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LUCKNOW, WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 6, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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# BJP IN HUDDLE TO PICK CMS

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After securing a decisive mandate in the Hindi heartland States of Madhya Pradesh (MP), Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, the BJP high command is currently in a huddle to name the Chief Ministers (CM). It has been three days since the results of the Assembly polls were declared on Sunday.

Party sources said several rounds of meetings, involving top leaders, including BJP President JP Nadda, have taken place in the last two days to finalise the candidates for the key positions.

The party, despite having prominent leaders like multiple-time incumbent Chief Ministers Shivraj Singh Chouhan in MP, Vasundhara Raje Scindia in Rajasthan, and Raman Singh in Chhattisgarh in the electoral fray, did not go to the polls with a specific chief ministerial candidate.

While there has been no word from senior party leaders on the likely chief ministerial picks, names will be decided keeping in mind the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. Interestingly, party sources have revealed that all three winning States may have Deputy Chief Ministers, following the model the BJP has implemented in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Yogi Adityanath.

BJP sources said the central



leadership will soon be appointing observers to oversee meetings of newly elected MLAs of the party in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan where they will elect their leaders. "Party will definitely keep in mind the major Lok Sabha elections within six months," party sources said.

In Rajasthan, two-time Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia, Mahant Baba

Balak Nath, Rajsamand MP Diya Kumari, and Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat are the top four contenders for the top post in Rajasthan.

Although Vasundhara remains the front runner, at least until the Lok Sabha polls. Vasundhara is trying to impress the Central leadership and holding meetings with her loyalists since Sunday when the result

were declared. On the other hand Shivraj Singh Chouhan in MP and Raman Singh in Chhattisgarh have maintained a low profile and have left the issue with Narendra Modi and Amit Shah.

Sources from Vasundhara camp claimed that nearly 50 MLAs have met her at her residence since then. She has been the Chief Minister of Rajasthan twice from 2003 to

2008 and from 2013 to 2018. While she was the chief ministerial face in earlier elections, the party decided to go to polls without projecting any leader for the post and Modi leading the campaign.

BJP Sources said the party is not very keen on Vasundhara having a third tenure as the Chief Minister.

The party's in-charge for Rajasthan, Arun Singh, said the decision of the party's

parliamentary board about the Chief Minister's post will be acceptable to all, even as newly elected MLAs continued to visit Baba Balak Nath. The Lok Sabha MP from Alwar is the head of the Baba Mastnath Math in Rohtak.

He was the BJP's candidate for Assembly elections from the Tijara Assembly constituency. Known as 'Rajasthan ka Yogi' Balak Nath is the eighth 'mahant' (chief priest in a monastery) of Baba Mast Nath Math.

Another name that can be considered for the top job in Rajasthan is that of Gayatri Devi's granddaughter and Rajsamand MP Diya Kumari. Previously, she was an MP from Sawai Madhopur. She is known for social work and was initially considered as an outsider in Sawai Madhopur.

In Madhya Pradesh among the probable names for the CM post being tossed around are incumbent favourite Chouhan, Kailash Vijayvargiya and Jyotiraditya Scindia.

In a video message on Tuesday, Chouhan said he had not been a contender for the CM's post in the past, nor was he one now. "As a party worker, I have always carried out whatever work the BJP assigned me to the best of my ability, with dedication and honesty," Chouhan said in a video statement posted on his social media account.

# INDIA Bloc meet postponed after key leaders snub



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Amid reports of differences cropping up between various parties in the INDIA Bloc, the Opposition alliance has now decided to reschedule the meeting of party heads to the third week of December. Despite many leaders of the coalition already being in Delhi for the ensuing Winter Session of Parliament, the INDIA bloc meeting, announced by Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on December 6 to strategise for the Lok Sabha 2024 polls, received a lukewarm response from several major stakeholder leaders, including West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, Samajwadi Party Chief Akhilesh Yadav, and senior Janata Dal United (U) leaders.

According to sources in

Congress, several key Opposition leaders will not be able to attend the meeting that was earlier scheduled on Wednesday in Delhi.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin will not be able to come to Delhi as several areas of the State have been badly hit by Cyclone Michaung. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will not be able to make it to the national Capital owing to his illness. Similarly, West Bengal Mamata Banerjee would have given it a miss owing to a wedding in her family.

While Mamata claimed that she would go ahead with her state programmes as she was not aware of the meeting call, Akhilesh said if the behaviour of the Congress had been different in one of the States where polls were conducted recently, it too would have seen a change.

Continued on Page 8

## BRIEFS

KARNI SENA CHIEF SHOT DEAD

**Jaipur:** Right-wing group Shri Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena's president Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi was shot dead in the living room of his house here on Tuesday by three armed men, one of whom was also killed in retaliatory firing, police said. One of Gogamedi's security guards sustained bullet injuries in the exchange of fire with the assailants, who had gone to his house in the Shyam Nagar area on the pretext of meeting him, they said. The incident was caught on CCTV.

MICHAUNG MAKES LANDFALL, CLAIMS 12 LIVES

**Chennai/Amaravati/Bhubaneswar/Hyderabad:** Severe cyclonic storm Michaung made landfall crossing south Andhra Pradesh coast between 12.30 pm and 2.30 pm on Tuesday leaving its maximum fury to be felt on Monday in Chennai and adjoining areas in neighbouring Tamil Nadu. Southern districts of Odisha and eastern Telangana continue to be on alert. At least 12 people lost their lives in various rain-related incidents in and around Chennai.

DELHI'S AIR QUALITY IMPROVES

**New Delhi:** Pollution levels in Delhi improved on Tuesday, and were recorded in the "poor" category, with minimum temperature settling at 11.2 degrees Celsius, weather department officials said. As per Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data, the 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) was 297, higher than 310 ("very poor" category) recorded a day earlier. The national Capital recorded a maximum temperature of 25.4 degrees Celsius.

# Ram Temple event guest list ready

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■ LUCKNOW

As the eagerly awaited consecration ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya approaches, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust has revealed the meticulously prepared final guest list. A total of 7,000 guests, including revered saints and sages from across the country, have been invited to partake in the historic event. In a bid to ensure a seamless and harmonious celebration, the Trust has issued a special appeal to all attending saints and religious leaders not to bring traditional symbols such as dand, chhatra and paduka to the ceremony.

The decision was formalised during a meeting where officials from the four provinces of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and Vishwa Hindu Parishad gathered in Ayodhya.

Before the meeting, the officials inspected the ongoing work at the Ram Janmabhoomi site, along with assessing the progress of the statue construction and the tent city being set up in Bagh Bijesi.

Following these evaluations, a two-hour meeting took place at the Trust office in Ramkot, focusing on the comprehensive arrangements for accommodating, transporting and providing sustenance for the guests.

The guest list was meticulously prepared to encompass a diverse



array of individuals, with particular emphasis on extending a warm welcome to approximately 2,500 sages and saints representing various traditions from around the country. Approximately 7,000 guests, including representatives from Kedarnath, Badrinath, Baba Vishwanath Dham and Vaishno Devi temple, have been invited to witness the historic event.

While the participation of priests from major temples remains uncertain, representatives from these temples are expected to attend the consecration ceremony.

Emphasising the principle of 'Atithi Devo Bhava' (the guest is god), the Trust is keen on extending a grand reception to the esteemed guests. Dr Krishna Gopal, former co-secretary of the

RSS, held a meeting with the officials in Ayodhya, addressing various aspects of the consecration ceremony. This included discussions on accommodation, food, healthcare, sanitation and the tent city's provisions for the devotees. Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai said 21 Vedic acharyas from Kashi would conduct the consecration of the Ram temple.

The throne for Lord Ram Lalla, eight feet long and four feet wide, is ready, with the final touch of a gold layer pending.

"The Trust is making meticulous preparations to enshrine Ram Lalla on this golden throne during the Pran Pratishtha ceremony," he said.

# Adani Group Stocks surge

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Adani Group shares continued their upward movement on Tuesday after a report stated that US agency IDFC had found Hindenburg Research's allegations of fraud against billionaire Gautam Adani-led conglomerate were 'not relevant'.

Some of the group firms hit their 52-week highs and locked in upper circuit levels, with the total valuation of group companies reaching near the ₹14 lakh crore mark at close.

Adani Energy Solutions and Adani Green Energy zoomed 20 per cent each to close at ₹1,082.60 and ₹1,348 apiece, Adani Total Gas surged 19.95 per cent to settle at ₹878.20, and NDTV jumped 18.41 per cent to end at ₹266.55 per share on BSE.

Flagship firm Adani Enterprises advanced 17.03 per cent to finish at ₹2,960.10, Adani Power climbed 15.91 per cent to close at ₹538.50, while Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) bounced 15.15 per cent to settle at ₹1,011.85.

During the day, shares of Adani Power and APSEZ hit 52-week highs on the BSE.



Shares of Adani Wilmar rose 9.93 per cent to end at ₹380.70, ACC gained 8.20 per cent to close at ₹2,185, Ambuja Cements went up 7.22 per cent to settle at ₹508.70.

Meanwhile, Sanghi Industries jumped 4.97 per cent to finish at ₹129.90 apiece on the exchange.

The combined market valuation of all the 11 firms soared to ₹13.91 lakh crore at close on Tuesday. It stood at around ₹11.98 lakh crore at the close of trading on Monday. Thus, the combined market valuation of all the 11 firms, including Sanghi Industries went up by about

₹1.92 lakh crore on Tuesday.

This was the first time that the group stocks hit the ₹14 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.

Meanwhile, a report stated that the US International Development Finance Corp, or DFC, examined the allegations against the Adani Group before extending a loan for the Indian conglomerate's port project in Sri Lanka.

# Panic subsides as leopard returns to natural habitat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The leopard, which spread panic in South Delhi's Sainik Farms and its adjoining areas for the last five days, seems to have returned to its natural habitat. According to the Delhi Government's forest department officials the leopard has not been seen since Saturday evening but the department's team remain stationed in the area.

However, residents were advised to remain vigilant for a couple of days more. The operation to capture it continued on Tuesday with the help of drone surveillance and at least 50 police personnel were deployed to monitor the situation. Several arterial roads in the area were blocked.

Deputy Conservator of Forest (South Division) Mandeep Mittal said the Forest Department teams combed the area but did not find anything. "The leopard has not been seen since Saturday evening. We are expecting that it has gone



back but our team is still there," he said. The cage that was set up is also there," he said.

Sushil Jain, a wildlife expert from Bail A Tail NGO, who led the search operation along with the forest department, wildlife and the Delhi Police for the last five days, told *The Pioneer* that search operation was on Tuesday evening. "A joint team of the force, Forest Department,

Western Avenue Resident Welfare Association (WARWA) and an NGO (Bail A Tail) conducted an hour-long search operation in the area in the afternoon but could not find the animal. There was no sighting of leopard for the past two days. That's why we decided to end operation," Jain said.

After the search operation, the Residents Welfare Association of

Sainik Farms issued an advisory informing that the forest department officials have completed their search.

"As per them the animal seems to have returned to its natural habitat. We can relax for now but still keep our eyes & ears open atleast for a couple of days more. We take this opportunity to thank Our SHO Surinder Rana and his team and the forest officials for their support in this crisis. We on behalf of all residents thank our wonderful Member Sushil Jain for his relentless support," reads the advisory.

"Last but not the least we salute our Quick Response Teams and our guards who have been on their toes all this time. Meanwhile lets try to keep the story alive so that the unwanted elements stay off our area," it said.

"On Monday again, a thorough search operation was conducted in the area but the animal was not spotted. Exits were closed from three sides and only the one leading

towards the jungle was left open. It is likely that the leopard has gone back into the jungles of Aravallis but we are still on alert," the police official said.

On Sunday, the Forest Department team conducted a search operation using drones but the leopard was not spotted anywhere, the official added.

The Asola Wildlife Sanctuary shares boundaries with densely populated settlements like Sangam Vihar, Chattarpur, Sainik Farms and Fatehpur Beri and villages such as Mangar and Pali in Faridabad.

In 2021, a leopard was caught on multiple cameras in southwest Delhi's Najafgarh, leading to cages being installed to catch the animal, but in vain.

A similar exercise was also undertaken in 2016 to trap a leopard that had reached the Yamuna Biodiversity Park (YBP). The state forest and wildlife department eventually trapped the animal, which was then released in the Shivaliks.

# Revanth is Telangana new Chief Minister

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Telangana Congress chief A Revanth Reddy will be the new Chief Minister of the State. Announcing the decision at the party headquarters in national Capital on Tuesday, AICC general secretary KC Venugopal said the swearing-in will take place on December 7 in Hyderabad.

"After considering the report of observers and after discussion with senior leaders, the Congress president has decided to go with Revanth Reddy as the leader of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) in Telangana," he said.

Revanth was the frontrunner for the top post in the State after the party staged a stupendous victory in Assembly elections by

winning 64 seats in Telangana, upstaging the BRS.

Venugopal said the Congress Legislature Party in Telangana had unanimously decided to authorise the Congress president to take a decision to appoint the CLP leader in its meeting earlier.

He said the party had appointed four observers, including Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar, Deepa Dasmunshi, Ajay Kumar and K J George, besides AICC general secretary in-charge Manikrao Thakre.

Shivakumar and Thakre were present as Venugopal announced the party high command's decision on Telangana. He did not answer queries on how many Ministers would be sworn in and whether there would be any Deputy Chief Ministers.



# Physiotherapist kills wife, absconding

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A physiotherapist allegedly killed his wife by slitting her throat at their house in Thakurganj on the intervening night of Monday and Tuesday. The incident came to light when the deceased's mother visited the house and found her lying in a pool of blood. The accused was said to be frustrated following a loss in betting. Identified as Anand aka Anandeshwar, the accused is said to have absconded.

As per reports, Sandhya Sahu aka Jahnvi Agrahari of

Roshan Nagar in Chor Ghati locality was found lying in a pool of blood when her mother visited her house to ask for her well-being around noon on Tuesday. Blood had spattered all around in the room and there was a deep cut on the throat. As the mother of the victim raised an alarm, neighbours reached the scene and informed police about the incident.

Preliminary investigation revealed that Sandhya's mother Kamla of Naka had tried calling her on Monday night but the calls went unanswered. She waited for the morning to



File photo of the deceased

reach her daughter's house. In the morning, the victim's younger son Shaurya (9) called Kamla and told her that his parents were nowhere to be found.

Kamla reached there and found the body covered by a bedsheet. Sandhya's elder son Tanishq is said to be differently abled and cannot speak.

The victim's brother Aman Sahu lodged a complaint with the police, alleging Anand aka Anandeshwar killed Sandhya and absconded. He also alleged that Anand and his brother Mintu had assaulted Sandhya in the past

and a police case was registered in this connection. The couple had got married in 2008. Locals said they heard the couple scream at one another on Monday night, but had no idea that the woman would be killed. "The verbal spat between them was a regular feature and it would continue for hours," a neighbour told the police.

The police said they got a lead that Anand had lost money in betting/gambling. "He had become ill-tempered due to being frustrated and would thrash Sandhya off and on," the police said.

# UP Cong chief asks his team to strengthen party



UPCC chief Ajay Rai and others during a press conference in Lucknow on Tuesday

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Claiming that the recent defeats in the assembly elections had no impact on the party, Uttar Pradesh Congress president Ajay Rai, on Tuesday, asked the newly-appointed state officer-bearers and party leaders to work with full strength and connect with the people to revive the party for the parliamentary elections next year.

Rai was addressing the first meeting of the newly-constituted state executive at UP Congress Committee headquarters here on Tuesday. The executives and other leaders gave several suggestions during the meeting to strengthen the party at the ground level before the announcement of the parliamentary elections.

Welcoming all the members, Rai said that he not only

had faith in them but was also confident that they would fulfill the responsibility assigned to them with full dedication and honesty and would work to further strengthen the Congress organisation.

He pointed out that only five months were left for the Lok Sabha elections and in such a situation all Congressmen would have to come together with full strength and provide dynamism by connecting as many people as possible with the party organisation.

"We have to accept the Lok Sabha election as a challenge and work day and night on a war footing. We do not need to be disheartened by the recent election results of five states, rather we need to stand up again with full strength and fight on the streets," he told the party leaders.

"The intention of the Bharatiya Janata Party is to destroy democracy and the Constitution of this country and if it succeeds in its objective then our future generations will never forgive us. For this, we need to come out on the streets with full force and wherever I am needed, I will be available even at 12 o'clock in the night," he added.

Addressing journalists, Rai said that the Congress would embark on a 'Parivartan Yatra' from Saharanpur district of western Uttar Pradesh. He said during this yatra, Congressmen would travel on foot from village to village and city to city in all districts of the state and make the people of the state aware of the policies and ideology of the BJP. He said the yatra would culminate at Naimisharanya Dham in Sitapur district.

# KGMU employee killed in mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 45-year-old employee of King George's Medical University was killed in a road mishap in Sairpur police station area. The incident occurred on December 1, but a case was registered on Wednesday after the deceased's son performed all the rituals. The victim, identified as Ramesh Chand Pandey of Shiv Nagar Colony, had gone to Raitha village in Bakshi-Ka-Talab for some work and was returning home. When he Dhatingra crossing in the area around 6 pm on the fateful day, his motorcycle was hit by a car moving on the wrong side of road. His son Nitesh Pandey said his father

THE INCIDENT OCCURRED ON DECEMBER 1, BUT A CASE WAS REGISTERED ON WEDNESDAY AFTER THE DECEASED'S SON PERFORMED ALL THE RITUALS. THE VICTIM WAS IDENTIFIED AS RAMESH CHAND PANDEY OF SHIV NAGAR COLONY IN BKT

suffered injuries and was rushed to the Bhainsamau Community Health Centre by commuters. As his condition deteriorated, he was rushed to the King George's Medical University Trauma Centre, where he was pronounced dead.

Meanwhile, a woman, identified as Sunita of Awas Vikas Parishad Vihar Colony, was deprived of her gold chain on Monday evening. She said she was going towards Gangotri Enclave when two bike-borne chain-snatchers targeted her.

# Yogi govt offers CM Fellowship Programme in aspirational cities

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On the lines of aspirational development blocks, the Yogi Adityanath government has now started the CM Fellowship Programme in aspirational cities also for which the Urban Development Department has started online registration from Monday.

Uttar Pradesh is the first state in the country to start a development project like the Aspirational City Scheme, which provides an opportunity to the youth and other citizens to actively participate in the state's urban development, planning, management and monitoring.

The Yogi Adityanath cabinet had recently approved the Aspirational City Plan to create new employment opportunities while improving basic urban facilities as well as education, healthcare and social infrastructure in 100 small cities with a population

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

■ Applicants must have a bachelor's degree or higher qualification in the relevant field for the CM Fellowship Programme.

■ The maximum age limit for applicants is 40 years. Additionally, they should be proficient in both Hindi and English.

■ Applicants should have the ability to work on computers and be well versed in information and communication technology.

ranging from 20,000 to one lakh.

The CM Fellowship Programme is an important action plan under the Aspirational City Scheme of Uttar Pradesh, through which youth will be actively involved in urban development, plan-

ning, management and monitoring. This opportunity empowers citizens to contribute to independent thought, innovation and development.

"Moreover, the best-performing fellows may get the opportunity for placement in the government sector. The CM Fellowship Programme provides a new opportunity for partnership and skill development and this initiative will play a significant role in the urban development of Uttar Pradesh," a government spokesman said here on Tuesday. The focus areas under the scheme will include urban infrastructure, social infrastructure, urban local governance, economic opportunities, climate and disaster resilience. The applicants can visit the official website of the Urban Development Department (<http://anyurban.upsdc.gov.in/>) to register online.

# Kenya President invites BJP MLA to Nairobi

**Lucknow (PNS):** During his three-day visit to India, Kenya's President William Samoei Ruto met former joint director of ED and BJP MLA Dr Rajeshwar Singh. During their meeting, the president extended an invitation to Singh to visit Nairobi.

Singh was influenced by the Kenya's president, his life, struggles, and personality. Taking to social media, he said that William Samoei Ruto's journey, from walking barefoot from his farm to school to performing various small tasks, and finally becoming the president, was inspirational for everyone.

The legislator applauded the efforts of Ruto in safeguarding the world's best national and wildlife parks. Singh mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was strongly emphasising the promotion of nature and wildlife, and there were strong possibilities for mutual cooperation and partnership between India and Kenya in biodiversity conservation. President Ruto arrived in New Delhi on Monday for a three-day maiden trip to India.

On Tuesday, Ruto met Prime Minister Modi and President Droupadi Murmu. Modi stated that they had the opportunity to review the complete spectrum of India-Kenya relations. Discussions were held on deepening economic ties between our nations.

# UP on top position in implementation of PM Awas Yojana-Urban

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a major achievement for Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state has topped in the implementation of Prime Minister Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-Urban) with over 14 lakh houses built for the poor and the deprived in the last six and a half years.

This came to light during a recent meeting presided over by the principal secretary of the Urban Development Department. The focus of the meeting was on highlighting the ongoing enhancements in the state's performance and tracking the progress of upcoming projects.

More than 17.65 lakh houses have been approved in Uttar Pradesh under the PM Awas Yojana (Urban) out of which currently over 17 lakh houses are in various stages of construction. Additionally, work is set to commence soon on 59,000 more houses.

Among the completed houses, more than 12.12 lakh have been constructed under the beneficiary led construction (BLC) scheme, while over 34,000 houses have been completed under the affordable housing in partnership (AHP) scheme, and more

than 1.55 lakh houses have been completed under the credit linked subsidy scheme (CLSS). The process of allocating these houses to eligible beneficiaries is also progressing rapidly.

The discussion in the meeting remained focused on the construction of the Light House Project in the Awadh Vihar Yojana of Lucknow. The Light House Project is poised to become a milestone in the housing landscape of Uttar Pradesh. Located in Sector 5, this project embraces an innovative construction perspective by utilising a hybrid system incorporating PEB structural and in-place formwork systems.

The project, which is on the way to completion in December, also showcases the excellent work of Uttar Pradesh in housing projects and stands as a testament to the commitment of the Yogi government to provide quality and affordable housing solutions. The Yogi government has been continuously working to realise the dreams of the poor to own a house.

The meeting highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Urban Development Department and its partners.

# State polls have strengthened INDIA bloc, says Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav claimed that the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) had gained strength after the recent elections to state assemblies in five states. The assembly elections were held in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram. The BJP swept the polls in three states, wresting Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh from the Congress and retaining Madhya Pradesh while the Congress won in Telangana and Mizoram went to a regional party.

"The poll results of the five state assemblies must be a cause of concern for the Bharatiya Janata Party as the results have clearly demonstrated that the people are in favour of a change and the election will do this during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections," Akhilesh Yadav said, adding that the SP would win all the 80 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh.

