

OPINION 6
IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE
TAKING OVER THE CONTROL?

MONEY 9
SENSEX, NIFTY FALL
FOR SECOND DAY

WORLD 10
OVER 4 LAKH AFGHANS
RETURN HOME FROM PAKISTAN

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY NOVEMBER 21, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Complete Chaos in Uttarkashi

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

A tense situation persists for the 41 workers trapped in the Silkyara tunnel since November 12. Despite it being the ninth day of their ordeal, authorities on Monday are still grappling to devise effective rescue strategies, leaving the fate of the stranded individuals in a precarious balance between hope and despair.

As delays continue, discussions have begun to circulate about the potential man-made nature of this catastrophe, raising questions about Government officials' negligence and a lack of consideration for basic scientific principles in executing infrastructure projects in the vulnerable Himalayan region.

Amid the challenges, there is a glimmer of hope, as international tunnelling expert Arnold Dix has arrived at the disaster site to assess the ongoing rescue efforts. Dix, who leads the Geneva-based International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association, brings his expertise to contribute to the rescue mission.

Rescuers on Monday pushed through a six-inch-wide pipeline through the rubble of the collapsed Silkyara tunnel, a breakthrough that will help them supply larger quantities of food and possibly allow live visuals of the trapped workers.

So far, a four-inch existing tube was being used to supply oxygen and items like dry fruit and medicines into the section

of the tunnel beyond the rubble of the collapsed portion of the under-construction tunnel on the Char Dham route in Uttarakhand.

As the rescue operations unfold, experts are raising concerns about the Government's oversight during the planning and initiation of this project. Criticisms include questions about the project's approval despite concerns about fragile rock strata and the absence of an escape tunnel in the Silkyara project. This has led to speculation about whether due diligence was exercised before the project's implementation.

The 4,531 metre long Silkyara tunnel being constructed under the Radi Pass area is to join the Gangotri and Yamunotri axis at a cost of ₹853.79 crore under the ambitious Char Dham all-weather road project. Geologists, scientists, and environmentalists have been asserting that landslides have increased along the roads since the commencement of the all-weather road project. Founder of Himalayan Environmental Studies and Conservation Organisation (HESCO) and Padma Bhushan recipient Anil Prakash Joshi said the Silkyara incident appears to be a lapse by the construction company.

The work in the mountains is slower and different than work in the plains. It is necessary to consider the geological features of the fragile Himalayas and climate change while taking up infrastructure



International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association president Arnold Dix near the site after a portion of an under-construction tunnel between Silkyara and Dandalgaon on the Brahmkhal-Yamunotri national highway collapsed in Uttarkashi district on Monday PTI

development. He said construction work in the mountains is being done just like the work in the plains and this must be looked into. "We need infrastructure development in our mountains but it has to factor in the geological aspect of the terrain and the impact of climate change which is now a reality," Joshi said.

He said sustainable development has to keep science at the heart of all planning and execution.

MPS Bisht, Geologist at

HNB Garhwal Central University, said whenever taking up such massive engineering work, it is of vital importance to conduct thorough geotechnical and geophysical mapping of the specific rock on which the tunnel is to be constructed. The exercise is a must before initiating any infrastructure project in the mountains. While the work is in progress, one must consistently uphold and monitor the safety measures.

"The rock conditions vary so

geophysical mapping gives details of the rock quality across the mountain. The load-bearing capacity of the mountain rocks is also to be looked at before taking up such projects. For sustainable development, the prescribed checks and set norms have to be strictly followed to avoid any loss in the future," Bisht said.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday. The PM sought

information about the current status of the rescue operation. Now, the authorities are focusing on six options to rescue the stranded workers.

National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHID-CL) director Anshu Manish Khalkho called it the "first breakthrough" at the site. "We have sent the pipe 53 metres to the other side of the rubble and the trapped workers can hear and experience us," he said.

"First achievement, big achievement. The next step is the more vital one and the most important — that is to get them out intact, happy," his colleague Col Deepak Patil said.

Drones and robots from the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) have also been brought to the site to look into the possibility of other escape routes for the trapped men.

Rescue workers were yet to resume the horizontal boring through the debris after a boulder appeared to block the progress of the heavy-duty auger machine earlier this week. But an official statement said this was scheduled to begin in the evening.

The first machine for construction of a vertical rescue shaft — possibly around 80-metre deep — by drilling from near the hilltop has also reached the tunnel. A road to the hilltop has been laid, and the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is arranging for more equipment, the statement said.

Kartarpur Sahib desecrated

PTI/AGENCIES ■ LAHORE

Condemnation poured in after a video of the desecration of Pakistan's Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara went viral. Jagdip Singh Kahlon, the General Secretary of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, has alleged that alcohol and meat were served during a dance party held by Project Management Unit (PMU) on the premises of the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab province.

The party was organised at the reception of the gurdwara on November 18.

However, days after the video, the authorities on Monday dismissed the report. Two PMU officials told PTI that alcoholic beverages were not served or there was no dance at the reception held on November 18. The officials said the video which showed alcohol at the dinner party "must have been doctored for propaganda purposes".

The officials also clarified that the dinner reception was held about two kilometres from the Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in the Project Management Unit (PMU) complex.

Inaugurated on November 9, 2019, on the eve of the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak, the first Guru of Sikhism, Kartarpur has a special significance in the Sikh religion as Guru Nanak had spent the last years of his life at the

place. Separately, the PMU in a statement said a dinner reception was held last weekend for stakeholders for the development of Phase-II of Kartarpur and providing better facilities to the visitors.

"On Saturday night (November 18) the PMU hosted an informal dinner at Kartarpur in which heads or their representatives of all important Government departments of district Narowal, including the judiciary, district administration, police, Rangers, Customs, Anti-Narcotics officials and journalists attended the dinner, the PMU said in the statement. It said the purpose of the event was to enhance coordination and cooperation among all departments/stakeholders concerned with the deployment of Phase II of Kartarpur. It said Narowal Deputy Commissioner and all other participants assured of their complete cooperation and role in further development of Kartarpur and religious tourism. The visa-free Kartarpur corridor links Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan to Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Punjab's Gurdaspur district. The crossing allows devotees from India to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Narowal, some 130 kilometres from Lahore in Pakistan, from Gurudwara Dera Baba Nanak, Gurdaspur district, Punjab, India.

Visakhapatnam harbour blaze destroys 35 boats

PTI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A fire broke out in a jetty area where in which at least 35 fishing boats were gutted, even as the police launched a hunt for 10 to 15 persons who allegedly partied in one of the boats, officials said on Monday. The fire broke out around 11.30 pm on Sunday in a boat owned by Balaji in zero jetty and was doused by 4 am on Monday, officials said. However, no death or injury was reported in the accident, the officials added.

Visakhapatnam Harbour Assistant Commissioner of Police B Moses Paul said police are probing the role of the group of 10 to 15 people who quarrelled over a transaction. "After a boat caught fire, the group untied it and pushed it into the sea but it drifted back towards the boats and sparked a bigger fire," Paul told PTI.

The blaze occurred in an area near the Visakhapatnam Container Terminal and an Indian Oil Corporation facility where fishing boats were anchored. Police received the names of the persons involved in the skirmish while Paul said more clarity over the cause of the fire will emerge on questioning them.

Though 25 fire tenders were



Flames and smoke rise after a fire broke out in a jetty area in Visakhapatnam early on Monday PTI

pressed into service from across the city over time, it was the Navy's Sahara firefighting boat which managed to extinguish the flames by spraying foam and sand, he said.

According to Paul, the fire tenders could not put off the blaze initially because almost every boat had diesel and cooking gas cylinders.

Every 10 to 15 minutes, he said those cylinders exploded.

Visakhapatnam Deputy Commissioner of Police-Zone II K Ananda Reddy said the intervening night of Sunday and Monday was quite windy, causing the fire to spread quickly among the boats made of fibre (plastic) and anchored closely.

"Many of these boats also carry up to 5,000 litres of diesel as the fishermen venture into the sea for weeks. Many boats

also carried LPG cylinders which the fisherfolk use for cooking," Reddy added.

Considering the critical location of the fire, Reddy said the Vizag Steel Plant fire brigade and the Navy were also alerted, while controlling the fire without further spread proved to be a big task.

Visakhapatnam District Fire Officer S Renukayya said he received a call about the acci-

dent around 1 am, prompting him to rush firefighters and 12 fire tenders initially, including seeking help from the National Disaster Response Force and the Visakhapatnam Port Trust.

According to Renukayya, the firefighters managed to control the fire from spreading to other boats in the vicinity within half an hour but it took almost two hours to douse the fire completely.

According to estimates, each boat is valued between ₹35 lakh and ₹50 lakh, Ananda Reddy said. Police booked a case of accidental fire, he added.

Paul said the port city has about 11 jetties, each of which could accommodate the anchorage of up to 60 fishing boats.

Meanwhile, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed sorrow over the fire accident and directed Fisheries Minister Seediri Appalaraju to personally visit the accident spot.

The Chief Minister directed officials to carry out a thorough investigation and find the reasons for it, said an official statement.

Further, the CM instructed officials to support the fishermen who lost their boats and help them in whatever way possible.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) on Monday refuted the allegations levelled against its Chairman Rashmi Saluja with regard to excessive remuneration, terming those as "completely false and erroneous".

In a strongly worded response, the Board expressed its shock and disappointment at the allegations, emphasising that they are not isolated to Dr Rashmi but are a targeted attack on the entire Management and Board.

The statement comes within days of proxy advisory firm InGovern Research alleging that Saluja was paid excessive remuneration.

Religare said the performance-linked remuneration was paid to Saluja after approval of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC), Board, and the shareholders of REL.

"The allegation that the executive chairperson draws a remuneration of more than ₹150 crore per annum is completely false and erroneous. As per the annual report for FY 22-23 of REL, the remuneration for the Executive Chairperson was ₹8.12 crore. Even after including the perquisites value of the

ESOPs, it reached a figure of ₹42.06 crore," Religare said in a statement. It further said that Saluja was reappointed as the Executive Chairperson in February 2023 for a second term for a five-year period through a resolution by the Board and approval of shareholders.

This period has witnessed a historic revival, with Religare completing a one-time settlement of RFL (Religare Finvest Limited) through organic collections and payments exceeding ₹9000 crores to the country's banking system.

Religare further said that Saluja was instrumental in creating value for all the shareholders of REL. The share price of REL, which saw a low of ₹17 in 2020, rose to a high of ₹280 in September 2023. "The ESOP perquisite value is also reflective of this significant value creation a part of which was also shared by her as a shareholder/employee of the company," Religare added.

Currently, Religare management is engaged in a tussle with the Burman family, promoters of FMCG major Dabur India.

Burman family which has hiked its stake in Religare through creeping acquisition

to around 26 per cent, is now proposing to make an open offer for acquiring another 25 per cent stake in the financial services company. As per market regulator Sebi rules, it is mandatory for a company to make an open offer of 26 per cent to all shareholders.

Religare also denied that the Burman family, at a meeting on September 20, had informed Saluja of a proposed open offer.

The Burman family, it may be mentioned, had announced an open offer to buy additional share of REL at ₹235 apiece, amounting to a total consideration of up to ₹2,115 crore in cash.

Religare had objected to the open offer price and sought an independent valuation report.

On allegations that Saluja had liquidated the ESOPs after meeting a representative of the Burman family on September 20, the Religare statement said, "The process of liquidation of ESOPs through financing and sale was set in motion several days before the said meeting."

The actual sale, it added, happened on September 21 and 22 at the prevalent market price and the share sale proceeds were utilised to further invest in Religare group entity.

Retired bureaucrat gives all to Ram Lalla in sacred pledge

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Inspired by the devotional sentiment of Sanatan Dharma, a retired bureaucrat has offered his life's earnings, totalling ₹5 crore, in obeisance to Lord Vishnu with the words, "Tera Tujhko Arpan; Kya Laage Mera" (it is all yours and nothing mine). This contribution is dedicated to the construction and related paraphernalia for the completion of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The temple is scheduled to open its doors in January 2022.

The devotee has not only dedicated his financial savings but also all his movable and immovable property to the purpose of Bhakti. Inspired by the lines from Ayodhya, Lord Vishnu's Aarti, "My offering to you, what will I like?" S Lakshmi Narayanan, former Union

Home Secretary of the 1970 IAS batch, has devoted his life's earnings to Ram Lalla. Although the donor has chosen not to seek public credit, sources in the Temple Trust reveal that, following the consecration of Lord Ram, the donor has committed to commissioning a 151 kg Ramcharitmanas at a cost of ₹5 crore, which will be installed in front of the idol.

Each page of this epic, comprising 10,902 verses, will be crafted from copper. The emerald will be dipped in 24-carat gold, and gold-studded letters will be inscribed. This ambitious endeavor will necessitate 140 kg of copper and five to seven kg of gold, with other metals being employed for decoration. To fund the creation of this unique book, Narayanan has made the decision to sell all his properties



and empty his bank accounts. The resulting work, the 'Manas', will be reverently placed near the feet of Ramlala, as revealed by sources within the trust to The Pioneer.

Narayanan, who recently visited the holy town of Ayodhya with his wife, sought permission from Champat Rai, the General Secretary of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, regarding his desire to make a donation.

The largest asset financing

NBFC in India announced the election of Narayanan as Chairman by the Board of Directors of the company in a board meeting held in Colombo on January 24, 2015. Narayanan has served as an Independent Director of STFC since September 2009. In addition to his distinguished career in civil services, Narayanan has also served as Chairman in a major finance company.

In an interview with Rai, it was mentioned that around ₹1,800 crore is expected to be spent on the construction of the Ram Temple. Rai also stated that 70,000-75,000 people could have easy darshan if the temple is open for 12 hours. Sources reveal that the firm responsible for preparing the design for the new Parliament has agreed to create the gold-studded Ramcharitmanas.

In a brief interaction with

the temple community, the retired IAS officer shared that he received his name due to a vow made to Goddess Lakshmi. During pregnancy, his mother had prayed at Delhi's Birla Temple, also known as Lakshmi Narayan Temple, pledging that if she had a son, she would name him Lakshmi Narayan.

"God has blessed me abundantly throughout my life. I have held prominent positions and my life has been prosperous. Even after retirement, I continue to receive a significant income. Despite this, I am a person of simple tastes, content with basic necessities. My pension remains largely untouched. I believe in returning what God has bestowed upon me. I find it more meaningful to offer His book at the feet of God rather than accumulating wealth in the name of

charity," shared the former Union Home Secretary, accompanied by his wife Saraswati, as he conveyed his thoughts to the people in the temple trust.

In an interview, Nripendra Misra, Chairman of the Ram Temple Construction Committee, stated that the funds for the temple construction are entirely sourced from devotees, with no government involvement. As of the end of September this year, approximately ₹3,500 crore has been collected through donations.

On January 15, 2021, the then President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, initiated the contributions toward the construction of the Ram Mandir by donating ₹5,01,000. The first phase of the project is set to be completed by the end of next month, allowing pilgrims to witness Lord Ram in his child form before January 26, 2024.

Preparations are underway for the grand inauguration of the much-awaited temple on the banks of the Sarayu river in 2024, which will be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 22, 2024. The puja for the occasion will commence on January 14, coinciding with the celebration of Makar Sankranti, and the installation of Lord Ram's idol in the Garbhagriha of the Ram Mandir is scheduled for January 22. "Jai Siya Ram! Today is a day full of emotions. Recently, officials from the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust visited my residence and invited me to Ayodhya for the consecration of the Shri Ram Temple. I feel truly blessed. It is my good fortune that in my lifetime, I will witness this historic occasion," posted PM Modi on social media last month.

CAPSULE

JAWAN, TRIBAL SHOT BY TERRORISTS IN MANIPUR

Imphal: A security force personnel and his driver were shot dead by suspected members of the Imphal Valley-based terror groups in Kangpokpi district of Manipur on Monday, officials said here. The duo were travelling in a vehicle when suspected terror group members belonging to the state's majority community carried out an ambush between Haraothel and Kobsha villages, the officials said. One of the deceased was working with the India Reserve Battalion (IRB), the officials said. The incident took place in an area adjacent to the Singdam dam, which has become a hotspot for insurgent groups to target tribal community members during the ongoing ethnic violence in the northeastern state.

Lucky escape for employees in fire at real estate co office

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Over 40 employees of a real estate and housing company were trapped in a massive fire which broke out in its office in Hazratganj police station area around 5:45 pm on Monday.

Five fire tenders were pressed into service and the rescue operation continued for hours. An employee, Utkarsh Dubey, showed courage as he saved the lives of several of his colleagues. However, he ended up fracturing his hand in a stampede-like situation.

As per reports, the fire broke out in the office of Rudra Real Estate and Poonawala Housing Loan on the second floor of Business Park Building on Naval Kishore Road in Hazratganj on Monday evening. The outbreak and intensity of the fire was so sudden that about 40 employees were trapped in the office. With no way out, they cried for help.

Five fire tenders reached the spot and doused the flames in about an hour, after which those trapped inside were rescued. Three of the employees were admitted to Civil hospital as they complained of suffocation. District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar also reached the spot and took stock of the situation.



Fire workers conducting a rescue operation outside a building where the fire broke out on Monday

Pioneer

Chief Fire Officer (CFO) Mangesh Kumar said five vehicles from the Hazratganj fire station reached the spot for the rescue operation. An investigation revealed that the fire broke out due to a short-circuit in the building. The fire was controlled in time and a major tragedy was averted. Utkarsh Dubey told mediapersons that after seeing smoke, he alerted his colleagues. "There was

only one way out. By the time we thought about running downstairs, a gush of fire scared us into staying put. All of us were crying for help. I broke the window panes and fractured my hand during a stampede-like situation. Around 25-30 employees were rescued after that while 10 to 12 people were still trapped inside when the fire brigade reached there," he said. Even as

the losses were being estimated, initial investigation revealed that files, computers, tables, furniture, etc were reduced to ashes. The CFO said initial investigation revealed that the fire was caused by a short-circuit. "A notice will be issued to the building owner to know if he had got the NOC. Appropriate action will be taken if any laxity is found," he added.

Civil among 4 hosps being modernised by UP govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

To ensure quality healthcare services for the people of Uttar Pradesh, the Yogi Adityanath government has initiated the process for revitalisation of four main state hospitals. In line with Chief Minister Yogi's vision for the modernisation of hospitals, a detailed action plan has been developed.

Working on this, the state government has commenced the renovation process for Gautam Buddha Nagar's district hospital, district hospital of Siddharth Nagar (Bansi), Maharaja Chet Singh Hospital of Bhadohi and Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee (Civil) Hospital in Lucknow.

Thousands of modern medical equipment will be purchased to complete the upgradation process in these hospitals.

Simultaneously, the plan to equip hospitals with modern furniture and equipment will also be completed. In this sequence, administrative and financial approval has been given for the allocation of total funds of Rs 9.98 crore, and instructions have also been issued by the government to complete all these proposed works expeditiously.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's commitment to enhancing healthcare facilities is being realised through the



ongoing implementation of the action plan for hospital upgradation in the state. It is noteworthy that the hospital of Siddharthnagar (Bansi) will incur an expenditure of a total of 3.25 crore for the purchase of thousands of medical equipment, furniture, and other furnishings for more than 205 units.

Similarly, the district hospital in Gautam Buddha Nagar will spend Rs 2.98 crore, Maharaja Chet Singh Hospital in Bhadohi will spend Rs 2.36 crore, and Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee (Civil) Hospital in Lucknow will spend Rs 1.47 crore for the purchase of medical equipment. All these procurement and upgradation processes will be completed under the supervision of the director general of Medical and Health Services Department as per the rule-

book of the Uttar Pradesh government.

The ophthalmic operating microscope is the main medical equipment for purchase in Lucknow Civil Hospital. A budget of Rs 45 lakh has been allocated for the procurement of this microscope, which holds significant importance in various aspects. Similarly, for the hospital of Siddharthnagar (Bansi), the process of purchasing essential equipment, including the emergency unit, ICU ward, operation theater, dental, orthopedic, EMT, pathology, physiotherapy, and radiology has been initiated. On the same lines, the process of medical equipment modernisation will also be implemented in Maharaja Chet Singh Hospital of Bhadohi and district hospital of Gautam Buddha Nagar.

Man duped of ₹1.27 lakh on pretext of job in Saudi Arabia

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

His dream to earn in Saudi Arabia was shattered when it was revealed to him that the company for which he was sent there did not exist. He had to spend three months with 15 others like him in a room in a foreign country. When he requested his facilitator to bail him out, he was asked to cough up money for travel expenses. After coming back, he lodged a complaint against the Hazratganj-based company that sends people overseas for jobs.

The victim, Waris Ali of Amethi, alleged that he had to

cough up a total of Rs 1.27 lakh for the job offer and then his return to India as the facilitator had given him a fake appointment letter. The victim alleged that several persons like him were duped.

As per reports, Waris met one Shafiq Khan, who runs the office of the company called Kite Tour and Travel on the third floor of Shalimar Square in the area some time ago for a job in gulf countries.

Shafiq promised him a job and charged Rs 55,000 as fee for sending him to Saudi Arabia as an operator in a company and Rs 3,000 as Lucknow to Delhi travel

expenses.

After he made the payment, Waris was sent to Saudi Arabia. "On reaching there, I found that there was no such company as told by Shafiq. There were 15 others like me who were kept in a small room in Saudi Arabia for three months without any work. We were later transported to Riyadh where we were not assigned any job. I was not given a single penny during this period and I ran out of all the money I had. I had to borrow money from some Indians who were working there," he said.

He said he and his family

were anxious about his future and requested Shafiq to send him back to India.

"Shafiq demanded 3,000 riyal (around INR 70,000) and said that otherwise, he would implicate me in a case and I would be sent to jail," the victim alleged. He said his family somehow arranged Rs 69,000 which they were asked to transfer in the bank account of Trinity Air Tour and Travel Company. Police registered a case for criminal breach of trust forgery and other counts and started investigation.

Sources said there are several such companies operating in Hazratganj. "Some of these

companies are genuine while a few of them fleece jobseekers. The local police are in the know of these fraudulent practices but they turn Nelson's eye as company owners grease their palms," the sources said.

In another incident, five youths were duped of over Rs 2 lakh by two accused in Vibhuti Khand police station area. The office of the company is located in Vibhuti Khand while the owner Salim Ansari, along with his aide Inderjeet, also has a branch in Danapur, Patna. A case was registered in this regard on Sunday.

One of the complainants,

Brishbhan Yadav of Gopalganj in Bihar, said he and other victims — Sonu Kumar, Jitendra Vishwakarma, Mohammed Shariq and Mahendra Vishwakarma — paid the money to Salim Ansari and Inderjeet for a job in Kuwait. "We found an advertisement on Facebook about a company offering a job in Kuwait. After we contacted Salim, he and Inderjeet collected the money from us and fled UP while threatening us with dire consequences," the victim said.

Meanwhile, a woman, Aparajita Singh of Gudamba, was duped of over Rs 1.5

lakh in the name of a job in Amazon. The victim said she was using Instagram when she inadvertently clicked a link which redirected her to a webpage in which she found the mobile number of one Pragati Dubey. "She introduced herself as a recruiter and manager in Amazon for the Lucknow region. She sent a link to Telegram which had a registration form. I was given online work and she got me to transfer Rs 1.56 lakh in a bank account. It later dawned upon me that I had been duped. She is not attending the calls now," the victim said.

Youth kills wife five months after marriage, ends life

Lucknow (PNS): In a shocking incident reported from Meerut, a youth killed his wife and later ended his life. Surprisingly, he also called his in-laws after killing his wife and informed them about the murder of their daughter. The entire family is in a state of shock and grief as the deceased were married just five months back.

According to reports, Suraj used to work as a pizza delivery boy. He was married to Priya, daughter of Sanjay of village Sikhedra under Incholi police station, about five months ago. Priya's family came to know later that Suraj was a psychopath. When the marriage was solemnised, despite Suraj being a psychopath, no one had any idea that he would suddenly take such a step.

According to local residents, Suraj was the eldest among five siblings. It was his responsibility to take care of the family. However, he recently became psychotic and his treatment was also going on.

On Monday, Suraj left the house on motorcycle in the afternoon on the pretext of taking Priya to the doctor. Half an hour later, Suraj called Priya's family and informed them that he had murdered their daughter and was going to kill himself. The family did not believe him immediately but after being informed about the incident by the police, the members of both the families reached the spot.

According to the police, a complaint was filed by Priya's family that Suraj was mentally retarded and that his family had not informed them about this at the time of marriage.

Meanwhile, a class XI girl student was found hanging at her house in Lucknow's Dubagga area on Monday. Police said the girl was suffering from some mental disease and ended her life under a bout of depression. As per reports, the family of the girl, identified as Anjali of Barawan Khurd, found her hanging and called police. "I had gone out for work while my wife was at our old house. Around 2 pm, when my wife reached there, she found Anjali hanging from the ceiling with a dupatta tied around her neck," deceased's father Amarnath said.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MANJOO LATA SHARMA to MANJU LATA SHARMA. In future I Shall be known as MANJU LATA SHARMA. MANJU LATA SHARMA W/o Honey Sharma, 228/207, Gariwan Tola, Gudiya Talab, Khuldabad, Prayagraj.

NOTICE

My son Anshman Pratap Singh is studying ICSE Vlllth in your School. My son name is written as Anshman Pratap Singh in your School whereas the deponent wants to change his son's name to Anshmaan Singh Yadav S/o Shiv Bahadur, Ishwari Khara Korari Kalan (Unnao)

NOTICE

I Kamlesh Kumar Singh working at Army Medical Corps Centre & Collage Lucknow. In my Service Record my son name spelling has been written as Aniketh Kumar Singh. While the correct spelling is Aniket Kumar Singh. Resident of flat No.- 203 Shristhi Apartment, Sri Nagar Colony, Aktha, Sarnath, Varanasi (U.P.) 221007.

NOTICE

This is to inform the general public that the details of the following members of my family have been wrongly recorded in my Army Record Army No. 2998640A-1- LAUJARI DEVI 10/07/1950 (Mother) 2- LAXMI DEVI 10/01/1980 (Wife) 3- BHAGAWAN SINGH 01/11/1998 (Son) 4- ANKIT SINGH YADAV 09/11/2000 (Son) The correct and correct details are as follows:-1-LAVAJARIYA 01/01/1957, 2-LAKSHMI DEVI 01/01/1976, 3-BHAGAVAN YADAV 17/01/2002, 4- ANKIT YADAV 04/04/2004 HAV Jai Prakash Singh Yadav, son of Rambachan Singh Yadav, Village Para, Phulai Ka Pura, Chauraboj, Ghazipur.

सूचना

मैंने अपना नाम Ramzan Sultan Ahmad Ansari से बदलकर Ramzan Ahmad रख लिया है, Ramzan Ahmad S/o Sultan Ahmad R/o-132/442, बाबू पुरवा कानपुर

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mohammad Saqib S/o Mohammad Sami to Mohd Saqib S/o Mohd Sami R/o 49/5, Kashiram Colony, Sanigawan Road, Kanpur. 208021

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MEHJABI to MAHZABIN W/o MOHAMMAD NIZAM. In future I shall be Known as MAHZABIN W/o MOHAMMAD NIZAM 89/305 GURBAT ULLAH PARK DEPUTY KA PADAO, Kanpur UP

NOTICE

I have changed my name from MOHD ASLAM to MOHAMMAD ASLAM S/o SIRAJ AHMAD. In future I shall be Known as MOHAMMAD ASLAM S/o SIRAJ AHMAD 77/133 COOLIE BAZAR Kanpur UP 208001

NOTICE

I 15427455A NK Kallappa Lad R/o Village & Post- Kednur, Tehsil - District - Belagavi, State- Karnataka Pin-591143 hereby declared that my father's name and date of birth wrongly entered in my service documents as Balvant and date of birth 05 June 1957. Instead of correct name Balavant Punnappa Lad and date of birth 01 January 1956 vide affidavit 81AE763618 dated 07 November 2023 notary at Lucknow.

UP hub of Buddhist heritage: Minister

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Tourism and Culture Minister Jaiveer Singh highlighted Uttar Pradesh's significance as a hub of Buddhist heritage, emphasising the presence of six renowned Buddhist circuits within the state.

Among these, Sankisa holds a special place in the Buddhist pilgrimage map. In a bid to enhance the Buddhist tourism experience, the government plans to establish a Buddhist museum and centres that will serve as educational and experiential hubs for tourists seeking insights into Buddhism, Singh said while speaking at the Buddhist Conclave at Shanti Upvan in Alambagh on Monday.

Singh underscored Prime Minister Narendra Modi's sentiment that 'Others gave war (yudh) to the world, but India gave Buddha (peace) to the world,' emphasising the mes-



sage of peace. By following the path shown by Lord Buddha, Singh believes that many problems will naturally find resolution.

The minister inaugurated a painting exhibition organised by Lalit Kala Akademi on the theme of Buddha. The minister also donated a special patra, crafted in India after 2500 years, to Buddhist monks. Earlier it used to come from Thailand.

Dr Richard Dixie, a scholar from Britain, said that their study identified 20,000 known and unknown Buddhist sites in India. Highlighting the global interest in Buddhist pilgrimage, especially to Uttar Pradesh, Dixie stated that the state is a magnificent destination for millions of Buddhists worldwide. He emphasised the possibility of economic and tourism growth if only a portion of the 600 million

Buddhists worldwide choose to visit India, particularly the Buddhist circuit in Uttar Pradesh.

The ongoing 10-day Buddhist Conclave, organised in collaboration with the Light of Buddhism Foundation International and Uttar Pradesh Tourism department, drew devotees from Southeast Asia and European countries. The event commenced with a procession featuring rituals and programmes dedicated to Buddha.

The Buddhist Conclave, initiated in Sankisa on November 18, continues its journey through various locations in the state. The collaborative efforts of the state government and the Uttar Pradesh Tourism department in developing sites associated with Buddha under the Buddhist Circuit were acknowledged, setting a positive tone for the Dhamma Yatra.

LDA to change layout of Rashtriya Purna Sthal

Lucknow (PNS): The Lucknow Development Authority (LDA) has once again decided to change the layout of 'Rashtriya Purna Sthal' which will be coming up in Vasant Kunj housing scheme in Dubagga. Initially, the estimated cost of the proposed project was Rs 110 crore, but the change in design would take it to Rs 135 crore. Earlier on Sunday, the LDA administration had announced to alter the blueprint of outer ring road for smooth flow of traffic and safety of commuters.

In a meeting held on Monday with the officials and engineers to discuss the change in layout of the ongoing project, LDA Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi said the project is coming up on a 65-acre land.

He said there would be an artificial lake on one side of the project. He added that the waterbody would be constructed in an area measuring two acres and three statues would be installed in the centre. There would be statues of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee and Deen Dayal Upadhyaya for their selfless contribution to the nation, he added.

The VC said that the work to change the layout has started on a war footing as the project has to be completed in April next year.

RLD leader visits Ram Janmabhoomi

Lucknow (PNS): Rashtriya Lok Dal national spokesperson Anil Dubey visited Ram Janmabhoomi on Monday and prayed for peace and prosperity in the country.

He was in Ayodhya to galvanize the local leaders and party workers. He also prayed for the well-being of RLD national president Jayant Chaudhary and the expansion of the party.

Giving this information, RLD state general secretary Vishvesh Nath Mishra alias Suddu Mishra said that the party national spokesperson visited Ram Janmabhoomi along with party colleagues, worshipped Ram Lalla after taking part in a party programme.

Dubey said RLD supremo Jayant Chaudhary was working to realise the vision of Lord Ram's 'adarsh Ram rajya' with which Mahatma Gandhi and Chaudhary Charan Singh were also convinced fully.

Dubey said he prayed that the evil forces in the country may be destroyed and eternal culture and mutual brotherhood should thrive in the country.

CITYBRIEFS

EXHIBITION, POSTER COMPETITION

The Archaeology department organised an exhibition and poster competition on the historical and archaeological heritage of Uttar Pradesh on the occasion of World Heritage Week. The chief guest on the occasion was Brig Rakesh Dutt, who inaugurated the programme. An exhibition has also been organised at Chhattar Manzil and it will remain open throughout the week. Director of Archaeology department Renu Dwivedi said that the programme is being organised in collaboration with two social organisations. A poster competition was organised for the poor and working class students and the best 20 participants were given stationery kits and certificates. She said photo exhibitions and quiz competitions are being organised through mobile vans in Kanpur, Unnao, Barabanki, Ayodhya, and Sitapur. The exhibition in the directorate will be open till November 25. She said 15 districts are being covered under the World Heritage Week. The programme aims to promote these heritage sites.

DC INSPECTS HEALTH ATMS

Divisional Commissioner Dr Roshan Jacob inspected the health ATMs installed by Smart City on Monday. She first took stock of the Lohia Chowk and LDA office health ATM centres and issued necessary guidelines for the officials concerned. The divisional commissioner said that the health ATMs should open on time everyday. Seeking information about the availability of basic medicines in the health ATMs, she said there should not be any shortage in the availability of

5-yr-old killed by neighbour

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident, a five-year-old boy was murdered by his neighbour to take revenge, in Muzaffarnagar.

The accused, named Asifa, allegedly kidnapped the boy while he was playing outside and later strangled him to death as an act of 'revenge' on his mother.

Asifa was produced in the court on Monday and sent to jail.

The accused confessed to her crime in front of the police, claiming her neighbour Danista Begum (the boy's mother) failed to show her respect and often insulted her, which led her to take such an extreme step.

The boy went missing from his house on Saturday (November 11) and his body was found inside a sack three days later on the outskirts of Tewra village.

The boy's father had filed a missing complaint at Kakrauli police station after the family failed to locate the boy in the village. Initially, a case was registered against unknown people, claimed the local police. However, after a thorough investigation, the boy's skullcap, slippers and the rope used to choke the boy were seized from the house of the accused on Sunday after which Asifa was arrested.

Asifa reportedly locked the child inside her house and subsequently strangled him to death. In her statement, Asifa claimed that Danista Begum repeatedly hurled slurs at her and she even barred her from entering her (Danista Begum's) house.

Sunil Kasana, SHO of Kakrauli, said that Asifa was facing murder charges and more evidence was being collected as the probe in the murder case was underway.

LOANS SANCTIONED, DISBURSED

basic medicines. Blood and urine tests should also be done at all the health ATM centres, she added. Expressing displeasure over the lack of cleanliness at Lohia Chowk health ATM centre, she reprimanded the officials concerned and said no laxity would be tolerated. Information about how many people come every day for health check-up was also taken from the officials concerned.



Managing director and CEO of Indian Bank SL Jain on Monday sanctioned loans of Rs 105 crore and disbursed loans of Rs 75 crore to customers in the 'Credit Outreach Programme' organised on the Hazratganj campus of the bank. Under this programme, 250 customers of the state have received loan facility. Jain also spoke to reporters after the programme and answered their questions. He went to the SHG stalls set up at the venue and interacted with the customers.

Kanwar Yatra held in UP but curfew imposed in Raj on Ram Navami: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sharp criticism of the Congress, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath emphasised that while the Rajasthan government enforces curfew on Ram Navami, in Uttar Pradesh, peaceful kanwar yatra involving four crore people proceeds without any disruption. In the electoral battleground of Rajasthan, Yogi Adityanath is making waves with his extensive rallies. On Monday, he actively connected with voters in Rajasthan, rallying support for the Bharatiya Janata Party. UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath sought votes in support of Amer MLA, former BJP state president and party candidate Satish Punia. He emphasised the historical significance of Rajasthan, a land that has bestowed the world with illustrious figures like Prithviraj Chauhan, Maharana Pratap, and Surajmal. Highlighting the legacy of former Vice President and Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, who transformed Rajasthan into a prominent tourism hub, Yogi dityanath

lamented the decline in development, tourism and the well-being of farmers over the past five years. He pointed out the prevalence of issues such as crime, hooliganism, cow smuggling, cybercrime and corruption in the state, highlighting Rajasthan's unfortunate distinction as the leader in paper leaks. Drawing a contrast between Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, he pointed out the Congress government's imposition of curfew during Ram Navami in Rajasthan, contrasting it with the smooth conduct of kanwar yatras in UP, where four crore people participate without any disruptions. He emphasised the grandeur with which every event, including festivals like the Festival of Lights, is celebrated in Uttar Pradesh. Chief Minister Yogi, who spoke out in support of Ram Bilas Meena in Lalso, said that Rajasthan suffered much loss over the past five years. He described the current state of Rajasthan as one of distress, citing incidents like the murder of Kanhaiya Lal and threats to the safety of sisters and daughters. According to him,



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath addressing an election rally in Rajasthan on Monday

development has stagnated, unemployment among the youth has risen, and there is a standstill in progress. He said there had been

incidents of infiltration during the Congress rule, but the terrorist leaders now knew that any such activity in India would result in a strong

response from the Indian soldiers, who would then enter their hideouts to neutralise the threat. Chief Minister Yogi

emphasised the transformation of India under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, stating that in New India, no one faces harassment and

wrongdoers are held accountable. He highlighted the substantial progress in infrastructure, citing the construction of 38 kilometres of highways every day across the country. Addressing the global COVID-19 situation, Chief Minister Yogi noted the increasing cases in many countries, including America and China. However, he reassured the public by pointing out that India has successfully developed a vaccine that provides protection to 142 crore people. In Ramgarh assembly constituency, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath called for the victory of candidates Jai Ahuja, Rajgarh candidate Bannaram Meena, Ramesh Khinchi from Kathumar and Jairam Jatav from Alwar Rural assembly constituencies. He criticised the current government, stating that it has capitulated to the influence of the mafia. He charged that the Congress party supports such criminal elements. Drawing a parallel with Uttar Pradesh, he highlighted the decisive action taken against the mafia through the use of bulldozers. Chief Minister Yogi urged the

voters to bring in the double-engine government, emphasising that a similar crackdown on the mafia could be expected in this region as well. He credited Prime Minister Modi for accomplishing tasks that the Congress could not achieve in 55-60 years within a span of nine and a half years. Yogi also drew attention to the contrasting actions of Congress leaders during the COVID-19 pandemic, claiming that while some were abroad, BJP leaders were actively involved with the people. In the city assembly constituency of Bharatpur district, Chief Minister Yogi sought votes for BJP candidate Jawahar Singh Bedam. "Now is the moment to use democracy to take revenge for the suffering endured over the past five years. Incidents used to occur on a daily basis during the Congress period. Congress got innocent Sikhs killed in 1984. They abuse our Giriraj Maharaj and insult Braj Bhoomi and Kanha. Had there been a BJP MLA here, beef would not have been found in the car," he said.

CM reviews preparations for Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra

‘Every citizen has a role to play in realising vision of Developed India’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Monday, reviewed the preparations for organising the 'Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra' and gave necessary guidelines. He said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the last nine and a half years had been instrumental in creating a 'New India, Prosperous India'. "The prime minister envisions India achieving developed nation status by the centenary year of independence in 2047. As responsible citizens, we all have to play our role in realising this vision," Yogi Adityanath said. On the occasion of Tribal Pride Day on November 15, the nationwide 'Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra' was launched by the prime minister. Through the Yatra, all 57,709 gram panchayats and 2,341 urban areas of the state are to be covered by January 26, 2024. Aligned with the vision of inclusive development, the yatra intends to diligently extend the benefits of both Central and state government public welfare schemes to every eligible individual across the nation. This yatra is poised to be a significant stride towards broader outreach and the empowerment of citizens,

he pointed out. Yogi Adityanath said that schemes like PM Awas Yojana (Rural), National Rural Livelihood Mission, PM Kisan, Fasal Bima Yojana (crop insurance scheme), Poshan Abhiyan, Ujjwala Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, Jan Aushadhi Yojana and PM Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana should be included under the 'Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra'. People should benefit from information about the Skill Cell Anemia Eradication Mission, enrollment opportunities in Eklavya Model Residential Schools, and scholarship schemes in tribal-dominated areas, he added. The yatra involves direct contact with the common people, creating awareness among them and providing them access to sanitation facilities, essential financial services, electricity connections, LPG cylinders, housing for the poor, food security, proper nutrition, reliable health services, clean drinking water, etc. It is imperative to operate in a mission mode to ensure the effective implementation of welfare schemes. The oath of 'Panch Pran' should also be administered to the citizens present in the programmes organised during the yatra. "During the yatra, it is

essential to gather feedback from beneficiaries of various schemes. Engage with progressive farmers, acknowledging and honouring their contributions. Celebrate the achievements of gram panchayats that have attained 100 per cent completion of schemes such as the Ayushman Card, Jal Jeevan Mission, Jan Dhan Yojana, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, and ODF Plus status," he said. Various public participation programs like quiz competitions, felicitations of local players, health camps, and cultural programmes would be organised at the venue. He said routes should be selected for the Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra. In this regard, committees have been formed under the leadership of the chief secretary at the state level, the district magistrate at the district level and local bodies, and gram pradhan at the gram panchayat level. Proper communication with the local communities is essential, and in areas where programmes are scheduled, advance notice should be provided to the regional public. Adequate publicity measures should be implemented to ensure widespread awareness of the events, he added. Accountants, ASHA workers, primary school principals,

panchayat secretaries, Anganwadi workers, panchayat assistants, Rozgar Sevaks, post masters, BC Sakhis, etc. will play an important role in the success of the yatra. The Agriculture Department in rural areas and the Urban Development Department in urban areas will serve as the nodal departments, ensuring effective coordination for the yatra. All government departments are expected to engage in the 'Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra'. The presence of ministers from the state government and local public representatives would be ensured at the Yatra programmes. To promote various public welfare schemes, materials such as handbills, published in simple language, would be distributed. A concrete action plan would be made for the 'Vikas Bharat Sankalp Yatra', from the gram panchayat to the government level. The public would be made aware of the success stories resulting from innovative efforts by both the Central and state governments, bringing positive changes to the lives of ordinary citizens. Vehicles used during the journey would be equipped with GPS for continuous monitoring of their activities.

UPSRTC earns over ₹32.5L in one month

Lucknow (PNS): The Yogi Adityanath government is consistently implementing measures to transform state departments that previously incurred losses under previous administrations into entities that generate surplus revenue. This ongoing initiative is yielding positive results, as these departments have not only successfully overcome financial challenges but have also emerged as revenue-surplus entities. As part of this strategy, the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation consistently conducts revenue collection and investigation campaigns to address issues such as ticketless travel and improper bookings for goods. In line with these efforts, enforcement personnel from the UPSRTC carried out inspections in October. This proactive action resulted in the department generating an impressive revenue of Rs 32,58,385 in a single month. UPSRTC General Manager (Personnel) Ashok Kumar, stated that as per the intention of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, several steps were taken to recover the transport corporation from losses. As a result, the corporation has gained significant profits in the past six and a half years. For this purpose, regular inspections of the corporation's buses are conducted through a strategically formed Sumo squad and interceptors at the headquarters level.