He claimed that the double-engine government of the BJP had nothing to show as its achievement and the development work done by it in UP.

The SP had contested 69 seats in Madhya Pradesh this time but it did not even come a close second on any of them.



The party failed to win any seat in MP and ended up with its worst-ever vote share of a mere 0.46 per cent.

This electoral reverse comes despite MP having historically been the SP's second-best performance state after UP. The SP had won four seats in MP with a 1.58 per cent vote share in 1998, seven in 2003 with 3.7 per cent vote share, one in 2008 with a vote share of 1.9 per cent, and one seat in 2018 with a 1.3 per cent vote share. Even when it did not win any seat in MP in 2013, its poll percentage was 1.2 per cent.

Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the BJP government in UP had done nothing for the micro, small and medium enterprises sector. He said the government had waived loans amounting to Rs 15 lakh crore of the industrial houses but it did not

waive Rs 2 lakh crore loans of the farmers. He said the farmers' loan would be waived when the SP comes to power. "The BJP owes an explanation to the farmers why the minimum support price (MSP) for the paddy crop has not been doubled by the government. It should also tell whether all the unemployed youths have got jobs," Akhilesh Yadav said.

Accusing the BJP of being an "enemy" of social justice, the SP chief alleged that the Scheduled Castes, Other Backward Classes and Muslims were victims of injustice due to the discriminatory policies of the BJP government.

He alleged that the BJP government was wary of caste census as the ruling party was against the idea of SCs, OBCs and Muslims getting their due share in power structure.

# Extortion gang targeting gays through dating app busted; four arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Police claimed to have busted a gang comprising four members hailing from Patna in Bihar for allegedly targeting gays in the state capital through a specially-designed dating app. The gang would lure gullible people with promises of sexual pleasure or body massage and then rob them or blackmail them to extort money.

The accused, identified as Roshan Pathak (28), Shubham Raj (25), Mohammed Firdaus (30), and Mohammad Faisal (28), hail from different police stations in Patna. They had hired an apartment in Lucknow and were actively targeting gay or queer people.

The arrest came after a resident of Indira Nagar filed a complaint with the Vibhuti Khand police. He alleged that he was thrashed and robbed of Rs 80,000 in cash and mobile phone

by four men at a hotel. An FIR was registered under IPC sections for causing hurt and extortion, but later charges of robbery and dishonesty were added. The victim, who met the men through a dating app, had agreed to meet them at the hotel. He alleged that they threatened to expose his sexual orientation if he didn't pay them money. When he refused, they assaulted him and forcibly transferred money from his bank account using his details. They demanded more, and snatched his phone before fleeing the scene.

The police said that the gang targeted various individuals in the city using the app. They lured victims with promises of physical pleasure or body massage. The police said that the names of the arrested accused were also linked to another robbery case reported to Naka police in the recent past. In this case, a sum of nearly Rs 5 lakh was looted from a

man. As per the FIR registered with the Naka police in May this year, Shubham Raj had targeted a man working as a coordinator for IGNOU at a degree college in the city by calling him to a hotel room in Charbagh. When he reached there, he three more people. The victim was threatened and his debit and credit cards, along with their secret numbers, were forcibly secured by the accused.

"The accused withdrew Rs 38,000 from the debit card and bought gold ornaments worth 4,58,150 by using the credit card. They threatened to kill me if I opened my mouth," he had alleged in the FIR. The police laid their hands on the accused with the help of their bank details. They were arrested near Gomti Nagar railway station on Monday morning. A sum of Rs 35,000 in cash and the mobile phone of the victim had been recovered.

## CITYBRIEFS

### SPECIAL CAMP

The Lucknow Development Authority is organising a special fortnight-long camp at its office in Gomti Nagar to register properties held by tenants without proper documentation. The camp, which will be underway till December 20, requires participants to bring supporting allotment documents and Aadhaar cards. Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi stressed the importance of registration under the new tenancy law, warning of legal consequences for non-compliance. On the first day, 101 applicants applied, with 23 cases registered, and 79 under review.

### INAUGURATED

The gold loan counter was inaugurated by circle head Neeraj Gupta at Punjab National Bank branch in Civil Lines, Ayodhya, on Tuesday. The circle head, while addressing the customers present, said that this counter has been established by the bank in this branch to provide gold loans, especially to the entrepreneurs and farmers. The gold loan facility is being provided by the bank at an affordable interest rate (starting from 8.65% for farmers).



**BEFORE THE ARBITRAL TRIBUNAL, LUCKNOW (U.P.)**  
**R/o 2/46, Vikas Nagar, Lucknow**  
**Sole Arbitrator - Sri Anuj Kudesia**  
In: Re  
Arbitration Case No. 1 of 2023  
Ankit Dubey -----Claimant  
Versus  
Lallan Kumar Singh -----Respondent  
To,  
Lallan Kumar Singh, S/o S. N. Singh, Resident of D-272, Rajajipuram, Lucknow.  
"Whereas Ankit Dubey has instituted the above arbitration proceedings against you for cancellation of agreement dated 18.06.2015, you are hereby summoned to appear before the above named arbitrator in person or by a pleader on the 09th day of December 2023 at 1 pm at the address mentioned above i.e. 2/46, Vikas Nagar, Lucknow to answer the same, failing which the claim will be disposed of exparte."  
**(Sri Anuj Kudesia)**  
Sole Arbitrator  
2/46, Vikas Nagar, Lucknow  
**Place : Lucknow**  
**Dated : 06.12.2023**

the pioneer  
**CLASSIFIEDS**

## OBITUARY

**OBITUARY**  
  
SEJOY GOPAL MADDI  
02 MAY 1994 - 05 OCT 2023

ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SEJOY GOPAL MADDI WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH 420 FIELD HOSPITAL.

FROM: LT GEN V SABID SYED AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

## OBITUARY

**OBITUARY**  
  
SEJOY BASAVARAJ HUBBALLI  
25 JUL 1992 - 01 NOV 2023

ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SEJOY BASAVARAJ HUBBALLI WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH 309 FIELD HOSPITAL.

FROM: LT GEN V SABID SYED AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

## OBITUARY

**OBITUARY**  
  
SEJOY SHIVKESH GURAJR  
01 OCT 1998 - 05 OCT 2023

ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SEJOY SHIVKESH GURAJR WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH 420 FIELD HOSPITAL.

FROM: LT GEN V SABID SYED AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS

## OBITUARY

**OBITUARY**  
  
SEJOY HANUMAN RAM JAT  
07 APR 1994 - 20 OCT 2023

ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS SOLEMNLY PRAY TO THE ALMIGHTY TO BESTOW PEACE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL AND GRANT STRENGTH TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY TO BEAR THE GREAT LOSS OF SEJOY HANUMAN RAM JAT WHO DIED WHILE SERVING WITH 320 FIELD HOSPITAL.

FROM: LT GEN V SABID SYED AND ALL RANKS OF ARMY MEDICAL CORPS



# Rate of conviction in UP 180% more than national average

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a major achievement for the Yogi Adityanath government, Uttar Pradesh has emerged as number one state in the country in terms of convictions in crimes against women with a conviction rate of 180 per cent as compared to the national average.

The latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for the year 2022 has also revealed that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's zero tolerance policy against crime and criminals has led to a significant drop in overall crime rate in UP. According to the NCRB

data, against more than 35 lakh cases registered in the country only 4,01,787 cases were registered in UP. Besides, the crime rate of UP is 171.6 per cent as compared to 258.1 per cent of the entire country.

In terms of the ratio of cases registered, UP stands at 11.28 per cent and ranks 20th in the country compared to other states and Union territories of the country. This is when Uttar Pradesh is the most populous state of the country having 16.89 per cent of the population.

According to the NCRB data, with 28,522 murder cases registered in the country, the

rate of murder (defined as the number of crimes relative to the number of crimes per one lakh population) is 2.1 per cent whereas with 3,491 murder cases, Uttar Pradesh's rate of murder is 1.5 per cent. UP ranks 28th in terms of murders, much less than in Jharkhand which has recorded 4 per cent cases.

Compared to Uttar Pradesh, the crime rate of Arunachal Pradesh is 3.6 per cent and that of Chhattisgarh and Haryana is 3.4 per cent.

Similarly, 57,256 cases of attempt to murder were registered in the country with a rate of 4.1 per cent whereas in UP

3,788 cases of the same category were registered with a rate of 1.6 per cent. Uttar Pradesh ranks 25th in the country in attempt to murder cases.

Furthermore, 83,344 cases of outraging modesty were registered in the country with

## CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN

a crime rate of 12.4 per cent while 10,548 cases of the same category were registered in UP. UP ranks 17th in the crime in the country with a crime rate of 9.4 per cent. Compared to UP, the rate of outraging modesty is 32 per cent in Orissa,

26.6 per cent in Kerala and 24.9 percent in Jammu and Kashmir.

Altogether 615 cases of kidnapping for ransom were registered in the country while only 30 cases were registered in Uttar Pradesh. UP is at 30th

position in terms of kidnapping for ransom cases.

A total of 31,516 cases of rape were registered in the country with a rate of 4.7 per cent whereas 3,690 cases of rape were registered in UP, with a crime rate of 3.3 per cent. UP

ranks 24th in the country in rape cases whereas in Uttarakhand, the rate of rape is 15.4 per cent, in Chandigarh it is 13.9 per cent and in Rajasthan it is 13.9 per cent.

Similarly, 57,082 cases of rebellion were registered in the country at a rate of 4.1 per cent while in UP 4,745 cases of rebellion were registered with a rate of 2 per cent. UP ranks 24th in the country in the crime.

As many as 1,07,222 cases of embezzlement have been registered in the country with a rate of 7.8 per cent while in UP 6,906 cases of the same category were registered with a

crime rate of 3 per cent. With this, UP ranks 31st in the country in terms of embezzlement.

At the same time, 28,356 cases of robbery were registered in the country with a rate of 2.1 per cent whereas 1,975 cases were registered in UP with a rate of 0.8 per cent. UP ranks 27th in the country in the crime.

UP's rate of robbery is lower than Delhi with 8.6 per cent, Orissa's with 6.5 per cent. Besides, 2,666 cases of dacoity were registered in the country with a rate of 0.2 per cent against which 80 cases were registered in UP.

Compared to UP, the crime rate of dacoity in Orissa is 0.9 per cent, in Meghalaya it is 0.5 per cent and in Chandigarh it is 0.4 per cent.

Furthermore, 63,414 cases have been registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act in the country with a crime rate of 14.3 per cent whereas 8,136 cases have been registered under the Act in UP with a rate of 9.5 per cent. UP ranks 25th in the country in crime whereas Andaman and Nicobar has recorded a crime rate of 97.1 per cent under the Act, Lakshadweep 55.3 per cent and Sikkim 50 per cent.

# Encourage medical research by preparing case studies: CM

## Asks faculty of medical colleges to sit in OPDs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that faculty members of medical colleges should sit in the Out Patient Department (OPD) regularly and encourage research in medical institutions by preparing case studies.

Speaking at an event organised as part of Mission Rozgar at Lok Bhavan, the chief minister said on Tuesday that Uttar Pradesh was able to control encephalitis because of the efforts of health workers.

"More research needs to be done on various illnesses and the professors and assistant professors of both Allopathic and AYUSH should hold OPD," he said.

The chief minister highlighted the significant positive changes since 2017, stating that Uttar Pradesh, previously experiencing an identity crisis and lacking in development, has witnessed a transformation.

"As a result of the government's efforts over the last six and a half years, individuals in Uttar Pradesh not only proudly express their identity, but even those who are not originally from UP proudly associate themselves with the state," he said. Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh has significantly enhanced its healthcare services in the last six and a half years. "In the



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath flagging off an ambulance equipped with advanced life support system, at Lok Bhavan in Lucknow on Tuesday

period from 1947 to 2017, only 12 medical colleges were established in the state. Today, there are 65 medical colleges in Uttar Pradesh, of which many are functional," the chief minister pointed out.

Attributing the accelerated pace of development to the double-engine government in the state, Chief Minister Yogi said today, along with Allopathy, even traditional medicine was also being promoted in the state.

"After the formation of the Ministry of AYUSH by the Government of India, Uttar Pradesh also formed the Department of AYUSH. Today, Uttar Pradesh has its own AYUSH University, which is rapidly progressing in terms of

recognising new colleges," he said. The chief minister said that paramedics and staff nurses were the backbone of the state's healthcare system. "Their interactions with the patients should be such that the patients remember them even after they have recovered," he said.

He highlighted the successful control of diseases like malaria, chikungunya, kala-azar and dengue in the state, emphasising the significant improvements in healthcare statistics since 2017.

Chief Minister Yogi highlighted the tangible outcomes of the government's efforts to enhance healthcare services in the state.

"Under Ayushman Bharat and Mukhyamantri Jan Arogya

Yojana, health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh is being given to 10 crore people of the state. Dialysis facility has been made available in 72 districts of the state. ICUs (intensive care units) have been established in every district," he pointed out.

In a commitment to provide prompt and efficient healthcare, efforts to minimise the response time of ambulance services 108 and 102 have shown positive results, the chief minister added.

He emphasised that Atal Medical University was being established in Lucknow, dedicated to the revered Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to bring about a revolutionary transformation in the field of medical education.

# Govt gives appointment letters to nurses, medical teachers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a testimony to transparency in recruitment process, a massive function was organised in which appointment letters were given to the new appointees in the Health Department, including assistant professors.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath led the function in Lucknow while public representatives distributed the appointment letters in districts. On Tuesday, appointment letters were given to 278 assistant professors, 2,142 staff nurses and 48 AYUSH teachers. "It is a major accomplishment of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as it has increased transparency in recruitments. It is not only ensuring provision of employment to the maximum number of youths, but also appointment of the most deserving, meritorious and eligible ones on vacant positions across sectors," a government spokesman said here on Tuesday.

In this sequence, the state government held an appointment letter distribution ceremony across the state. The function was led by the chief minister who distributed the appointment letters at a function held in the Lok Bhavan.

Earlier on Sunday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had distributed appointment letters to 242 assistant boring technicians at the Lok Bhavan.

The newly-appointed youths expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday handed over appointment letters to assistant professors, staff nurses and AYUSH teachers during a programme in Lucknow

Adityanath for fulfilling their wish for a prosperous future. The youth believe that transparency has played a crucial role in their obtaining employment and it has given them an acute sense of responsibility towards the work as well.

One of the new recruits, Dr Ved Prakash Upadhyaya, said that the distribution of appointment letters at Lok Bhavan rather than the college itself gave him a sense of pride. He said that the address of Chief Minister Yogi inspired him to work with dedication and also pay attention to both treatment of patients and education of children.

Sarojini Devi, a resident of Barabanki, has been selected

for the position of staff nurse in Pratapgarh. She said that complete transparency was maintained in the appointments in all government departments.

Dr Anjali Chaudhary, who received an appointment letter for the post of assistant professor in Sultanpur, thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for the fair selections. She said "recruitment based on a fair process boosts our confidence and inspires us to do something new every day".

Mohd Faizan Ansari, who has been appointed as an assistant professor in Kanpur Dehat, said that he was enthusiastic

about the impartiality of the appointment process and expressed gratitude to the Yogi government for it. He said that the honest appointment process "has increased our responsibility as well and now we have to work hard to deliver good results".

Yet another candidate, Shweta Singh of Deoria who has been selected for Basti, said that the appointment had taken place in a completely fair and transparent manner.

"In Uttar Pradesh, eligibility is the only criterion for selection. We obtained employment only by meeting this criterion. For this, we thank the Yogi Adityanath government," she added.

# Postpone investigation into functioning of madrasas: UP Madrasa Board

**Lucknow (PTI):** Following the Uttar Pradesh government's decision to initiate a probe into the availability of basic facilities and competent teachers at state-funded madrasas, UP Madrasa Education Board Chairman Ifitikhar Ahmad Javed called for the exercise to be postponed, saying examination preparations are going on in the madrasas.

In a letter written to Minority Welfare Minister Dharmpral Singh, Javed said examination work should be prioritised to safeguard the students' future. "As examination preparations are going on, I request you to postpone the probe and priority should be given to examination work so that the future of students remains secure," Javed said in his letter.

"It is the intention of the madrasa board that the annual examinations in the madrasas of the state should be conducted on time like other education boards," he said.

Javed said the probe in madrasas, however, is creating confusion and problems with conducting examinations. Delay in examination work could cause a delay in examinations, especially when Lok Sabha elections are to be held next year, he said. The Director of the Minority Welfare Department, J Reebha, in a letter sent on December 1, directed all divisional deputy directors and all district minority welfare officers to ensure the availability of

fundamental facilities and competent teachers in madrasas to ensure quality education for students enrolled in them.

The letter emphasised the need to develop "exploratory, interesting, and scientific perspectives" in students and to "integrate them into the mainstream".

To ensure this, the letter said, there should be a probe into madrasa buildings, basic facilities available there and also the educational records of teaching and non-teaching staff of state-aided madrasas. The letter instructed that a report on it be submitted to the Registrar of the Madrasa Education Board by completing the probe by December 30.

At present, approximately 25,000 recognised and unrecognised madrasas are operational in Uttar Pradesh, out of which 560 receive grants from the state government. For conducting the probe, a committee has been formed consisting of the District Minority Welfare Officer and the District Magistrate.

Additionally, in districts that have more than 20 madrasas receiving state government grants, an additional committee will be formed for speedy completion of this task. The state government conducted a comprehensive check of all recognised and unrecognised madrasas in the state in September last year, in which approximately 8,000 madrasas were found to be unrecognised.

# Govt to add 1,000 modern buses to UPSRTC fleet

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Yogi Adityanath government is set to add 1,000 state-of-the-art buses to the fleet of Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) to upgrade road transport in the state.

The government has already released the second installment of Rs 200 crore for the upgradation of the bus fleet following the approval of a proposal in this regard during the cabinet meeting held recently.

The UP government had announced a budget of Rs 400 crore for upgradation of road transport in the state through addition of 1000 state-of-the-art buses to the fleet of UPSRTC in the year 2023-24.

With this funding, the process of purchasing and including modern buses in the UPSRTC fleet will accelerate. Additionally, the maintenance and repair of existing buses will also improve.

The state government aims to complete the process of purchasing and including these 1,000 buses in the UPSRTC fleet within the financial year 2023-24. The transport commissioner will oversee all the procurement, ensuring compliance with the rule book of Uttar Pradesh government.

To ensure that the buses emit minimal carbon, necessary environmental approvals



under environmental rules and Acts and the EIA Notification of 2006 (amended) will be obtained. Compliance with environmental regulations and court orders will also be ensured.

The new buses will make travel on UPSRTC buses for passengers convenient, comfortable and enjoyable.

Meanwhile, the process of allotment of funds for the completion of various works at the State Transport Appellate Tribunal has also been started in the financial year 2023-24. Against the funds provisioned through supplementary budget, an amount of Rs 82 lakh has been released after administrative and financial approval.

This amount will be used for transfer travel expenses, maintenance of vehicles and purchase of petrol and balance of revised salaries (government). The expenditure of the allocated funds will follow the rules outlined in the budget manual and financial handbook.

# Lovesick youth shoots girl, ends life in Shahjahanpur

**Lucknow (PNS):** A lovesick youth shot the girl he loved and then committed suicide in Shahjahanpur. The youth wanted to marry the girl at any cost but she and her family were against it as he was not only disabled but also a distant relative of the family.

Mukesh Yadav was the eldest among the three sons of Omkar Singh Yadav of Tindulia village in Nigohi area of Shahjahanpur district. As he was physically disabled, he was not married. His younger brother, Dharendra, was married two years ago in Paraspur village near Amirnagar in Mohammadi area of Lakhimpur Kheri. Mukesh liked Dharendra's sister-in-law, Rama, so he was trying to cajole her to marry him. The girl and her family members were against this as Rama's elder sister was married in the family and Mukesh was disabled. On Monday, the wedding of Dharendra's cousin brother-in-law was taking place in Paraspur village. To participate in it, Mukesh had also gone to Paraspur along with his entire family. Rama had also come with her family to attend the marriage ceremony.

On Tuesday morning, Mukesh asked Rama to accompany him as he wanted to talk to her. When they were alone, Mukesh started exerting pressure on her to marry him and when she refused, he took out a pistol and shot her dead from point-blank range. Later he also opened fire at himself to commit suicide. Mukesh's cousin, Badam Singh Yadav, found both Rama and Mukesh lying in pools of blood. Both were rushed to a hospital where Rama was pronounced dead. Mukesh also succumbed to injuries after a few minutes.

# Girl's body found hanging

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The body of a girl was found hanging from a hook in the same room in which the body of a youth was found lying on the ground in Banwaria village under Tamkuhiraj police station of Kushinagar district. There was a mark of a rope on the youth's neck.

The girl was identified but the identity of the youth was yet to be ascertained.

Reports said that the girl's mother raised an alarm after seeing the body of her daughter hanging inside the room on Tuesday morning.

As the room was bolted from inside, the police had to wait for about two hours to enter it. A forensic team later visited the spot and collected evidence.


The girl was identified as Lavang, the 22-year-old daughter of Harikishun Chauhan of

Banwaria village under Tamkuhiraj police station area of Kushinagar.

Tamkuhiraj Circle Officer Jitendra Singh Kalra and Inspector Atul Srivastava of Tamkuhiraj, who visited the spot, said the identity of the youth was yet to be ascertained and they were waiting for the post-mortem report before heading with the investigation. The cops did not deny that it could be a case of honour killing.