Clerics divided over ban on halal-certified products

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Even as Muslim clerics are divided over the ban imposed on the sale of halal-certified products by the Uttar Pradesh government, All India Muslim Personal Law Board and Samajwadi Party have opposed the ban. The SP termed the ban as a move to polarise voters ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The AIMPLB said that there was nothing illegal in halal certificates. Its spokesperson Qasim Rasool Ilyas said that in Islam there were restrictions on certain things which could not be eaten. He said halal certificates made it easy for the Muslim community to buy Sharia compliant food products that were permitted in the religion. He said that agencies issuing halal certificates were duly recognised. Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind has issued a statement after the ban imposed on halal certified products by the UP government. Jamiat has been giving halal certification and an FIR was lodged against it in

Lucknow on Saturday. The organisation said that it had a valid certificate regarding halal and authorisation from the commerce ministry. It said that halal certificates were being issued with transparency and honesty. However, prominent Muslim cleric of Bareilly sect, Maulana Shahbuddin said that halal tag could be given to meat products only and not to everything. He said that in the Shariat the world halal was being used only for the meat of animals hence its use for any other item was not proper. He said that consumption of other things could be legal or illegal but the halal tag could not be used for it. Maulana Sufiyan Nizami of Darul Uloom Firangi Mahal, Lucknow said that Muslim must have the liberty on what to eat or consume as per their religious belief and there should be no restriction on halal certified products. He said that the ban on halal certified products would hamper exports and would adversely impact the economy. All India Shia Chand

Committee chairman Maulana Saif Abbas said that putting halal tags was meant to target a particular community. "Throughout my life I have never heard of the word 'halal' or 'jhatka' except for meat. Neither there is any mention of halal in Shariat other than for meat," Maulana Saif said. He said that there were certain agencies which had been issuing halal tags for even clothes which should be prohibited. Maulana Saif demanded stern action against agencies issuing such certificates. The opposition parties, including Congress and Samajwadi Party, have termed the ban as a move to polarise voters before the Lok Sabha polls. UP Congress Minority department chairman Shah Nawaz Alam said that sensing defeat, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party was adopting the tricks for polarisation of voters. SP spokesperson IP Singh said that such bans would not help in easing the real problem of the people and the BJP was not going to gain anything from it.

AKY reiterates demand for caste census

Lucknow (PNS): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav has reiterated his demand for caste based census, arguing that there are many people from backward communities and classes who are yet to be brought into the mainstream and get their due share in power structure. Yadav, who was in Saifai on Monday, said that his party would continue to work towards ensuring that people from backward communities and classes get their rights and respect. "The whole country today wants a caste census because after so many years of independence there are many backward people whose counting could not be done

and we could not bring them into the mainstream," the Samajwadi Party president said. "There are many castes in the country which do not have any identification. Therefore, the voice which was once raised from Uttar Pradesh for a caste census, is now also being raised in Bihar. We know that people of Haryana also want this census," he said. Akhilesh Yadav said after the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, his party would ensure a caste census in the country so that the people get their rights and due respect. The Congress has also been demanding a caste census and has promised to get the survey done if voted to

power at the Centre. The Nitish Kumar-led Janata Dal (United) government in Bihar has already released findings of its caste survey, months ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Yadav also spoke against the Centre's Agniveer scheme for recruiting soldiers. In the SP manifesto for Lok Sabha polls, the party would promise to end the scheme, he said. "I want to say this to you as the youth of Haryana are joining as Agniveers. I want to tell them that the first promise in the 2024 Lok Sabha poll manifesto of the Samajwadi Party will be to end the Agniveer system and restore the earlier system of recruitment," Yadav said.

UPEIDA to pump in over ₹7k cr for industrial corridors

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Along with improving the connectivity of the state by constructing new expressways, the Yogi Adityanath government is also working on developing them as industrial corridors by establishing industrial centres along these expressways with an estimated budget of more than Rs 7,000 crore. In this regard, on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) has identified sites for industrial centres. According to the plan, UPEIDA will establish industrial centres along five expressways in the state. These include the Agra-Lucknow Expressway, Purvanchal Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway, Gorakhpur Link Expressway and Ganga Expressway. UPEIDA presented details of the identified industrial corridors along these five expressways to the chief minister in a high-level meeting on Saturday. According to this, 11 sites have been chosen for industrial corridors along the Ganga Expressway, which connects a total of 12 districts in the state, with a total area of 1522 hectare. The estimated expenditure on this is around Rs 2,300 crore.

Similarly, six sites have been identified along the Bundelkhand Expressway connecting seven districts. The proposed area for this is 1,884 hectares, with an estimated expenditure of more than Rs 1,500 crore. Similarly, five sites have been selected in 10 districts connected to the Agra-Lucknow Expressway. The total area for this is 532 hectare and the estimated expenditure for its development is around Rs 650 crore. Meanwhile, five places have been identified for the industrial corridor on the Purvanchal Expressway connecting nine districts, the proposed area of which is 1,586 hectares and the estimated expenditure is likely to be Rs 2,300 crore. The fifth and final expressway is the Gorakhpur Link Expressway. For this, two sites have been chosen in four districts for industrial centres, with a total area of 345 hectare and an estimated expenditure of Rs 320 crore. In total, more than 30 sites have been identified along these five expressways, with a total area exceeding 5,800 hectare. All 108 villages associated with the identified 30 sites by UPEIDA have been notified by the state government. Additionally, Rs 200 crore has been released to the respective six district magistrates for land

purchase. Moreover, an order has also been issued to release Rs 1,500 crore on the lines of Bundelkhand Industrial Authority for purchasing land. Determining the rates for purchasing land at the district level is currently underway. It is noteworthy that Uttar Pradesh is the state with the highest number of expressways in the country. Currently Purvanchal Expressway, Bundelkhand Expressway, Agra-Lucknow Expressway, Noida-Greater Noida Expressway, Meerut-Delhi Expressway and Yamuna Expressway are operational in the state. Additionally, construction is progressing rapidly on Gorakhpur Link Expressway, Ballia Link Expressway, Ganga Expressway, Lucknow-Kanpur Expressway, Delhi-Saharanpur-Dehradun Expressway, G h a z i a b a d - K a n p u r Expressway and Gorakhpur-Siliguri Expressway. Similar to the development activities along the Yamuna Expressway, where industrial centres are being established through various commercial and residential schemes, including Noida International Airport, Film City, Toy Park, and Logistics Park, similar activities are anticipated along the other expressways.

Engineer killed in blast at sugar mill in Ayodhya

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An electrical engineer was killed while some others were injured in a powerful blast in the sugar production plant in Sahodaya Sugar Mill of Ayodhya district. The blast took place on Monday afternoon. Reports said that while staff members were working in Sahodaya Sugar Mill in Ayodhya, a powerful blast took place in which a 38-year-old electrical engineer Vipin Singh was critically injured. He was rushed to a nearby hospital but the doctors pronounced him dead upon arrival. The reason for the blast is not yet clear. After the incident, the local police along with senior officers visited the spot to investigate the cause behind the blast. The body was sent for post-mortem and further investigations are on. Meanwhile, in another tragic incident in Budaun district, three kids, aged two to five, swallowed rat poison by accident, thinking it was sugar and one of them died. Reports said that some monkeys threw a packet containing powder (reportedly rat poison) from a tree as they played in a residential compound on Saturday evening.

Shortly after consuming the powder, the children started crying, after which their parents rushed them to a local hospital. Atif Ali (2) passed away, according to the police, while his elder brother Rahat Ali (4) and their neighbour's daughter Mannat (5) are still receiving medical attention. Guddu Ali, Atif's father and a carpenter who lives in the Wazirganj neighbourhood, claimed that the incident happened while the neighbourhood kids were playing together. My elder son Alshaiz saw that they were in distress when froth began to emerge from their lips and informed us. We hurriedly rushed the three kids to the hospital, where Atif passed away from poisoning as he consumed most of the powder. Station house officer of Wazirganj police station said by the time police learnt of the incident late on Saturday, the family had already buried the deceased. "We discovered that it was an accident and that the family had not filed any complaints after consulting with the doctor and the locals. The other two children's conditions are stable. We are still looking for the source of the toxic material," he added.



INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK

Patti Branch (2511)
House No. - 2, Ward No. 2 Civil Line,
Patti Town, District Pratapgarh - 230135
Email: iob2511@iob.in, Mob No.7045860503

Possession Notice [Rule 8(1)]
Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (For Immovable Properties)
Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of the Indian Overseas Bank Under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & 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 a Demand Notice as detailed here in below calling upon the borrower to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, Notice is hereby given to the **Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors** and the public in general that is undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the properties Described herein below in exercise of the power conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on mentioned Date.
The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charges of the **Indian Overseas Bank** for the amounts and interest there on mentioned against account herein below.
The Borrowers/Mortgagors/Guarantors attention is invited to provisions of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, In respect of the time available to them, to redeem the secured assets.
Details as under:

Sl No.	Name of the Borrowers/ Mortgagors with Address	Dues Claimed in Demand Notice	Description of Secured Assets
1.	Borrower/Mortgagor : (1) M/s. Pant Nagar Agro Beej Bhandar Proprietor : Mr. Akhilesh Kumar Tiwari S/o Mr. Shri Ram Sundar Tiwari (2) Mr. Akhilesh Kumar Tiwari S/o Mr. Shri Ram Sundar Tiwari Address of Both : Gram Gaura Maafi, Aashpur, Devsra, Tehsil Patti, District Pratapgarh - 230135. Date of Possession Notice: 17.11.2023	10,86,793.65/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Eighty Six Thousand Seven Hundred Ninety Three and Sixty Five Paise only) as on	Equitable Mortgage of Property situated at Plot No. 87 Mi, Village Tardaha, Pargana & Tehsil Patti, Pratapgarh - 230135 Area 127.89 Sq.Mtr. in the name of Mr. Akhilesh Kumar Tiwari S/o Mr. Ram Sundar Tiwari. Boundaries: East: Land of Prem Narayan, West: Remaining Part of the Land in the Possession of Nisha Kant, North: Remaining Part of the Land, South: Chak Marg.

Date: 21.11.2023**Place: Patti****Authorised Officer Indian Overseas Bank**



Devotees performing rituals of 'Chhath Pujā' in Kanpur on Monday.

PTI

NSI to start short term course on sugar refinery operations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In order to provide competent manpower well versed in refined and specialty sugar production, the National Sugar Institute (NSI) will start a short term course on 'Sugar Refinery Operations' from April next year. Till a couple of years ago the country used to produce only white sugar by sulphitation process but to cope with the requirement of industrial users and also considering consumer preferences for better quality sugar out of the 532 operational sugar factories, about 80 factories have converted their process to refined sugar or sulphurless sugar. This was informed by Director NSI Prof Narendra Mohan while addressing presspersons on Monday. He said the processing technique in case of sugar refineries being different, sugar units are facing crisis in getting the required operational staff. He said thus after having a dialogue with reputed sugar companies and apex organisations,

the NSI considered starting a three-month duration course on the subject matter for the XIIth pass individuals with science background already working in sugar factories to upgrade their knowledge. He said the course will have 20 seats and will be conducted during April-June when classes for most other courses remain off and hence no additional infrastructure of classrooms, laboratories and hostel will be required. He said the Academic Council of the institute has already consented to the proposal and we propose to conduct the entrance exam for this course in March next year.

WORKSHOP: Parent-teacher meeting is the key component in school education because parents get an opportunity to connect with teachers and discuss about academic progress of their child and to jointly develop strategies to support their child's learning ability. This was stated by Dr Paulomi Roy, Oxford Publications, New Delhi, while

addressing a workshop on 'Parent-teacher meetings' at Dolphin Public School on Monday. She said parents can potentially play an important role in their children's overall learning and education both at home and at school. She said policy makers and educational experts have often advocated parents being encouraged to be more involved in their children's academic lives. She said parental involvement with their children's education can occur either at home or at school. She said interactions with teachers such as having parent-teacher meetings in schools improved accountability and transparency, resulting in an improvement in school services. She said parents might be more engaged with children at home if they met teachers regularly to discuss their children's performances, homework, etc. Dr Roy said school, teachers and parents play a vital role in the holistic development of the child. She said parents are the first mentor of the child and teacher is

the second. Both have an immense contribution and responsibility in shaping child's personality. She said parents are the child's first role model and they behave, react and imitate same as their parents. She said thus they play an important role in encouraging and motivating their kids to learn. Parent-teacher conferences allow parents and guardians to get a better understanding of their child's strengths and weaknesses and teachers can provide insight into child's academic abilities, areas of improvement and overall progress in the classroom. She said it also helped build a positive relationship between families and teachers. She advised parents to take part in parent-teacher conferences which can encourage their involvement in their child's education. She said it also helped provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to develop a plan for child's academic success. The vote of thanks was proposed by headmistress Pratibha Pandey.

Training programme on role of nanotech in plant growth

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K) hosted an international training programme in association with the African-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO) on the role of nanotechnology in plant growth and crop protection for sustainable agriculture. The programme was a platform for experts from various disciplines to deliberate on solutions to meet the pressing global challenge of ensuring food security and sustainability in agriculture. The training programme began with an inaugural session by Prof SV Shukla, which set the tone for informative sessions and enlightening discussions over the week that followed. The topics covered ranged from the role of nanomaterials in creating a sustainable microclimate for horticulture to the potential applications of nanobiotechnology in plant nutrition. Notable sessions includ-

ed discussions on smart agriculture practices, sustainable chemistry for crop growth and the use of drones and agrivoltaic systems in agriculture.

A highlight of the workshop was the emphasis on research for practical applications, with sessions such as "Lab: Nanomaterials Development and Testing" by Prof Mainak Das and "Lab: Cultivation of Flavour and Fragrance Plant" during a visit to FFDC Kannauj. Sessions such as "Agrivoltaic systems: Combining solar PV and agriculture" and "Green Simulation models in agriculture" underlined the programme's commitment to not only discussing theoretical advancements but also showcasing real-world applications. Prof S Ganesh, Officiating Director, IIT Kanpur, in his statement, expressed his enthusiasm about the workshop's success. "This programme is a confluence of ideas and innovations that highlights how nanotechnology can revolutionize sustainable

agricultural practices. We are proud to have hosted this international event and are sure that the insights shared here will significantly take us towards a more sustainable and technologically advanced agricultural future." Prof J Ramkumar, Department of Mechanical Engineering and Design who is also the coordinator for ImLab, MedTech Lab & RuTAG IIT Kanpur said, "The collaboration between AARDO and IIT Kanpur will open new avenues for research and development in agriculture. The diverse range of topics covered in this workshop from microbial products in agriculture to the role of biodegradable carbon-based nanomaterials in crop protection highlights the huge potential that nanotechnology holds in transforming sustainable practices in agriculture."

The workshop also featured participation of organisations like the Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research, Lucknow, National Sugar Institute, Kanpur, Fragrance and Flavour

Development Centre, Kannauj, and others which were pivotal in integrating various perspectives and enriching the workshop. The IIT Kanpur-AARDO international programme workshop has been a landmark event and sets a precedent for future collaborations for innovations in the field of sustainable agriculture and nanotechnology. This will inspire and guide future research and practices, paving the way for more sustainable and efficient agricultural methodologies. Other programme coordinators who took part were Prof J Ramkumar, (HAG), Department of ME & Design, FNAE, FETE, FIE(I), SC Agarwal Chair Professor, Coordinator for ImLab, MedTech Lab & RuTAG IIT Kanpur, and Dr Amandeep Singh, FIE(I), MIEEEE, LMISTE, Institute Ambassador, IIC IIT Kanpur, AARDO, Dr Sanjeeb Behera, Head, IEC Division, AARDO and Kamal Dhameja, technical officer, AARDO.

BHU urologists hog limelight at SAUS Congress in Colombo

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Head of Urology department, Institute of Medical Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (IMS-BHU) Prof Sameer Trivedi and assistant professor Dr Yashasvi Singh were invited by the illustrious SAUS Congress at Colombo recently. The Congress was held with more than 150 delegates from SAARC countries along with invited urologists from Australia, UK and USA.

Prof Sameer Trivedi delivered his lecture on the role of intra operative USG in urology because of his vast experience as an astute and expert surgeon in the field of Uro-Oncology. He elaborated and emphasised on the need of a state-of-the-art intra operative USG machine to meticulously manage difficult urological cancers. Dr Trivedi also emphasised on the need of training of young urologists in South Asia in the field of Intraoperative USG while dealing complex kidney cancers for better patient care and results.



BHU's urologist at SAUS Congress at Colombo recently.

Dr Yashasvi Singh presented his work on the role of micro RNA in the management of prostate cancer. Dr Yashasvi Singh has been working along with Prof Sameer Trivedi for the search of microRNA targets causing severe and life threatening cases of prostate cancer and their team along with Prof Rajesh K Singh of Molecular Biology, IMS-BHU are in a

process of searching a molecular panel consisting of miRNA and mRNA network which triggers prostate cancer.

Dr Yashasvi Singh further elaborated that these research activities are highly complicated and are only possible in a handful of institutes of the country including an apex centre like IMS-BHU. These studies are first of its kind in

Purvanchal (eastern UP) and entire north India and if successful, they have the capacity to help the poor and needy patients of prostate cancer in the region and at an affordable cost. Both the Urologists were felicitated at the Congress and were invited to the SAARC countries to further train and monitor these research and clinical entities.

Workshop on healthy lifestyle for women

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Medical Association (IMA), Kanpur Chapter president, Dr Nandini Rastogi while addressing a workshop on 'Healthy lifestyle for women' at Bithoor said it is a matter of grave concern that women focus more on their family and their home and overlook their health needs. She said they need to strike a balance on the professional and home front and give themselves adequate time and attention. She said this can help a person feel better about themselves and put things into perspective.

Addressing the session key speaker, Dr Richa Bhalla said stress was caused by different situations for different people. She said there are many stressors in one's life like financial worries, job security, issues at the workplace, relationship issues, family conflict, traumatic events like loss of a loved one, severe illnesses etc. She said some women can handle stress better than others and key to achieving this was being able to recognise triggers, signs and coping techniques. She said stress was body's response to certain situations and when

one was under stress the body released stress hormones such as cortisol or adrenaline which caused certain chemical reactions and responses which could be harmful.

She said it was important to identify how long-term stress manifested in one's body. She said it affects emotions, behaviour, thinking ability as well as physical health and reflects upon the health of the woman. Dr Bhalla said women need to start with a good and scrumptious breakfast. She said in the rush of morning hour it is very easy to skip the meal but one must never do that as a healthy and balanced breakfast gave stamina to go through the day without building up unnecessary stress that can impact heart adversely. She advised women to observe kids and other family members for signs of stress. She said often other people notice our stress cues before we do. She advised deep breathing or mindfulness. She said women need to get at least eight hours of sleep every day. Dr Shalini Mohan, Dr Shubhi, Dr Soni Vyas, Dr Vandana Tiwari, Dr Vatsala, Dr Shikha Sachan, Dr Vinita Awasthi, Dr Neetu Mishra and Dr Madhu Loomba took part.

Vasectomy fortnight to promote healthy society from today



CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary reviewing family planning programme in Varanasi on Monday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

'Vasectomy Fortnight' will start in the district from Tuesday to promote a healthy and happy society. The fortnight will run in two phases till December 4 and during this period, the family planning campaign will get a boost, said the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary at a meeting held here on Monday. According to him, the first phase will run from November 21 to 27 for 'mobilisation' (publicity and public awareness) and the second phase from November 28 to December 4 for 'service delivery'. The CMO said that Dr Ved Prakash, General Manager of Family Planning State Programme Management Unit of National Health Mission (NHM), Uttar Pradesh, has issued instructions by sending letters to all the CMOs of the state to conduct vasectomy fortnight. "To make the fortnight a success, all preparations have been completed by the department. Vasectomy facility is available at primary and community health centres (PHCs and

CHCs) including District Hospital and District Women's Hospital. Along with this, vasectomy camps will also be organised in the second phase.

The CMO said that the main objective of this campaign is to make men aware and prepare them to adopt sterilisation by telling them about family planning. Family planning is an important part of a healthy and happy society. Men should actively participate in this. Any person can become a part of family planning by getting sterilisation done.

Nodal Officer of Family Welfare Programme and Deputy CMO Dr HC Maurya said that during the first phase (mobilisation phase) of Vasectomy Fortnight, ANM/ASHA workers will contact men while making home visits in the community. Will identify and sensitise interested men and pre-register them. During this period, promotional material will be displayed in public places and health units explaining male participation in family planning and various myths associated with it. Health partners and other voluntary organisa-

tions working in the field of family planning will be taken to promote vasectomy services in the community. In the service delivery phase which will run from November 28 to December 4, sterilisation facilities will be provided to the interested beneficiaries. He said that the male beneficiary who undergoes sterilisation is given Rs 3000 as incentive amount. Also, Asha, who encourages sterilisation, is given Rs 400 per beneficiary.

Dr Maurya said that for awareness, publicity will be done in the blocks through Sarathi vehicles. ASHA workers have also been used for encouragement. Besides, men who have been sterilised will also be made ambassadors to spread awareness so that more and more men can be prepared for sterilisation. He further said that under the Population Stability Fortnight conducted from July 11 to 31 this year, the maximum number of 184 male sterilisations and 2,418 female sterilisations were done in the state. So far this year, 5128 female sterilisations and about 230 male sterilisations have been done, he added.

Gopashtami's significance highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana while inaugurating the Gopashtami organised by Kanpur Gaushala Society at Gandhi Bhawan, Phool Bagh, on Monday said Gopashtami is a festival in which cows are worshipped. He said Gopashtami has great religious significance among Hindus in Uttar Pradesh. He said this festival is purely dedicated to worship of Lord Krishna. Addressing the gathering BJP MP Satyadev Pachauri said cows and calves are decorated on this sacred day of Gopashtami and worshipped according to rituals and customs. He said this festival was mainly celebrated in Braj as Lord Krishna worshipped the cows on various occasions



like Gopashtami and Govardhan Pujā. People should worship cows and protect them as well, he said. He said Kanpur Gaushala is one of the biggest cow shelters and appealed to people to use the products made and marketed by Kanpur Gaushala Society. He

said the festival commemorated the story of Lord Krishna lifting the Govardhan Parvat to protect people and cows from torrential rain brought by Lord Indra. He appealed to people to serve the milch cattle and save them by bringing them to the cow shelter.