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**Notice inviting E-TENDER**

The General Manager, (Ayodhya Zone) invites on behalf of the Managing Director, UPRNN Online Item rate/percentage rate on two bid systems for Construction of NIT No-544/ E-Tender/Sri Ram/RNN/23-24 Dated-04-12-2023-Rectractable Gate at Sri Ram Janam Bhoomi Path in Ayodhya. Last date of Submission of bid- 11-12-2023 at 3:00PM. The Detailed document is available on U.P. Government e-tender portal <http://www.etender.up.nic.in> and UPRNN website <http://www.uprnn.upscdg.gov.in>



Bank of India

Relationship beyond banking

**Zonal Office**  
128/24 Om Laxmi Tower, H-Block, Kidwai Nagar,  
Kanpur-208011, Tel: 0512-2985004

**POSSESSION NOTICE See Rule 8 (1)**

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notices calling upon the below mentioned Borrower/Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice plus interest and other charges within in 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower/guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the below mentioned properties in exercise of power conferred on him under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002. The borrower/ guarantor in particular and public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Bank of India upto the recoverable amount. The borrowers/guarantors attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Name of the Borrower/Guarantor	Demand Notice Dt. Amount as per Demand/Date of NPA	Possession Date	Description of Properties Mortgaged/Owner of the Properties	
<b>Branch: Auraiya, Vinayak Plaza, Kanpur Road, Auraiya</b>				
<b>Borrower:</b> Mr. Vipin Kumar S/o Lakhna Lal & Mrs. Pooja W/o Vipin Kumar	<b>Demand Notice Dt.</b> 01.08.2022	<b>Possession Date</b> 04.12.2023	EQM of residential property situated at Survey No. 718, Kakhawatola, Pargana & District Auraiya, UP-206122. <b>Name of Mortgagor:</b> Mrs. Pooja W/o Vipin Kumar, <b>Area :</b> 966.00 Sq.ft., <b>Boundaries:</b> East: Road 20 Feet, West: Plot Seller, North: Land Digar, South: Plot Om Prakash	
<b>Guarantor:</b> Mr. Lal Girish Chandra S/o Ram Nath	<b>Rs. 4,02,467.91</b> (Rs. Four Lakh Two Thousand Four Hundred Sixty Seven and Ninety One Paise + Intt. + Other Charges as on notice date			
<b>Branch: Lalitpur, 1027, Kasturi Plaza Market, Talabpura Road, Lalitpur-284403, Ph: 7234822822</b>				
<b>Borrower:</b> Mr. Durga Prasad S/o Late Chhotelal	<b>Demand Notice Dt.</b> 08.09.2023	<b>Possession Date</b> 04.12.2023	EQM of property situated at Plot No. 238/1, Pisanari (Andar Had Nagar Palika) Lalitpur, <b>Name of Mortgagor:</b> Mr. Durga Prasad S/o Late Chhotelal, <b>Area :</b> 118.96 Sq.mt., <b>Boundaries:</b> East: Main Raighat Road, West: Plot Seller, North: Plot of Seller, South: House of Smt. Narvada Devi	
<b>Guarantor:</b> Mr. Kishorilal S/o Chandan Singh	<b>Rs. 3,15,964.61</b> (Rs. Three Lakh Fifteen Thousand Nine Hundred Sixty Four and Sixty One Paise + Intt. + Other Charges as on notice date			
<b>Date: 05.12.2023</b>		<b>Place: Kanpur</b>		
<b>Authorised Officer: Bank of India</b>				



# Two siblings killed as truck hits motorcycle

**BARABANKI (PTI):** Two brothers were killed when their motorcycle was hit by a speeding truck on the Bhitaria-

Haidergarh Road here, police said on Tuesday. Gangaram Rawat (40) and his brother Jagdish Rawat (35), residents of

Mahulara village, were crossing the road on the motorcycle when the incident occurred in Ram Sanehi Ghat area on

Monday night, they said. The speeding dump truck laden with construction material was coming from Haidergarh. The

driver fled from the spot after crushing the duo under the wheels of his truck, police said. The brothers, who were not

wearing helmets, died on the spot, they added. A search is underway to nab the erring driver, police said.

# Karachi connection of don brothers comes to light

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAVAGRAJ

After the murder of mafia Atiq-Ashraf, the investigating agencies have made a shocking revelation. Now the connection of don brothers with Karachi, Pakistan, has come to light. Suhail Siddiqui was allegedly called from Karachi for grabbing land worth crores on Muir Road. It is alleged that he allegedly made fake documents of property and grabbed the land by getting it vacated at gunpoint. After investigation a case was registered at the Cantt police station for grabbing land worth crores. According to the case registered at the police station, the family of a professor had ancestral land on Muir Road and Rajapur. Many years ago, he had prepared a registered will and given it to Bhai Lal Shukla. After this he went to Pakistan and started living there in Karachi city. In 1996 mafia Atiq Ahmed came to know about this land. After this don brothers laid a trap and engaged their cousin brother-in-law Mohd Umar in it. This was enemy property for which someone had to be called from Pakistan. The mafia prepared the forged records of a person named Suhail Siddiqui of Karachi in the name of Suhail Siddiqui and Saeeduddin of Beli Road. Umar allegedly entered the victim's house with a weapon, issued threats and indulged in vandalism with his henchmen. After the murder of Atiq-Ashraf, when the victim's family is requesting the bullies to vacate the house, they are being threatened. It is being said that Rs 1 crore will have to be paid otherwise the land will not be vacant. Bhailal's son Rajendra Kumar alias Raj Shukla has lodged an FIR. DCP Nagar Deepak Bhukar said that a case has been registered at the Cantt police station. The case is being investigated.

In the Umesh Pal murder case during interrogation of Atiq by police and ATS, the Pakistan connection of the former MP had come to light. Evidence of Atiq's nexus with ISI and Lashkar-e-Taiba was found. It is said that Atiq has been taking supply of arms from Pakistan and had called the ISI agent from Ahmedabad jail. Ashraf had told the police that the weapon used to reach a farm house in Punjab through some channel. He

never had any shortage of weapons. Through ISI agents, its weapons were dropped from Pakistan to the Indian border through drones. Ashraf used to get those weapons delivered and give money in return. A huge amount of cash and weapons were recovered from Atiq's office. **CYBER FRAUD:** A retired army man Vipin Kumar Chaudhary was deprived of Rs 4.90 lakh through cyber thugs. Vipin, originally from Baka district of Bhagalpur, Bihar, said he lives with family in Tophkhana in New Cantt. He took a confirmed ticket from Prayagraj Junction to Patna station on November 29. The next day he was to leave for Patna. When he searched the location of the train on the app, he found that the train was 12 hours late. Vipin then went to the app to cancel the ticket. He started searching for options online and when he clicked on the top option it showed the number of customer care. When he talked on the same number, he was told that he had been connected to railway customer care. When Vipin said that he had to cancel his ticket he was asked for the PNR number of his ticket. Shortly after giving the number, a link came on his WhatsApp and he was told that if clicked on it his ticket will be cancelled. As soon as Vipin clicked on it ₹4.90 lakh was deducted from his account. He complained to the cyber cell which is investigating it.

**CLASH:** A clash took place between the inmates of GN Jha and SSL hosts of Allahabad University late at night. Students of both the hostels indulged in stone pelting and hurled crude bomb. When the police arrived the students ran away. No complaint has been given yet by any party in it. The police have launched a search. The local outpost in-charge filed a complaint and an FIR has been lodged against about 100 unknown miscreants under various sections.

ACP Rajesh Yadav said preliminary investigation revealed that during the day there was a dispute between some students of both the hostels over some issue at a shop. The fight at night was over this matter or was there some other dispute can be told only after boys involved in the disturbance are caught.

# 33-year-old woman killed by husband

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A man killed his wife when she was fast asleep in the verandah of the house in Kamalganj Kotwali police area of Farrukhabad late on Monday night. When the children raised an alarm, the villagers rushed to spot. After carrying the profusely bleeding woman to a hospital, the police took the impounded the body. Station House Officer (SHO) and out-post incharge took the husband into custody and quizzed him. According to reports received here, Dharendra Singh alias Rinku of Nagla Jodh village killed his wife Aarti (33) around 11 pm on Monday when she was fast asleep in the house.

On hearing the noise, the children woke up and seeing their mother profusely bleeding informed the grandfather. Immediately dozens of villagers rushed to the spot. SHO Rajesh Rai along with Khudaganj outpost incharge Deepak Kumar and force rushed to the spot. The police took the profusely bleeding Aarti to the CHC where she was declared dead by the doctors. The police sent the body to the mortuary and took her husband Dharendra into custody in the night itself. On getting information about the incident, Aarti's father Pratap Singh along with other family members also reached the spot from Dungerpur in the Mohammadabad Kotwali police area.

**CEILING CAVES IN:** The ceiling of a house of Jai Narain Tewari in Compound No 6 in McRobertganj Colony under

Colonelganj police station area suddenly caved in on Tuesday morning. As a result the entire household goods were buried under the debris. Fortunately his son Anil and daughter-in-law were out of the house at the time of incident. On Tuesday morning the ceiling of his house suddenly caved in due to which all the household goods were buried under the debris. On the other hand, ACP Colonelganj Akmal Khan said the digging of underground tunnel was being carried out about 100 metres away from the dilapidated house, hence there was no possibility of any vibration which could have affected it. The police officials were present at the spot. As the house was in a dilapidated condition, it was apprehended that it collapsed following the rains on Monday, he said. **LITIGANT DIES:** A litigant who had arrived in the court of additional district judge (21) for 'pairvi' of his case related to payment of compensation of a land in Kanpur suddenly fell unconscious on the floor on Tuesday morning. Immediately, the medical clinic of the court, collectorate outpost incharge and Kotwali police were informed of the incident. He was brought down on stretcher from the fifth floor and sent to the Regency Hospital on an ambulance. Lawyer Shiva Kant Shukla said the man was declared dead by the doctors at Regency Hospital. The deceased was fighting for justice in his matter for the past two decades, Shukla said. The identity of the deceased could not be ascertained.

AXIS BANK LTD.			PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION OF PLEDGED ASSETS BEING GOLD ORNAMENTS			
THE BORROWERS, IN SPECIFIC AND THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL ARE HERE BY NOTIFIED THAT PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE GOLD ORNAMENTS PLEDGE IN THE BELOW ACCOUNTS IS PROPOSED TO BE CONDUCTED BY THE AXIS BANK AT THE BELOW MENTIONED BRANCH. THE BELOW MENTIONED BORROWERS HAS AVAILED THE CREDIT FACILITY FROM THE AXIS BANK LIMITED AGAINST THE PLEDGE OF GOLD ORNAMENTS ("GOLD LOAN FACILITY") IN FAVOUR OF THE BANK TOWARDS THE SECURITY. THE DEMAND NOTICES WERE ISSUED TO THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS CALLING UP THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS TO PAY THEIR OUTSTANDING AMOUNT TOWARDS THE GOLD LOAN FACILITY AVAILED. AS THE BORROWERS/ GUARANTORS HAVE FAILED TO REPAY THE OUTSTANDING LOAN AMOUNT, THE BANK IS CONSTRAINED TO INVOKE THE PLEDGE AND PROPOSED TO CONDUCT AN E-AUCTION SALE OF PLEDGED GOLD ORNAMENTS MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY HEREUNDER ON 16.12.2023 AT 12.30 PM TO 03.30 PM ON "AS IN WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", "WHATEVER THERE IS" AND "NO RECOURSE BASIS".						
DETAILS OF BORROWERS AND OUTSTANDING AMOUNT						
SR. NO.	CUSTOMER NAME	LOAN A/C NO.	AMOUNT OUTSTANDING (IN RS.)	DATE OF RECALL NOTICE	GROSS WEIGHT	NET WEIGHT
B.O.: AGRA [UP]						
1	MUKESH	XXXXXXXXXXXX8879	RS. 62,258.84	10-10-2023	18.600	17.600
2	SHYAM BABU	XXXXXXXXXXXX3601	RS. 72,985.00	25-08-2023	24.000	22.500
3	MUKESH	XXXXXXXXXXXX2078	RS. 136,623.00	25-10-2023	49.900	46.400
4	MOHIT DUDEJA	XXXXXXXXXXXX8345	RS. 288,978.00	30-05-2023	89.100	84.900
5	SATYVEER SINGH BAGHEL	XXXXXXXXXXXX1930	RS. 589,767.41	10-10-2023	255.400	215.800
B.O.: ALAMBAGH, LUCKNOW [UP]						
6	SURENDRA KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX4058	RS. 57,690.00	25-08-2023	18.300	17.800
7	NITIN KUMAR BAJPAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1781	RS. 66,433.00	25-08-2023	19.200	18.800
8	RITESH PRATAP SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX2241	RS. 110,738.00	30-05-2023	33.000	32.400
9	SAJAL PNADEY	XXXXXXXXXXXX7806	RS. 162,480.00	28-02-2023	50.200	47.500
B.O.: ALIGANJ,LUCKNOW [UP]						
10	BHANUPRATAP VERMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX3077	RS. 57,641.00	27-06-2023	19.000	18.100
B.O.: ALIGARH [UP]						
11	SANTOSH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX1461	RS. 91,345.00	25-08-2023	28.000	27.100
12	MUHAMMD JMIL KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX7790	RS. 141,980.00	25-08-2023	40.600	40.200
B.O.: ALLAHABAD [UP]						
13	YOGITA YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXX1900	RS. 28,053.00	30-09-2023	9.200	8.800
14	DEEPAK KUMAR JAISWAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX6731	RS. 342,396.00	30-05-2023	121.800	112.000
B.O.: AMROHA [UP]						
15	VIKRAM JEET SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX4369	RS. 218,518.58	12-10-2022	66.300	66.100
B.O.: ANPARA UP						
16	PIYUS SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX1264	RS. 86,631.00	25-08-2023	29.400	28.900
B.O.: AZAMGARH [UP]						
17	MANISH SHARMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX2622	RS. 28,852.00	30-05-2023	9.700	9.600
18	KAUSHAR JAHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX8898	RS. 34,097.00	20-04-2023	11.600	10.600
19	MASOOD	XXXXXXXXXXXX6474	RS. 46,236.00	20-04-2023	22.800	20.400
20	AVINASH RAI	XXXXXXXXXXXX6960	RS. 546,139.00	30-05-2023	159.500	154.300
21	SAYED MOHD BELAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX4927	RS. 1,281,040.00	25-08-2023	373.100	352.400
B.O.: BAGHPAT [UP]						
22	IMRAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX0117	RS. 33,867.21	30-05-2023	62.700	62.300
23	RAHISH	XXXXXXXXXXXX5836	RS. 85,980.00	08-03-2023	23.400	23.000
24	RAHISH	XXXXXXXXXXXX5836	RS. 85,980.00	08-03-2023	23.400	23.000
25	PANKAJ	XXXXXXXXXXXX00740	RS. 107,196.00	25-08-2023	33.600	33.000
26	SARVESH KUMAR PATHAK	XXXXXXXXXXXX6428	RS. 69,100.00	25-10-2023	27.760	24.500
B.O.: BALLIA [UP]						
27	AMARDEEP YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXX5051	RS. 63,976.00	30-05-2023	18.760	18.100
28	SEETA BBHARTI	XXXXXXXXXXXX7632	RS. 243,161.00	30-05-2023	82.850	76.860
29	LAXMAN JI VERMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX5732	RS. 260,007.00	30-05-2023	86.600	86.000
B.O.: BALRAMPUR [UP]						
30	OM KANT	XXXXXXXXXXXX0672	RS. 27,045.00	30-05-2023	10.600	10.600
31	VIJAY KUMAR TRIPATHI	XXXXXXXXXXXX6108	RS. 107,880.00	25-08-2023	33.200	33.200
B.O.: BARABANKI [UP]						
32	DILEEP KUMAR VERMA	XXXXXXXXXXXX6148	RS. 34,376.00	25-08-2023	12.100	11.000
B.O.: BARGHALGANJ UP						
33	SHIWAM KUMAR SHRIVASTAVA	XXXXXXXXXXXX3010	RS. 156,984.00	30-05-2023	52.400	52.400
B.O.: BASTI [UP]						
34	SACHIN KUMAR GOND	XXXXXXXXXXXX4431	RS. 54,624.00	30-05-2023	18.300	17.600
35	BRJESH KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX8511	RS. 142,302.00	25-08-2023	46.040	43.940
B.O.: BHAISSANA,MUZAFF MUJZ UP						
36	VIVEK DESHWAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX9834	RS. 55,195.00	25-08-2023	16.400	16.100
B.O.: BIJNOR [UP]						
37	ABDUL JABBAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX3929	RS. 48,580.00	30-05-2023	16.500	16.100
38	AFSAR ALI	XXXXXXXXXXXX3651	RS. 65,112.00	25-10-2023	17.700	17.200
39	KAMAL KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX1774	RS. 68,879.00	30-05-2023	23.100	22.800
40	MUKUL	XXXXXXXXXXXX7648	RS. 114,037.00	25-08-2023	37.600	37.300
41	AYESHA	XXXXXXXXXXXX7187	RS. 646,690.00	25-08-2023	178.100	177.000
B.O.: BILHAUR DEHAT KAN UP						
42	DEVESH SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX9321	RS. 25,150.00	08-03-2023	12.100	12.100
B.O.: BISWAN SIT UP						
43	MOHD SAIF ALI	XXXXXXXXXXXX02407	RS. 29,389.00	08-03-2023	11.400	10.000
B.O.: BULANDSHAHR [UP]						
44	CHANDAN SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX8862	RS. 48,238.00	30-05-2023	15.100	13.300
B.O.: CHANDAUSI [UP]						
45	NASREEN JAHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX5913	RS. 69,871.00	30-05-2023	23.900	23.350
B.O.: DADRI DDR UP						
46	DILSHAD ALI	XXXXXXXXXXXX1526	RS. 58,176.20	20-10-2023	19.700	19.000
47	AKIL KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX3248	RS. 103,091.00	30-05-2023	31.000	31.000
B.O.: DEEN DAYAL PURAM, BAREILLY UP						
48	KUSHENDRA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX4485	RS. 437,235.00	20-04-2023	142.900	140.500
B.O.: DELHI ROAD, MOR MDD UP						
49	SUNIL KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX0326	RS. 60,440.00	25-08-2023	18.900	18.600
B.O.: DEOBAND DOB UP						
50	ABHISHEK	XXXXXXXXXXXX1791	RS. 46,358.00	08-03-2023	10.600	10.600
51	ABHISHEK	XXXXXXXXXXXX1791	RS. 46,358.00	08-03-2023	10.600	10.600
52	YOGENDRA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX6738	RS. 50,519.00	25-08-2023	14.400	14.000
53	YOGENDRA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX0829	RS. 79,713.00	30-05-2023	25.900	25.100
54	VASIM	XXXXXXXXXXXX5616	RS. 119,651.00	08-03-2023	46.500	38.900
55	MOHD SAAD	XXXXXXXXXXXX4011	RS. 376,184.00	25-08-2023	126.100	116.100
B.O.: VARANASI [UP]						
56	AMRITA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX9411	RS. 49,142.00	25-08-2023	30.500	22.000
B.O.: ETAWAH [UP]						
57	SHIVAM PRATAP	XXXXXXXXXXXX4047	RS. 90,693.00	27-06-2023	35.850	31.400
58	PINKI	XXXXXXXXXXXX4681	RS. 142,086.00	25-08-2023	55.750	43.850
59	POOJA	XXXXXXXXXXXX9427	RS. 233,090.00	30-05-2023	92.100	74.300
B.O.: FAIZABAD [UP]						
60	UTKARSH SRIVASTAVA	XXXXXXXXXXXX5944	RS. 56,865.56	05-09-2023	16.700	16.400
61	ANSHU YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXX1271	RS. 68,871.00	25-08-2023	20.700	20.000
62	SHIVA KANT TIWARI	XXXXXXXXXXXX9151	RS. 45,446.00	08-02-2023	28.700	27.100
63	NISHA KESARWANI	XXXXXXXXXXXX3709	RS. 201,203.00	27-06-2023	65.800	58.600
B.O.: FATEHPUR [UP]						
64	SHWETA DEVI	XXXXXXXXXXXX2645	RS. 31,018.00	30-05-2023	10.200	10.000
65	VISHWADEEP SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX0685	RS. 55,309.00	30-05-2023	19.340	18.500
66	NAJEEB ULLA	XXXXXXXXXXXX4177	RS. 138,838.38	25-08-2023	41.260	39.000
B.O.: GAJRAULA [UP]						
67	SAZID	XXXXXXXXXXXX07635	RS. 72,565.51	12-10-2022	17.300	16.100
68	ALIMUDDIN AHMED SAID KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX01935	RS. 316,059.42	08-03-2023	95.500	94.100
B.O.: GARH ROAD, MEERUT [UP]						
69	DEVENDER SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX5861	RS. 40,001.92	20-10-2023	13.380	12.500
B.O.: GHAZIPUR [UP]						
70	SHARAVAN YADAV	XXXXXXXXXXXX7024	RS. 115,356.00	28-02-2023	35.300	33.400
B.O.: GOLA GOKARANNAT GLA UP						
71	VISHAL KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX9760	RS. 43,079.00	12-09-2022	9.960	9.950
72	AFJAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX3483	RS. 45,354.00	30-05-2023	13.300	13.100
73	ANURAG KANAUIYA	XXXXXXXXXXXX2843	RS. 83,245.00	06-08-2022	21.130	21.000
74	MOHAMMAD JUBER	XXXXXXXXXXXX2734	RS. 97,731.00	30-05-2023	27.100	26.950
75	SHARAD CHANDRA DIXIT	XXXXXXXXXXXX4995	RS. 99,844.14	25-08-2023	28.700	28.500
B.O.: GOMTI NAGAR,LUCKNOW [UP]						
76	ARPIT MISHRA	XXXXXXXXXXXX8014	RS. 37,239.00	30-05-2023	9.820	9.320
B.O.: GORAKHPUR [UP]						
77	SAVITRI SHUKLA	XXXXXXXXXXXX00883	RS. 98,187.00	25-08-2023	31.400	30.200
78	BABITA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX3903	RS. 101,455.54	20-04-2023	34.800	33.000
79	GAURAV SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX9145	RS. 168,914.00	20-04-2023	82.400	55.800
B.O.: HAPUR [UP]						
80	DHEERAJ SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX7688	RS. 66,286.00	20-10-2023	17.320	17.300
81	ANAS	XXXXXXXXXXXX04505	RS. 122,685.00	12-09-2022	41.890	41.830
82	HIMANSHU	XXXXXXXXXXXX3902	RS. 52,505.00	30-05-2023	14.200	14.200
83	SHUBHAM TRIVEDI	XXXXXXXXXXXX00772	RS. 123,563.00	25-08-2023	41.000	39.500
B.O.: INDIRA NAGAR, LUCKNOW [UP]						
84	RAHUL SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX3344	RS. 113,221.00	25-08-2023	40.300	39.000
85	RICHA THAPA	XXXXXXXXXXXX07915	RS. 132,318.52	18-07-2023	46.000	44.800
86	JHEE GUPTA	XXXXXXXXXXXX1733	RS. 165,243.18	28-08-2023	63.000	55.500
87	RAHUL SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX00577	RS. 454,569.00	25-08-2023	168.400	162.000
B.O.: ISMAILPUR SAH UP						
88	VIRENDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX9031	RS. 55,340.00	06-08-2022	12.700	12.500
B.O.: JAHANGIRABAD ANP UP						
89	DHARMENDER KUMAR	XXXXXXXXXXXX4813	RS. 344,386.00	25-08-2023	109.800	109.800
B.O.: JAJMAU KAN UP						
90	ARMAN AHAMAD	XXXXXXXXXXXX8485	RS. 41,808.00	20-10-2023	13.100	12.750
91	SHANAWAZ KHAN	XXXXXXXXXXXX1196	RS. 66,685.00	20-10-2023	23.100	19.800
B.O.: JALESAR C2426 UP						
92	VARUN PRATAP SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX1796	RS. 37,305.44	30-09-2023	10.700	9.000
B.O.: JAUNPUR [UP]						
93	NEHA SINGH	XXXXXXXXXXXX9034	RS. 32,865.00	30-05-2023	12.600	11.200
B.O.: JHANSI [UP]						
94	VIJENDRA KUMAR ARORA	XXXXXXXXXXXX6135	RS. 28,393.00	30-09-2023	9.400	8.460
95	AVEENA RAWAL	XXXXXXXXXXXX6999	RS. 30,701.19	20-10-2023	10.500	9.800



# IIT-K honoured for engaging in assistive technology activities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IIT-K), a pioneer in technological innovation, has been honoured with the prestigious AssisTech Foundation (ATF) Awards 2023 for engaging in assistive technology activities. The award ceremony took place at Bangalore Palace, Bengaluru, Karnataka during the Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS) 2023. The ATF award was presented by Priyank Kharge, Minister for Information Technology, Government of Karnataka, and was received jointly by Prof Siddhartha Panda from the Department of Chemical Engineering, IIT-K and Prof Braj Bhushan from the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT-K. The institute was featured in the assistive technology innovations and became the first-time winner in the “Best AT Initiative by Educational Institutes” under the enablers category of ATF Awards.