Active case finding drive under TB Elimination Programme from Nov 23

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In an effort to get India free from tuberculosis, the Health department will launch an Active Case Finding (ACF) drive from November 23. Chairing a meeting held to review the preparations for the drive, CMO Dr Sandeep Chaudhary informed that the ACF drive will begin on November 23 under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP) and continue till December 5. The screening of 20 per cent of total population of the district will be made during the drive and symptomatic TB patients will be examined and the treatment will be started immediately after the confirmation of tuberculosis, he added. DTO Dr Piyush Rai informed that the health workers will go door-to-door to search for TB patients. Microplan has been prepared

under which a total of 225 teams and 45 supervisors have been deployed for the drive. All health workers are being trained and they will screen potential TB patients and if TB is confirmed, treatment will be started within 48 hours, he added. Dr Rai informed that during the drive, sensitisation will be done against TB by organising camps in residential complexes like orphanages, old age homes, Nari Niketan, child protection homes, madrasas and hostels and sputum samples of symptomatic persons will be collected and added that as per the microplan, 20 per cent of the population of the district will be screened covering sensitive areas (dense settlements and slum areas). The people with symptoms found during screening will be tested. If TB is confirmed in the test, the CBNOT test will be done for every patient so that it becomes easier to determine the right medicine for him. Along

with this, sugar and HIV tests of all the patients will also be done and the complete data will be uploaded on the Nikshay portal, he added. District Programme Coordinator Sanjay Chaudhary said that since January till now, 14,917 TB patients have been discovered in the district, out of which treatment of 5,930 patients has been completed. The remaining 8,987 patients are being continuously treated by the Health department. Besides, nutrition packets are also being provided every month to all the adopted tuberculosis patients. Under the Nikshay Nutrition Scheme, Rs 500 is also being sent through DBT every month to the tuberculosis patients during their treatment. Cough for two weeks or more, phlegm coming with cough, sometimes blood in the phlegm, chest pain, mild fever in the evening, weight loss and loss of appetite. These are the common symptoms of TB, he added.

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Tender Inquiry No. PPR – 26/2023 Dated: 20-11-2023
Chief Engineer/PP&R Organization, Shed No. D-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender under three part bid system for supply of electrical energy from interstate/intrastate sources viz. Generators, Traders having valid Inter-State Trading License issued by CERC for interstate trading of energy, intrastate trading license issued by PSERC for interstate trading of energy, State Electricity Boards, State Electricity Utilities, States, IPPs & CPPs from 1st Dec 2023 to 29th Feb 2024. The link for the e-Bidding portal is www.mstcecommerce.com and is also available on the website of Ministry of Power (www.Powermin.nic.in) and PFC Consultancy Limited (www.pfcindia.com). For detailed NIT & tender specifications please refer to www.mstcecommerce.com from 16.11.2023 onwards.
Note:- Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at www.mstcecommerce.com
C-826/23

76155/12/2415/2023/29896 Dated CHD :- 11/20/2023

Chhath Puja comes to an end with arghya at sunrise

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Thousands of devotees thronged various ghats of rivers Ganga and Varuna apart from leading ponds including Surya Sarovar in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Monday morning to offer 'arghya' to Surya Bhagwan (Sun God) at the time of sunrise and with this, the four-day Surya Shasthi festival, popularly known as Dala Chhath Puja, came to an end. Elaborate security arrangements were made at various ghats and ponds. Several traffic restrictions were imposed especially in the central city area of Dashashwamedh, southern part of Assi and Bhaisasur in the northern part near Rajghat.

Right from wee hours the devotees started thronging various ghats of rivers Ganga and Varuna to secure space at the stairs.

The ghats like Dashaswamedh, Rajendra Prasad, Ahliyabai, Man Mandir, Assi, Sheetla, Scindia, Panchganga, Nagwa, Bhainsasur, Rajghat, Narad, Kedar, Hanuman, Ravidas and Tulsi Ghat witnessed gathering of huge number of devotees. Rush was also seen at different ghats of Ramnagar including Shastri and Balua ghats.



Rush of devotees near Rajghat to offer arghya at sunrise in Varanasi on Monday.

Besides, a rush of devotees was seen at Shastri and other ghats of river Varuna apart from various kundas and ponds.

Even after 5 am the vrati women started taking baths and standing in the water, carrying 'dauras' (baskets made of bamboo sticks) of 'prasad' in their hands.

They stood for almost an hour to wait for sunrise. As soon as the sunrise was seen, the women started offering arghya. The family members

also did the same and sought the blessings of the vratis. At that time, the ghats were echoed with traditional songs of Chhathi Maiya. Thousands of vratis in view of heavy rush at ghats and ponds preferred to celebrate the festivals at their homes.

Earlier, at Surya Sarovar in BLW General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda offered the first arghya to the setting sun after performing ritual puja. On the occasion, Principal Chief

Electrical Engineer SK Srivastava, Vice Chairperson of Women Welfare Organisation Gauri Srivastava, Principal Chief Engineer Vinod Bampal, Principal Chief Security Commissioner Ranveer Singh Chauhan, Chief Quality Assurance Manager Praveen Kumar, Senior Deputy General Manager Vijay, Chief Mechanical Engineer, SQM Ramjanm Choubey, Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar were also present.

Gopashtami celebrated at Dharmasangh

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The premises of Dharmasangh (Mani Mandir), the holy place of Dharmasamrat Swami Karpatri Ji Maharaj, remained abuzz with various events throughout the day on the occasion of Gopashtami on Monday. Dharmasangh general secretary Pandit Jagjit Pandey started the ritual worship at Swami Karpatri Adarsh Gaushala established on the campus in the morning hours. The rituals were performed by 11 Vedic Brahmins and 111 Batukas under the leadership of Acharya Ramanand Pandey in the Shodashopachara method while chanting the mantras of Shukla Yajurveda. First of all, Gauri-Ganesh and Aditya Surya worship were done. After offering prayers to Lord Vishnu, cow worship was done.

On the occasion of Gopashtami, hundreds of desi (indigenous cattle breeds) like Gangatiri, Gir, Sahiwal etc living in the cow shed, were given Panchagavya and Panchamrit bath in the morn-



Gopashtami being celebrated in Varanasi on Monday.

ing, after which the cows were adorned with silk clothes, crown ornaments etc.

After the puja, all the cows were fed green fodder like cucumber, gourd, beans, greens, carrots, green peas etc along with gur, fruits and sweets. At the end, aarti was performed.

Speaking on the occasion, Pt Jagjit Pandey said that we serve cow like our mother. "Cow is the provider of all happiness, the incarnation of cow has happened for the welfare of

all. Serving cows not only brings happiness and prosperity but also opens the doors to salvation," he said, adding that the cow is the nurturer of the entire world and in this form she has incarnated on earth. "Cow is the simplest, easiest and most beneficial to people," he said.

The distinguished guests including Cantt MLA Saurabh Srivastava, Dr Ramnarayan Dwivedi, Dr Udayan Mishra, Abhishek Mishra, Pramod Mishra etc participated in the

Gau Pujan (cow worship). Rajmangal Pandey welcomed the guests. Dharmasangh also felicitated the Gausevaks who are continuously active in the field of cow service.

Earlier, a pledge was taken to serve cows by donating lamps in 21 Akashadeeps (sky lamps) in the temple premises. On the occasion, the temple courtyard was decorated with colourful electric lighting arrangements. Entrance gate was decorated with flowers attractively.

Aadharshila-2023 held at SMS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

School of Management Sciences (SMS) completed 29 glorious years of its establishment in the city. The inaugural function of Foundation Day 'Aadharshila-2023' was organised by the institute on Monday in which UP Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) Dr Daya Shankar Mishra 'Dayalu' was the chief guest. Describing SMS Varanasi as a leading institute in the field of providing employment-oriented education to the students of North India including Purvanchal, Dr Mishra said that since its inception, this institute has given maximum emphasis on skill development and employment-oriented education among the students. Dr Mishra said that today in this era of technology, the nature of education has changed. The needs of the students have also changed, hence it is important that the educational institutions keep their curriculum updated. While presiding over the programme, former Vice-Chancellor of APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University Prof Durg Singh Chauhan said that this educational institution is a leader in the field of management and technology.

Welcoming the dignitaries, Director of the institute, Prof PN Jha said that this moment of completion of 29 glorious years of the institute is historic. While thanking all the partners associated with the institute, he said that due to their good wishes and blessings, SMS has created a distinct identity for itself on the national and inter-



UP Minister Dayashankar Mishra inaugurating foundation day function at SMS in Varanasi on Monday.

national stage. Prof Jha remembered the founder director of the institute. Paying homage to Prof Mukund Lal, he said that Prof Mukund's vision and strong self-confidence have given a distinct identity to this institute. Started in 1995, this institute has never looked back in the last 29 years and has left an indelible mark in the world of management education by continuously scaling new heights. He said that this institute is dedicated to the overall development of students along with education. In the year 2017, NAAC awarded SMS, Varanasi with 'A' grade in its evaluation, which is also a matter of pride for the city of Varanasi. The award of autonomous status to the institute by the University Grants Commission is also a seal of its

excellence. After the inaugural session, various cultural programmes and competitions were also organised in which competitive events - solo singing, solo dance, business quiz, antyakshari, rangoli, ad and poster making were organised. In the various inter-college competitions, participants from more than a dozen educational institutions of Purvanchal (eastern UP) including Varanasi displayed their talent. The main attraction of the programme was the fashion show in which the undergraduate and post-graduate students of SMS showcased their magic in the ramp walk fashion show.

Demonstrating the significance of India's message of 'Unity in Diversity', various costumes of India were displayed by the students in the fashion show. Like every year, this year also SMS Management Committee decided to honour its employees who have provided continuous services to the institute for 25, 20, 15 and 10 years in which, Prof Kamalshel Mishra, Pradeep Kumar, General Manager, IT, for providing continuous service for 25 years, Shambhu Sharan Srivastava, Associate Professor, Sushil Kumar Singh, Senior Programmer, for 20 years and Atish Khadse, Associate Professor for 15 years. The inaugural session was conducted by Prof Pallavi Pathak, coordinator of Aadharshila. Executive Secretary of the institute Dr MP Singh, Sanjay Gupta and the teachers and employees were also present.

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Bride elopes with lover after 'nikah'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A 'barat' returned home without the bride in Mauima here on Sunday. After the nikah the bride eloped with her boyfriend and sent a message that that there was no meaning of that 'nikah' for her.

The angry 'baratis' returned but were helpless as the police intervened and stressed on a compromise.

The 'barat' departed from a small village of Mauima to Sultanpur with the groom. They were given a grand reception there and the 'nikah' was performed. Things were normal for about half an hour, but suddenly the members of the bride's family started running from one place to another with pale faces. The bride was missing.

After about an hour a relative received the message of the bride that the 'nikah' was meaningless for her and she was happy with her boyfriend.

Somehow information reached the groom's side and a heated argument took place between the two sides. In the

meantime someone informed the police and they reached the spot.

The police asked both the parties to sit together with a cool mind and reach a compromise. The 'baratis' returned home without the bride.

POLICE PREPARING TO GET B WARRANT: The Puramufi police are preparing to get a B warrant from the court to take Saddam, brother-in-law of Ashraf, brother of mafia don Atiq Ahmad, in connection with the 'illegal' sale of waqf land worth Rs 50 crore. Saddam is at present in Bareilly jail. The main accused in this 'illegal' land deal, mutavalli Asiyam and wife Jinnat are absconding. Saddam was arrested by the STF from Delhi and was lodged in Bareilly jail. Wife of Ashraf Zainab Fatima and her elder brother Zaid Master are also named in the FIR lodged a day earlier for grabbing Waqf land and selling the same. Both Zainab and Zaid Master have been absconding for quite some time. Four other accused in this case are also untraceable. Four teams have been con-

stituted to trace the culprits, and they will soon be sent to jail, said DCP City Deepak Bhukar.

Zainab and Shaista Parveen, wife of Atique went underground immediately after the murder of Umesh Pal. Saddam had been providing all possible facilities to Ashraf in Bareilly jail.

PRACTICAL EXAM: The practical examination of Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad Uttar Pradesh (UP Board of Secondary Education) Intermediate 2024 will be held in two phases. The first phase practical examinations will be held from January 25 to February 1, while the second phase practical examinations will be conducted between February 2 and February 9. Agra, Saharanpur, Bareilly, Lucknow, Jhansi, Chitrakut, Faizabad, Azamgarh, Devipatan and Basti divisions will be covered under phase one, while the second phase will include Aligarh, Meerut, Moradabad, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Mirzapur Varanasi and Gorakhpur divisions. The regional offices of the Board

will be apprised of the detailed schedule and the list of examiners well in advance. CCTV camera will monitor the practical examinations also. The principals will have to preserve the recording of the CCTV footage and will have to make the same available to the regional office on demand.

Practical examinations will be held, as usual, on internal basis and the project work will be evaluated. The High School students have been advised to get themselves enrolled for the practical examinations with the principal. It will be based on internal evaluation on moral sports and physical education.

For Intermediate students their sports and physical education marks will be uploaded on the Board website by the principals concerned. Principals have been advised to conduct pre-board examinations of High School and Intermediate between January 13 to 22 along with the annual examination of classes IX and XI. This has been informed by Board secretary Divya Kant Shukla.

Senior Judge Gupta appointed as officiating CJ of All India HC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Senior Judge Manoj Kumar Gupta has been appointed as the officiating Chief Justice (CJ) of the Allahabad High Court. Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court Pritinker Diwakar, who is retiring on November 21, will hand over charge to Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta. Justice Gupta will be the officiating CJ till the appointment of a regular chief justice.

EMPHASIS ON SAFE RAIL TRAVEL: The Railway Protection Force (RPF) North Central Railway (NCR) is doing everything possible to ensure safe rail travel for women passengers. Train are being escorted by women RPF team 'Meri Saheli' for ensuring

security of women travelling alone, helping women in case of any problem and rescuing children. As part of its continuous efforts in this direction to spread the message of women's security among the public, under the guidance of IG-cum-Principal Chief Security Commissioner (PCSC) AN Sinha a team of 24 RPF officers and staff took part in the 38th Indira Marathon organised by the Sports department of Uttar Pradesh in Prayagraj on Sunday. This RPF Team comprised one assistant commander, three inspectors, five sub-inspectors and 15 staff, including three women RPF staff.

During the run the RPF carried the messages "Let us come together to ensure safe rail travel for women," "Our

aim making rail travel safer for women" etc. The participation in the marathon is aimed at promoting the cause of safe and secured travel on trains for women.

It is for creating public awareness about various initiatives of RPF aimed at promoting women's safety and security. In particular attention was focused on the 'Meri Saheli' initiative. In 2023 RPF NCR displayed remarkable performance by rescuing 17 passengers from perilous situations near moving trains. Under operation Nanhe Farishte RPF NCR rescued 738 unaccompanied children at risk in stations and trains, preventing them from becoming victims of child abuse. RPF/North Central Railway marathon team also

carried the message of the railway helpline number 139. Passengers can call on the helpline number while on travel if they encounter any security-related issues. On receiving such complaints on the helpline, RPF will immediately attend the train at the nearest station and address the issue.

Under the guidance of AN Sinha, IG-cum-PCSC all three divisions of NCR are doing everything possible to ensure security of the travelling public in general and women's security in particular. Women RPF personnel deployed across NCR are attending to women passengers, elderly women, and children addressing their security-related issues to ensure safe rail travel for them.

Water chestnut exported to Dubai

VARANASI (PNS): Water chestnut (singhara) from the ponds of Kashi will now make its presence in the Arab markets. Its first consignment from this holy city was exported to Dubai (United Arab Emirates) on Monday.

With the efforts of the government, the farmers and entrepreneurs are turning to become exporters. Due to the hard work of farmers and efforts of Agricultural and

Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the strategy of the government, farmers are getting fair prices for their produce. Vegetables, flowers and fruits are being exported continuously from Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Babatpur and due to which farmers are getting proper results of their hard work. Deputy General Manager of APEDA's regional office in

Varanasi, Dr CB Singh said that a consignment of water chestnuts was sent to the UAE. The DGM said that farmers are being continuously trained through APEDA and Horticulture department experts so that farmers can present their produce as per export standards.

"Our produce is getting a fair price in the international market. Varanasi is gradually becoming a major centre of

agricultural export and food processing for the entire Purvanchal (eastern UP)," he said, adding that to make the region as a major agri export hub, a pack house (perishable cold storage) with a capacity of five tonnes has been built in the industrial area near LBSI Airport.

The PM has also given the gift of perishable cold storage in Rajatala for his parliamentary constituency.

Mishap claims man's life

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

An aged man died in a road mishap in an area under Jigna police station on Sunday. Reports said that Baijnath Bind (70), a resident of Bhaironpur village under Manda police station in Prayagraj, was going on foot when he was hit by an Innova near Rannopatti village under Jigna police station. On information the police reached there and found the victim dead on the spot. The police took the body into possession and impounded the vehicle.

PONTOON BRIDGE TO BE ERECTED: Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel while addressing a public gathering at the village secretariat of Sindhora village under Pahadi block on Sunday informed that the pontoon bridge at Sindhora Ghat on Ganga river will be erected soon for the convenience of people. She appealed to the people to ensure maximum presence of old and Divyang persons at block headquarters on the date fixed to examine the requirement of calipers for the needy. Giving details about examination camps in each block of the district she said calipers were not required only for the Divyangs but for the aged persons too who were facing physical abnormality due to age factor. She said in the camp the doctors will examine the requirement and on their recommendation calipers will be prepared and will be handed over to the needy. But prior registration and examination was necessary to avail such



Devotees performing rituals of Chhath Puja on the bank of Ganga in Mirzapur on Monday. PTI

facility, she added.

During her visit the minister became aware of the problems related to Ganga by doing spot inspection by boat. During her tour she was accompanied by BJP leader Harishankar Singh, chairman cooperative bank Dr Jagdish Singh Patel, block pramukh Pahadi Indra Bahadur Pandey and local people's representatives of Seekhar and Pahadi blocks.

CONDOLED: District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan condoled the demise of veteran journalist Ravindra Nath Jaiswal alias Laloo Bhaiya. His last rites were performed at Ganga Ghat on Sunday. Speaking at a condolence meeting held at the Information and Public Relations office, District Information Officer OP Upadhyay described him as a person who lived for values. Prominent among those who also spoke on the occasion were

Manoj Shukla, Santosh Srivastava and Vishwajeet Dubey. The meeting concluded with two minute silence in respect of the departed soul.

COUPLES REUNITE: Under Project Milan programme five couples who were living separately due to petty issues got reunited on Sunday in the family counselling centre (FCC) located at Police Lines. After several sittings the centre was successful in getting five couples to agree to live together. The entire process was carried out by woman inspector and incharge of FCC Seema Singh who was assisted by sub-inspector Shashi Tiwari, constable Pinki Jaiswal, counsellors Dr Krishna Singh and S Devi.

ARRESTED: The Vindhyaachal police on Sunday arrested an accused of raping a minor girl. A woman had

lodged a named FIR on September 13 alleging that the accused had enticed her minor daughter away. After registering the case the police started the investigation. SHO Arvind Mishra nabbed the accused. The police sent the accused of Pakari village under Jigna police station to jail.

CAUGHT: The Padari police on Sunday caught two accused of motorcycle theft, including a juvenile offender, and recovered three stolen motorcycles.

Arun Kumar Dubey of Keshavpatti on November 17 and Manoj Bind of Sikari on November 18 had lodged a complaint about the theft of their motorcycles. The police nabbed Karan Bind of Garayi Nala along with a stolen motorcycle and on his identification a juvenile offender was caught and two more stolen motorcycles were recovered.

Lasting ordeal

Despite the ongoing multi-pronged rescue approach, the trapped workers are still fighting for life

For nine long days and nights, the 41 construction workers trapped inside the Uttarkashi tunnel have been bereft of sunlight, a cool breeze and normal life where they can move around at will. Best efforts using the best machinery by several Government agencies notwithstanding, these men await evacuation from what used to be their workplace after the Silkyara-Barkot underconstruction tunnel suddenly collapsed on November 12. The ill-fated workers – mostly natives of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand – face the ordeal of their way out being blocked by rubble and debris. This incident has not only tested the resilience of these workers but also triggered a massive, coordinated effort to rescue them. The location of the tunnel – part of the Narendra Modi Government's 'Char Dham' all-weather accessibility project – in a remote mountainous area presents a logistical nightmare for the rescue teams. The authorities swiftly mobilised a multi-



agency response to evacuate the trapped workers. Specialised teams from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), local police and experts from abroad have been deployed at the accident site. The rescue operation is going on for nine days now but to no avail. The initial rescue operation was suspended on November 17 when a loud cracking sound was heard from inside the tunnel during the positioning of a new pipe for the workers to walk out bypassing the rubble. The pipes were also being used to supply the workers with food, water and medicines.

Ironically, the use of heavier machinery to move the earth only aggravated the problem and led to more debris falling and clogging the planned way out. Now, in the first place, this incident should not have occurred. Though it is not the time to delve into the larger question of whether such mega projects in a fragile ecosystem should be allowed or whether the safety and security procedures were adequate, it appears certain that the lives of poor workers do not amount for much in our system. This crisis comes barely three months after 20 workers and engineers lost their lives on the Nagpur-Mumbai Samruddhi Expressway, a similar mega project, in Thane district. However, the most uplifting and positive development in this incident has been that the innate helpful nature of people came to the fore. As news of the trapped workers spread, the local community rallied together, offering support to the rescuers and workers' families. Local volunteers played a crucial role in assisting on-ground operations and providing food, shelter and moral support to those involved in rescue efforts. But the happy ending is not here yet; there are prayers in bated breath for the hapless trapped workers who are paying the price for someone else's callousness and greed.