Talking about the award, Director IIT-K Prof S Ganesh said, “The three awarded technologies address a major lag in assistive ecosystem and IIT-K has been proactively working with an objective to develop more such technologies that can create an impact on society in the assistive domain and can be transformed into a product.” Prof Siddhartha Panda and team from the National Centre of Flexible Electronics (NCFlexE), IIT-K received the award for the technologies titled, “Haptic smartwatch for blind and visually impaired” and “Single Refreshable Braille Cell Based Braille Learning Device with a Touch Sensitive”. Prof Braj Bhushan and his team received the award for the invention titled “Assistive Application for Children with Dyslexia and Dysgraphia (AACDD)”. The ATF Awards is India's first and foremost dedicated flagship awareness initiative for the Assistive Technology ecosystem. These awards aim to

recognise the unsung heroes who are significantly impacting the lives of people with disabilities worldwide through the power of Assistive Technology (AT).

**INSPECTED:** District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer while inspected the ‘rain basera’



(night shelter homes) of the city. He directed the officials to ensure that beds, blankets and drinking water and all other basic infrastructure which was required were provided in all shelter homes.

He said there no fee should

be charged for those who take shelter in these shelter homes and bonfires should be lit. He said in view of inclement weather and rain it had been decided that people who are shelterless were given priority in these homes. He said if NGOs want to extend help they

can do it in the form of food and tea.

He directed the officials to ensure that as many bonfires are lit. He then visited shelter homes at Parmat, Chacha Nehru Hospital, Babupurwa police station and a few more.

## Workshop on CPR organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Noted ex-IAF cardiologist and CPR specialist Dr Sumit Gupta while addressing a workshop on CPR especially meant for the para-medical staff at the 7 Air Force Hospital said CPR or Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation was an emergency lifesaving procedure performed when the heart stopped beating. He said immediate CPR can double or triple chances of survival after cardiac arrest. He added CPR was a hands-on emergency intervention used to restore heartbeats and breathing in someone who had gone into cardiac arrest. He said it involves manual chest compressions and in some cases, rescue (mouth-to-mouth) breathing. He said if available a device called an automated external defibrillator (AED) may be used to restart the heart. He said these interventions can keep blood flowing to the brain until emergency medical assistance arrived.

Dr Gupta informed that CPR in adults and older children can be performed by placing one hand on the middle of the person's chest and place the other hand on top, locking fingers. He said using the body weight, push hard with the heel of your hand and one needs to push hard enough to compress the chest to a depth of around two inches and one must keep arms straight.

He said that one needs to keep compressing at a rate of 100 to 120 beats per minute and the easiest way to do so was by pushing to the rhythm. Over 50 nurses and doctors took part in the workshop.

**KILLED:** An elderly woman was fatally knocked down by a speeding van on Mahuwa-Maholi village road in the Maharajpur police station area late on Monday evening.

The victim was identified as Somwati (60), wife of Motilal.

According to a report the incident took place when a youth of Mahuwa village was going to Maholi on the van. On seeing nobody on the spot, the scared youth put the body in the van and moved about 50 metres ahead towards Mahuwa village. When he dumped the body in a pit and started escaping from there, villagers chased him. In a bid to escape from the spot, he lost control over the van which overturned on the roadside.

The villagers dragged him out of the vehicle and brutally beat him up. Station House Officer (SHO) Abhishek Shukla said the woman was killed after being hit by the van. On receipt of complaint, further action will be initiated in the matter, he said.

## Nandi meets governor

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

UP Minister of Industrial Development Nand Gopal Gupta ‘Nandi’ met Governor Anandiben Patel at Raj Bhavan, Lucknow. He expressed his gratitude for allowing the Raj Bhavan visit and lunch to the children living in the slums and Dalit colonies of Prayagraj City South Assembly Constituency and for the successful completion of the programme before Diwali. The minister said there was immense excitement and happiness among the children and their parents on returning from Raj Bhavan. This programme will remain a golden memory in their lives. The minister said before Diwali he had met the governor and sought approval to bring the children living in slums and various Dalit colonies of Prayagraj City South Assembly Constituency to Lucknow and give them lunch along with a tour of Raj Bhavan which was approved by her. On behalf of Nandi, 51 Dalits and hundreds of children from slums were brought to Lucknow along with their parents in buses. Along with a tour of the Raj

Bhavan, they had lunch under the guidance of the governor. The minister said with the blessings of the governor, the slum children visited Raj Bhavan which was the most unforgettable moment of their lives.

**CELEBRATED:** A large number of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers celebrated the victory the victory of the party in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan at the residence of former minister Sidharth Nath Singh on Monday. Singh described PM Modi as a guarantee of victory. The activists burst fireworks and exchanged sweets. Singh said the party will decide the chief ministers on the report of high command observers. He said the victory of BJP in three states has brought enthusiasm among the workers. He said the public trust is only on Modi. He said that the opposition can now hold any meeting only one result will come i.e. BJP will cross the 400 mark. He attacked the opposition and alleged that whenever it came to power, it does corruption and robbed the public. Singh said the opposition has been

‘cursed’ by the Sanatan.

**M A H A K U M B H :** Mahakumbh will be held in 2025 but before that Magh Mela will be organised. The Magh Mela is considered to be the full rehearsal of Mahakumbh. Under the direction of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Chief Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra is constantly visiting the city to see the reality of work. Mela Adhikari (Mahakumbh) Vijay Kiran Anand is constantly holding meeting with officials. As about 40 crore devotees are expected to come many permanent works are being done. Special attention has been paid to road, health and safety. There are preparations for beautification of temples, widening of roads etc. Under the plan so far a ropeway will be built from Adi Shankar Mandapam Temple to Aaral and Jhums located near the Bade Hanuman temple. For the first time on the banks of the Sangam, a Digital Kumbh Museum will be built in Aaral and focus will be on biographies of sages along with religious and mythological sites. The government is arranging for the stay of devotees coming to Mahakumbh.

## Emphasis on soil conservation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Soil scientist Dr Khalil Khan while addressing a special soil awareness camp on ‘Soil and Water: Source of Life’ at Chandra Shekhar Azad University for Agriculture and Technology (CSAU&T) on the occasion of ‘World Soil Day’ said there is no doubt that due to the indiscriminate use of pesticides and chemicals the fertility of soil was dangerously decreasing and this engendered the need for soil conservation. He advised the farmers to ensure that they get their soil tested from the CSA lab.

He advised the farmers that they need to use vermicast (also called worm castings, worm humus, worm poop, worm manure, or worm faeces) the end-product of breakdown of organic matter by earthworms. He said these excreta had been shown to contain reduced levels of contaminants and a higher saturation of nutrients than the organic materials before vermicomposting. He said in addition they can also adopt NADEP method of composting which is aerobic decomposition of organic matter. He said this method takes care of all disadvantages of heaping with farm residue and cattle shed wastes in open. He said soil fertility can be further improved by incorporating cover crops that add organic matter to the soil which led to improved soil structure and promoted a healthy and fertile soil by using green manure or growing legumes to fix nitrogen from the air through the process of



Soil testing workshop being held at CSAU&T on Tuesday.

biological nitrogen fixation. Dr Khan informed that it can be executed using many techniques, including removal and replacement, pre-compression, vertical drains and soil reinforcement. He said the use of replacement soil under shallow foundation can reduce consolidation settlement and increase soil bearing capacity. He said the selection of soil improvement method was governed by several factors like soil type, equipment availability, cost, construction period, skills and past experiences. He said soil type is one of the critical factors that can influence the selection of one soil improvement method over another. Dr Arun Kumar Singh, Dr Shashi Kant, Dr Rajesh Rai and several others were present.

**MEET:** Chairman of the Super House Group, Mukhtarul Amin, while addressing the press conference of the Indian Footwear Components Manufacturers Association (IFCOMA) on

Tuesday said a meet was to be held on December 6 and 7 at the multi-purpose hall of the CLE. He said apart from Kanpur, businessmen and footwear entrepreneurs and artisans from Banthar, Unnao, Jajmau and Agra and other nearby districts were expected to attend it. He said this body was a trade association of footwear and parts manufacturers in India and a non-profitable organisation with a duly elected apex body. He said IFCOMA had achieved considerable development in the last 15-20 years. He said many footwear components will be displayed in this exhibition and these ingredients included labels adhesives, shoe finishes, chemicals, synthetic fabrics, printing machines, textile laminated fabrics, thread and other auxiliaries. Amin said over 70 manufacturers were participating in the 13th edition meet. He said due to rapid increase in demand for shoes in the national and international mar-

kets, there was great potential for business of footwear components. He said the new companies had started and this had given a boost to the footwear world. He said there had been a growth of 15 per cent in leather and related industries in Kanpur and central areas in about two years. He said Kanpur achieved exports worth Rs 6,000 crore in the year 2022-23.

**DIES:** A retired railway employee had gone for a walk was killed after being hit by a train near Jaitipur railway station under Ajgain police area of Unnao district. On the basis of documents and mobile phone recovered from his possession, police identified the deceased and informed his kin. The body was sent for an autopsy. Nagendra Pal Gopal (65), son of Balmram Gopal of Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow, had gone for a walk in the evening. When he was crossing the railway track near Jaitipur railway station in Ajgain police area, he was hit by the goods train and came under its wheels which led to his killing on the spot. The residents informed the station master and RFP jawans rushed to spot and got the route clear by removing the body from the track. Ajgain police also reached there and identified the victim on the basis of ID card and mobile phone recovered from his possession and informed the kin of the deceased. The autopsy was carried out on Monday. Son of the deceased Manish Gopal said his father had retired five years ago and was upset due to illness for the past six months.

## Bangladeshi woman held

PTI ■ BAREILLY

A Bangladeshi woman, who had been living illegally in this district for the last 35 years, was arrested here, police said on Tuesday.

Anita Devi (55) hails from Bedi Narayanpur Najharan village in Sarsa, Yeshore, Bangladesh. She had been as the wife of a man named Mangal Sen in Udaipur village in Bareilly. One of her relatives living in Bangladesh is ill and she had applied for a passport to go to meet him, police said.

When the police reached the village to investigate the application, it came to light that the woman was a Bangladeshi and had been staying in India illegally. After that a case was registered on Monday and she was arrested, they said.

According to a police official, teams of intelligence agencies have also reached the village and investigations have started. The call details of the mobile phones of the woman's family members are being scrutinized to find out the others with whom she had been in contact in Bangladesh, the official said. When Anita Devi was aged 20, she came to India from Bangladesh to work as domestic help. A person who facilitated entry of labourers to India had brought her from across the border. While wandering from Uttarakhand, she reached Bareilly where she met Mangal Sen, a resident of Udaipur, while working as a labourer in a factory. Both of them got married. The couple

have three sons and two daughters. Mangal Sen works as a labourer in and around the village.

**TRAGIC END:** A 24-year-old man riding a motorcycle was hit by an unknown vehicle when he was on his way to attend a wedding ceremony here, police said on Tuesday. The accident occurred near DPS College in the CB Ganj area here late on Monday night, they said. Bareilly Superintendent of Police (City) Rahul Bhati said that Prashant Singh Raghav, a petrol pump manager, was on the way to attend a wedding ceremony when an unknown vehicle hit him late on Monday night. Singh sustained serious injuries and was admitted to the district hospital by the police where he died during treatment. His father, Raghavendra Singh Raghav said that Prashant had gone on a motorbike to attend the wedding in the Dhaneta area. The body has been sent for post-mortem and efforts were on to trace the vehicle which hit the motorcycle, police said.

**RAPED:** A seven-year-old girl was allegedly raped by a youth from her village here, police said on Tuesday, a report from Chitrakoot stated. The incident took place on Monday night. The accused, identified as Sonu (19), has been arrested. Superintendent of Police Vrinda Shukla said. The girl has been admitted to a government hospital for treatment, she said.

## Class X girl stalked, harassed in Lko

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A youth threatened to upload a Class X girl student's morphed picture on social media in a bid to coerce her into submission. After the incident came to light, the girl's family filed a complaint. The girl's family pardoned the accused after he apologised. However, the recalcitrant accused harassed the girl again on Monday, forcing her family to lodge a fresh complaint. Police said they were searching for the accused.

As per reports, the accused had been stalking the girl and making indecent gestures on the way for the past several days. It was alleged in the complaint that the girl, who is from a village in the area, studies in a school in Mohanlalganj town. The accused, also of the same village, fell for the girl and started stalking her in a bid to woo her. However, the girl ignored his amorous advances and even snubbed her one day while returning home along with her classmates. The accused threatened to click her picture and upload it on social media after making it obscene through morphing. On October 28, the student's family complained to police. “The accused apologised for his behavior and the victim's family pardoned him, considering legal action would spoil his future. However, the accused did not mend his ways and continued to harass the girl by making

dirty gestures and inappropriate remarks,” the victim's family members said, adding it became difficult for her to go to school.

On Monday, the girl's mother reached the police station and lodged a fresh complaint against the accused, demanding stern action against him. The police said an FIR had been registered in this regard.

Meanwhile, a girl student pursuing LLB accused her former boyfriend and two of his friends of blackmailing her after making an obscene video of her, in Mahanagar police station area. She also alleged that the accused extorted money from her to delete the video but they made it viral on social media even after having pocketed the money. The victim had come across the accused, Rahul Kathal, through a social media platform some time ago and they soon became friends. In due course of time, they started dating and decided to get married. However, Rahul involved his friends Siddharth Singh and Mohammed Shakil Anwar in the gang and they also started talking to the girl. The group filmed a video of her and made it obscene by morphing it. “They started blackmailing me. They took Rs 36,000 from me online on the pretext of deleting the video. However, they still made the video viral on social media,” the victim alleged. She lodged a complaint with the Mahanagar police.



Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar's statue being cleaned on the eve of his birth anniversary, in Lucknow on Tuesday

Pioneer

## 3 gold smelters booked for cheating jeweller of ₹1.6 cr

**Kanpur (PTI):** Three gold smelters were booked in this district on Tuesday for allegedly duping a jeweller of Rs 1.6 crore, police said. About a dozen more victims have also submitted written complaints with the police against the three who allegedly decamped with gold and cash worth over Rs 14 crore from the Kanpur city. The FIR has been lodged under Indian Penal Code sections 420 (cheating) and 406 (criminal breach of trust) against Sampatrao Shivaji Lavate, key accused, his brother-in-law Mahesh Maske and their associate Suraj, who have are on the run, Joint Commissioner of Police (crime) Nilabja Choudhury said.

The incident has triggered panic

among local jewellers who accompanied with the office bearers of Kanpur Mahanagar Sarafa Association (KMSA) apprised police officials about the huge fraud. An Special Investigation Team has been formed under supervision of DCP (Central) Pramod Kumar who has been instructed to ascertain early arrests of the absconding fraudsters and to recover the gold and cash, the JCP added.

The jeweller, Mohammad Ayub, in his complaint stated that he along with his family members had given the gold weighing 2,600 gram worth more than Rs 1.6 crore to Lavate to sell it just a few days back. Lavate had issued him several cheques for Rs 31 lakh with the

promise to pay the rest amount on Monday, but he found his shop closed, Choudhary said. KMSA president Pankaj Arora told the media that Lavate, a resident of Maharashtra, had hired a rented house in Birhana Road around 15 years ago and had been running gold smelting business from a rented shop in Beckonganj.

Since he was good at his work, all the nearby goldsmiths used to send their goods to him for melting the gold, he said. DCP Pramod Kumar told PTI over the phone that the SIT has started a probe into the matter. Efforts are being made to gather information about the fraudsters to ensure their arrests at earliest, the DCP added.



## Sensible approach

Cong will do well not to dwell on the Assembly poll debacle and heed PM Modi's sound advice

The Assembly poll results in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have bruised the Opposition, particularly the Congress. The defeat in the Hindi heartland raises questions about its strategy, also triggering concerns about its impact on the winter session in its weakened avatar. The rout has prompted its leaders, workers and supporters alike questioning the efficacy of their campaign strategies and leadership choices. The winter session of Parliament comes immediately after the declaration of results, making it important for the Congress to register its presence on the political landscape. So it might resort to pandemonium, walkouts, sloganeering and entering the well to disrupt proceedings. The defeat may also affect the morale of Congress members, leading to potential rifts and groupism. Causing further embarrassment to the Congress, Trinamool's Mamata Banerjee and Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav — already unhappy with the party over its indifference in attending a seat-sharing meeting with the INDIA bloc members ever since the last round of State elections was announced as it reportedly wanted to focus on the polls — have declared that they have no plan to attend today's INDIA all-party meeting at Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge's residence.



The Congress, as the principal Opposition party, is supposed to play a crucial role in shaping House discussions, debates, legislative agenda and steering the bloc. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's call for a balanced approach in Parliament, despite the heated post-election atmosphere, underscores the need for constructive debate. The Congress would do well

to introspect rather than finding fault with the system or blaming the BJP for the results. Following the rather surprising verdict, Modi has urged the Opposition MPs not to vent their anger in Parliament. The call for restraint comes at a time when tensions are high, and there is a risk of disruption. The appeal for a dignified and constructive approach to parliamentary proceedings highlights the importance of maintaining decorum and focusing on the nation's priorities. Unfortunately, however, the PM's own party has other ideas. Amit Malviya, the BJP's IT cell head, mocked, "Where is Rahul Gandhi hiding?" Malviya, and for that matter the huge troll army at the BJP's disposal, would do well not to provoke the Congress as that will result only in more acrimony. It is crucial for all political parties, including the BJP and the Congress, to prioritise the nation over partisan interests. The Assembly election results should serve as a catalyst for introspection, reform and improvement rather than leading to a confrontational stance. The session presents the Congress with an opportunity to reevaluate its strategy and leadership and connect with the electorate. It can be a platform for the party to articulate a clear vision for the future, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in the face of adversity.

### PICTALK



A farmer carries harvested rice as a herd of wild elephants gathers in a field in search of food, in Nagaon

PTI

## Why did Gehlot lose despite his welfare schemes?

The BJP encashed the alleged massive corruption in the welfare schemes launched by Gehlot and people trusted Modi's guarantee

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is ready to return to power in Rajasthan and in the elections held on 199 seats, BJP has won 114 seats and Congress 70 seats. But this is evident from the fact that the difference between the two parties appears so big. This marks a continuation of a three-decade-old trend of voters in the desert state changing governments every five years. This marks a major turnaround in the fortunes of the party, which was divided into factions and was struggling to counter the welfarist agenda of the Ashok Gehlot-led government. To win in Rajasthan, the BJP targeted the Gehlot welfare model and ensured victory by controlling the internal strife in the party. The only hindrance was the lack of unity in its organisation and the Rajasthan unit was mired in infighting. Rani Basundhara proceeded step by step to convince Raje and bring unity to the party and addressed the leadership issue by fighting as a unit and without announcing any chief ministerial face. **Modi's guarantee card** Modi had previously mocked



the growing Revadi or 'freebie' culture in Indian politics, mocking the Congress' guarantee in Karnataka and even speaking on the issue in Parliament. However, several surveys conducted by the BJP found that people were voting based on day-to-day economic issues and that the Congress' promised welfare schemes in Himachal and Karnataka were key factors in its victory. Thus, the BJP went to the polls armed with a number of welfare schemes, both existing schemes — such as Madhya Pradesh's Ladli Behna scheme, which was announced in March this year — and the annual financial assistance for women in Chhattisgarh in the manifesto. As promises were made. Also many concessions for youth and farmers. The Prime Minister also used his personal credibility by offering the 'Modi Guarantee' to differentiate BJP's welfare schemes

from those of Congress. There was the issue of recruitment exam paper leak, which was used by BJP leader and Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat to target the youth constituency. Rajya Sabha MP Kirori Lal Meena and the state leadership held several protests on the issue. Earlier this year, when Meena was on hunger strike, Bashundhara Raje had also given her support to him. The BJP brought together these issues, from paper leaks to crimes against women to unemployment, during a street protest in September — 'Nahi Sahega Rajasthan' — to craft a unified script and capitalise on the anti-incumbency wave. Can be picked up. Since Rajasthan has a mental tendency to elect a different government every five years, the BJP's only real fear was a welfare scheme-based loss by Gehlot at the last moment, but the CM lost that advantage too by retaining most of its sitting MLAs. , which became a boon for the BJP. To turn the indecision of Gurjars in BJP's favour. In 2018, the Gujar community was seen supporting the Congress and rallied with

the Meenas to make then-state chief Sachin Pilot the chief minister. Eight Gujar candidates of the Congress won, giving the party a total of 25 seats in East Rajasthan. The BJP was reduced to three seats in the region, with the remaining seats going to independents and the BSP, which later supported the Congress. This time, the BJP had been working on a multi-pronged plan for some time to win back the Gujar votes, as evidenced by Prime Minister Modi's attempt to capitalise on Congress's attempt to humiliate Rajesh and Sachin Pilot at rally after rally. This not only brought many Gujar leaders into the organisation but also kept the issue of Pilot's "insult" alive in the Gujar belt to draw community voters away from the Congress. State BJP leaders acted at Modi's behest, for example, Sukhbir Singh Jaunapuriya, a two-time MP from Tonk-Sawai Madhopur, said Pilot had "no chance of becoming chief minister because Gehlot would never allow it". (Writer is a senior journalist; views are personal)



RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

## Only right education can ensure world peace

The quality of school education deserves maximum attention, particularly in terms of teacher education and recruitment, vocational skills and interest identification

The strife-torn world aspires to witness days of no wars, and no violence for future generations. One could safely state that even those who are busy fighting the Ukraine-Russia war, or Israel - Palestine war; or busy in violence in the name of fundamentalism and terrorism, must be somewhere inside willing to give a tension-violence-war free world to their future generations. Probably some select ones could still be under the illusion that their Truth is the only Truth, and all others who do not toe the line must be brought within the fold by even by violence would like their generations ahead to continue in the tradition of violence their Goal — certainly a utopia — stands achieved! One needs a really tough-nut optimist to even imagine that wars and violence could vanish from the face of the earth in the near future. However, the faith in human ingenuity and trust in the powers of love to create an environment of hope and inspire people to work for global peace. The way out is only one; follow the path of knowledge, and be conversant in applying the skill of discrimination to separate right from wrong, light from darkness, real from false, and Truth from Untruth! This is not the oft-quoted cliché! It is the only alternative available to human beings for the very survival of the human race on the planet Earth, and the planet itself. The mute question before India and Indians is: are we preparing ourselves to become the soldiers of peace and harmony within the boundaries of India, and then establish that the only way is the Indian way that respects diversity, universality of the human race, and responsibility of human beings to care for every human being, and most importantly, the nature that sustains humans so long it is treated in the appropriate manner! In the third decade of the third millennium, it is evident that as the world moves ahead in its dependence on knowledge, the emergence of an enlightened and cohesive people; and a strong, prosperous, enterprising, nation would prominently depend on good quality



education and dynamic skill acquisition which are the two of its most powerful pivots. India's achievements in education in the post-independence period are indeed praiseworthy. From a literacy rate of around 18%, in 1947 we are now touching 80%! Initiatives taken at the policy level, support extended to the community and adequate comprehension of their key role by teachers, academics, scholars and people have contributed to reaching the present position. Credit must also go to three major policy formulations in education - 1968, 1986 and 1992 - that have taken a comprehensive view of the emerging needs of the nation, changing national and international scenarios and aspirations of the young of India. Each one of these confronted the inherited legacy of a transplanted alien system of education and made an attempt to move away from it. It has not been an easy task. However, India is now well-equipped with the necessary experience and expertise and has successfully formulated a policy that is 'rooted to culture and committed to progress'. It envisages India's prominent role in global human endeavours to create new knowledge and explore every possibility of its use for the benefit of humanity. The NEP-2020 is essentially an articulation of the fundamen-



THE WAY OUT IS ONLY ONE; FOLLOW THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE AND BE CONVERSANT IN APPLYING THE SKILL OF DISCRIMINATION TO SEPARATE THE RIGHT FROM WRONG

tal role of education in 'achieving full human potential, developing an equitable and just society, and promoting national development'. It responds with the confidence of an alert and active nation to achieve the SDG-4 that seeks to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote; lifelong learning opportunities for all". The challenge before the academia of the nation is how to ensure quality education on a universal scale, dynamic skill acquisition and effective personality development. This would require high levels of competence, commitment and performance from every teacher irrespective of his level or stage in the hierarchy. The NEP-2020 offers basic support by permitting flexibility in the choice of subjects of study and encourages multidisciplinary. Every learner could pursue the subject areas of his interest, he could study music and mathematics, or chemistry and philosophy. Flexibility and learner's interest shall dominate the system. As the quality of school education paves the path for quality enhancement at higher levels, it deserves maximum attention, particularly in terms of teacher education and recruitment, vocational skills, individual attention and interest identification, and assessment procedures. It shall have to fully transform itself to ensure that ideas, imagination,

curiosity and creativity with which every child is blessed with is never impeded, but dexterously nourished. Hopefully, education shall get all the resource support in future, and the dilution of quality in certain aspects of education shall be redressed early. Only then the Indian education attract global attention and appreciation and shall not be 'just the acquisition of knowledge as preparation for life in this world, or life beyond schooling, but for complete realisation and liberation of Soul'. True Indian education imbued with the legacy of 'Worlds but one family' could pave the path for global brotherhood in the world of today that is suffering in innumerable ways. The first step in India could be the transformation of elementary schools! Yes, if teachers are given the autonomy -and responsibility — to present a model of regularity, punctuality, discipline, honesty, integrity, empathy, broad vision, commitment to the profession, value-based conduct, and growing up in competence, the multiplier impact would be tremendous. That could transform work culture in every other sphere of life. For that, the nation must trust the teacher and look after him! (Professor Rajput works in education, social cohesion and religious amity)

JS RAJPUT

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### A MEMORABLE PERSONALITY

Sir — On December 5, 1950, Sri Aurobindo left his body in Pondicherry. His far-sighted views on many issues are still relevant and deserve our attention. He had the foresight about the necessity of a socialist revolution for evolutionary progress. He wrote, "There is to be equality of opportunity for all, but also of status for all, for without the last the first cannot be secured; even if it were established, it could not endure (The Human Cycle: The Psychology of Social Development - page 201). On October Revolution he said to AB Purani that he was one of the influences that worked to make it a success (Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo - Page 474). We cannot deny the contribution of the October Revolution towards human evolution. That brute capitalism made poor children die young after working as chimney sweepers, gives us enough reason to tip our hats to his foresight. Let us recall a line from William Blake's poem, "The Chimney Sweeper: When my mother died I was very young, 'So your chimneys I sweep & in soot, I sleep." As a result of the October Revolution, many socialist states emerged to take care of the potentialities of every human being. Human evolution again discarded the dictatorship of the proletariat of socialism as it had earlier thrown out the laissez-faire liberty of market players. However, the contribution of socialism to human evolution can never be denied as modern welfare states have come to balance between the liberty of capitalism and the equality of socialism. All modern welfare states including the United States of America have accepted the ideas of socialism in their policy of giving social security to the people like health care and handsome allowance for the unemployed. A true welfare state is more inclined to socialism than far-right capitalism.

Sujit De | Kolkata

#### BJP's spadework succeeds



Like every election season, this one too was filled with tall promises, speeches, and the blame games of netas. As in the past, it steered clear of all the noise and brought a fresh

lease of life bereft of the poll issues. As all attention now moves to the CM designates in states, we love to see the outcome across the five states. Unlike the 2023 World Cup cricket final (trigger warning: may revive trauma), where the match still had to be played to know the result, the result here is already decided. A range of exit polls have given their verdict on what they see as likely to happen in the five Assembly elections. With the BJP emerging as an impossible opponent to dislodge, is Madhya Pradesh the new Gujarat? The BJP has always won a higher vote share than the Congress this millennium. The thumping victory in MP made its model most amicable for its governance. The exit polls have gone awry but exact poll results proved BJP's supremacy in state elections.

CK Subramaniam | Chennai

#### DRUG ADDICTION

Sir — Today the country's youth are falling into the swamp of drugs. One of the reasons for this is lack of stamina. Young people today lose their morale very quickly, which leads to depression and then falling into the trap of drug addiction. Parents should teach their children to fight situations and make them strong. The second big reason is that addiction has become popular nowadays. In many films, the actor is shown smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol, as a result of which young people are also inspired to become addicted to drugs. The biggest weakness of young people is accepting drugs as a fad by falling into bad company. Young people need to empower themselves and share any problems with their parents.

Ashraf Nawaz | Hyderabad

#### SOIL POLLUTION: A CAUSE OF CONCERN

Sir — Soil pollution has received a different level of attention than water and air pollution. The chemicals emerging from industrial and agricultural practices cause land degradation. Untreated waste and waste waters have also destroyed

thousands of species of fish, birds and plants. Though soil has the innate property to filter out contaminants, it can do so only to a limited extent, the rest trickle out into the atmosphere. Direct contact with contaminated soil is a plausible reality. More than ninety per cent of people's food is accrued through soil and, therefore, its conservation is crucial for the eco chain. The crippling effects of soil pollution, including congenital health disorders, infective diseases and non-contagious diseases like cancer, have worried the health professionals. No doubt, environmental scientists have in their armoury various remedies to combat soil contamination like surface leaching, bioremediation, thermal remediation, mycoremediation and phytoremediation. Nonetheless, on December 5, World Soil Day, the responsibilities of an individual as an active contributor to the prevention and elimination of soil pollution cannot be overlooked.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

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FIRST COLUMN

GET ON THE HAPPINESS TRAIN!

Happy people see the humour and magic in each moment



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

As per 'World Happiness Report' (WHR) released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, a global initiative of the United Nations, India stands at rank 126th in the global happiness ranking list with a Happiness score of 4.036, classifying it as one of the world's least joyful nations. Isn't it startling & unpleasant? There is no doubt in it that happiness is an aspiration of every human being, and it can also be a measure of social progress. It is the art of living, the very purpose of our existence & the true index of quality of life. Without happiness, life is dry and meaningless. With happiness, life immediately becomes fulfilling and wonderful. Being happy is not about how well you're doing in general, but rather if you're doing better than expected. For example, say you go to an ice cream parlour where the desert ice cream was the best you've ever had in your life. Now, according to the happiness equation, you would be happier if you had expected it to be just average, as opposed to assuming it would be as delicious as it was. However, it doesn't mean that having low expectations is the path to happiness. Happy people usually keep themselves happy because they know the little ways to appreciate themselves and to see the humour and magic in each moment.



our happiness?" What makes us take the wrong path and lose our inner state of buoyancy? When we pursue limited, superficial or false goals, it is very easy to lose happiness, firstly, because we are not being true to the self, and secondly, because we may build up false expectations that are not met through our goals and activities. Remember! Happiness gained through relationships and possessions has seeds of sorrow because they are sown with expectations that stem from greed, selfishness, attachment or ego. Hence before getting yourself involved in anything, we need to ask ourselves, "Will this bring me happiness?" Very few people know about the fact that human beings in their most powerful stage have a good stock of happiness. It is only when we contravene the spiritual and natural laws, we lose happiness & start making others around us unhappy. The repercussions of anger, attachment, greed, ego and desire lead us to loss of peace and happiness. The more we are driven by these forces, the more we will spend the stock of our happiness. Hence awareness and application of spiritual truths is the only way out to sustain & increase our stock of happiness. We need to go within ourselves to tap the eternal source of happiness and for that firstly we need to be true to the self, know the self and be the self.

Once we have understood the happiness that comes from within and as a result of the manner in which we conduct our lives, and ourselves then it is possible to understand how to share that happiness with others. Increasing the happiness of others brings happiness to the self, but this cannot be an escape - that is, it is not a substitute for creating internal happiness. Benefiting the self on a spiritual level will definitely bring internal happiness & resolve past karma. So what are you waiting for? let's get on the happiness train & reach our final destination of "Happy Nation".

*(The writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist, views are personal)*

# Revolutionising agriculture with the ‘natural produce on wheels’ project

The ‘natural produce on wheels’ project has been a resounding success in Himachal Pradesh, showcasing that natural farming can reshape agricultural practices in the region

A truck arrives at the Agriculture Department of Himachal Pradesh in Baluganj, Shimla. Two women, Nirmala and Sumana Devi, members of Narishakti Mahila Krishi Samooch from Nerwa village, Tutu Block, Shimla, step out, bringing fresh seasonal vegetables. These vegetables, including tomatoes, radishes, French beans, and even fruits like guava and kiwi, have been collected on the same day from the doorsteps of local farmers, primarily by women. Representing their group, the two women, along with Lokesh Bhanot, Farmers Produce Officer (FPO) from the agriculture department, move to the vegetable market or 'subzi mandi'. Bhanot, who surveyed the market rates the



SARITA BRARA

previous evening, displays the rates on a blackboard, and customers make on-the-spot purchases. The vehicle then heads to another selling venue at the state Secretariat complex, carrying the produce along with a cashier. Upon reaching the venue, vegetables and other products are unloaded and arranged. Several women, mostly regular customers, are already waiting to buy these fresh, chemical-free, and locally-grown products. "The vegetables are fresh, have a longer shelf life, taste better, and, importantly, they are chemical-free, not harmful to our health," says Sunita, a regular customer. Other customers echo similar sentiments, expressing a preference for naturally farmed, more nutritious produce.

Beyond fresh vegetables, products from forest areas, such as anna dana (dried pomegranate seeds), amla (Indian gooseberry), kachina, Bauhinia variegata, and wild honey, are also available. The villages, falling under forest areas, allow people to collect and sell forest produce. The farmers are paid according to the rates fixed by the FPO. Another pickup van from Basantpur Block brings vegetables from villages in that area, forming a network of women farmers participating in the 'natural produce on wheels' project. Three blocks in Shimla district, Totu, Mashobra, and Basantpur, were selected for this initiative, involving 5,000 farmers, including 8% women, practising natural farming. They are

all small and marginal farmers. Four women Self-Help Groups with 20 members are involved in this pilot that aims to procure fresh produce directly from farmers' doorsteps and sell it at the HP Secretariat & Agriculture Directorate Boileauganj, Shimla. This alleviates the need for middlemen, ensuring farmers receive fair market prices. The project operates twice a week, and its success may lead to increased frequency based on customer response. For farmers, it is a win-win situation; they receive market prices without intermediaries, transport costs are shared among them, and all produce is sold on the same day. A survey conducted a year ago identified areas and farmers engaged in natural farming.

Farmers undergo a two-day training program, and their products are certified and graded by the agriculture department. Initiated earlier this year, the 'natural produce on wheels' project addresses the challenge of lower yields in natural farming. Farmers cultivate only a portion of their land using the kitchen garden model, maximising the output on smaller plots. Natural farming, a chemical-free traditional method, relies on nature's laws, avoiding external inputs like chemical fertilisers and pesticides. The process minimises human intervention, making it distinct from organic farming. Pesticides used are prepared by farmers using cow dung, cow urine, garlic, red chilli, and buttermilk.

While organic vegetables are often costly, products from natural farming are more affordable for daily consumption. A survey indicates that natural farming reduces cultivation costs by 46% and increases profits by 22%. In comparison, organic farming relies on expensive inputs, contributing to higher market prices. The positive impact of natural farming extends to disease incidence. Scab and marssonina incidences in Natural Farming orchards are notably lower than in chemical farming, suggesting its potential to improve crop health. Most women involved in the project own small agricultural plots, not exceeding 6 to 7 bighas of land. Their husbands typically work in various professions, and two women from each group manage the pickup of produce. "We spend half of our day in our agriculture fields or with livestock, managing sowing to harvesting on our own," shares one woman. The pickup service provided makes it feasible for them to sell their produce without the challenges of transportation. The 'natural produce on wheels' project has seen success, with products selling out quickly, and the demand continues to grow. It exemplifies a sustainable model, benefiting farmers, consumers, and the environment, showcasing the potential for natural farming to reshape agricultural practices in the region.

*(The writer is an independent senior journalist, views are personal. Charkha Features)*

# Cut out red tapism in public sector share sale



UTTAM GUPTA

The lengthy and cumbersome process of approval and bureaucratic red tape undermines the chances of the Government selling CPSU shares to willing investors



THE GOVERNMENT WANTS TO REMAIN IN THE DRIVER'S SEAT EVEN AFTER STRATEGIC SALE. THIS IS AMPLY REFLECTED IN A STATEMENT IN SITHARAMAN'S BUDGET SPEECH FOR FY 2019-20

(CCEA). Taking all these approvals is a time-consuming process and by the time these are in place, the market scenario could become adverse. At a fundamental level, disinvestment of the government's shareholding in a PSU is tantamount to the sale of assets. Therefore, receipts arising therefrom can only be treated as 'capital receipts' (CRs). While preparing the budget, it won't be advisable to plan for receipts from this source in the same manner as it is done for revenue receipts (RRs) which are receipts generated from the day-to-day business activities e.g. dividends on shares held by the government. The government should only provide for proceeds from share sales in CPSU on an 'actual' basis after it has happened instead of making provision at the time of presenting the budget. Having delinked from the budgetary process, it should take up disinvestment in CPSUs as an independent exercise guided by the broad principle of where it shouldn't be in. In an approach outlined in the Budget for 2021-22, the government divided CPSUs into two broad categories i.e. strategic and non-strategic. The strategic group covers atomic energy, space and defense; transport and telecommunications; power, petroleum, coal and other minerals; and banking, insurance and financial services. The non-strategic category includes all other sectors such as industrial and consumer goods, hotel and tourist services, trading, and marketing. While, the government wants to

sell CPSUs in the strategic sector with the caveat that at least one (and a maximum of four) will be retained in the public sector, it will privatise 'all' undertakings in non-strategic sectors. All loss-making undertakings in the latter category will be closed. Based on this template, it is working on a detailed action plan which is fine. But the process is hamstrung because of a host of legacy issues. For instance, despite the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) and Niti Aayog recommending the privatisation of all nine CPSUs in the fertiliser sector (it falls in the non-strategic category) coming under the administrative control of the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, the latter has opposed it. The ministry feels that with control over fertilizer PSUs gone, the government won't be able to ensure adequate availability of this politically sensitive agri-input in every nook and corner of the country. The strategic sale of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) hasn't happened nearly four years after it was initially mooted in 2019-20. A prime reason is the government's intent to regulate the prices of petrol and diesel (despite the price of these fuels having been deregulated way back in 2010/2014) which it can do by asking the three oil marketing CPSUs including BPCL to do its bidding. Its ability to influence prices will be hampered if BPCL is privatised. The government wants to remain in the driver's seat even after strategic sales. This is amply reflected in

a statement in Sitharaman's budget speech for FY 2019-20. She had stated the intent was to change the existing policy from "directly" holding 51 per cent or above in a CPSU, to one whereby its total holding, "direct" plus "indirect", is maintained at 51 per cent. In yet another glaring instance, even though an order of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) issued last year prohibits participation of CPSUs in the strategic sale of other PSUs, a caveat "...unless otherwise specifically approved by the Central Government in public interest" enables the powers that be to bypass this prohibition if they so wish. Above all, the majority ownership and control by the Government for several decades has ingrained in the bureaucrat a feeling of exercising command (albeit remote) over the management of the PSU. The latter readily acquiescing has added to the sense of bureaucratic power. Although things have improved under the Modi - dispensation (courtesy of its focus on a 'policy-driven state', and increase in 'transparency'), the basic ingredients remain intact. Modi needs to play some hardballs to kill the existing mindset of the bureaucracy. The process of share sale should be de-bureaucratised by setting up a holding company (HC) where all government shares in CPSUs are placed. To be manned by eminent professionals, the HC should be fully empowered to make all decisions.

*(The writer is a policy analyst, views are personal)*



# Modi takes a swipe at critics after poll win

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday took a swipe at critics, saying they may remain happy with their arrogance, lies, pessimism and ignorance but people should be beware of their divisive agenda as an old habit of 70 years cannot go away so easily.

He was reacting to a social media post captioned "Meltdown-e-Azam" (great meltdown) of a news clip that cited "excuses" and alleged attempts by an "ecosystem" to stoke regional divide and insult voters in Hindi speaking states after the BJP swept to power in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, brushing aside the challenge from the Congress. Congress drew some consolation by winning the assembly poll in Telangana.

"May they be happy with their arrogance, lies, pessimism and ignorance. But... Beware of their divisive agenda. An old habit of 70 years can't go away so easily. Also, such is the wis-



May they be happy with their arrogance, lies, pessimism and ignorance. But...

⚠️⚠️⚠️ Beware of their divisive agenda. An old habit of 70 years can't go away so easily. ⚠️⚠️⚠️

Also, such is the wisdom of the people that they have to be prepared for many more meltdowns ahead. 😞😞😞😞

dom of the people that they have to be prepared for many more meltdowns ahead," the PM posted.

His reply and the expression of unusual social media aggression in reaction to a post was also punctuated by several emojis, also not very common with his remarks on X.

BJP leaders said the prime minister's post reflects the party turning up the heat in its social media outreach in the recent months.

"This post of the prime minister is not out of character. It

is aggressive and taking the opposition ecosystem head on," a leader said.

He added this has been the case with the BJP's content on social media in general too for the last few months now.

"Its campaign and reels have seen aggressive in tone and tenor." Many Instagram reels have generated 1.5 million views and more, he added.

Commenting on Modi's post, a leader likened it to "a technically sound batsman resorting to a slog sweep to hit the ball for a six."

## Opposition looking for excuses to hide shortcomings: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday hit back after Congress's Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh and some other Opposition leaders questioned the reliability of electronic voting machine (EVM) and said the Opposition was looking for excuses to hide their shortcomings. Digvijaya raised the issue of reliability of EVMs on Tuesday following his party's defeat in the Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh Assembly polls.

The former Madhya Pradesh chief minister claimed that any machine with a chip can be hacked and said he has opposed voting by EVMs since 2003.

As the BJP emerged victorious in three Hindi heartland states -- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh -- in the recent round of Assembly polls, several opposition leaders raised questions over electronic voting machines, even as some said they had faith in the EVMs.

Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh slammed the opposition and said they blame EVMs when-



ever they fail to win elections.

"There is nothing new. The opposition, whoever it may be, when they win, they are fine with the EVMs, but when they lose, they blame it on the EVMs," he said.

Another BJP leader, S P Singh Baghel, said, "With these EVMs, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) won elections in Delhi thrice and in Punjab once, the Samajwadi Party (SP) got an absolute majority (in Uttar Pradesh) in 2012, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) got an absolute majority (in Uttar Pradesh) in 2007 and the Congress won Telangana."

He used an idiom -- "Naach na jane angan tedha (a bad workman blames his

tools)" -- to explain the situation.

Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) MP Chirag Paswan said the opposition is being repetitive. "There is nothing new, but if you are raising questions in three states, also question the Telangana victory. This is a done-to-death formula. It is repetitive. Why do you go for campaigning if you think the EVMs are manipulated? You do selective criticism in states where you have lost elections. You need to accept and understand your loss," he said.

Senior BJP leader Rajiv Pratap Rudy said EVMs have been around for a long time. "EVMs have been there for the last 18-19 years. They

(opposition) do not raise these questions when they win elections. Do they not trust people? I think after repeated defeats, it is ridiculous that the opposition still raises this," he said.

Actor and BJP MP Ravi Kishan said, "It was known that they would blame the EVMs. Their brains have stopped working. Their corruption and appeasement have been rejected by people, so they are saying such immature things," he said.

"The country has rejected the opposition. In the future, the BJP will win every election," he asserted.

Actor-turned-politician Dinesh Lal Yadav Nirahua said, "The opposition will keep crying over EVMs and (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi will come back with 400 (Lok Sabha) seats next year." Several opposition leaders said the doubts over the EVMs have been growing. Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Saugata Roy said there are concerns that should be addressed.