PICTALK



Spectators attend the inauguration of the Champs Elysee Avenue for the upcoming Christmas, in Paris

PTI

Cricket World Cup: A spectacle of excellence

The World Cup was a rare display of talent and grit showcasing the best cricket has to offer. It would linger for long in the memory of cricket lovers

With almost 1,30,000 fans in attendance and numerous high-profile personalities from all over the world, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, Sunday, November 19, however, belonged to an indefatigable Australia. In the heart of Ahmedabad, at the magnificent Narendra Modi Stadium, history was etched, as, Australia emerged victorious in the Cricket World Cup. It was India's first defeat of the tournament after they had, in a brilliant display of finesse, won all 10 of their previous matches. Without any exaggeration, it can be said that it was one of the finest tournaments India had ever played under the captaincy of Rohit Sharma. Once again, it was Australia's cricketering legacy that continued to shine brightly in the 2023 World Cup. The leadership of the Australian captain, Pat Cummins, and the team spirit led the team through challenging encounters. Cummins' strategic acumen and strategic captaincy style proved instrumental in setting the tone for Australia's



success. The team's batting lineup, featuring seasoned players like David Warner and Steven Smith, consistently delivered impactful performances, ensuring substantial totals in crucial matches. While the outcome may not have favoured the Indian cricket team, their journey in the 2023 World Cup was marked by moments of brilliance and a never-say-die attitude. Captained by Rohit Sharma and the dynamism of the charismatic Virat Kohli, the Indian team displayed determination and captivating fans around the world. India's batting lineup boasted formidable talents, with Rohit Sharma and K L Rahul providing solid support in most matches. Sharma's elegant stroke play and Rahul's aggressive approach set the stage for the middle order to capitalise on favourable situations. Even Virat Kohli, the linchpin of the Indian batting

order, played several crucial innings, showcasing his class and composure under pressure. Further, several key moments and individual performances defined the narrative of the 2023 World Cup. In a crucial group-stage encounter, India faced Australia in a high-scoring thriller. David Warner's breathtaking century and Mitchell Starc's were other moments of the match. After restricting the South Africans to 212, Australia eked its way to 215-7 to win by three wickets with 16 balls to spare in a tense atmosphere inside Eden Gardens. It was the lowest margin of victory (by wickets) at the World Cup knockout stage. Further, India showcased a batting masterclass led by Shreyas Iyer and KL Rahul in their undefeated run into the knockouts, delivering a stunning hammer blow to the Netherlands. The hosts enforced a 160-run defeat, leaving the Dutch team to conclude their World Cup journey on a disappointing note. The foundation for India's commanding total of 410 for 4 was laid by the opening pair of Rohit Sharma

and Shubman Gill, who put together a solid 100-run partnership. One cannot also forget Afghanistan's remarkable journey in the World Cup that unfolded as an enthralling cricketing saga. The team's outstanding performances astounded the global cricketing community, clinching victories against formidable opponents such as Pakistan, England, and Sri Lanka. These successes carved out a historic chapter in Afghanistan's cricketing narrative, highlighting their resilience and skill on the grand stage. Afghanistan concluded their World Cup campaign with an impressive record of four victories in nine matches, marking a historic achievement for a team that had previously secured only one win in World Cup history. The eyes are now set on the 2027 World Cup scheduled to take place in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Namibia. Till then, the gentleman's game continues to keep us engaged. *(The writer is a programme executive, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, views are personal)*



RAJDEEP PATHAK

AI technology has been widely used in the current Assembly poll campaign. It includes creating songs featuring Prime Minister Narendra Modi in languages such as Hindi, Tamil, and Telugu. These songs have gone viral on the internet. Additionally, AI-powered voice cloning tools have been utilised to send personalised messages to voters and party workers. Modi's digitally rendered songs in Telugu have gained over 2 million views. In comparison, a Tamil-language song featuring his voice has gone viral with over 2.7 million views. Additionally, a Punjabi song that features Modi's voice has gained over 17 million views. Further, Falu, an Indian-American singer, has received a Grammy nomination for her song "Abundance in Millets", featuring PM Modi. Congress and the BJP have used AI-powered voice cloning tools. Ashok Gehlot, the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, is notable for this. Some Television channels have introduced AI TV anchors in Odiya, Kannada and Hindi. Artificial Intelligence has transformed healthcare in India significantly. Advanced diagnosis, treatment, and patient care tools have improved medical services. A recent World Economic Forum report says that India's expenditure on AI is expected to reach \$11.78 billion by 2025. It will contribute to an addition of \$1 trillion to India's economy by 2035. Prime Minister Modi is keen on fostering further AI development in India. All these bring us to the question of whether AI is gradually gripping the world. At the first AI Safety Summit hosted by the UK at the historic Bletchley Park on November 1, political and industry leaders discussed the risks around artificial intelligence. The focus was also on how to develop the technology safely. About 28 countries participated, including the United Nations and the European Union. US Vice President Kamala Harris represented the US. India, represented by Minister of State Rajeev Chandrasekhar, said, "We want AI and tech to represent good-

ness, safety and trust": Rapid progress in AI is arousing fear as well as excitement. The participants ranged from doom-sayers to hopeful participants who hoped AI would save humanity. They addressed the global nature of the issue. They stressed the need for international cooperation and healthy competition. British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has said he's worried about humanity losing control to computers. The role of artificial intelligence (AI) in cyberattacks was also discussed. AI can impersonate at a scale and speed never known. These could make the global financial system go haywire and threaten democracy. "We want AI and tech to represent goodness, safety and trust," said Minister of State Rajeev Chandrasekhar, who represented India. The conference was undoubtedly a good start. India is planning to host another meeting in December. As the host nation, the UK was the first to announce the formation of an official AI Safety Institute to examine the safety of emerging forms of AI. At the end of the conference, the declaration said: "The Bletchley Declaration stresses safe, responsible AI development, urges international cooperation to mitigate risks, and promotes global benefits." Google CEO Sunder Pichai

SUPPORTERS CLAIM AI IMPROVES EFFICIENCY BY AUTOMATING TASKS, ANALYSING DATA, MAKING DECISIONS, OPERATING 24/7, REDUCING ERRORS, AND ENSURING SAFETY

admitted, "Knowledge workers, writers, accountants, architects and, ironically, software engineers would face a threat to their jobs. The concern of terrorist groups using generative AI tools and the fear that AI could become uncontrollable by humans are additional worries. AI concerns will include real-time cybersecurity, supply chain efficiency, software development acceleration, and customer service automation in the coming year. AI has disadvantages, such as potential job displacement and ethical concerns, the possibility of losing human qualities like creativity and empathy, high cost and complexity, reliability issues, and dependency on technology. It cannot engage in negative thoughts or understand cause and effect. It also cannot comprehend time. On the other hand, supporters claim AI improves efficiency by automating tasks, analysing data, making decisions, operating 24/7, reducing errors, and ensuring safety. AI can be used for voter registration and verification. Politicians would benefit from using AI for predictive analysis of voter behaviours. AI can analyse social media to gauge sentiment and identify critical issues for political campaigns to tailor their messages.

Moreover, AI is crucial in maintaining election security by detecting and preventing fraud, hacking attempts, and other irregularities. It can use historical data and current events to predict election outcomes. AI-powered chatbots can inform voters about polling locations, candidate profiles, and additional crucial election-related information. This first summit successfully brought these people together on the table and discussed AI, its benefits and dangers. There has yet to be an international regulatory body. Ultimately, we have to find the answer to questions like should we automate away all the jobs, including the fulfilling ones? Should we develop non-human minds that might eventually outnumber, outsmart and replace us? Is AI a dangerous or a welcome technology? Still, moving to AI will take time to happen. That is the crux of the AI issue. It is still in the nascent stage. World leaders and industry leaders must apply their minds to a regulatory system. Rogue nations must be controlled. All countries must accept the rules and regulations. *(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

RESCUE OPERATION

Sir—On Sunday, district administration officials laid out the red carpet for the Union Minister of Road, Surface Transport, and Highways at Silkyara. However, the plight of the 41 workers trapped in the tunnel since November 12 shows no signs of ending soon. The union minister informed the media that all options were being explored, with horizontal drilling remaining the most viable. If the machines continued to operate smoothly, he hoped the rescue team would 'reach' the stranded workers in the next two or two-and-a-half days. While the minister spoke of using 'robots' to reach the workers, confusion arose about what 'reaching the workers' meant. Did it imply the pipe being drilled reaching them, or did it refer to rescuers or robots reaching the workers? Ambiguity also surrounded the roads built by the Border Roads Organisation, intended for transporting heavy machinery to the accident site. Although these roads are slated to be ready by Monday, details regarding the awaited machinery and its arrival remain unclear. Experts have noted the government's initial approval of a bi-lane tunnel at Silkyara with 'escape lanes,' yet the current plan appears to have abandoned these provisions. It seems the stranded workers are unlikely to see daylight until at least Tuesday. The nation fervently prays for their swift rescue.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WE NEED A STRICT E-PHARMA POLICY

Sir—The e-pharmacy business has flourished with the rise of smartphones. With a simple mobile click, necessary medicines are promptly delivered to homes. E-pharmacy caters to medicines not readily available on the market and serves the elderly and pregnant mothers. Questions are emerging in the pharmacy industry, prompting the Delhi High Court to direct the central government to formulate the pending e-pharmacy policy over the past five years. The deadline for this policy's formulation is set within the next

World Television Day



In 1996, a German delegation boldly declared at the United Nations (UN) that "television is a rich man's medium," opposing the observance of 'World Television Day' on November 21. They remained unimpressed by television's ability to captivate imaginations as effectively as radio. From JJ Thomson's

cathode ray experiments in 1887 to its primitive form in the 1920s, to its present state, television's evolution—from black and white beauty to colored marvel—is both surprising and inspiring. Surpassing radio and newspapers, the pivotal communication mediums, wasn't an easy feat. The vivid narratives of winners and losers, the distressed and saviors, politicians and governments, celebrities, and the ordinary, make television a unique medium. It encapsulates education, news, and entertainment—a compact three-in-one package. Cultural exchange, family bonding, issue resolution, and creative documentaries are its evident benefits. A cynical scholar once remarked, "I find television to be very educational. Every time somebody turns it on, I go to the other room and read a book," a sentiment that may not resonate with avid television lovers. The question they must ask themselves is, "How much is too much?"

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

eight weeks.

While the sale is banned, it's clarified that it is not permitted under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the Pharmacy Act of 1948. However, questions persist about the online sale of medicines. The Union Health Ministry needs to devise a stringent policy to prevent the sale of counterfeit medicines.

Dattaprasad Shirodkar | Mumbai

HEARTBREAKING FINAL

Sir—The final for Team India cricket fans was undeniably heart-wrenching. Had at least one of the so-called 'super batsmen,' known for creating miracles and records, recognised it as a 'mega final' and demonstrated the patience not to lose their wickets carelessly, the scorecard would undoubtedly have shown a different story. Cricket is a mind game, and the more patience players exhibit, the greater the

team benefits and resilience. This was evident in the resolve of Australian batsmen, who, despite losing three quick wickets, chose to stay and fight with full of fervor. Unfortunately, for the men in blue, the leader and experienced senior players couldn't lead the team effectively, resulting in a heartbreaking loss in the final, shattering the hearts of millions of Team India cricket lovers. Nevertheless, cricket enthusiasts will always cherish beautiful memories and records of their favourite team and players. At the end of the day it is not about winning or losing but being part of a Cricket carnival, which was magnificent to watch and some of the best memories we will cherish for long time were made during the world cup 2023.

M Pradyu | Kannur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



KALYANI SHANKAR

FIRST COLUMN

OVERCOMING GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT

Accept the truth that nothing is permanent and live in the present to overcome grief



RAVI VALLURI

He was a nonagenarian who lived a life peppered by vicissitudes. There had been high noons and some cathartic moments too. But he remained a contented person as his children and grandchildren were 'settled' in their respective fields. However, impermanence is a fact of life and he succumbed to multiple organ failure. Ill health prevented him from meeting his older brother, (a centurion himself), who had departed for his heavenly abode sometime earlier. This had rankled him considerably and he never quite recovered.

Vital prana or the subtle life force which provides human existence and energy was drained away by the mandarins of death. It is said that parents are our first teachers. Parents act as cicerone for their children, encouraging them to take baby steps into the world and to eventually make decisions and face various challenges in life.

What does one do when a dear one ceases to exist?

"Time will take care of it. If someone you love crosses over, grief overtakes you. But see it from a broader angle — we all must go one day; someone has taken an earlier flight and we must take a later flight. When you see the impermanence of everything, you will gain the strength to overcome the grief. Again, and again, you must put your attention on the impermanence of everything," says Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.

Mindfulness and grief

At the core of Buddhism is the concept of mindfulness, and it is inexplicably connected with impermanence. Impermanence is a Buddhist concept that has brought comfort to several people once they lose close ones. When humans value permanence they focus towards the future rather than dwell on the present. The mind needs to be convinced about impermanence to live in the present moment.



Sages from ancient times – with enormous perspicacity- have developed palliative techniques to overcome cataclysmic situations. These include chanting mantras, listening to religious texts, meditation, pranayama, Vipassana and the rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya. Mindfulness can act as a centrifugal force in life; a state in which one becomes aware of the present; thoughts and feelings, various physical experiences, and the world around us. We need to accept the cardinal truth that nothing is permanent, be it a chutzpah moment or a woe-begone situation. Change is constant.

How do mindfulness and acceptance of impermanence act as a sword to combat a sense of bereavement?

There are two common ways many of us cope with grief – either one is completely subsumed by the thought and feels entrapped like a bird in a cage. Or the mind is channelled by the techniques mentioned to become robust and grapple with ill-disposed thoughts. It is aware of an alternative paradigm to move on with life despite adversity.

A question plagues the mind as to whether humans can conquer the devastation of grief in its entirety. The truth is perhaps that that does not occur. But it does help in altering the trajectory, intensity, shape, and form of the aftermath. Mindfulness and acceptance of impermanence assist in arresting the trend of obfuscation of the mind by demons of gloom. This sets in motion the acceptance of the reality of bereavement. It is said that time is a great healer to overcome grief and bereavement. Perhaps a few notches above that are performing seva (service to the society) and surrendering to the vast universe and the Almighty to combat grief.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

BJP banking heavily on Modi guarantee



KS TOMAR


It is now crystal clear that BJP's high command and RSS have completely relied on Prime Minister, Modi's 'Charisma' to win five state polls



It is quite evident from a personal appeal made by the PM to the voters of Madhya Pradesh and the decision not to project any leader as the chief ministerial face is aimed at focusing on Modi's popularity that the BJP is relying heavily on PM's popularity to win the state elections. Opinions are divided about the impact of victory and losses in these state polls in Nov next month. One school of thought says that if BJP is victorious in these elections then the outcome will have no impact on 2024 polls as voters' preference may not be different when it comes to electing central government. BJP lost assembly polls in the Hindi heartland in 2018 but it swept Lok Sabha polls by winning 61 out of 65 seats which included 24(25) in Rajasthan, 28(29) MP and 9(11) in Chhattisgarh and primarily owing to Modi wave and nationalistic agenda.

Modi's popularity has gone very high at the international level and he commands maximum acceptance in the eyes of electorates in India. Experts say that BJP will be armed with Hindutva which is bound to be strengthened after the inauguration of Ram Temple in January and it will be exploited to the hilt. BJP has got vast resources and RSS will use its' well-oiled machinery to ensure the success of the party candidates in Lok Sabha polls. BJP will try to convince about the spectacular performance of the NDA Government and the strong leadership of Modi which made it possible to abrogate Article 370 and adopt 33 per cent women reservation bill in parliament besides

On the contrary, critics believe that if the BJP loses state polls, then it is bound to



THE BJP HIGH COMMAND SURPRISED ITS MINISTERS LIKE NARENDRA SINGH TOMAR, PRAHLAD SINGH PATEL AND FAGGAN SINGH KULASTE WHO FIGURED IN THE FIRST LIST OF CANDIDATES FOR MP POLLS

(The writer is a political analyst and senior journalist, views are personal)

give back to saffron in parliamentary polls. They say that there are predominant factors that will upset BJP's calculations. First, there will be no Pulwama and surgical strikes to create nationwide feelings of Nationalism. Second, the popularity of Congress and opposition parties were at its lowest ebb hence voters did not have an alternative to BJP. Third, Modi's 'Charisma' may not be sufficient to neutralise the nine-year Anti-incumbency of the NDA Government. Fourth, common people are facing the worst type of skyrocketing prices of essential commodities which has made their survival difficult. Fifth, youths had voted in large numbers in the country for BJP but now the unemployment problem is at its zenith which has angered this dominant section of society. The sixth, the middle class seems to be affected and responses vary from 2019. Seventh, the BJP's downward journey has been stalled by the Congress in Karnataka and AIADMK's decision to sever ties with the BJP has given a jolt in Tamil Nadu. BJP cannot ride to power without having significant seats from southern states. Finally, the opposition parties have come under the umbrella of I.N.D.I.A. This which can be attributed to their compulsion of alleged misuse of investigating agencies against them and their leaders. The chances of declaring a PM candidate seem extremely difficult but even if they

broadly agree to share seats and decide not to field candidates against each other than arithmetic of votes may make a difference in the outcome in all states in the country in 2024.

To checkmate sitting CM, Shivraj Chouhan, the BJP high command surprised its ministers like Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel and Faggan Singh Kulaste who figured in the first list of candidates for MP polls. As per party calculations, union ministers may have their influence across the state though they have yet to prove their statewide appeal amongst the people.

Experts say that the ministers or MPs hardly do micro-level management of particular constituencies which should worry them in MP. They may not have the state-level stature when compared with Chouhan who may be sulking as he has not been declared as CM candidate despite being at the helm of affairs. BJP high command and the top brass of RSS have taken a big risk by making Prime Minister, Narendra Modi as face of the party and refrained from naming chief ministerial candidates in poll-bound states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Mizoram.


Based on a different analogy, BJP has experimented with a new strategy of fielding 24 MPs and 4 union ministers in three poll-bound states including MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh

which reflects the saffron party's 'desperate move and resolve' to ensure victory in these states to create a better narrative for 2024 parliamentary polls. 2nd, it may be aimed at neutralising the anguish of the voters who may have to rethink when new faces (MPs and ministers) are fielded from such constituencies.


As per the outcome of Karnataka and Himachal assembly elections, Modi's all-out aggressive campaign and Hindutva did not work hence if BJP fails to oust Congress in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and C.S. Rao's 'Bharat Rashtira Sanithi'(BRS) in Telangana besides losing MP then it may have direct bearing on 2024 parliamentary elections in 2024. But if the results go in favour of the BJP then it may have a double impact to ensure the victory of Modi for a third successive time. Experts say that BJP's think tank might have assessed the possible impact of the Modi government's nine-year performance and welfare measures which may give weightage to the party's nominees in the elections in the state polls. BJP's 'Gujrat Model' of replacing older generation leaders yielded positive results in Uttarakhand, Goa and Tripura but it miserably failed to deliver in Karnataka. Now it will be interesting to see whether a new strategy to push union ministers and MPs into the electoral fray will work to the advantage of the party or it will backfire.

Geopolitical implications of energy transition

The transition of energy is happening at a rapid pace which will cause a paradigm shift in geopolitical power structure



ISHOO RATNA SRIVASTAV




SAIRAM

(Sairam is an international development advisor and a Chevening scholar, & Srivastav is an Indian Railway Service Officer and a Commonwealth scholar; views are personal)

to global power equations including (1) capital losses from fossil fuel reserves being stranded, (2) losses to treasury reaped from the fossil fuel rents and most importantly (3) loss of the geopolitical power advantages due to the shift to more diffused zero-carbon energy sources such as the solar, wind and hydropower.

Also, an aspect that can't be ignored is that an energy transition entails a technology transition. The eternal zeal towards maximising power from fossil-fueled internal combustion-based systems would shift to electrification in novel ways. Take the case of the global automotive industry which has an almost 3.5% share of global GDP; its technological shift towards



EVs is bound to have a deep impact across its value chain. Also, as the R&D in the conventional energy systems slows down, the locked-in investments would starve for upgrades, particularly in countries having a dependency on technology transfer. These large-scale industry-wide shifts would put pressure on the geopolitical equilibrium. Also, emissions-linked tariffs in global trade regimes, like the one proposed by the EU are already concerning its trade partners.

The theatre of energy-critical materials like lithium, nickel, cobalt, copper and rare earth elements is already abuzz with action as nations scramble

ble to secure the reserves worldwide. Since the essential resources for energy transition are not necessarily a consequence of inherited natural advantage, new fault lines are emerging, pushing the global giants to reposition their competitive advantages and undermine the geo-political strengths of others to maintain their position of power in the era of Green Industrialisation. The war in Ukraine, resulting in uncertainty in gas supplies has served as a wakeup call for Europe to hasten its renewable energy transition. Japan, another developed and technologically advanced nation, has announced its intention to be a part of the power play by announcing its Hydrogen strategy that targets an annual supply of 12 million tonnes by 2040. India too, is leading the global solar effort by playing a leadership role in the International Solar Alliance and through its recently unveiled Hydrogen strategy, it aspires to become a global electrolyser production hub.

The issues of energy security, energy poverty and climate change are central to the concept of energy transition and provide an opportunity towards the creation of a more equitable and sustainable world. For a smooth transition to a new geo-political world order the following may be the critical elements:

Equitable & Fair Transition – Mitigation of socio-economic dislocation through compensation for stranded

carbon assets and creating opportunities for job mobility

Revival of Multilateralism – Global institutions need to collaborate more than ever to break the vested interest nexus and create incentives for rapid action

Technological Leapfrogging – Open-source technological breakthroughs can prevent the creation of newer pockets of power based on energy capabilities and create a new world order

Diffusion of power to emerging nations – Considering the future centres of global economic growth and therefore consumption of energy to be anchored in the emerging nations, their voice needs to find a central space in global power equations.

Indian team gets words of solace from Modi after heartbreak

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Crestfallen after losing the World Cup trophy match on Sunday night, the Indian cricket team had the country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to offer his commiserations. The heartbreaking defeat left a few Indian cricketers in tears while others just went into a shell.

Modi visited the Indian dressing room where he hugged pacer Mohammed Shami, the highest wicket-taker in the tournament, and also spoke with Ravindra Jadeja.

The cricketers took to social media to reveal about their meeting.