"Our party has not taken a decision on this but there are, obviously, questions. Many opposition parties have raised the question that EVMs can

be manipulated by telephone. Also, an Israeli technology has come into question in this matter. The government has taken a pro-Israel stand in the recent conflict (between Israel and Hamas). This needs to be looked into thoroughly," Roy said. "The results in several states were very surprising and led to the doubt about EVM functioning," he added.

BSP MP Danish Ali said he has always been against EVMs.

"Questions on EVMs are being raised for long. It was questioned by the BJP's Lal Krishna Advani. BJP's Rajya Sabha MP G V L Narasimha Rao has written a book on it," he said. "Even when I was elected as an MP, I had said I will continue protesting against EVMs. Winning or losing is another issue, but even developed countries have stopped using EVMs. People do not have faith. Why not use ballot paper?" he asked. Communist Party of India (CPI) MP Binoy Viswam said it is a serious matter to ponder over. "The confidence over EVMs is diminishing. More and more people are believing that EVMs are doing mischief in elections," he said.

## DMK MP calls Hindi heartland gaumutra States Senthilkumar apologises after his remark draws flak

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

DMK MP Dr. S. Senthilkumar sparked a controversy on Tuesday in Lok Sabha by describing Hindi heartland States as 'gaumutra States', and said the BJP can win elections only there and not in South India. The comments few months after a DMK's 'Sanatan Dharma' row create ripples on social media however the major alliance partner Congress immediately said the party did not relate with the politics of DMK.

Participating in a debate in the Lower House on two bills related to Jammu and Kashmir, Senthilkumar said people of this country should think that the power of the BJP is only winning elections "in the heartland states of Hindi and what we generally called as gaumutra states".

Later in the evening,



Speaker OM Birla ordered to expunge the word -- gaumutra -- from the records.

"You (BJP) cannot come to South India.

You see all the results of what happens in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka ... We are very strong over there," said Senthilkumar, amid protests from BJP MPs. Senthilkumar is representing Dharmapuri constituency in Lok Sabha and a doctor by profession, specializing in radiology.

He went on to say, "We will not be surprised if you have an option of converting all these States into Union territories so that you can come into indirect power because you can never dream of setting foot over there and taking control of all the southern states."

BJP leaders hit back at the DMK and asked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi if he agreed with the insulting remarks of its INDIA bloc partner against the north Indians.

The comments come in the backdrop of some referring to the recent assembly election results as a 'North-South divide' after the BJP trounced the Congress in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and the Congress won in Telangana.

"Congress belives in Sanatan Dharma and Gau Mata, we don't agree with DMK's statements," said

Congress General Secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Rajiv Shukla. During the elections, the row over some DMK leaders' remarks against Sanatan Dharma had been latched on by the BJP to target the Congress.

Earlier this year, Congress had wrested Karnataka from the BJP, while other southern states are ruled by non-BJP parties including Tamil Nadu where Congress ally DMK is in power.

In Tamil Nadu, state BJP chief K Annamalai condemned the "insensitive" remarks of the MP, saying the level of the party's discourse is "sinking" like Chennai and the "arrogance" of DMK will be the prime reason for its downfall. "After calling our North Indian friends Pani Puri sellers, toilet constructors, etc., I.N.D.I. Alliance DMK MP, makes Gaumutra Jibes," he said on X.

"Chennai is sinking due to the misgovernance of DMK & and so is their level of discourse on the floor of the Parliament," Annamalai said, referring to the flood-like situation in the state capital. The BJP "highly condemns this insensitive remark," he said. Annamalai said the DMK MP has possibly forgotten that the NDA Alliance is in power in Puducherry and was in power in Karnataka until recently. "The arrogance of DMK will be the prime reason for their downfall!" he posted.

Later in the evening, Senthilkumar apologised on his controversial remark. "Commenting on the results of the five recent state assembly elections, I have used a word in an inappropriate way. Not using that term with any intent, I apologize for sending the wrong meaning across," he posted on X.

## Book Ministers making hate speeches against Sanatan Dharma: BJP MP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

BJP Rajya Sabha member BGVL Narasimha Rao on Tuesday charged some Tamil Nadu Ministers with making "hate" speeches against Sanatan Dharma and Hindu religion and asked the State Government to register a case against them.

The Constitution allows every religion, every member and every sect to practice their faith and even propagate it, he said, and demanded the sacking of the state ministers for their objectionable remarks.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the Upper House, Rao said that a minister in the Tamil Nadu government indulged in hate speech against Sanatan Dharma and the Hindu religion.

"I quote what he said, 'Sanatan Dharma is like malaria, and dengue, and so it must



be eradicated and not opposed," the BJP member said without naming anyone.

Another minister in the same state government has mentioned that the purpose of the formation of the INDIA alliance is "the eradication of Sanatan Dharma", the BJP member alleged, and wondered whether they wanted to pursue "this kind of anti-India agenda".

Rao claimed that another minister in the Karnataka government, who is the son of the Congress President and Leader of the Opposition in Rajya

Sabha, had supported those comments. "This is the agenda of the INDIA alliance," he said, adding that such statements constitute "hate speech".

According to the BJP MP, these statements are deliberate and malafide acts intended to outrage religious sentiments, and there was also an attempt to create public mischief.

"Therefore I call upon the state government, Tamil Nadu, to on its own, register FIR against the same ministers who spoke against Sanatana Dharma and also dismiss these ministers from the state government because what they have, what they have publicly stated, is the violation of the oath they have taken under the Constitution," he said.

He said it was a matter of regret that there are ministers in the state government who are campaigning against Sanatan Dharma and calling for its eradication.

## ₹15,000 crore seized by ED going back to public sector banks'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday informed the Rajya Sabha the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has confiscated assets worth Rs 15,186.64 crore under the stringent prevention of money laundering law and almost all of these have been restituted to public sector banks.

Replying to supplementary questions in the House, she said specific actions through various legal provisions are being taken against defaulters and as a result, "huge monies" are going back to the banks.

Sitharaman informed the House that as of March 31, 2023, legal suits were filed for

recovery against 13,978 loan accounts, action under the SARFAESI Act has been initiated in 11,483 cases, FIRs have been filed in 5,674 cases, and an aggregate amount of Rs 33,801 crore has been recovered.

"As of December 1, 2023, assets amounting to Rs 15,186.64 crores under the PMLA have been confiscated by the ED out of which Rs 15,183.77 crores have been restituted to the Public Sector Banks," she said.

Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar asked the minister to explain the meaning "phone banking" which was mentioned in reply to a supplementary question.

Explaining the meaning of

the phrase, Sitharaman said 'Phone Banking' was the method through which "political interference (during UPA rule of 2004-2014) spoilt all our banks and drove them to a loss-making situation".

"Phone Banking" was at that time when people would call the banks and say 'so and so will come to seek a loan from your bank, please grant it', meaning that there's no need to look at their eligibility, etc & that the loan must be granted," the minister said.

She further said the heart of the problem was during the 10 years of UPA rule between 2004 and 2014 when calls were made to grant loans to people who were not worthy of getting a loan.

## Tamil Nadu seeks ₹5,000 crore aid for flood ravaged Chennai

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Tuesday saw an appeal for an interim central assistance of Rs 5,000 crores to provide relief to people of Tamil Nadu affected by heavy rains. Other issues like missing women, suicide by youth in coaching institutes and sale of millets through public distribution system also figured in the house.

Seeking an interim assistance of Rs 5,000 crore for Tamil Nadu to rebuild infrastructure damaged by incessant rains in Chennai and some other districts, DMK leader T Siva said heavy rains due to severe Cyclone Michaung have submerged Chennai and other districts.

At least nine people, including a child, were killed in the flooding and the havoc caused hours before the cyclone was due to make landfall. Cars were swept and airport operations shut down as the streets of Chennai got inundated.



"Roads have become rivers because of non-stop running waters and rivers have become like seas... All the water bodies are overflowing. Many tanks have been breached," he said.

Informing the Rajya Sabha that roads have been badly damaged due to the fury of nature, Siva said essential supplies have been hampered.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister

M K Stalin and the entire Cabinet, municipal corporation officials, fire department, sanitation workers, doctors, rescue teams and electricity department have been working on a war footing to rescue people and provide relief material.

As a precautionary measure, electricity supply was suspended, Siva said.

He said while the state gov-

ernment is doing everything in its means, the damage to infrastructure is so huge that it cannot be repaired at the earliest. "The state government has requested an interim relief of Rs 5,000 crore."

"I urge the Union government (that) considering the condition of Tamil Nadu and five districts, kindly release Rs 5,000 crore as initial interim

relief which would help the State government in their efforts to safeguard the people of Tamil Nadu," he said.

Drawing the attention of the Upper House to missing women, Fauzia Khan (NCP) said it was matter of grave concern. She called for a sustained awareness campaign to address the issue and likely reason for it was trafficking by organized groups.

Sushil Kumar Modi (BJP) drew the attention of the Elders to suicides in institutes of higher learning and said 26 such incidents were reported from Kota this year.

He called for appointment of counselors to interact with students facing pressure and sought review of syllabus of institutes of higher learning.

Highlighting the benefits of millets as these crops required little water for cultivation, Ajay Pratap Singh (BJP) favoured sale of millets through public distribution system as it will benefit farmers.

### FROM PAGE 1

#### INDIA BLOC MEET POSTPONED

Akhilesh had accused the Congress of betraying the SP by not giving it tickets to contest in a potential alliance with the Congress in MP.

"I don't know, I have no information so I kept a programme in North Bengal... If we had the information, we wouldn't have scheduled those programmes. We would have definitely gone (for the meeting), but we have not received any information," the TMC chief said on Monday. "I will be busy in my State (Jharkhand). I spoke to Kharage, maybe a representative from our side will go." Soren told the media in Ranchi. Seat sharing for the Lok Sabha polls, which are just four months away, is likely to be at the top of the agenda of the meeting. The next INDIA Bloc meeting would also be crucial for the Congress, particularly as the party lost Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh Assembly polls, the Hindi heartland States that send a large number of members to Parliament.

INDIA or 'Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance' is a group of 26 Opposition parties, including the Congress. The parties have come together to take on the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which is led by Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and prevent it from winning a third straight term at the Centre in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

The first meeting of the joint Opposition was

convened in Patna on June 23 and the second meeting was held in Nagpur on July 17-18. The third meeting happened in Mumbai during August 31-September 1.

In the Mumbai meeting, the Opposition parties adopted resolutions to collectively contest the upcoming 2024 Lok Sabha elections while announcing that seat-sharing arrangements would be finalized as soon as possible through a spirit of give-and-take. The theme they have chosen for the elections is "Judega Bharat, Jeetega India" (India will unite, India will win) to take on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led government.

SP leader Ramgopal Yadav said his party will attend the meeting although Akhilesh may not be present as he is busy with some events in the Purvanchal region.

Later during the day at the TV programme, Akhilesh said, "Today's win could be the message of BJP's defeat tomorrow. All the channels and newspapers say that people's mood was for change. The result of these elections indicates people want a change and if so, why will the people not want a change when the elections for Delhi are held?"

On his party's dismal showing in Madhya Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party president said, "There is party organisation only in some districts (of Madhya Pradesh) where we were seeking to contest on some seats. When the Congress did not keep us with them, we had to fight to save our party. What was wrong with that?"

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced India's decision to provide USD 250 million to Kenya for modernisation of its agriculture sector following his wide-ranging talks with visiting Kenyan President William Samoei Ruto. He arrived here on Monday on a three-day visit with an aim to expand overall ties between the two countries.

In its foreign policy, India has always given high priority to Africa and has expanded its overall ties with the continent on a mission mode in the last nearly one decade,



Modi said in his media statement after the talks.

"I am confident that President Ruto's visit to India will not only strengthen bilateral ties but will give a new momentum to our engagement with Africa," he added. The prime minister said India

will provide USD 250 million as Line of Credit to Kenya for modernisation of its agriculture sector.

Referring to the Indo-Pacific, Modi said closer cooperation between India and Kenya in the region will advance common efforts.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit during a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday



# Israel strikes in and around Gaza’s second largest city

AP ■ KHAN YOUNIS (GAZA STRIP)

Israel intensified its bombardment in and around Gaza’s second largest city early Tuesday, as ambulances and private cars came racing into a local hospital carrying people wounded in a bloody new phase of the war in Gaza.

Under US pressure to prevent further mass casualties, Israel says it is being more precise as it widens its offensive into southern Gaza after obliterating much of the north. Aerial bombardment and the ground offensive have already driven three-fourths of the territory’s 2.3 million people from their homes.

At the Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, ambulances brought dozens of wounded people in throughout the night. At one point, a car pulled up and man emerged carrying a young boy in a bloody shirt and whose hand had been blown off. “Where is the Red Cross? ... where is the United Nations?” a woman screamed outside the emergency department. “My children, since 10 p.m., are still under the rubble.”

Satellite photos taken Sunday showed tanks and troops massing outside Khan Younis, the latest target of the offensive, which was home to more than 400,000 people before the war.

Israel has ordered people out of nearly two dozen neighbourhoods instead of the entire region, as it did in the north. But with most of Gaza’s population already packed into the south, cramming U.N. shelters and family homes, there are few places left to go. Israel has barred people who fled the north earlier in the war from returning. Palestinians say that as Israel continues to strike across the besieged territory, there are no areas where they feel safe, and many fear that if they leave their homes they will never be allowed to return.

## THE QUEST TO ELIMINATE HAMAS

Israel says it must dismantle Hamas’ extensive military



Palestinians are treated as they lie on the floor after being wounded in an Israeli army bombardment of the Gaza Strip, in the hospital in Khan Younis, Tuesday. AP/PTI

infrastructure and remove it from power in order to prevent a repeat of the Oct. 7 attack that ignited the war. The surprise assault through the border fence saw Hamas and other Palestinian militants kill about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and capture some 240 men, women and children.

The Israeli military says it makes every effort to spare civilians and accuses Hamas of using them as human shields as it fights in dense residential areas, where it has a labyrinth of tunnels, bunkers, rocket launchers and sniper nests.

But the militant group is deeply rooted in Palestinian society, and its determination to end decades of open-ended Israeli military rule is shared by most Palestinians, even those opposed to its ideology and its attacks on Israeli civilians. That will complicate any effort to eliminate Hamas without causing massive casualties and displacement.

Even after weeks of unrelenting bombardment, Hamas’ leaders in Gaza were able to conduct complex cease-fire negotiations and orchestrate the release of more than 100 Israeli and foreign hostages in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners last week. Palestinian militants have also kept up their rocket fire into Israel, both before and after the truce.

The fighting has mean-

while brought unprecedented death and destruction to the coastal strip. The Health Ministry in Gaza said the death toll in the territory since Oct. 7 has surpassed 15,890 people – 70% of them women and children – with more than 42,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths. It says hundreds have been killed or wounded since the cease-fire’s end, and many still are trapped under rubble.

An Israeli army official provided a similar figure for the death toll in Gaza on Monday, after weeks in which Israeli officials had cast doubt on the ministry’s count.

The official said at least 15,000 people have been killed, including 5,000 militants, without saying how the military arrived at its figures. The military says 84 of its soldiers have been killed in the Gaza offensive.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Monday that it was too soon to pass judgment on Israeli operations, but that it was unusual for a modern military to identify precise areas of expected ground maneuvers and ask people to move out, as Israel has done in Khan Younis.

“These are the kinds of steps that we have asked them to undertake,” he said. “These

are the conversations we’re having day in, day out.”

The US has pledged unwavering support to Israel since the Oct. 7 attack, including rushing weapons and other aid to the country.

Airstrikes and the ground offensive in northern Gaza have reduced large swaths of Gaza City and nearby areas to a rubble-filled wasteland. Hundreds of thousands of residents fled south during the assault.

Now around 2 million people — most of the territory’s population — are crowded into the 230 square kilometers (90 square miles) of southern and central Gaza. Since the truce’s collapse, the military has ordered the population out of an area of about 62 square kilometers (24 square miles) in and near Khan Younis, according to the evacuation maps issued by the Israeli military. That further reduces the space available for Palestinians by more than a quarter.

## KHAN YOUNIS IN THE CROSSHAIRS

Satellite photos from Sunday, analyzed by The Associated Press early Tuesday, show around 150 Israeli tanks, armored personnel carriers and other vehicles just under 6 kilometers (3.7 miles) north of the heart of Khan Younis. The army did not respond to a request for comment and rarely publicizes troop deployments.

Constant bombardment on the edge of Khan Younis lit up the sky over the town Monday evening.

Over the past few days, Israeli strikes have been “on a ferocious scale,” said Mohammed Aghaalkurdi, an aid worker with the group Medical Aid for Palestinians in Khan Younis.

He said neighborhoods and shelters were emptying as people fled. Leaflets dropped by the Israeli military warn people to go south toward the border with Egypt, but they are unable to leave Gaza, as both Israel and neighboring Egypt have refused to accept any refugees.

# Putin to discuss Israel-Hamas war

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin will make a one-day trip to the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia focused on the Israeli-Hamas war and host the Iranian president in Moscow this week, the Kremlin said Tuesday.

Putin will make working visits to both countries on Wednesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

The talks will focus on bilateral relations, the war between Israel and Hamas and other international issues,

Peskov said. Issues related to oil price caps under OPEC+ will also be on the agenda, he added. Putin’s trip was first announced on Monday by his foreign affairs adviser Yuri Ushakov, who didn’t give a date for the visits when he spoke to the Russian news outlet Life.

“I hope that these will be very useful negotiations, which we consider extremely important,” Ushakov was quoted as saying by Life.

Putin will make the visit at a time when Russia wants to advance its role as a power broker in the conflict in the

Middle East. Putin will host Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in the Kremlin on Thursday, Peskov added.

The Russian president visited China in October and recently made several trips to former Soviet nations.

The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Putin in March for war crimes, accusing him of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine.

Since the warrant was issued, Putin chose not to attend a BRICS summit in South Africa because the

country would be obliged to arrest Putin upon arrival as it is a signatory to the international court’s treaty.

Neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE have signed the ICC’s founding treaty.

The notice against Putin in March was the first time the global court issued a warrant against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council.

The ICC said in a statement that Putin is accused of the war crime of “unlawful deportation” of children from occupied areas of Ukraine to Russia.

# Top US Congressmen introduce bill to reduce Green Card backlog

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Three influential Congressmen have introduced bipartisan legislation in the US House of Representatives to reduce the Green Card backlog and end country-based discrimination for employment-based visas, a bill if passed would benefit thousands of Indian Americans.

Three influential Congressmen who introduced the legislation include Indian Americans, Raja Krishnamoorthi and Pramila Jayapal. Congressman Rich McCormick is the third lawmaker to have joined the two Indian-Americans in introducing the bill on Monday.

If passed and signed into law, it would help thousands of Indian Americans who are currently in decades-long wait for green cards or permanent residency.

HR 6542, the bipartisan Immigration Visa Efficiency and Security Act of 2023, would strengthen the US economy and boost its international competitiveness while reducing the Green Card backlog by allowing American employers to focus on hiring immigrants based on their merit, not their birthplace, a press statement said. A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent



Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently.

The bill would phase out the existing seven per cent per-country limit on employment-based immigrant visas while increasing the seven per-country limit on family-sponsored visas to 15 per cent, it said.

“As we work to build the economy of the future, we cannot allow high-skilled workers to languish in the Green Card backlog, left unable to fully establish themselves as Americans and contribute more fully to our nation,” Krishnamoorthi said.

“I am proud to partner with my colleagues on our bipartisan legislation to end country-based discrimination for employment-based immigrant visas to reduce visa back-

logs while strengthening our economy and our workforce,” he added.

The employment-based visa system provides permanent residence (or “green cards”) to individuals whose work contributes to US economic growth and enhances our competitive advantage.

To qualify, a sponsoring employer generally must advertise and prove that they cannot find a qualified US worker to fill the position. Thus, although America’s employment-based visa system starts as “merit-based,” what happens next has nothing to do with merit or skills — visas are allocated based on the intended immigrant’s country of birth, the statement said.

Approximately 95 per cent of employment-based immigrants currently live and work in the United States on temporary visas while waiting for a visa to become available. Some of these individuals remain in temporary status for many years, if not decades, because of the caps applied to their country of nationality, it read.

The statement said the new, phased-in system, established in the bipartisan EAGLE Act, would help ease the backlog for those who wait the longest.

Like the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act that

passed the House in July 2019, the bill phases out the seven per cent per-country cap for employment-based immigrant visas; and raises the seven per cent per-country limit on family-sponsored visas to 15 per cent.

Like the version of the Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act that passed the Senate in December 2020, the bill includes a longer nine-year transition period to ensure that no countries are excluded from receiving visas while the per-country caps are phased out, it said.

The bill strengthens the H-1B temporary visa programme and provides an option for individuals who have been waiting in the immigrant visa backlog for two years to file a green card application, although the application cannot be approved until a visa becomes available, according to the statement.

The H-1B visa, the much sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

## UN warns that 2 boats with 400 Rohingya aboard need rescue

**Bangkok (AP):** An estimated 400 Rohingya Muslims believed to be aboard two boats adrift in the Andaman Sea without adequate supplies could die if more is not done to rescue them, according to the UN refugee agency and aid workers.

The number of Rohingya Muslims fleeing by boats in a seasonal exodus - usually from squalid, overcrowded refugee camps in Bangladesh - has been rising since last year due to cuts to food rations and a spike in gang violence. “There are about 400 children, women and men looking death in the eye if there are no moves to save these desperate souls,” Babar Baloch, the agency’s Bangkok-based regional spokesperson, told The Associated Press.

The whereabouts of the other boat were unclear.

The boats apparently embarked from Bangladesh and are reported to have been at sea for about two weeks, he said.

The captain of one of the boats, contacted by the AP, said he had 180 to 190 people on board. They were out of food and water and the engine was damaged. The captain, who gave his name as Maan Nokim, said he feared all on board will die if they do not receive help.

On Sunday, Nokim said the boat was 320 kilometers (200 miles) from Thailand’s west coast. A Thai navy spokesperson, contacted Monday, said he had no information about the boats.

The location is about the same distance from Indonesia’s northernmost province of Aceh, where another boat with 139 people landed Saturday on Sabang Island, off the tip of Sumatra, Baloch said. Those on the ship included 58 children, 45 women and 36 men - the typical balance of those making the sea journey, he said. Hundreds more arrived in

# EU official warns of security risk in Europe over Christmas

**Brussels (AP):** Europe faces a “huge risk of terrorist attacks” over the Christmas holiday period due to the fallout from the war between Israel and the Palestinian militant group Hamas, the European Union’s home affairs commissioner warned on Tuesday. The warning came as French investigators probe a fatal weekend attack near the Eiffel Tower in Paris. Questions were raised about the mental health of the suspect, who swore allegiance to the extremist Islamic State group before stabbing a German-Filipino tourist to death and injuring two other people with a hammer.