"We had a great tournament but we ended up short yesterday. We are all heartbroken but the support of our people is keeping us going. PM @narendramodi's visit to the dressing room yesterday was special and very motivating," Jadeja posted on X along with a picture with Modi.

Shami also posted his picture with Modi with a message.

"Unfortunately yesterday was not our day. I would like to thank all Indians for supporting our team and me throughout the tournament. Thankful



to PM @narendramodi for specially coming to the dressing room and raising our spirits. We will bounce back!" Shami wrote on his X, formerly twitter, page.

Modi had also posted a message for the Indian team on social media.

"Dear Team India, Your talent and determination through the World Cup was noteworthy. You've played with great spirit and brought immense pride to the nation. We stand with you today and always," he wrote on X on Sunday night.

Shubman Gill was hurting, Shreyas Iyer also found it difficult to let the reality sink in while veteran spinner

marvelous campaign," Iyer wrote.

Gill took to Instagram to share his side of the story.

"Been almost 16 hours but still hurts like it did last night. Sometimes giving your everything isn't enough. We fell short of our ultimate goal but every step in this journey has been a testament to our team's spirit and dedication.

"To our incredible fans, your unwavering support in our highs and lows means the world to us. This isn't the end, it's not over until we win. Jai Hind." Another post from Shami read, "You win some, you lose some. Tough pill to swallow for us but we have our heads held high.

Ashwin, who was a member of India's 2011 World Cup winning side wrote: "Mighty mighty heartbreak last night. Everyone in the team had several days to remember during this campaign and special mentions to Kohli, Shami, Rohit and Bumrah."

The ace offspinner further congratulated Australia "However I can't help but applaud the giants of modern day cricket 'Australia'. What they did on the field yesterday was just unbelievable. Congrats on their 6th World Cup win."

Over ₹1,760 crore drugs, cash, liquor seized in five poll-going States: EC

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Total seizures of unaccounted cash, liquor, drugs, freebies etc in the ongoing polls to five State/UT Assemblies have crossed ₹ 1,760 crore surpassing the figure recorded in all past assembly electoral processes. According to the Election Commission (EC), the amount is more than seven times, seizures made in the previous electoral processes in these states in 2018 which was just Rs 239.15 crore. This is an increase of 636 per cent as compared to seizure figures during previous elections in the five States.

With Rs 659.2 crore seizures, Telangana is top in the list, followed by Rs 650.7 crore in Rajasthan; Rs 323.7 in Madhya Pradesh; Rs 76.9 crore in Chhattisgarh and Rs 49.6 crore in Mizoram. While assembly polls have already been held in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Mizoram, voting will take place in Rajasthan and Telangana on November 25 and November 30 respectively. The EC said the seizures included cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals, all worth of crores, freebies and other items.

In a statement, the EC said,



'Seizures over Rs 1760 crores have been reported in the five poll-going states since the announcement of the elections, which is more than 7 times (Rs 239.15 crore) the seizures made in previous Assembly Elections in these states in 2018'. This is an increase of 636 per cent as compared to seizure figures during the 2018 Assembly Elections in these five states'.

"It may be recalled that seizures of over Rs 1400 crores were done in the past six state Assembly elections held in Gujarat, HP, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Tripura and Karnataka which is 11 times the previous assembly elections in these states," added the statement.

Data showed, of total

seizures of Rs 1760 crore, the law enforcement authorities and flying squad have seized Rs 372.9 crore as cash; liquor worth Rs 214.8 crore; drugs worth Rs 245.3 crore; precious metals worth Rs 371.2 crore and freebies and other items worth Rs 556.02 crore.

In Telangana, the EC has seized cash amount of Rs 225.23 crore; liquor worth Rs 86.82 crore; drugs worth Rs 103.74 crore; precious metals worth Rs 191.02 crore and freebies worth Rs 52.41 crore. The agencies have seized cash amount of Rs 93.17 crore; liquor worth Rs 51.29 crores; drugs worth Rs 91.71 crore; precious metals/gold worth Rs 73.36 crore and freebies worth Rs 341.24 crore from Rajasthan.

Cash amount of Rs 33.72 crore; liquor worth Rs 69.85 crore; drugs worth Rs 15.53 crore; precious metals worth Rs 84.01 and freebies valued Rs 120.53 crore have been seized in Madhya Pradesh.

According to EC data, it has seized cash amount of Rs 20.77 crore; liquor valued Rs 2.16 crore; drugs worth Rs 4.55 crore; precious metals worth Rs 22.76 crore and freebies worth Rs 26.68 crore from Chhattisgarh while liquor worth Rs 4.67 crore;

drugs valued Rs 29.82 crore and freebies of Rs 15.16 crore seized in Mizoram.

"This time the Commission has also embedded technology into the monitoring process through the Election Expenditure Monitoring System (ESMS) which is proving to be a catalyst, as it brought a wide array of Central and State enforcement agencies together for better coordination and intelligence sharing," the EC said.

"As many as 228 experienced officers from IRS, IC&CES, IRAS, IDAS and other Central Government Services have been deployed as Expenditure Observers. For close monitoring, 194 Assembly Constituencies have been marked as Expenditure Sensitive Constituencies. It is also ensured that there is adequate availability of field level teams in the monitoring process and regular follow-ups with DEOs/SPs and enforcement agencies is done to deal with menace of money-power. The efforts on close monitoring will further continue in the poll-going States till completion of the ongoing elections and the figures of seizure are expected to rise further," it added.

US Ambassador for 'deeper conversations' on AI regulatory framework

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Given the growing role of Artificial intelligence, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti on Monday made a strong pitch for "deeper conversations" between New Delhi and Washington on a regulatory framework on artificial intelligence (AI), saying it could be an example of "multiplicative relationship" between the two democracies. In an interactive session organised here by Observer Research Foundation, Garcetti

stressed on the need to "get in front" of artificial intelligence (AI) to avoid facing catastrophic consequences.

He made it clear that while there had been deep conversations on the issue with India, there was no formal proposal yet from either side.

Garcetti noted that US President Joe Biden had spoken strongly on the issue. Last month, Biden issued an executive order that required AI manufacturers to provide the federal government with an assessment of their applications' vulnerability to cyber-



attacks, the data used to train and test the AI and its performance measurements.

"If we don't get in front of AI, the consequences, even if it is a small percentage of likelihood, of something catastrophic happening with our official intelligence could be sooner than we believe," Garcetti said.

On the India-US 2+2 dialogue last week, Garcetti said the two sides took important steps towards strengthening the major defence partnership which continues to grow and increasing the acceleration

seen through initiatives such as the US-India roadmap in industrial cooperation and defence.

He stressed that New Delhi and Washington should deepen their Artificial Intelligence (AI) conversation. He pitched for India-US collaboration and cooperation in emerging domains.

"...We sometimes just focus on weapons and what is being sold, or potentially co-developed, but the operational level of our militaries...Is as critical as any equipment," he said.

The US envoy also said the countries should "discuss ways to deepen our science and our technology partnerships to harness technology for the global good instead of technology that harms us and divides us."

Garcetti said the joint statement issued after the 2+2 Dialogue reflected the resolve of the US and India to promote resilient rules-based international order to safeguard a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific through the QUAD and other metrics, global issues.

Climate change to reduce Himalayan ungulate population by 2070



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

By 2050 to 2070, four main wild ungulates blue sheep, Tibetan argali, Tibetan gazelle and Kiang found in India's Himalayan Changthang region of Ladakh may witness their home range shrinking by half due to climate-change induced surging temperatures.

While some may be forced to move uphill, others like Tibetan gazelle which are already on endangered list might become extinct if adequate and timely conservation steps are not taken, a team of wildlife experts has warned. "The maximum predicted range loss will be for the Tibetan gazelle with an average of 90 percent loss, which might make it locally endangered with a prediction that only 9.5% of their present habitat might be suitable for them in 2070 in the context of climate change," they said.

An estimated 100 individuals of Tibetan gazelles are known to be in Ladakh with a patchy distribution in the southern part of the study area.

Changthang is a high altitude area supporting wild ungulates and is susceptible to climate change impacts including receding glaciers and decrease in water supply and storage, which could negatively impact wildlife habitat.

In addition, environmental and social changes have been

taking place in Changthang that have resulted in fragmentation of critical wildlife habitats.

Experts Anchal Bhasin and Upamanyu Hore from Noida-based Amity Institute of Forestry and Wildlife, Amity University and Pankaj Raina and Sunetro Ghosal from Department of Wildlife Protection, Leh, Ladakh had used using Species Distribution Modelling (SDM) to estimate the current and future distribution of the four ungulates.

The results suggest that these ungulates may lose 57% to 61% of their current range, depending on the algorithm used and dispersal scenarios with a northward shift in their ranges, said Raina in the study "Climate change impacts on high altitude wildlife distribution: Predicting range shifts for four ungulates in Changthang, eastern Ladakh." The study is published in the ScienceDirect.

Raina said that the Tibetan gazelle in Ladakh requires urgent conservation efforts to enable it to adapt to future climate change scenarios in the region.

"We recommend restoration and conservation of grassland ecosystems that were historically and currently occupied by ungulates with additional attention given to potential suitable habitats outside protected areas by regulation of human activities," added Bhasin.

Climate change is already a threat to the future suitability of habitats for mountain ungulates such as Marco Polo sheep, Siberian ibex, Tibetan antelope, Wild yak besides Tibetan gazelle and Kiang in other countries too.

The experts flagged that many of these species are classified as Critically Endangered according to the IUCN and species that are now classified as Least Concern may also experience habitat shifts and population decline due to climate change. In fact, climate change can have variable impacts including reduction of suitable habitat and redistribution of range to higher latitudes along with an elevation shift. Climate change can also reduce the abundance of species and intensify competition between sympatric species due to increased spatial overlap.

Habitat change is not the only challenge associated with climate change as mountain ungulates are also extremely sensitive to increase in temperatures as mammals have lower tolerance to deviations in core body temperatures.

The authors explored future projections for the ungulate species by combining four GCMs and one greenhouse gas trajectory for two future time periods i.e., 2050 and 2070.

Ungulate occurrence points were obtained from field surveys conducted between 2018 and 2021.

India, Australia reviews defence ties 2+2 dialogue

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Australia on Monday here reviewed the entire gamut of their bilateral defence and strategic ties during the 2+2 Ministerial level dialogue. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar represented India while their counterparts Richard Marles and Penny Wong respectively led their delegation.

The two sides also reviewed the situation in the Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China flexing its muscle there. India and Australia are part of the Quad combine including the US and Japan.

Giving details of the bilateral meeting between Rajnath and Marles besides the 2+2 dialogue, defence ministry officials said, both the ministers reaffirmed their commitment towards further strengthening the bilateral defence relations.

They expressed satisfaction at the increasing military-to-military cooperation between the two countries, including joint exercises, exchanges and institutional dialogue. Rajnath congratulated Marles on the maiden and successful conduct of multilateral exercise 'Malabar' by Australia in August this year.

Both ministers underscored the importance to further enhance cooperation in information exchange and maritime domain awareness between the two countries. The two sides are also in an advanced stage of discussion to conclude implementing arrangements on Hydrography Cooperation and cooperation for air-to-air refueling.

Rajnath emphasised that the forces of the two countries should also look at cooperating in niche training areas like Artificial Intelligence, anti-submarine and anti-drone warfare and cyber domain.

The two ministers agreed that deepening cooperation in defence industry and research

would give a fillip to the already strong relationship.

Rajnath suggested that shipbuilding, ship repair and maintenance and aircraft Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) could be the potential areas of collaboration. The two ministers also discussed cooperation for joint research in underwater technologies.

Collaboration between the defence start-ups of both the countries, including that for solving challenges jointly, was discussed by the ministers. They concurred that a strong India-Australia defence partnership will augur well not just for the mutual benefit of the two countries but also for the overall security of the Indo-Pacific.

External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Wong will hold the 14th Foreign Ministerial Framework Dialogue (FMFD) on Tuesday to take stock of cooperation under the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

The inaugural "2+2" ministerial dialogue between India and Australia had taken place in September 2021.

India has such a framework for talks with a very few countries including the US and Japan. The latest edition of India-US foreign and defence ministerial dialogue took place in New Delhi on November 10.

The bilateral defence and strategic ties between India and Australia are on an upward trajectory in the last few years.

In June 2020, India and Australia elevated their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership and signed a landmark deal for reciprocal access to military bases for logistics support. The Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) allows the militaries of the two countries to use each other's bases for repair and replenishment of supplies, besides facilitating scaling up of overall defence cooperation.

Centre proposes register with details of all pharmacy professionals



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has proposed a National Pharmacy Register with details of all pharmacy professionals as part of a draft Bill that seeks to repeal the nearly 75-year-old Pharmacy Act and replace the Pharmacy Council of India with a national commission.

The Union Health Ministry uploaded a draft National Pharmacy Commission Bill, 2023, on its website on November 10, seeking comments from the public.

The draft Bill aims to provide for a pharmacy education system that improves access to quality and affordable pharmaceutical education, ensures availability of adequate and high-quality professionals in all parts of the country, promotes equitable and universal health care and makes services of pharmacy professionals accessible to all citizens. It also calls for periodic and transparent assessment of pharmacy institutions, facilitating maintenance of a pharmacy register for India and enforcing high ethical standards in all aspects of pharmacy services.

According to the draft Bill, the Pharmacy Ethics and Registration Board will maintain a National Pharmacy Register, which will contain details of pharmacy professionals to ensure transparen-

cy.

"The Pharmacy Ethics and Registration Board shall maintain an online and live National Pharmacy Register (NPR) containing the name, address, all recognised qualifications possessed by a pharmacy professional and such other particulars as may be specified by regulations," according to the draft document.

The board shall make available the National Pharmacy Register to the public in the form of a digital portal accessible on the website of the Pharmacy Ethics and Registration Board/Commission in such manner and form as may be specified by regulations.

The Bill also proposes that every state chapter shall maintain and regularly update, in digital form, the State Pharmacy Professional Register and the State Pharmacy Register in the specified digital format and supply a digital and physical copy to the Pharmacy Ethics and Registration Board/Commission within three months of the commencement of the act.

The draft Bill also encourages pharmacy professionals to adopt the latest research in their work and to contribute to research.

It proposes flexibility to adapt to changing needs and seeks to set up an effective grievance redress mechanism.

NIA files case against Khalistani terrorist Pannun

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The NIA has registered a case against designated terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun and his banned organisation Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) for issuing video messages threatening people flying Air India, a spokesperson of the agency said on Monday.

The case has been filed under the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the official said.

Pannun, the self-proclaimed general counsel of "unlawful association" SFJ, released the video messages on social media platforms on November 4.

In these, he asked Sikhs not to fly on Air India planes on and after November 19, claiming that there was a threat to their lives if they flew on the airline's aircraft. The listed terrorist also threatened that Air India would not be allowed to operate globally.

Following this, a high alert was issued and investigations started by security forces in Canada, India and certain other countries where Air India flies.

In his video messages, Pannun also issued a warning to the Indian government that the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi, one of the world's busiest airports, would remain closed on November 19.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) spokesperson said Pannun has been under the NIA's lens since 2019, when the anti-terror agency registered its first case against him.

In September, the NIA had confiscated his share of a house and land in Amritsar in Punjab and Chandigarh, the spokesperson said, adding that non-bailable arrest warrants were issued against Pannun by a NIA Special Court on February 3, 2021.

He was also declared a 'Proclaimed Offender' on November 29 last year, the official said.

Blue Dart, India Post ink pact for parcel locker

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Express logistics provider Blue Dart on Monday said it has set up digital parcel locker service at post offices under a partnership with India Post. This service allows consignees to retrieve their shipments from digital parcel lockers at post offices, doing away with the need for personal receipts or signing for a package, Blue Dart said in a statement. "Blue Dart and India Post forge strategic partnership for enhanced services. Under the collaboration, Blue Dart has introduced automated digital parcel lockers at selected post offices, offering customers an additional delivery method," the statement said.

These parcel lockers keep their contents secure and are easily accessible. When the recipient needs to retrieve a package from the locker, they can simply enter the assigned code and open the locker, the company said. Additionally, the deliveries can be collected at any time, and only authorised personnel can access the packages.

Blue Dart Managing Director Balfour Manuel said this transformative partnership under-



scores unwavering commitment to exceptional customer service, providing customers the option to collect packages at their convenience.

This initiative demonstrates the company's commitment to revolutionise hyper-connected city logistics, enhancing last-mile delivery efficiency while ensuring a reliable and secure experience for our customers in an increasingly digital and on-demand world.

Blue Dart Express Ltd is South Asia's premier express air and integrated transportation and distribution company, offering delivery of consignments to over 56,000 locations in India.

Sensex, Nifty fall for 2nd day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark equity indices Sensex and Nifty stayed on the back foot for the second straight session on Monday due to selling in auto, utility and commodity shares amid high valuation concerns and fresh foreign fund outflows.

In a volatile trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex declined 139.58 points or 0.21 per cent to settle at 65,655.15. During the day, it fell 246.93 points or 0.37 per cent to 65,547.80.

The Nifty dropped by 37.80 points or 0.19 per cent to 19,694 as 27 of its components closed in the red, 21 in the green and two unchanged.

Among the Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance, Mahindra & Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, Asian Paints, Hindustan Unilever, Tata Motors and JSW Steel were the major laggards.

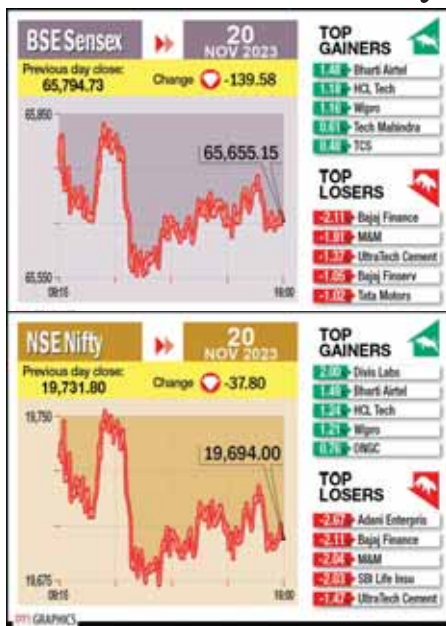
Bharti Airtel, Wipro, HCL Technologies, Tech Mahindra, Tata Consultancy Services and Maruti were among the gainers.

"Elevated long-term interest rate trends and a weakening global economy continue to hurt inflows and market movement. While the recent softening of inflation in the US & India and the negative trend of crude are expected to help the view on global equity and India in the short term. "In that context, the ease in FII selling is helping the domestic markets but continues to consolidate primarily due to India's premium valuation relative to global peers," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In this scenario, the IT sector is benefiting; however, valuation continues to be on the higher side compared to long-term history, suggesting a cautious approach in the sector in the medium term, he added.

A mixed trend was witnessed on the sectoral front wherein IT posted decent gains while auto and metal ended in the red. In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.39 per cent and midcap index dipped 0.06 per cent.

Among the indices, auto fell 0.69 per cent, com-



modities declined 0.66 per cent, capital goods (0.43 per cent), realty (0.33 per cent) and consumer discretionary (0.30 per cent).

Energy, healthcare, IT and tech were the gainers. In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled in the green, while Tokyo ended lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US markets ended with marginal gains on Friday. Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.74 per cent to USD 81.21 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 477.76 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

The BSE benchmark declined 187.75 points or 0.28 per cent to settle at 65,794.73 on Friday. The Nifty slipped 33.40 points or 0.17 per cent to 19,731.80.

Rupee falls 9 paise to close at all-time low

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined by 9 paise to settle at its all-time low of 83.35 against the US dollar on Monday, tracking a negative trend in domestic equities.

Foreign fund outflows also weighed on the local unit, forex traders said.

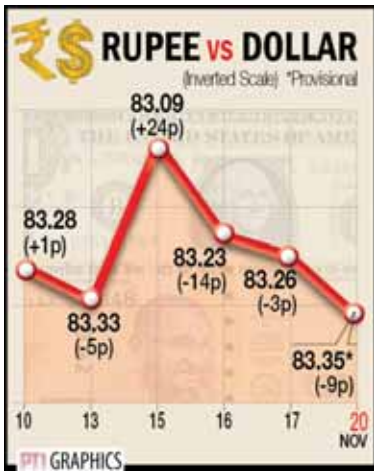
At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.25 and settled at its lifetime low level of 83.35 against the dollar, registering a fall of 9 paise from its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee settled at 83.26 against the American currency. Earlier, the rupee closed at its lowest level of 83.33 against the dollar on November 13, this year.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.42 per cent lower at 103.48.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, rose 0.66 per cent to USD 81.14 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, Sensex fell 139.58 points or 0.21 per cent to settle



at 65,655.15 points. The Nifty declined 37.80 points or 0.19 per cent to 19,694.00 points.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital markets on Friday as they sold shares worth Rs 477.76 crore, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, India's forex kitty decreased by USD 462 million to USD 590.321 billion for the week ended November 10, the Reserve Bank said on Friday.

In the previous week, the overall reserves had increased by USD 4.672 billion to USD 590.783 billion.



GDP growth to dip a bit in 2024: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's real GDP growth will decline marginally to 6.3 per cent in 2024 from the 6.4 per cent estimated for 2023, an American brokerage firm said on Monday.

The next calendar year will be of two halves, wherein the government spending before the upcoming General Elections will be the key driver for growth, while after the elections, it will be the re-acceleration in investment growth, especially from the private sector, Goldman Sachs said in a report. From a fiscal year perspective, the brokerage said it expects growth to accelerate to 6.5 per cent for FY25 from the 6.2 per cent it has projected for the ongoing FY24, it added.

"India has the best structural growth prospects in the region. We believe GDP growth is likely to stay robust at 6.3 per cent y-o-y (year-on-year) in 2024," the brokerage said, adding the country is less sensitive to potential external shocks like longer rates globally, persistent dollar strength and geopolitical uncertainties.

The brokerage said risks around the growth outlook are

evenly balanced but added that "the main domestic risk" is emanating from political uncertainty, with elections approaching in the April-June quarter of 2024.