“With the war between Israel and Hamas, and the polarisation it causes in our society, with the upcoming holiday season, there is a huge risk of terrorist attacks in the European Union,” EU Home Affairs Commissioner Ylva

Johansson told reporters.

“We saw (it happening) recently in Paris, unfortunately we have seen it earlier as well,” she said, as EU interior ministers gathered in Brussels. She provided no details about any information that might have led to her warning.

Her office did not immediately respond to requests for details.

Johansson, whose brief includes security and immigration, said that European Commission will provide an additional 30 million euros (\$32.5 million) to help bolster security in vulnerable areas, notably places of worship.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser sent her condolences to France over the attack, and said that it highlights “just how acute and how serious the threat posed by Islamist terrorism is currently in the EU.”

# China recognises Taliban govt in Afghanistan

PTI ■ BEIJING

China has become the first country to confer diplomatic status to a Taliban-nominated official as Afghanistan’s Ambassador to Beijing, thereby formally recognising the Taliban-run administration as a legitimate government in Kabul.

“As a long-standing friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China believes that Afghanistan should not be excluded from the international community,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing on Tuesday when asked whether China recognised the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan. Earlier reports from Kabul said China has given Bilal Karimi, a Taliban nominee the status of Ambassador and he has submitted his credentials to the foreign ministry here.

China along with Pakistan and Russia maintained its embassy in Kabul after the Taliban took control of



Afghanistan in August 2021 following the withdrawal of American troops from the war-ravaged country. While maintaining close contact with the Taliban interim administration, Beijing withheld recognition, especially over global criticism of the Taliban’s treatment of women and girls, excluding them from educational institutions. No other country has formally recognised the Taliban government, which has been criticised over human rights violations and crushing women’s rights.

Defending China’s move, Wang said, “We hope Afghanistan will further respond to the expectations of the international community, build an open and inclusive political structure, adopt moderate and prudent domestic and foreign policies, firmly combat all forms of terrorist forces, develop friendly relations with other countries, especially with its neighbours, and integrate itself into the world community.”

“We believe that diplomatic recognition of the Afghan

# Prince Harry challenges UK government’s decision to strip him of security detail

AP ■ LONDON

Prince Harry is challenging on Tuesday the British government’s decision to strip him of his security detail after he gave up his status as a working member of the royal family and moved to the United States. The Duke of Sussex said he wants protection when he visits home and claimed it’s partly because an aggressive press jeopardizes his safety and that of his family. The three-day hearing scheduled to begin in London’s High Court is the latest in a string of Harry’s legal cases that have kept London judges busy as he takes on the UK government and the British tabloid media. It was not clear if he would attend Tuesday’s hearing.

Harry failed to persuade a different judge earlier this year that he should be able to



privately pay for London’s police force to guard him when he comes to town. A judge denied that offer after a government lawyer argued that officers shouldn’t be used as “private bodyguards for the wealthy.”

Harry, the youngest son of King Charles III, said he did not feel safe bringing his wife, former actor Meghan Markle,

and their two young children back to Britain and was concerned about his own safety after being chased by paparazzi following a London charity event.

Harry’s animosity toward the press dates back to the death of his mother Princess Diana, who died in a car wreck as her driver tried to outrun aggressive photographers in Paris. Harry, whose wife is mixed-raced, cited what he said were racist attitudes and unbearable intrusions of the British media in his decision to leave the United Kingdom.

The 39-year-old prince is challenging the decision by the Executive Committee for the Protection of Royalty and Public Figures to provide his security on a “case by case” basis after moving in 2020 to

Canada and then California, where he and his family now reside.

He said the committee unfairly nixed his security request without hearing from him personally and did not disclose the makeup of the panel, which he later learned included royal family staff. He said Edward Young, the assistant private secretary to the late Queen Elizabeth II, should not have been on the committee because of “significant tensions” between the two men.

The Home Office has argued that any tensions between Harry and the royal household staff was irrelevant and that the committee was entitled to its decision because he had relinquished his role as a working member of the family.

# ‘Harvard muzzled disinfo team after USD500 mn Zuckerberg donation’

**Cambridge (Massachusetts) (AP):** A prominent disinformation scholar who left Harvard University in August has accused the school of muzzling her speech and stifling — then dismantling — her research team as it launched a deep dive in late 2021 into a trove of Facebook files she considers the most important documents in internet history.

The actions impacting Joan Donovan’s work coincided with a USD500 million donation to Harvard by a foundation run by Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan. In a whistleblower disclosure made public Monday, Donovan seeks investigations into “inap-

propriate influence” from Harvard’s general counsel, the Massachusetts attorney general’s office and the US Department of Education.

The CEO of Whistleblower Aid, a legal nonprofit supporting Donovan, called the alleged behavior by Harvard’s Kennedy School and its dean a “shocking betrayal” of academic integrity at the elite school.

“Whether Harvard acted at the company’s direction or took the initiative on their own to protect (Facebook’s) interests, the outcome is the same: corporate interests are undermining research and academic freedom to the detriment of the public,” CEO Libby Liu said in a press statement.

## UK police renew appeal over hate crime attack against British Sikh

**London (PTI):** A UK police force investigating a hate crime have renewed their appeal for information related to an incident in which a Sikh man in his late 50s sustained injuries after a group of boys attacked him in Slough, south-east England.

Thames Valley Police said the victim, named locally as Inderjit Singh, was walking through Langley Memorial Park when he was approached by a group of boys. One of the offenders tried to grab the victim’s beard and then all the boys circled him, kicking him and pulling him to the ground. Singh sustained three broken ribs as well as swelling and cuts to his hand.

The police were initially investigating it as an incident of GBH (grievous bodily harm), but are now treating it as a hate crime, investigating officer Detective Constable Holly Baxter, who is based at Slough Police Station, said in a statement.

“I am appealing to anybody who was in the area around the time of the incident (at 7 pm local time on November 21), to please get in touch with Thames Valley Police,” Baxter’s statement said last week.

“We are currently conducting further patrols in the area and anyone with concerns should speak to a uniformed officer or contact us by calling 101 or via our website. We take all reports of hate crime seriously as we know that they have a devastating impact on individual victims and targeted communities,” she said.

The police are appealing for anyone with their car dash-cam footage, doorbell video, or any other potential recordings from the day of the attack that could assist the investigation. Following the attack, the offenders — described as teenage boys around 13 to 16 years old — are said to have left in the direction of Marish School.



# Stock markets hit new record highs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty settled at new peaks on Tuesday, rallying for the sixth straight session amid massive buying in power and utility sector shares. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 431.02 points, or 0.63 per cent, to close at a new record high of 69,296.14. The broader index Nifty also climbed 168.50 points, or 0.81 per cent to hit its lifetime high of 20,855.30.

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms surged by more than Rs 2.5 lakh crore to cross Rs 350 lakh crore on Tuesday.

Analysts said the positive sentiment was fuelled by unabated inflow of foreign funds on the back of robust sentiment built up over favourable macroeconomic data in the previous week and the results of assembly polls of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh that raised expectations of longer political stability in the country. Also, investors

## SENSEX BREACHES 69K-MARK, NIFTY EYES 21K LEVEL



are expecting the Reserve Bank to maintain the status quo on the interest rate in its bi-monthly monetary policy decision to be announced on Friday, they said.

Among major Sensex movers, Power Grid rose the most by 4.46 per cent, NTPC by 3.89 per cent, SBI by 2.31 per cent and ICICI Bank by 2.28 per cent.

Other gainers included Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan and Maruti. On the other hand, Hindustan Unilever, HCL Tech, Bajaj Finance remained laggards with losses of up to 1.49 per cent.

As many as 20 stocks of the 30-share benchmark closed with gains, while among Nifty firms,

32 shares registered gains.

Foreign institutional investors purchased shares worth Rs 2,073.21 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

"The domestic market extended the gains and hit fresh highs despite cautiousness among global peers ahead of key US job data this week. The aura

of the state election results and other positive factors like above-expected earnings and GDP growth data are supporting the return of FII flows to the Indian market," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. "The RBI's monetary policy meeting is expected to be status quo. However, the com-

mentary on economic growth, foodgrain prices and inflation trajectory will be closely watched," he added.

Meanwhile, in Asian markets, Hang Seng and Nikkei 225 were trading lower by 2.07 per cent and 1.37 per cent, respectively, while China's Shanghai Composite was trading 1.67 per cent lower. European markets were mixed. Germany's DAX gained 1.51 per cent and France's CAC 40 by 0.69 per cent. London's FTSE 100 declined 0.22 per cent. The US markets ended on a mixed note with S&P 500 registering a loss of 0.54 per cent on Monday.

Meanwhile, global oil benchmark Brent crude advanced 1 per cent to USD 78.81 a barrel.

On Monday, 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 barometer logged its biggest single-day jump since May 20, 2022. Nifty also climbed 418.90 points, or 2.07 per cent, to hit 20,686.80.

## Indian Chamber of Commerce unveils first overseas office in Italy

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Marking a milestone in its international expansion strategy, the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has inaugurated its first overseas office in Italy. The ICC said this strategic move underscores its commitment to fostering robust trade relations between India and Italy and expanding opportunities for Indian businesses in the European market.

ICC has appointed Vas Shenoy, a businessman and seasoned geopolitical strategist and analyst, as Chief Representative for Italy who will play a major role in driving the chamber's engagement with the Italian business community and government entities. ICC President Ameya Prabhu said, "The opening of our first overseas office in Italy marks a pivotal step in

ICC's global expansion strategy."

ICC Italy's primary focus will be on promoting India as an attractive investment destination for Italian companies and facilitating the entry of Indian businesses into the Italian market.

The establishment of ICC Italy aligns with the recent strengthening of diplomatic ties between India and Italy. The two countries have upgraded their relationship to a strategic partnership and signed defence cooperation and manpower mobility agreements in 2023.

The growing economic ties between India and Italy are evident in the surge in bilateral trade, which reached Euro 14.88 billion in 2022.

India's exports to Italy have also witnessed a substantial increase, highlighting the deepening economic relationship between the two nations.

## Banks write off ₹10.57 lakh crore in 5 years



'Make NPA recovery worth ₹7.17 lakh cr'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Banks have written off Rs 10.57 lakh crore during the last five financial years, of which Rs 5.52 lakh crore was in respect of loans pertaining to large industries, the government informed the Parliament on Tuesday.

"As per RBI data, scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) have written off an aggregate loan amount of Rs 10.57 lakh crore during the last five financial years," Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said in reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha.

The scheduled commercial banks have also recovered Rs 7.15 lakh crore of non-performing assets (NPAs) during the five-year period.

"Comprehensive steps have been taken to recover NPAs, enabled by which, SCBs have made an aggregate recovery of Rs 7,15,507 crore (RBI provisional data for FY 2022-23) in NPA accounts, including written-off loans, during the last five financial years," he said.

In reply to a separate question, Karad said: "Scheduled commercial banks have written off an aggregate amount of Rs 5.52 lakh crore in respect of loans pertaining to large industries and services during the last five financial years (FYs), i.e. From FY 2018-19 to FY 2022-23."

He also said that this includes Rs 93,874 crore written off by all the banks on account of fraud during the five-year period.

Karad said banks regularly evaluate the impact of write-offs as part of the exercise to clean up their balance sheet, avail tax benefit and optimise capital, in accordance with the said guidelines and policies of the respective boards.

"Such write-off does not result in waiver of liabilities of borrowers to repay and therefore, write-off does not benefit the borrowers. The borrowers of written-off loans continue to be liable for repayment and banks continue to pursue recovery actions initiated in written-off accounts through various recovery mechanisms available to them..."

## COP28: Adani pitches for balanced approach to energy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As world leaders dwell on the language of the final outcome of climate talks, billionaire Gautam Adani on Tuesday made a pitch for adopting a balanced approach that takes into account energy costs and availability while continuing to accelerate on green ambitions.

At the 28th UN Climate Change Conference in Dubai, called COP28, 118 governments pledged to triple the world's renewable energy capacity by 2030 but have not been able to arrive at the language to be used in the outcome document for cutting the share of fossil fuels in the world's energy production.

"In the midst of initial encouraging signs from COP 28, it is relevant to remember that while in sum total (given

our 1.4 billion population) we are the world's third largest primary energy consumer, our per capita electricity consumption @ 1250 kWh is still less than one-third of the global average and less than one-seventh of the developed world," Adani said in a post on X.

India, he said, is also the only large nation ahead of its target in meeting its UNFCCC commitment to reduce its emissions intensity by 45 per cent from the 2005 level by 2030.

"The fastest growing economy must balance its energy cost, energy availability and green energy objectives while continuing to accelerate its massive green ambitions," he added.

On his post, the coal-to-edible oil conglomerate he heads commented: "With a pledge of investing USD 75 billion by 2030, Adani group is playing a



pivotal role in accomplishing this" task of reducing emission intensity. To keep global warming from rising no more than 1.5 Celcius by 2050, fossil fuel use needs to be greatly reduced

and unabated coal use needs to be completely phased out, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has argued. But India is not agreeable to phasing out of coal as 73 per cent of

its current electricity is produced from burning the fossil fuel.

The share of coal-fired electricity generation in India's power mix is slated to rise to 77

## Solar power potential 75,000 GW by 2050 possible with long-duration storage: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Solar power generation capacity can go up to 75,000 gigawatts by 2050 globally with long-duration storage capacity, a report by the International Solar Association (ISA) and LDES Council, said.

The report released on Tuesday by ISA and the Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) Council unveils a bold vision for the future of renewable energy, showcasing the pivotal role of Long Duration Energy Storage in realizing ambitious solar targets. The report, presented at COP28 in Dubai, emphasized the transformative potential of combining solar energy with LDES to ensure continuous, reliable, and affordable renewable energy, a statement said.

The report emphasized the necessity of LDES to fully real-



ize the potential of solar installations for complete decarbonization and achieving a solar capacity of 75,000 GW by 2050.

It presented a case study of isolated island utilities in the US, demonstrating the financial viability of LDES in areas with limited interconnectivity and high local fuel costs.

The combination of solar, wind, and LDES emerges as the

most cost-effective solution for achieving 100 per cent renewable energy.

The LDES Council estimates that LDES will become a USD 4 trillion industry by 2040, with an installed capacity potential of 8 TW, the statement said.

This growth is essential for enabling solar energy to meet global electricity demands affordably and reliably.

The report also identified barriers to the widespread adoption of solar and LDES, including regulatory challenges, financing issues, and technical limitations, and proposed solutions to overcome these hurdles.

"Solar, already the most economical source of new electricity globally, will further strengthen its competitive advantage. Combined with Long Duration Energy Storage, solar becomes a continuous, reliable 24/7 energy source," stated Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General ISA.

"Developing long-duration energy storage is the best pathway to full decarbonization for economies worldwide. LDES provides the scaffolding for reliable, resilient, around-the-clock renewable energy for industry and the electric grid," asserted Julia Souder, Chief Executive Office, LDES Council.



## 21,791 fake GST registrations

Suspected tax evasion of ₹24,000 cr detected in special drive: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday said GST officers have detected 21,791 fake GST registrations and over Rs 24,000 crore of suspected tax evasion during a two-month-long special drive.

In a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha, the minister said to safeguard the interest of honest taxpayers and avoid extreme hardship to taxpayers, instructions have been issued from time to time, directing officers to exercise due caution and care in the exercise of powers such as summons, provisional attachment of property, blocking of tax credit etc.

"A total of 21,791 entities (11,392 entities pertaining to state tax jurisdiction and 10,399 entities pertaining to CBIC jurisdiction) having GST registration were discovered to be non-existent. An amount of Rs 24,010 crore (state - Rs 8,805 crore + Centre - Rs 15,205 crore) of suspected tax evasion was detected during the special drive," Sitharaman said.

The minister was replying to a question on the number of entities identified as having fake registrations, and the total amount of evasion detected during the special drive against fake GST registrations conducted by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) from May 16 to July 15, 2023.

To a query on whether the government has considered the challenges faced by e-commerce enterprises in obtaining GST

registrations, especially operating in virtual spaces, Sitharaman said that considering the special nature of e-commerce operators, a simplified procedure for registration of e-commerce operators has already been notified.

It provides that when an e-commerce operator applies for registration in a particular state or Union Territory where he/she does not have a physical presence, he/she can apply for registration by giving details of the principal place of business located in another state or Union Territory.

Further, amendments have been made in GST Rules to strengthen the registration process, including biometric-based Aadhaar authentication, for high-risk registrants, along with the verification of the original copy of the documents. A pilot project for this was launched in Gujarat. In July, the pilot project was extended to Puducherry and in November to Andhra Pradesh.

Also, details of bank account, name and PAN of the registered person are required to be furnished within 30 days of the grant of registration or before filing of the statement of outward supply, whichever is earlier.

Entities who do not furnish the details of valid bank accounts within the time period prescribed will be suspended automatically by the system. However, upon compliance with this provision subsequently, by the registered persons such system-based suspension would be automatically revoked by the system.

## BUSINESS BRIEF

### POWERGRID LAB GETS INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION



(UCAIug) accreditation, to perform IEC 61850 Conformance Testing of Intelligent Electronic Devices (IEDs).

### INTERNATIONAL HARDWARE FAIR 2023

New Delhi: Over 200 international exhibitors and 7000 trade buyers created a vibrant platform for cutting edge hardware products and solutions at the International Hardware Fair 2023 in national Capital last week.

### RISE IN GLOBAL PRICES OF DAP FERTILISERS

New Delhi: Fertiliser industry body (FII) pointed out that global prices of Di-ammonium phosphate (DAP) have risen in the last few months and said there will be a need to increase either the government subsidy or retail prices if the rates remain high in the international market.

### DIGITAL INVESTMENT PLATFORM EXPANDING

New Delhi: Digital investment platform Vested said it is expanding its alternative investment portfolio by offering of Peer-to-Peer (P2P) lending via Vested Edge, and INR (Indian Rupee) bonds and solar projects via Vested Solar. With its solar offering, Vested is looking to give individuals the opportunity to earn while helping India transition to clean energy, a company statement said. Through Vested Solar, investors can own solar panels in rooftop projects and earn 10-13 per cent rate of return from the electricity generated over the panel's lifetime. The INR bonds offer another alternate fixed income investment opportunity to Vested customers. Vested offers a curated selection of listed corporate and government bonds, with corporate bonds rated A and above, and government bonds backed by the Indian Government.

## Rapido forays into cab services segment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ride hailing firm Rapido on Tuesday announced its foray into the cab services segment, where it will compete with established unicorns Ola and Uber.

The company has started the service in Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad and Bengaluru with around 1.2 lakh cabs and plans to scale it to around 35 cities by September 2024, Rapido Co-founder Pavan Guntupalli said.

"Over the course of 10 years not more than 25 per cent are participating in app based services. Our motive is to bring all these guys online and increase the market. "With a zero commission model, we will maximise their revenues in a way that it is not a burden on users," Guntupalli said.

The captains or the driver partners will get direct payment from customers without any commission cut by Rapido.

However, they will have to pay a subscription fee after crossing a certain level of earnings.

While the company claimed that it will provide the lowest price in the market, a random



check on the app showed that the fare of Rapido cab was higher compared to the prices offered by the established online players.

Guntupalli said that the service has just been launched and the company will work with cab partners to get the cheapest fare across 80 per cent of the route in the city where it operates.

Software-as-a-service-based Rapido will invest in adding electric vehicles to its fleet but it will operate rest of cab services at break-even level, he said.

The company plans to expand the services to Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai in January-March 2024 and cover a total of 35 cities by September 2024, Guntupalli said.



## Gold nosedives ₹1,050 to ₹63,250 per 10 gram

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold nosedived Rs 1,050 to Rs 63,250 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday, retreating from its all-time high due to weak trends in the global markets, according to HDFC Securities. The precious metal settled at Rs 64,300 per 10 grams in the previous trade.

Silver also tumbled Rs 1,700 to Rs 78,500 per kilogram.

"Gold prices plunged on Tuesday in the Delhi markets trading at Rs 63,250/10 grams, down by Rs 1,050, following a bearish trend in the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at

HDFC Securities, said.

In the futures trade, February contract of gold climbed Rs 46 to Rs 62,415 per 10 grams on the MCX. However, silver's March contract declined Rs 389 to Rs 75,779 per kilogram on the bourse.

In the international markets, gold and silver were quoting lower at USD 2,037 per ounce and USD 24.50 per ounce, respectively.

Gold retreated from its record high as the dollar and US Treasury yields advanced amid signs that traders' believe aggressive monetary policy of Federal Reserve rate cuts may have gone too far, Gandhi said.



JUNIOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP

Araijeet scores hat trick in India 4-2 win

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Araijeet Singh Hundal struck a hat-trick as India dished out a dominant display to beat Korea 4-2 in their opening pool match of the FIH junior men's hockey World Cup here on Tuesday.

Hundal scored in the 11th, 16th and 41st minutes while Amandeep found the target for India in the 30th minute in the Pool C match.

Dohyun Lim (38th) and Minkwon Kim (45th) were the goal scorers for Korea.

India, who had lost to France in the bronze-medal match in the last edition in 2021 in Bhubaneswar, made a strong start with Hundal scoring in the first quarter off a penalty corner.

The Indians continued their domination by pumping in two goals in the second quarter through Hundal and Amandeep — both field goals — as they were 3-0 up at the half time.

Korea pulled one back though Dohyun midway in the third quarter but India replied soon after with Hundal completing his hat-trick with another field goal.

With a 4-1 lead in the match, the Indians appeared to have slowed down a bit. The Koreans pressed for goals and they were able to reduce the margin with Minkwon finding the target.

India next play against Spain in their second pool match. Canada is the other country in the four-team Pool C.

India have won the tournament twice (2001 and 2016) and finished runners-up once (1997).



JUNIOR WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS



Payal, Nisha and Akansha strike gold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young pugilists Payal, Nisha and Akansha won a gold medal each after dominating performances as India ended their impressive campaign at the IBA Junior World Boxing Championships in Yerevan, Armenia with 17 medals on Tuesday.

The Indian contingent secured three gold, nine silver and five bronze medals from the championships. The Indian women's team finished joint second in the event. Payal hand-

ed India its first gold when she outclassed local favourite Petrosyan Heghine of Armenia by unanimous decision in the girls 48kg final. Later, Asian youth champions Nisha and Akansha lived up to the expectations as they extended their dream runs to clinch gold medals in style. Nisha (52kg) and Akansha (70kg) thrashed Abdullaeva Farinoz of Tajikistan and Taimazova Elizaveta of Russia respectively with identical 5-0 margins.