The election season is already underway with Assembly polls in five states, which will be followed by the General Elections later, it said, adding that outcomes of these elections will be "keenly watched" by investors from the standpoint of economic reforms and/or policy continuity.

It expects headline consumer price inflation to come at 5.1 per cent for 2024, against 4.7 per cent estimated by the Reserve Bank. This will, however, be lower than the 5.7 per cent expected in 2023, it added. "We expect the government to intervene through subsidies or other measures to keep a lid on food prices in an election year," it said.

The "somewhat elevated" inflation relative to the target will limit the room for monetary easing, and the RBI will cut rates by only 0.50 per cent to 6 per cent by early 2025, the brokerage said, adding that there will be a cut of 0.25 per cent each in Q4 2024 and Q1 2025.

Domestic flier traffic record high on Nov 19

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The domestic air traffic touched a new high on Sunday as airlines carried 4,56,910 passengers, marking two "consecutive days of historic numbers".

On Saturday also, the air traffic number reached a new high of 4,56,748 passengers, according to official data.

"Post-Covid, India's domestic aviation's turnaround story has not just been overwhelming but inspiring as well. Positive attitude, progressive policies, and deep trust among passengers are taking it to new heights with every flight, every day," the civil aviation ministry said in a post on X on Monday.

There were 4,56,910 domestic air passengers and 5,958 flight movements on Sunday (November 19). The count was much higher than the 3,93,391 passengers and 5,506 flight movements recorded on November 19 last year.

Sharing the record numbers, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday said there is no stopping the country from becoming



the world's largest aviation market.

"The josh is high-est sir! India's air passenger traffic breaks the previous day's record, thus marking two consecutive days of historic numbers. More than a feat for the aviation industry, it is a collective achievement for the people of India.

"With this, there is no stopping us from becoming the world's largest aviation market," he said in a post on X.

It was also the highest post-Covid air traffic for two consecutive days.

India is one of the fastest-growing civil aviation markets in the world and domestic air passenger traffic registered an annual growth of nearly 11 per cent to 1.26 crore in October.

'Future of coal is bright in India'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The future of coal in India is bright as there are technologies available which can help the country extract, use and combust the dry fuel far more sustainably, FutureCoal on Monday said.

Coal is considered to be the biggest contributor to climate change with thermal electricity being responsible for nearly 30 per cent of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

"The future of coal in India is bright.....We believe that there are technologies that are available which can help India extract coal far more sustainably, use it far more sustainably, combust it far more sustainably, and post combustion treatment to coal can reduce CO2 emissions by as much as 99 per cent," FutureCoal Board member Sunil Chaturvedi said.



The FutreCoal Global Alliance is an organisation representing the entire value chain and is dedicated to raising awareness on the contribution of the fossil fuel. He further said 70 per cent of electricity generation comes from coal. India has moved from last 15 years to supercritical and ultrasuper critical technologies. That means India as a country, is combining coal far better, efficiently and in a less polluting manner.

"This will continue because coal is not only for electricity generation....A lot of improvement has happened but things are still evolving," Chaturvedi

explained. He said that by 2030 when the thermal power share will come down to 30-35 per cent or so, India will still need 1.5 billion tonne of coal. Therefore, production of the fossil fuel in India has to go up. FutureCoal Chief Executive Michelle Manook was of the view that the future of coal in India is exciting.

"The total contribution made by the coal value chain in sectors, including power, steel, cement, aluminium, chemicals and renewable infrastructure is in the order of hundred of billion and is an interconnected global supply chain," she explained.

EPFO adds 17.2L members in Sept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body EPFO recorded a net addition of 17.21 lakh members in September, according to payroll data released on Monday.

Month-on-month comparison of payroll data shows an increase of 21,475 net members over August 2023, a labour ministry statement said.

Year-on-year comparison of payroll data reflects an increase of 38,262 net members over September 2022. Around 8.92 lakh new members enrolled during September 2023, the ministry said. Among these newly joined members, the age group of 18-25 years constitutes 58.92 per cent of total new members added during the month.

This demonstrates that a majority of the members joining

the organised sector workforce of the country are youth, who are mostly first-time job seekers, it explained.

Payroll data shows that approximately 11.93 lakh members exited but rejoined EPFO, it stated.

These members switched their jobs and re-joined the establishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement thus, extending their social security protection, it explained.

As compared to the previous month, the number of exits decreased by 12.17 per cent with 3.64 lakh exits in September 2023.



The data indicated that the number of members exiting the EPFO has been declining since June 2023.

The ministry stated that out of a total of 8.92 lakh new members added during the

month, around 2.26 lakh are female members, joining EPFO for the first time. Also, the net female member addition during the month stood at around 3.30 lakh.

State-wise analysis of payroll

data denotes that net member addition is the highest in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat and Haryana.

These states constitute around 57.42 per cent of net member addition, adding a total of 9.88 lakh members during the month. Of all the states, Maharashtra is leading by adding 20.42 per cent of net members during the month.

Month-on-month comparison of industry-wise data displays significant growth in the members working in establishments engaged in the sugar industry, courier services, iron and steel, hospitals, travel agencies etc.

Of the total net membership, around 41.46 per cent addition

is from expert services (consisting of manpower suppliers, normal contractors, security services, miscellaneous activities etc.) The above payroll data is provisional since the data generation is a continuous exercise, as updating employee record is a continuous process.

The previous data hence gets updated every month. From April 2018, EPFO has been releasing payroll data covering the period from September 2017 onwards.

In monthly payroll data, the count of members joining EPFO for the first time through an validated Universal Account Number (UAN), existing members exiting from coverage of EPFO and those who exited but re-joining as members, is taken to arrive at net monthly payroll, it stated.

Project cost doubled under Bharatmala: ICRA



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The project cost under the Bharatmala Pariyojana (BMP) programme has more than doubled to Rs 10.64 lakh crore owing to the steep rise in input costs and an increase in land acquisition costs, rating agency ICRA said on Monday. Bharatmala Pariyojana is the largest highway infrastructure programme in India which aims at the development of

34,800 kilometres of national highway corridors at an investment of Rs 5.35 lakh crore.

"Pending the cabinet approval for the revised cost of Bharatmala Phase-I, project awarding activity in the recent quarters took a beating, declining by 48 per cent YoY to 2,595 km during 7mFY2024 compared to 5,007 km during 7mFY2023," it said.

The figures are for the first seven months of this fiscal

compared to the year-ago period.

ICRA said it expects the awarding activity to contract over 30 per cent YoY (Year-on-Year) in FY2024.

Giving more insights, ICRA VP & Co-Group Head Ashish Modani said almost 95 per cent of the road awards by the Ministry of Roads and Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in the last five years were awarded through the hybrid annuity mode (HAM) and the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) route, wherein the entire funding burden lay on the ministry.

"The burden on MoRTH in case of BOT (Toll) projects is much lower, given the substantial cost escalation in the BMP and consequent increase in funding requirement," he said, adding that the MoRTH has thus shifted its focus on to BOT (Toll) projects.

ICRA said while the average number of bidders for the EPC and the HAM projects stood at 15 and 8, respectively, in the case of BOT (Toll), it remained below 5.

DMRC roped in as consultant for Bhubaneswar Metro

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) was roped in as a turn-key consultant for the construction of the Bhubaneswar Metro's first phase, from the airport to Trishulia Square in Cuttack, officials said on Monday.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Bhubaneswar Metro Rail Corporation and the DMRC for the project, which will be completed in four years, they said.

Chief Minister Naveen

Patnaik said the agreement signals the emergence of a new epoch in the transportation history of Odisha.

"We are now poised to transform the transportation landscape in the state's capital region. This is a flagship programme under the 5T (teamwork, technology, transparency, timely completion leading to transformation) initiative of the government that will also symbolise the emergence of a new Odisha," he said.

The first phase of the project will be built at a cost of Rs 6,255 crore, Patnaik said, adding that

this is the single largest investment made for any infrastructure project in the state.

The entire cost of the project will be borne by the state government, he added.

"I am happy that my government is delivering yet another promise that was made in our 2019 manifesto" the chief minister said. Patnaik said DMRC is a pioneer in the field of construction and operation of metro rail in the country.

He expressed confidence that the Bhubaneswar Metro will be of world-class standard, and will be completed in time.

Commercial vehicle segment set for growth: VECV MD

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Domestic commercial vehicle industry is expected to touch the peak sales volume of 2018-19 this fiscal and grow briskly over the next few years coinciding with the growth of the overall economy, VECV Commercial Vehicles MD and CEO Vinod Aggarwal said on Monday.

He noted in the first seven months (April-October), the heavy duty truck segment has grown by 15 per cent.

"We are expecting that this year the industry should either be very near to the peak or it may even cross earlier peak of 2018-19," Aggarwal told PTI here in an interaction. The industry is expected to grow over the next few years with the economy slated to cross the USD 5 trillion mark, he noted.

"There are fundamental reasons for this growth in the next few years. If we look at the economy, we are now at around USD 4 trillion mark and this economy is going to reach the USD 5-7 trillion mark the way it



is growing," Aggarwal said.

And if the economy grows, the commercial vehicle industry also grows because when more goods are produced more commercial vehicles are required to move them from one place to another, he noted.

Institutionalised elderly care need of hour: Secy Social Justice Ministry

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Secretary, Dr Saurabh Garg, on Friday said the institutionalised care of elderly people is the need of the hour and cannot be avoided.

"It is old concept in mind and also suitable to cultural traditions that aging at home is commonly accepted and encouraged. But at the same time the institutionalised care is somewhat which is needed and required and as time goes by it would be needed in a much greater way," the secretary said at 4th ASLI Ageing fest.

The Association of Senior Living India (ASLI) is a premier national voluntary membership association that addresses the needs of ageing population by establishing communication platforms that educate seniors about the diverse models of structured care available and the essential principles of quality care.

AP ■ KHAN YOUNIS
(GAZA STRIP)/ BEIJING

Health Ministry spokesman Ashraf al-Qidra, who is now based in southern Gaza, said some 600 patients, 200 health care workers and 2,000 displaced people are sheltering there. In a separate development that could relieve some

AP ■ JERUSALEM

CHINA WELCOMES MINS FOR TALKS

China's top diplomat welcomed four Arab foreign ministers and the Indonesian one to Beijing on Monday, saying his country would work with "our brothers and sisters" in the Arab and Islamic world to try to end the war in Gaza as soon as possible. The ministers from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Indonesia chose to start a tour of world capitals in Beijing, a testament to both China's growing geopolitical

“China is a good friend and brother of Arab and Islamic countries,” Wang said in opening remarks at a state guest house before their talks began. “We have always firmly safeguarded the legitimate rights and interests of Arab (and) Islamic countries and have always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people.” China has long backed the Palestinians and been quick to denounce Israel over its settlements in the occupied territories. It has not criticised the initial Hamas attack on October 7 — which killed about 1,200 people — while the United States and others have called it an act of terrorism.

International shipping often involves a series of management companies, flags and owners stretching across the globe in a single vessel. Two US defence officials confirmed that Houthi rebels seized the Galaxy Leader in the Red Sea on Sunday afternoon local time.

of us and an urgent humanitarian crisis that requires an international mobilization to deal with and counter it," he said. He added they appreciated the resolution issued by the United Nations Security Council, calling for urgent and extended humanitarian pauses in Gaza, "but we still need more efforts and cooperation." China—the world's second-largest economy after the US—has become increasingly outspoken on international affairs and even gotten directly involved in some recently, albeit cautiously.



AP ■ LONDON

Microsoft invested bil-

OpenAI said Friday that Altman was pushed out after a review found he was “not consistently candid in his communications” with the board of directors, which had lost confidence in his ability to lead the

OpenAI last week declined to answer questions on what Altman's alleged lack of candour was about. Its statement said his behaviour was hindering the board's ability to exercise its responsibilities.

The conference venue was picketed by activists from Medical Aid for Palestinians calling for a cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war to get urgent food and humanitarian aid into Gaza. "It is good that they are talking about addressing food and security in the world. But if they're going to do that seriously, they cannot ignore the situation in Gaza, where 2.2 million people are at risk of starvation," said the group's chief executive, Melanie Ward. "Because of the siege that's been imposed on Gaza, the amount of aid that's gotten in the last month is only enough for about two normal days in Gaza."

AP ■ MADRID

Sánchez's Socialist party will hold 17 ministries and its

The socialist prime minister's new term has gotten off

Speaking Monday, Sánchez promised to “prioritise dialogue and negotiation in a legislature that will be key for the social and territorial cohesion of Spain”.

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES
(ARGENTINA)

It is the widest victory margin in a presidential race since the South American country's return to democracy in 1983. In the streets of Buenos Aires, drivers honked their horns and many took to the streets to celebrate in several neighbourhoods. Outside



Milei's party headquarters, a hotel in downtown Buenos Aires, a full-on party kicked off with supporters singing, buying beers from vendors and setting off coloured smoke bombs. They waved Argentine flags and the yellow Gadsden flag,

Inside, the self-described anarcho-capitalist who has been compared to former US President Donald Trump, delivered his victory speech,

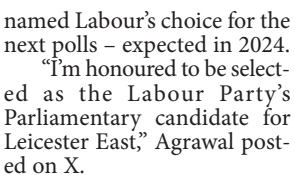
With a Milei victory, the country will take an abrupt shift rightward and a freshman lawmaker who got his start as a television talking head blast-

"This is a triumph that is less due to Milei and his peculiarities and particularities and more to the demand for change," said Lucas Romero, the head of Synopsis, a local political consulting firm.

The incident took place in Chakwal district, some 275 km from Lahore, Punjab Inspector General Police (IGP) Usman Anwar told reporters here. Both the teachers, identified as Zeeshan and Anis, have been arrested and are being interrogated, he said. "The two teachers of a seminary in Chakwal district sexually assaulted at least 15 male students, aged between 10 and 12. The number may increase during the course of the investigation," the IGP said.

AP LONDON

In a local parliamentary contest, he beat another Indian-origin prospective candidate Councillor Rishi Madhani to be



"It's time to use this auspicious moment to reset Leicester East, with a Labour MP who'll deliver for everyone who lives

employment conditions. I'll bring similar successes to Leicester East and make sure it gets its fair share," reads his mission statement. He reflects on his migrant journey 22

He lists championing Leicester's economy, helping residents with the cost-of-living crisis and creating affordable homes among his top priorities.

AP ■ TOKYO

The agency said it was assessing a possible impact, including the risk of a tsunami approaching Japan later

The eruption is expected to continue indefinitely, it said, and raised the volcano's risk level to the highest stage of four. Ulawun is one of the most active volcanoes in

JMA, however, urged coastal residents to stay cautious in case of a delayed tsunami. It said it could not immediately predict a possible size of the waves.

SARITA BAGS BRONZE; SHEETAL, RAKESH IN LINE FOR GOLD



PTI ■ BANGKOK

Sarita Devi won a bronze, while India is also assured of at least two silver medals with Rakesh Kumar and Sheetal Devi entering the finals of their events in the Para Asian Archery Championship here on Monday. Sarita got the better of Jyoti

Baliyan 139-135 in an all-Indian bronze playoff in the women's compound open section.

Fresh from winning the Para Asian Games gold, Sheetal overcame Sarita 143-138 in an all-Indian semifinal to make the gold medal clash in the women's compound open category.

Sheetal will take on

Singapore's Nur Syahidah Alim who defeated Jyoti 150-138 in the other semifinal. Rakesh assured India of another silver advancing into the men's compound open final. Rakesh pipped Yuya Oe of Japan 143-142 in the last four match.

India will also be looking to add to their six quotas (four

compound and two recurve) for Paris Paralympics from the qualifying event that will begin here from November 23.

India, however, failed to win any medal in recurve section with Tokyo Paralympic bronze medalist Harvinder Singh making a pre-quarterfinal exit.

Harvinder went down 5-6 in

a shoot-off finish against Tomohiro Ueyama of Japan in the men's recurve section.

Vivek Chikara lost 2-6 to second-seeded Chinese player Jun Gan in the last-eight round.

In women's recurve, second-seeded Pooja made a last-eight exit, enduring a 0-6 loss to Selenge Demberel of Mongolia.



Prannoy, Sen to lead Indian charge at China Masters Super 750

PTI ■ SHENZHEN

Indian shuttlers, including comeback man HS Prannoy, will eye a good show at the China Masters — the season's last BWF Super 750 event — beginning here on Tuesday, in pursuit of valuable ranking points in the race to the Paris Olympics.

Prannoy, who lost in the second round at the Japan Open Super 500 after returning to action following a back injury, will once again be the top Indian name in men's singles in the competition.

He will face Taiwan's Chou Tien Chen, who had defeated him in the last meeting in Japan.

The world No. 17 Lakshya Sen and world No. 23 Kidambi

Srikanth, who are fighting to be inside the top 16 by April 28 next year to qualify for the Olympics, will also be in action.

Following his first-round exit last week after a loss to Japan's world championships silver medallist Kodai Naroaka, Sen will hope for a better outing when he faces seventh seed Shi Yuqi of China.

With just four quarterfinal finishes in the season, Srikanth has not exactly looked the part and has often been guilty of falling in a pool of error. The former world No.1 skipped the Japan Masters last week and will face fourth seed Thai Kunlavut Vitidsarn, the reigning world champion.

Priyanshu Rajawat, on the other hand, will meet Japan's

Kenta Nishimoto in his opener.

The top seeded men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who are riding high on the success of an unprecedented year which saw them bagging gold medal at the Asian Games, will also aim a fruitful outing.

Satwik and Chirag will hope last week's first-round exit was just a blip as they take on English pair Ben Lane and Sean Vandy in their opener.

In women's doubles, Gayatri Gopichand and Treasa Jolly withdrew while Panda sisters — Rutaparna and Swetaparna — will be in the fray.

Aakarshi Kashyap is the only Indian competing in women's singles, taking on China's Zhang Yi Man.



Mbappé reaches 300 career goals faster than Messi or Ronaldo

AP ■ PARIS

Kylian Mbappé has scored 300 career goals faster than Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi. Former France great Thierry Henry has nothing but admiration.

Mbappé achieved the feat over the weekend in a 14-0 rout of Gibraltar at the age of 24 years and 333 days. Both Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo, the game's two biggest stars in the 21st century, were older when they reached the milestone.

"What this kid is doing is really out of this world," said Henry, who is now in charge of leading the new generation of France's players as coach of the Under-21 team. "It's just unbelievable."

Mbappé was often compared to Henry earlier in his career. Both attended France's Clairefontaine academy before playing as left wingers at Monaco, where each won the French league titles as a teenager. Mbappé then replicated another of Henry's accomplishments when he won the 2018 World Cup in his first major tournament with France. Henry won the 1998 tournament. Mbappé has also been compared with Brazil great Pelé for his precocity. But in terms of style, with his devastat-

ing speed and skills, he is closer to Henry.

"He's a goalscorer, he delivers assists, he knows how to do everything," Henry said.

"Of course, there's room for improvement, but that's not the point." With his 17th career hat-trick, Mbappé brought his season tally to 21 goals in 19 matches. It was the PSG star's 46th goal in 74 international appearances. He is now just five goals behind Henry on France's all-time scoring list and 10 off teammate Olivier Giroud's national record total.

The exact number of goals in Pelé's career will forever be a topic for debate. He often said one of the reasons he should be considered the greatest player of all time was because of his feat of scoring more than 1,000 goals. But many dispute his count because Pelé included goals scored in friendlies or matches against semi-professional or even amateur teams.

When asked how many goals Mbappé could reach, Henry jokingly hinted at the 1,000 mark, then said "it's up for him to decide." "He's a guy who breathes soccer, who prepares himself well, who doesn't do everything and anything, his professionalism and desire to play are always there," Henry said.

India seek inspiration from famous 2019 stalemate against Qatar

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

India will take inspiration from their famous goal-less draw against Asian champions Qatar four years ago when they face the same opponents in a 2026 FIFA World Cup second round qualifiers match here on Tuesday. Their confidence boosted after the 1-0 away win against Kuwait on November 16, India will hope to give a tough fight to Qatar, though the fancied visiting side will start as firm favourites.

India had surprised the football fraternity when they soaked up waves of attacks to hold Qatar 0-0 on September 10, 2019 in their 2022 World Cup second round qualifiers in Doha. Qatar were then in red-hot form, having won the Asia Cup title in early 2019.

Talismanic India captain Sunil Chhetri was absent in that match as he was indisposed

and he would be eager to show his class at the Kalinga Stadium on Tuesday, though scoring chances for the hosts are expected to be far less than the visitors.

Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, who had captained the team that night in Doha in front of a partisan expatriate crowd, will have to be at his best again on Tuesday to thwart the marauding Qataris as he had done four years ago.

Ranked 61 in the world, Qatar are coming off a 8-1 thrashing of Afghanistan in their earlier match in Doha on November 16, and they would be looking to make the record of the drawn game in 2019 straight with a dominating win against the 102nd-ranked India.

Qatar were 1-0 victors in the reverse fixture of the two teams in the 2022 World Cup qualifiers.

Star striker Almoez Ali, who struck four times against



Afghanistan the other day and was the top-scorer for Qatar at the 2019 Asian Cup with nine goals, would be the man to watch out for as he can create trouble at the Indian defence, which looked weak in the absence of Anwar Ali.

Sandhu would remember that he and India were lucky in Doha in 2019 as Ali was denied by the upright and the Indian custodian will have to marshal

the defence, along with veteran Sandesh Jhingan.

Head coach Igor Stimac could not use the services of both Ali and defensive midfielder Jeakson Singh in the Kuwait match due to injuries, and it was a blow to the plans of the Croatian tactician though India won the match.

Ali had suffered an ankle injury in Mohun Bagan's AFC Cup match against Bashundhara

Kings of Bangladesh last month. Kerala Blasters player Jeakson suffered a shoulder injury in an Indian Super League match against Mumbai City FC and he had undergone a successful surgery early this month.

Midfielder mainstay Sahal Abdul Samad and Manvir Singh, who scored the lone goal for India against Kuwait, were there in Doha four years ago and they would look to make life difficult for the Qataris, more so after the duo's good outing in Kuwait City.

Stimac was just a few months into India head coach's job in the 2019 match, and after four years, he feels a positive result against Qatar is "not unfeasible".

"We have analysed Qatar from every angle and position and know very well what they are capable of in terms of speed and strength. Their defensive and offensive positions are immaculate, which they demonstrated against Afghanistan by

scoring eight goals," Stimac said.

"It is going to be very difficult, Qatar are one of the pre-tournament favourites from the group. We do not have high expectations but we know we have a chance and we have to grab that with both hands.

"The first and bigger part was accomplished by winning against Kuwait, now I want the boys to show their quality against Qatar," he said.

India are placed in Group A alongside Qatar, Kuwait and Afghanistan with the top two from the group progressing to the third round of the FIFA World Cup qualifiers.

The top two teams from each group will also secure qualification to the 2027 AFC Asian Cup.

The Blue Tigers have never advanced to the third round of AFC's FIFA World Cup qualifiers but they now have a high chance of doing so after their 1-0 win over Kuwait.

India captain Savita eyeing hat-trick of Goalkeeper-of-the-Year titles

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India captain Savita Punia remained in contention for securing a hat-trick of Goalkeeper-of-the-Year Award after she was nominated for the recognition for a third time in a row at this year's FIH Hockey Star Awards.

"I never thought I would win this award for two straight years, and get nominated yet again," said Savita who had won the prestigious titles in 2021 and 2022.

"I feel really great, and it's a proud moment for me, my family and my teammates as well."

Savita has led the country to

various important wins in recent years, including the title triumph at the inaugural FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup 2022 in Spain that helped India earn promotion to the FIH Pro League 2023-24.

"When I started playing, I never thought I would come this far, and it is all due to the support of my family and my teammates. "In team sport, no achievement is based on individual efforts but is an outcome of teamwork. It's great to be recognised for your hard work, and it motivates the entire team," she added. She also led the team to the bronze medal at this year's Hangzhou Asian Games fol-



lowed by the title win at the Women's Asian Champions Trophy in Ranchi.

Under her captaincy, India also achieved their highest-ever world ranking, reaching No. 6.

"It has been an amazing season for us. I'm just proud of how we overcame the obstacles that were thrown our way. We've gotten better with each game. Even the younger players have shown

great tenacity; they have worked hard and given their all," Savita said. With the focus firmly on the FIH Hockey Olympic Qualifiers in Ranchi from January 13-19, the Indian women's team will be aiming for a top-three finish to secure their Paris Olympics ticket.

India are placed in Pool B alongside New Zealand, the United States, and Italy. Pool A consists of Germany, Japan, Chile, and the Czech Republic.

The top two teams from each group will then progress to the semi-finals, and the top three finishing teams will secure their qualification for the Paris Olympics.



Gavi's knee injury overshadows Spain's 3-1 win against Georgia

AP ■ VALLADOLID (SPAIN)

Ferran Torres scored and had an assist for Spain in its 3-1 home win against Georgia in a European Championship qualifying game that was overshadowed by a potentially serious knee injury for midfielder Gavi.

Gavi was in tears when he limped off in the 24th minute in Valladolid on Sunday.

Gavi's goal for Spain in a 1-0 win at Norway in October had already secured spots for both Spain and Scotland at next year's tournament in Germany.

The 19-year-old Barcelona player took a hard hit to the side of his right knee when he collided with an opponent. He kept playing for a few minutes and appeared to hurt the same leg while trying to control the ball. After that he immediately signaled to the team that he could not continue.

Spain coach Luis de la Fuente embraced his young player before Gavi was taken into the locker room with team doctors.

Robin Le Normand gave Spain the lead four minutes into the game when Torres curled a cross to the second post for the Real Sociedad central defender to head home.

Georgia's Khvicha Kvaratskhelia equalized on a counterattack in the 10th after some hesitant defending by Le Normand and Dani Carvajal.

Giorgi Mamardashvili kept the score level at halftime after the Georgia goalkeeper, who plays for Spanish club Valencia, made a reflex save to parry Alvaro Morata's point-blank shot.

Torres scored from José Gaya's cross in the 55th with his header bouncing off the turf and beyond the reach of Mamardashvili.

Torres ran to the dugout and held up Gavi's jersey during his celebrations to dedicate the goal to his club teammate.

"We don't know the extent of the injury, but given that we know what a warrior Gavi is and how he left the field, we think it could be serious," Torres said.

Amy captures her first American LPGA title

AP ■ NAPLES (US)

Amy Yang picked a lucrative time for her first LPGA title on American soil. Yang birdied her last two holes for a 6-under 66 to win the CME Group Tour Championship and claim the USD 2 million prize, matching the largest in women's golf.

The victory was her fifth on the LPGA Tour, the previous four coming in Asia.

Yang holed out for eagle on the 13th fairway to overcome an early three-shot deficit, and then she let Nasa Hataoka make the mistakes in crucial moments down the stretch. All 60 players who qualified for the season finale only had to win to become the Race to CME Globe champion.

Yang finished in style, making a 10-foot birdie putt. The 34-year-old from South Korea dropped her putter and cupped both hands over her face as a

half-dozen players charged onto the green and soaked her with so much bubbly she wrapped a towel on her shoulders as she went to sign her card.

Hataoka closed with a 69 and Alison Lee had a 66 to tie for second. Lee was never closer than two shots along the back nine at Tiburon Golf Club. Lee, still winless on the LPGA Tour, closed out her season with three runner-up finishes on the LPGA and a victory in Saudi Arabia on the Ladies European Tour.

Yang trailed by three shots through six holes of the final round when she charged back into the mix with three birdies over a four-hole stretch. The pivotal shot was holing out her approach on the par-4 13th, the ball landing near the pin and then spinning back about 6 feet into the cup.

Hataoka answered with a 10-foot birdie putt, and they were tied going to the final three holes.



That's when Hataoka, a 24-year-old from Japan, blinked first. Her birdie putt from the fringe ran some 6 feet by the hole, and the par putt caught the lip. That ended 35 straight holes without a bogey, and left her one shot behind.

On the par-5 17th, Hataoka missed left down a steep ridge, with the pin cut to the left. She bumped her chip to 8 feet and missed the birdie chance. Yang, who also was left but short enough to hit a lofted pitch, nearly holed it and had a 3-foot birdie putt that gave her a two-shot lead going to the 18th.

She never looked anything but calm, splitting the soft fairway, and not even watching the full flight of her approach that rolled out to 10 feet below the hole.

Lee had four birdies over her last eight holes. Lilia Vu, a two-time major champion this year and No. 1 in the women's world ranking, closed with a 65 to finish alone in fourth and picked up a valuable prize of her own.

‘NOT EPIC CHOKE, JUST A BAD DAY’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The murmurs around India's inability to land the knockout punch in a global event have grown since the ill-fated Sunday night but did the team, which looked invincible heading into the World Cup final, actually crack under pressure or was it just a bad day in the office?

Fears of a billion plus came true as Australia stitched together a perfect game to deny a rampant India who had not put a foot wrong during their stormy march to the final.

After 10 wins in a row, India's unstoppable run came to a crashing halt in yet another trophy clash. Since winning the Champions Trophy in 2013, India have lost five ICC finals and three semifinals.

Considering India's dominance heading into the final, the dejected look on faces of skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli after the six-wicket defeat was understandable.

The two greats of the game perhaps knew deep down that they might not get another shot at the crowning glory.

The dust has not yet settled but India's repeated failures on the world stage does warrant the question: did they choke or was it just an off day in an otherwise near perfect campaign?

Speaking to PTI, sports psychologist Gayatri Vartak, who works with elite Indian athletes, felt it was not a case of buckling under pressure and Australia were just tactically superior on the day.

"I don't think there was any pure evidence of the team cracking men-

tally. I don't think they choked or could not perform under pressure.

"All of them came into the tournament positively and had great build up to the final. As a player your reference point (over your mindset) becomes your last game and not what happened in a final three years ago. The last game was the semifinal which they won," said Vartak.

Diya Jain, a sports psychologist at Fortis Hospital, said the big match pressure can take a toll on elite athletes but India's performance should be celebrated. "Any team can have a bad day, it's important to accept it and learn from it. Australia had a plan and they stuck to it, believed in themselves and were zoned-in. The pressure of big matches can take a toll, and mental preparation is key.

"That said, this is not the time for analysis, it's time to celebrate. Being a World Cup finalist and winning 10 matches on the trot is a remarkable feat," said Jain.

LIFE OF AN INDIAN CRICKETER MAKES WINNING A TAD HARDER: India's larger than life cricketers often talk about shutting the "outside noise" to focus on the job at hand.

Having said that, it is only human to get distracted when they are reminded of winning the coveted trophy in their fleeting public appearances at airports, hotels and stadiums, which is something they experienced over the course of the World Cup at home even with the "head phones" plugged at all times.

On the other hand, the feisty bunch



of Australian cricketers, who excel at the art of winning, are not treated as demigods back home. The fans undoubtedly make Indian cricket special and provide unconditional support to the players but their non-stop attention does add to the pressure.

Matthew Hayden, a member of the all-conquering Australian team and someone who is well versed with Indian cricket, spoke about the added pressure created by fans ahead of the World Test Championship final in June, another high-stake contest that India lost.

"It's certainly not a question of skill. So, it has to be a question of just the opportunity and the mindset going in. I mean, cricket is life here, it is the DNA of sport and has no other competitors.

"In Australia I could walk down the street and largely be unrecognised, here in India it's very insular and there's a lot of pressure," Hayden had told PTI back then.

Vartak too agrees with Hayden that performing amid a constant frenzy does make winning a tad harder.

"For athletes, the Indian fan acts as a big fuel, they come from an emotional space, they can be very critical but they are also very, very supportive.

"I don't think it is specific to India but fan behaviour tells us that typically they tend to worship their athletes (which is not the case with cricketers in Australia). "With that in mind, the fan following of cricket is so high here and it is a religion for all of us. I would agree that it is harder for an Indian cricketer (to be insulated from pressure)," said Vartak.

NOT FAIR TO COMPARE THIS INDIAN TEAM WITH TEAMS OF THE PAST: The series of knockout defeats over the last 10 years tells a compelling story but Vartak also

believes that it is not fair to compare Indian teams of the past with the current lot.

"I am sure the composition of the Indian team was different over those games in the last 10 years. There is a tendency to talk about mental block when there is a defeat but when the team is winning no one talks about the mindset. It is a little unfair on the cricketers.

"Technically you can also fail at times and that was the case with India yesterday. Australia were the superior team technically and tactically, but it doesn't become a mental issue.

"They did very well under pressure through the tournament and even won a knockout game. It was a just a bad day I would say," she added.

INDIA WERE JUST UNFORTUNATE: Former chief selector MSK Prasad, whose tenure saw India falling short in the 2017 Champions Trophy and 2019 ODI World Cup semifinal, acknowledged that the team has been losing knockout games consistently but it is not down to crumbling under pressure.

"The result last night was really unfortunate. I know India have not performed in finals consistently (over last decade) but this team was head and shoulders above others in the tournament. It is their sheer hard luck that they could not go all the way.

"Credit must be given to Australia. They played excellent cricket and I feel India were 40-50 runs short.

Then the evening dew made it much easier for the Aussie batters," said Prasad.



Cummins boards Sabarmati river cruise boat, poses with WC trophy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A day after winning the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup, Australian captain Pat Cummins on Monday posed for photos with the trophy on a Sabarmati river cruise vessel housing a restaurant in Ahmedabad.

Australia defeated hosts India by 6 wickets on Sunday in the final match at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Motera in Ahmedabad to lift the ODI World Cup for the sixth time — the most by any team in the world. Cummins, along with International Cricket Council (ICC) officials, reached the iconic Sabarmati Riverfront in the morning and boarded a floating restaurant named 'Akshar River Cruise' in the river for a photoshoot with the trophy.

"It is a matter of great pride for all of us that the ICC selected the Sabarmati Riverfront, an iconic place, for its official photoshoot. Cummins gave various poses with the trophy on the upper deck of the cruise. He was also served a variety of food items," said Suhag Modi, director of Akshar Travels Pvt Ltd, which operates the cruise restaurant.

In some of the photos clicked by the ICC's official photographer, the 30-year-old fast bowler could be seen standing with the World Cup trophy on the deck with the iconic Atal Bridge in the background. Modi said Cummins also gave an interview on-board the cruise vessel.

World Cup final: Australia's grunt work trumps India's flair

PTI ■ BENGALURU

In a grainy YouTube video, football legend Gerd Muller describes how Germany defeated a great Netherlands side in the 1974 World Cup final. The whole conversation is brutally simple.

"A German team is not easy to bring down. We fought more than ever in that final, our best came on the last day," Muller says in a feeble voice.

Those words are eerily similar to Pat Cummins' "best for the last" comment after Australia plotted a marauding India's downfall in the title clash of the 2023 cricket World Cup.

In fact, the champion sides think alike. Their disciplines might differ, but methods to success remain comparable.

And Australia is an iron-willed champion side, more so in the knockout stages of a global event. A look back to their last two matches in the showpiece will reveal that facet of their game. Both India and South Africa, their opponents in the semifinals, were perceived to be far superior despite the Aussies winning seven matches in a row to reach the knockouts.

The Australian pacers struggled to make an impact of desired levels during the entirety of the league stage but they returned to the best in the first available opportunity. The Kolkata weather and the Eden pitch helped them purchase some swing and bounce, and the triumphvirate of Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood and Cummins blew away the Proteas, sharing eight wickets among them.

On a progressively slowing down surface, the Aussies found

batting saviours in Josh Inglis, Starc and Cummins after South Africa's bowlers reduced them to a shaky 137 for five.

However, Australia's grunt work was pushed under the table as the focus was more on South Africa's inclination to choke on these big moments.

But Australia's real challenge was against India in the summit clash. This was not just another Indian team as under Rohit Sharma they had assembled one of the finest ODI outfits in their entire history.

They did not merely beat their opponents but lorded over them imperiously in 10 successive matches, something no other Indian team was able to achieve in the marquee event dating back to 1975.

Strangely, Rohit's band was a mirror image of the dominant Australians at the turn of the century, an era when they went undefeated in 29 matches across three editions in 1999, 2003 and 2007. In a way, Cummins' side had to beat India who was playing the Australian way. Australia were the underdogs, or so thought several of us.

So, what did Australia do? As Muller said in that interview, they found a way to fight even more than ever.

Cummins believed in the big match temperament of his bowlers and elected to bowl against an Indian batting unit that had been firing on all cylinders. There has been this common observation that a certain softness has seeped into the Aussies post the 'Sandpaper Gate'. Perhaps, India's two Test series win Down Under too might have added to that perception.

Cummins' captaincy in World Cup final was brilliant: Paine

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's former Test skipper Tim Paine has praised Pat Cummins for his exemplary leadership and performance with the ball after their triumphant World Cup campaign in India.

Cummins led from the front and finished with impressive figures of 2/34 from his 10 overs, picking up the crucial wickets of Virat Kohli and Shreyas Iyer to restrict India to a modest 240. His bold decision to bowl first after winning the toss was hailed by many.

Australia then rode on Travis Head (137) and Marnus



Labuschagne (58 not out)'s 192-run fourth-wicket stand to beat India by six wickets and lift the coveted trophy for a record-extending sixth time.

"When we won the toss I think Pat Cummins shocked

everyone a bit with the call to bowl first," Paine told SEN Radio.

"They obviously had some terrific mail - and they all have a lot of IPL experience and have been there - the mail on that

ground is that the dew comes in and it is extremely hard to bowl in the second innings, and I think we saw that.

"The concern was, I think, that being an Indian pitch and potentially being a bit drier that it would spin and slow right up and it didn't do that, if anything it actually got slightly better," he said. Paine said Cummins did not put a foot wrong in the big finale on Sunday.

"I don't think there was a thing last night that Pat Cummins got wrong. He was outstanding and he deserves a lot of credit for that. Andrew McDonald and his coaching staff deserve a lot of credit for

Rohit named skipper of ICC's Team of World Cup featuring six Indians



tures when he recorded his 50th ton in the semifinal.

With more than half of the ICC's Team of the Tournament comprising Indian players, it was yet another indication of the fact that despite not winning the title, the hosts were the best side in the competition having registered a record 10 wins on the trot.

Wicketkeeper-batter and vice-captain KL Rahul, who made 452 runs at 75.33 with one century and two fifties, finished as the eighth-highest run-scorer in the World Cup and was named in the Team of the Tournament.

Despite missing four matches of the league stage initially, Mohammed Shami finished as the best bowler with 24 wickets in only seven matches at 12.20.

"Only four players in the his-

tory of the men's game have taken more Cricket World Cup wickets than Shami's 55 - Lasith Malinga (56) Mitchell Starc (65), Muttiah Muralitharan (68) and Glenn McGrath (71) - with Shami's returns coming in ten fewer matches than any of those above him in the list," the ICC said on its website.

India pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, who was the fourth most successful bowler in the World Cup with 20 wickets in 11 matches at 18.65, also features in the ICC XI.

"No bowler to have played more than a single game in the tournament was able to return a better economy rate than Bumrah's 4.06 - an even more remarkable stat considering he

was so often in action when the fielding restrictions were in place," the ICC said.

Ravindra Jadeja featured in the team alongside Australia veteran Glenn Maxwell for his all-round exploits in the competition.

"India's spin-bowling all-rounder played a crucial role for his team, taking key wickets throughout the middle overs and consistently turning the screw," the ICC said.

South Africa's wicketkeeper-batter Quinton de Kock, who is now retired from the ODI format given the World Cup is over, was named as one of the two openers in the competition having scored four centuries for the Proteas during their excellent run in the league stage.

The coveted No 4 slot went to New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell,

who was the only batter to have dominated the Indian bowlers when they were on song during their two meetings - one at the league stage and the other at the semifinals.

With 552 runs in 10 matches, Mitchell finished as the fifth highest run-getter with two tons and as many fifties.

Sri Lanka's young Dilshan Madushanka was a standout performance in an otherwise forgettable World Cup campaign. His 21 wickets in nine matches saw him finish as the third highest wicket-taker.

Winners Australia's sole specialist spinner Adam Zampa, who finished as the second-best bowler with 23 wickets in 11 matches, featured at the last spot while South Africa's Gerald Coetzee was named the 12th man. **ICC's Team of the Tournament:** Rohit Sharma (c), Quinton de Kock, Virat Kohli, Daryl Mitchell, KL Rahul (wk), Glenn Maxwell, Ravindra Jadeja, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Adam Zampa, Dilshan Madushanka. 12th man: Gerald Coetzee.

Silence in stadium when Virat got out was most satisfying: Cummins

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The deafening silence at the Narendra Modi Stadium, packed with over 90,000 fans, when Pat Cummins snuffed out the peerless Virat Kohli in the World Cup final was perhaps the "sweetest moment" the Australian skipper had ever experienced on a cricket field. After becoming the fifth Australian captain to secure his country's sixth ODI World Cup here on Sunday, Cummins admitted that he has "fallen in love with 50-over format all over again".

He got Kohli, who was well-set on 54, with a delivery that had an extra bounce and the premier Indian batter played on trying to jab it towards the covers.

"Yeah, I think so," Cummins nodded in affirmative when asked if the silence was his sweetest experience on a crick-

et field.

In fact, going against their custom, the Aussies had a second huddle to just acknowledge how big the moment in the game it was.

"We did take a second in the huddle just to acknowledge the silence that was going around the crowd. It just felt like it was one of those days where it was all made for him to score another hundred like he normally does and that was satisfying," Cummins said.

He believes that ODI World Cup is here to stay as it has got its own legacy and also players have their stories to tell and perhaps, it is the bilateral series that



become a problem.

"I must say, maybe because we won, I did fall in love with ODI again this World Cup. I think the scenario where every game really matters, it does mean a bit different to just a

bilateral," he acknowledged.

"I mean, the World Cup's got such rich history, I'm sure it's going to be around for a long time. Yeah, there's so many wonderful games, so many wonderful stories within this last

couple of months. So, I think there's definitely a place."

He lost his mother in March, during a tour of India, which he had to curtail.

He returned, leading the country to the World Test Championship title, secured the coveted Ashes, and now clinched what he termed the "pinnacle of this sport".

Australia's 'Captain Marvel' has accomplished it all.

"Yeah, I mean at this moment just incredibly proud really of the year we've had. I have obviously had a really big year," he said. He spoke about the sacrifices made by everyone in the team and their families.

Pakistan call up 3 uncapped players for Australia tour

PTI ■ LAHORE



Pakistan on Monday called up uncapped players Saim Ayub, Aamir Jamal and Khurram Shehzad for the three-Test series in Australia, starting in December after fast bowler Naseem Shah couldn't recover from a shoulder surgery for the tour.

Shan Masood will be leading the 18-member squad against Australia with new chief selector, Wahab Riaz also recalling left-arm pacer, Mir Hamza for the tour for which nine players from the World Cup squad have also been retained.

Pakistan plays three Tests before moving on to New

Zealand for five T20 internationals but Wahab only named the Test squad on Monday.

While swashbuckling opener, Saim Ayub has played 8 T20 internationals and Aamir Jamal four T20 matches, pace bowler Khurram Shehzad has been called up for the first time by Pakistani selectors due to his impressive performances in

domestic cricket.

Wahab said that Naseem, who was injured during the Asia Cup and later had a shoulder surgery in the UK, would begin bowling at 50-60 percent capacity in three weeks time so he was not available for the tour.

Mir Hamza last played a Test against New Zealand in Karachi last January but was then dropped for the Sri Lankan tour.

Former captain, Babar Azam, Muhammad Rizwan, Saud Shakeel, Agha Salman, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Hasan Ali, Imam ul Haq, Abdullah Shafique, Muhammad Wasim junior have been retained from the WC squad.