Three other Indian women in action on the final day, Vini

(57kg), Shrushti (63kg) and Megha (80kg) signed off with silver medals after suffering defeats in their respective final bouts. In the men's section, Sahil (75kg) and Hemant (80+kg) added silver medals to the Indian tally after going down 0-5 in their respective finals. Jatin (54kg) also put up a strong fight against Tulebek Nurassyl of Kazakhstan before losing 1-4 in a thrilling match.

Overall, 12 Indians had entered the finals, which was more than any other country in this edition.



Changing club manager: Sheffield United owner

AP ■ SHEFFIELD

The Saudi prince who owns Sheffield United said Tuesday he has changed the club's manager after the team dropped into last place in the Premier League.

Prince Abdullah Bin Mosaad Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud told British radio station talkSport that a decision has been made to part ways with Paul Heckingbottom after his two years in charge and bring back Chris Wilder, who managed Sheffield United when it was last in England's top division. Wilder, a former player at the club, has coached at second-division teams Middlesbrough and Watford since leaving Sheffield United in March 2021.

Heckingbottom becomes the first Premier League manager to lose his job this season.

His final game in charge was the 5-0 loss at Burnley on Saturday, which dropped Sheffield United to last place — where Burnley was at the start of the match — and four points from safety.

The team has just one win from 14 games.

The club hasn't officially confirmed the decision to change managers.

Heckingbottom took over in November 2021 and led the team into the Premier League this year, but has been hamstrung this season by the sale of key players such as Sander Berge and Iliman NDIaye before the start of the campaign. Heckingbottom appeared to reference that after the Burnley match when saying the club had "been making financial decisions rather than football decisions."

AP ■ TOKYO

The bid-rigging trial around the Tokyo Olympics played out Tuesday in a Japanese courtroom — more than two years after the Games closed — with advertising giant Dentsu and five other companies facing criminal charges.

Seven individuals are also facing charges from Tokyo district prosecutors in the cases, including Koji Henmi, who oversaw the sports division at Dentsu at the time. Executives or management-level officials at each of the accused companies, and Tokyo Olympic organizing committee official Yasuo Mori, have been charged with violating anti-monopoly laws.

Among the companies facing charges are Dentsu Group, Hakuhodo, Tokyo Agency and event organizer Cerespo. All deal with event organizing, sports promotion or marketing.

Dentsu has a long history of lining up sponsorships and advertising with bodies like World Athletics, headed by

Tokyo Olympics sullied by bid rigging

Sebastian Coe, and the Switzerland-based International Olympic Committee, led by Thomas Bach.

Genta Yoshino, the lawyer for Henmi, did not deny the bid-rigging took place. Speaking in Tokyo district court, he said no bid process was ever decided upon or set up by the Tokyo Olympic organizing committee.

"Even if what happened gets categorized as bid-rigging, all my client did was abide by the organizing committee's intentions, following their instructions," Yoshino told the court, presided over by a panel of three judges.

Yoshino said his client merely did his best to make the Olympics a success. Henmi was under pressure from the IOC, which repeatedly expressed doubts about the ability of the Tokyo organizers, Yoshino added.

The organizing committee



was headed at the time by Yoshiro Mori, a former Japanese prime minister who was eventually forced to resign as the head of Tokyo 2020. The CEO was Toshiro Muto, a former deputy director of the Bank of Japan.

The maximum penalty for a company convicted of bid-rig-

ging is a fine of up to 500 million yen (\$3.3 million). An individual, if found guilty, faces up to five years in prison and a fine of up to 5 million yen (\$33,000).

Trials take months in Japan, sometimes years. The next session in the trial was scheduled for Jan. 15, 2024. It's unclear when

a verdict may come.

Dentsu was a key force in landing the Olympics for Tokyo in 2013. French prosecutors have looked into allegations that IOC members may have been bribed to vote for Tokyo.

Once the Olympics landed in Tokyo, Dentsu became the chief marketing arm of the Games and raised a record \$3.3 billion in local sponsorship. Dentsu received a commission on the sales - sales that were at least twice as large as any previous Olympics.

The reports of corruption surrounding Dentsu also forced the resignation in 2019 of Tsunekazu Takeda, the head of the Japanese Olympic Committee and an IOC member who headed Olympic marketing.

Tokyo organizers say they spent \$13 billion to organize the 2020 Olympics, which were delayed a year by the COVID-19

pandemic. However, a government audit suggests the expenditure might have been twice that. At least 60% was public money. The Tokyo scandal ruined the chances of the northern city of Sapporo of landing the 2030 Winter Olympics. It had been a strong favorite but was forced to withdraw. The IOC last week said it favored a French Alps bid for the 2030 Games with Salt Lake City the preferred choice for 2034.

Earlier this year French police searched the headquarters of the 2024 Paris Olympics in an investigation over contracts linked to the Games.

In the wake of the scandal, Dentsu has been restricted from bidding on contracts for the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and by the city of Osaka and the local prefecture, which is hosting the 2025 World Exposition.

Lyon returns to Marseille

AP ■ LYON (FRANCE)

Lyon will return to Marseille amid heightened security measures Wednesday to play a game that was postponed after the team's bus was attacked by fans throwing rocks in October.

The rescheduled match comes just four days after the death of a fan ahead of a French league game that marked a new low in a season marred by violence.

The match between Marseille and Lyon was initially scheduled on Oct. 29 but was postponed after fans threw rocks and other projectiles at the Lyon bus and then-coach Fabio Grosso needed stitches in his forehead after being hit by broken glass. Lyon fans have not been allowed to travel to the rescheduled game, which takes place in the wake of the incident in the western city of Nantes, where a fan was killed during a fight close to the stadium before a game between Nantes and Nice. The match in Marseille will be under close scrutiny, with local authorities under pressure to deliver an effective security plan.

On Monday, French sports minister Amelie Oudea-Castera called for "a global and extraordinarily determined response" to an upsurge of violence in French soccer that culminated with the



fan's death.

"It's just not possible that police forces are so overstretched, that private property is destroyed, that buses are stoned and people injured," Oudea-Castera said. "And now, a death. That's enough."

Back in October in Marseille, the Lyon team bus was hit on the way to Stade Velodrome, shattering some windows. Grosso was injured by falling shards of glass and needed medical treatment with his face bleeding heavily. Lyon assistant coach Raffaele Longo was also injured.

Supporters were also targeted, five

police officers were injured, and nine people placed in custody. Grosso suffered a deep cut above his left eye that required stitches and a large bandage wrapped around his head.

Following a string of disappointing results, Grosso was fired last week and replaced by interim coach Pierre Sage.

"We're waiting for transport to be secured so that the players can tackle the match in the best possible way," Sage said.

According to local Lyon newspaper Le Progres, players and staff will leave for Marseille on Wednesday morning and will stay in a hotel that has been booked

in consultation with local Marseille authorities, further away from the Stade Velodrome than the one picked by Lyon in October. Once in Marseille, the team won't be using its usual bus bearing the club's colors. Lyon will instead use an unmarked bus belonging to a local transport company, fitted with reinforced windows. The team will then be heavily escorted to the stadium.

Because the October incidents took place outside the Stade Velodrome, Marseille has escaped disciplinary sanctions from the French league.

"The situation is a bit delicate," said Lyon right-back Clinton Mata. "We didn't think we'd have to play this match again as if nothing had happened. It's a strange feeling, but we're professional players. After what happened, we're a bit worried."

In addition to the attack on the bus, racist incidents also took place before the match between Marseille and Lyon. As fans from both teams remained in the stadium and exchanged insults as they waited for the game to kick off, some fans from Lyon were filmed making Nazi gestures and mimicking monkeys.

Both Marseille and Lyon, two traditionally successful French clubs, have failed to meet expectations this season. Marseille sits ninth in the standings, 16 points behind league leader Paris Saint-Germain. The situation is even worse for Lyon, which is bottom of the league with just one win in 13 matches.



WFI election date to be announced after December 8

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The notification to hold the stalled Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) elections could be issued on or after December 8, the date set for inclusion of any changes in the electoral college published earlier this year.

The Supreme Court recently set aside the stay imposed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court, paving the way for the process to elect the new WFI governing body.

An IOA-constituted ad-hoc panel, led by Wushu Association of India chief Bhupender Singh Bajwa, is currently managing the day-to-day activities of the WFI after the sports ministry suspended the federation headed by Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh over allegations of sexual harassment levelled by top Indian grapplers.

Several wrestlers, including Olympic medallists Bajrang Punia and Sakshi Malik, sat in protest at the Jantar Mantar here for more than two months to protest alleged sexual harassment of female grapplers by Brij Bhushan.

The election process, which was set in motion in July, has been delayed because of court cases. This has further led to the suspension of the WFI by the international federation, United

World Wrestling, for failing to conduct fresh polls in the time stipulated by them.

Indian wrestlers continue to participate in international competitions under the UWW flag because of the suspension of the national body.

But with the Supreme Court clearing the path for the elections, the returning officer, Justice (ret'd) MM Kumar, held a meeting on November 30 and asked Bajwa if there is any change in the electoral college notified on July 25, 2023 for the polls, initially scheduled on August 12.

"The way is paved for holding elections of WFI which were stayed by the Punjab and Haryana High Court on August 11, just a day before the date fixed for holding elections," said a statement from the office of the returning officer.

"Returning officer asked Mr Bajwa to inform if there is any change in the electoral college already notified on 25.07.2023... He was asked to provide this information at the earliest. Mr Bajwa sought one week time. Let complete information be furnished within 5 days i.e. On or before 8th December so that final notification for holding elections be issued," said the statement issued by assistant returning officer Tapas Bhattacharya.

US players excited about fresh start under new coach

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Although Emma Hayes hasn't yet assumed her new role as coach of the U.S. Women's national team, she's been involved behind the scenes as the team wraps up a turbulent year and looks forward to an eventful 2024.

Hayes is currently coaching Chelsea in the Women's Super League and won't join the United States until May, a short time before the Americans play in the Paris Olympics.

She visited the team last week as they prepared for a pair of exhibition matches against China. The U.S. Defeated the Steel Roses 3-0 in the first match on Saturday in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The second match is set for Tuesday in Frisco, Texas.

Hayes' fresh perspective is welcomed, especially after the

United States was eliminated from the Women's World Cup this summer by Sweden. The Round of 16 exit was the earliest ever for the four-time World Cup champions.

"I think we'll learn a lot from her and she'll learn a lot from us," defender Emily Fox said.

Hayes consulted with interim coach Twila Kilgore and U.S. Soccer Sporting Director Matt Crocker on the team's roster for the final two games of the year. The U.S. Left veterans Alex Morgan, Crystal Dunn, Becky Sauerbrunn and Alyssa Naeher off the squad in favor of taking a look at younger players.

"This camp is - honestly, we've been saying it's kind of starting fresh because of the World Cup and everything. Emma, being able to meet her, and obviously having new faces in camp, younger faces," forward



Trinity Rodman said after Saturday's game. "I think it's just building an understanding, creating an identity and executing a game plan."

Defender Naomi Girma echoed the sentiment that Hayes'

arrival is something of a fresh start. "We feel like we have our direction. We know what we're building towards now, and it's all very clear. I think overall we're just excited to hit the ground running with her," Girma said.



# INDIA TO PLAY FEARLESS CRICKET

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India women team's new head coach Amol Muzumdar wants his players to play 'fearless cricket' while also making it clear that there would be no compromise on fitness and fielding, ahead of the three-match T20I series against England beginning here on Wednesday.

"We need to play a certain brand of cricket, which we have been known for so far. Fearless cricket is something which I have always advocated. We would be playing that brand of cricket," Muzumdar told reporters on Tuesday ahead of the team's training session at the Wankhede Stadium.

"Shafali (Verma) and Jemimah (Rodrigues) are both very important cog in the wheel. I would like them to continue what they have been doing," Muzumdar said that every step taken from hereon will be important as the team has embarked on its preparations for next year's T20 World Cup (September-October 2024 in Bangladesh).

"We are moving towards the World Cup. Every series and match will have its own importance. The series against England and Australia will count a lot," said Muzumdar who is starting his coaching stint with the women's national team during the three-match T20I series against England.

"We had a chat about it with the team and they (players) are all raring to go. Every step that we take (hereon) is (about) moving towards the World Cup.

"England and Australia will be a superb series to start the preparations (for the World Cup). (Both) will be tough series (and) will give us an indication of where we are. Going forward, the tougher the opposition, the better it is," he said.

## NO COMPROMISE ON FITNESS AND FIELDING: WOMEN'S TEAM COACH MUZUMDAR



After the contest against England, India face Australia in another home series.

Muzumdar said there will not be any compromise on fielding and fitness standards, as parameters have been set and are being followed already. "Fielding and fitness are of highest priority. There is no compromise on fielding or fitness. There will be a lot of camps post this series - a lot of cricket will be played - at NCA or some other place," he said.

"That means more exposure. All the fringe and new players will also get an opportunity."

India's record of only seven wins in 27 matches against England in T20Is (home and away) does not bother the new coach who has urged his team to leave the past behind.

"As a team, we have decided to leave the statistics and whatever has happened behind us. We are looking forward to a fresh start," said the domestic batting stalwart.

"The numbers are there to be seen, but these girls and the team are looking forward to the season ahead. We are not going to go back in history — of course it is important — but at the same time, it is also important to look forward to the season ahead. They are all raring to go."

Muzumdar informed that Troy Cooley has been named the bowling coach for the series against England (three T20Is, one Test) and Australia (one Test, three T20Is and three ODIs). He said women's cricket in India is on 'cusp of something big' with the inaugural Women's Premier League garnering a lot of response from the fans.

"It was a fantastic advertisement for women's cricket last year. We all saw how many people turned up for the game. We all are on the cusp of getting it big in women's cricket. The crowd turning up for the game is absolutely a boost for everyone," he said.



## Bangladesh looking to secure first test series win over NZ

AP ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

Bangladesh head coach Bhandika Hathurusingha wants his players to guard against complacency as it tries to secure a first series win against New Zealand in the second and final test.

Bangladesh won the first test in Sylhet by 150 runs to close in on a landmark series victory. The only top-level teams that Bangladesh has ever beaten in a two-match test series are Zimbabwe and West Indies.

"I can't see complacency in the team. If I see any action of complacency, I will have one to one chat," Hathurusingha said ahead of Wednesday's opening day. "We had a good chat inside the dressing room yesterday. Strong and experienced leaders like Mushy (Mushfiqur Rahim) and Mominul (Haque) spoke very emotionally. They spoke in Bengali. I can see there's no tall poppies in the dressing room."

The Sylhet test victory was only Bangladesh's second against New Zealand in 18 meetings, and it came courtesy of captain Najmul Hossain Shanto's second-innings century. In doing so, Shanto became the first Bangladesh cricketer to hit a century on his debut as captain.

"Captains and leadership are two things," Hathurusingha said. "(Shanto's) captaincy was excellent. He was tactically on the mark. He was step ahead of the game most of the time. Very impressive field placements as well. Sometimes unorthodox, but very effective."

"(His) leadership was excellent. He led from the front with his performance. He was commanding respect, and demanding the standard. I think he has

a long future ahead."

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who took 10-184 in the first test, will be a Bangladesh's most crucial weapon in Mirpur, which traditionally has a slow wicket with unven bounce.

"He goes under the radar because he plays second fiddle to Shakib (Al Hasan) in most of the games," Hathurusingha said of Islam. "His record is phenomenal. He has nearly 200 wickets. He is very consistent."

New Zealand skipper Tim Southee said the team's spinners need to show more consistency if they are to avoid a first series defeat against Bangladesh.

"We're expecting obviously spin-friendly conditions, but we spoke about it after the last game about being more consistent for longer as a bowling group," Southee said. "And then, obviously, partnerships as a batting unit. We've had a great couple of days of training. So, we're looking forward to getting into another test match."

While Bangladesh's spinners claimed 18 wickets at an economic rate of 2.48, New Zealand's spinners took 14 wickets at a rate of 3.73 runs.

New Zealand's frontline spinners Ajaz Patel and Ish Sodhi also had a limited impact in the match, and the team could include Rachin Ravindra and Mitchell Santner in the squad for the second test.

"They're (Ravindra and Santner) obviously capable spinners. But we went with what we thought was the best side to win that first test match," Southee said. "It's just a tough one to try and get your 15 great players to fit into an 11. So, it's about picking a side that you think is going to do the job for the five days ahead of you."

## This tour is going to be valuable: Heather

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The T20 series in India gain significance as it will show how the young visiting players excel in conditions which will be similar to what the team will experience in Bangladesh during next year's T20 World Cup, said England women's skipper Heather Knight.

India and England are set to face off in a three-match T20 series, starting here on Wednesday.

"I learned a lot about my game playing in Indian conditions, it really tests you as a cricketer, your skill level and how you do with the noise and the heat," Knight told reporters ahead of England's training session here on Tuesday.

"It is a really good place to accelerate development, to see how our young players cope with it. We have got a T20 World Cup in Bangladesh later on in the year (2024) so this tour is going to be valuable in terms of having similar conditions."

The T20 World Cup is scheduled to be hosted by Bangladesh between September and October in 2024.

A lot of members of the

England's T20I squad arrived in India two days before the start of the series which will be played at the Wankhede Stadium on Dec 6, 9 and 10.

Knight said it will be challenging for her team to silence the Indian crowd as despite their dominant record against the hosts, presence of "world-class" players make India a "brilliant" team. "We have had some really good T20 games against them. They have got some world-class players in and in home conditions they are going to be tough (to face)," Knight said.

After winning the ODI World Cup beating India in the final, Australia captain Pat Cummins had said that he took delight in silencing the Indian fans.

Knight said passionate crowds in India can be imposing on the visiting sides and her team will look to keep its focus amid all the noise.

"Sometimes you can feel like things are accelerating; rushed actually, when there is crowd and the game is happening quite quickly. We have talked a lot about trying to get our own pace, maintain our concentra-



tion in the moment," the England captain said.

"Trying to silence the crowd will be tougher - watching the men's World Cup it is all you see and the support and the passion that Indian fans have and having experienced that, it is a hard thing to do to silence the crowd

and even if there is not many of them they are usually very loud.

"We have to have quick turnaround, adapting to conditions has to be accelerated a bit. How we do that, how we communicate, how we are going to take 10 wickets, how we are going to score runs?"

Knight said the past experience of playing in India, including the Women's Premier League (WPL) earlier this year should hold her side in good stead.

"We have got some good experience of players playing in India as well which will be valu-

able. It will be a brilliant series between two best teams," she said.

Having played in the WPL for Royal Challengers Bangalore wherein Knight shared the dressing room with some Indian players like Smriti Mandhana, Shreyanka Patil and Kanika Ahuja, the England captain said knowledge-sharing works two ways. "It is brilliant that some of the RCB girls have got the chance to play for India on the back of what they did in the WPL. It works both ways, obviously I know those players better and they also know my game better," Knight said.

England have seven wins in nine T20Is against India in their backyard and overall 20 wins from 27 matches, but Knight said it does not feel like they have a comforting factor as far as knowledge of conditions is concerned. "It feels like a long time actually since we have been to India, before that 2019 series we had a lot of tours here," she said. "It is how the Future Tours Programme pans out, and obviously, playing another WPL here in the calendar, there is going to be a lot of cricket here which is brilliant!"

## Gandas, Chouhan headline SSP Chawrasia Invitational Golf

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Defending champion Manu Gandas, PGTI Ranking leader Om Prakash Chouhan and Rashid Khan will be seen in action in the second edition of the SSP Chawrasia Invitational Golf tournament beginning here on Thursday.

The 124-member field of the Rs 1-crore prize purse event will also see tournament host and local favourite SSP Chawrasia, along with the likes of Rahul Gangjee, Khalin Joshi, Chikkarangappa, Veer Ahlawat, Karan Pratap Singh, Udayan Mane and Aman Raj.

The leading names from abroad include Sri Lankans N Thangaraja, Anura Rohana and K Prabakaran, Bangladesh's Badal Hossain, Md Akbar

Hossain and Md Dulal Hossain, American Varun Chopra, Nepal's Sukra Bahadur Rai, Canada's Sukhraj Singh Gill and Andorra's Kevin Esteve Rigail.

The other prominent local players are Shankar Das, Divyanshu Bajaj, Mohammad Sanju, Arjun Puri and Raju Ali Mollah.

Two-time Indian Open champion Chawrasia is the second Indian professional golfer after Jeev Milkha Singh to have a PGTI event named in his honour.

A six-time winner on the



Asian Tour, Chawrasia also has represented India at the Rio Olympics and the World Cup of Golf in 2016.

He also represented Team Asia at the EurAsia Cup in 2016 and 2018. SSP, a winner of 17 professional titles, was honoured with the Arjuna Award in 2017.

"With a strong field, we can expect a week of exciting golf. I'm also very motivated to performing well at my home course. I wish the players all the best," tournament host Chawrasia said.



## Ebenyo, Yehualaw star attraction in Kolkata 25K run on Dec 17

PTI ■ KOLKATA

World championships 10,000m silver medallist Daniel Simiyu Ebenyo of Kenya and Ethiopian 10K world record holder Yalemzerf Yehualaw will be the star attractions in the men's and women's sections respectively in the Tata Steel Kolkata 25K run on December 17. Ebenyo won a silver medal in 10,000m in Budapest world championships in August and then finished second in half marathon in Riga at the inaugural World Road Running Championships, before easily winning the Delhi Half Marathon in October.

Two other Kenyans, Roncer Kipkorir Konga and Bernard Biwott, with sub 60-minute personal best in half marathon (21.0975 km), are expected to challenge Ebenyo for the top podium position.

Yehualaw, who set the 10K world record of 29:14 in 2022, will participate in the event for the first time. She also sits second on the world all-time list in half marathon with a time of 1:03:51 (clocked in 2021).

Another Ethiopian, Anchinalu Dessie and Kenya's Betty Chepkemoi Kibet will be the main challengers for Yehualaw.

**ELITE FIELD: Men:** Daniel Ebenyo, Eric Kiptanui, Roncer Konga, Bernard Biwott, Victor Kipruto Togom, Jackson Kipleting (all from Kenya); Hiskel Twelde, Afewerki Berhane (both from Eritrea), Abe Gashahun, Mulugeta Debasu (both from Ethiopia).

**Women:** Yalemzerf Yehualaw, Anchinalu Dessie, Sutmee Asefa Kebede (Ethiopia); Betty Chepkemoi Kibet, Nelly Jeptoo (both from Kenya); Mercyline Chelangat (Uganda).