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WHAT NEXT?

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FRAUD CASE AS A 'SCAM'

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MOST WANTED TERRORIST NABBED IN DELHI

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

In a breakthrough against the Pune ISIS module, the Delhi Police arrested three Islamic State terrorists on Monday. One of them is Mohammad Shahnawaz, also known as Shafi Uzzama, who had a reward of ₹3 lakh on his head. Shahnawaz was on the most wanted list of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

According to the Delhi Police, the trio had been planning to carry out terror incidents in north India, taking instructions from handlers based abroad.

Addressing a Press briefing, Special Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) HS Dhaliwal, said, "Last month NIA declared award on three persons allegedly involved in blast cases. Among them, Mohammad Shahnawaz, the main accused, has been arrested with his two associates — Mohammad Rizwan Ashraf and Mohammad Arshad Warsi."

Shahnawaz was arrested from Southeast Delhi's Jaitpur area on Sunday night. Ashraf and Arshad were nabbed from Lucknow and Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh, respectively. All the three suspected terrorists, who are engineers and have expertise in assembling bombs, were produced in a court earlier in the morning and have been sent to seven days of police custody.

While responding to media queries, Dhaliwal said, "Shahnawaz is a mining engi-



Delhi Police's Special Cell with most-wanted terrorist Shahnawaz and his associates after arresting them for their links with an ISIS module, in New Delhi on Monday

neer from Visvesvaraya Institute of Technology, and he had knowledge of blast mechanisms. He hails from Hazaribagh in Jharkhand. His wife, Basanti Patel, is converted to Islam and is now known as Mariam. She is currently on the run."

Dhaliwal added that bomb making literature sent from Pakistan-based handlers and other incriminating materials were recovered from Shahnawaz's hideouts.

He said initial interrogation revealed that these people conducted elaborate reconnaissance in Western Ghats, southern India, including Hubballi, Dharwad, and Ahmedabad in Gujarat to establish their hide-outs.

They wanted to make their base in Western Ghats, the police said. During the inves-

tigation, it was revealed that they had been instructed to procure all items they needed locally so that external role in their work is not exposed.

Shahnawaz had managed to escape from the custody of the Pune Police. Last month, the NIA had released pictures of Shahnawaz, who was wanted in the Pune ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) module case.

"The arrests were made following a tipoff from an arrested accused of another ISIS module in Delhi. Elementary plastic tubes, iron pipes, different types of chemicals, timing devices, etc, which could have been used in making explosive devices, were seized from Shahnawaz, along with a pistol and cartridges," the police alleged.

Dhaliwal said the ongoing

crackdown has exposed the pan-India reach of the ISIS module. "Their aim was to target well-known people and inflict maximum casualties," he said, adding that they have also uncovered the funding trail behind such activities.

Warsi, police said, is also from Jharkhand. He had completed a B.Tech in Mechanical Engineering from Aligarh University and was pursuing a doctorate from Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi. Ashraf holds a B.Tech in computer science. Originally from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh, he had also trained as a cleric.

Earlier this month, the NIA had announced ₹3 lakh each for information about Shahnawaz and three other terror suspects: Rizwan Abdul Haji Ali, Abdulla Faiyaz Shaikh alias 'Diaperwala' and Talha

Liyakat Khan.

Shahnawaz, Abdulla and Rizwan were radicalised into joining the ISIS mission over Telegram app, it is learnt. It is alleged that they were linked to an ISIS module at Pune in Maharashtra.

Initially dismissed as petty thieves, further questioning revealed their association with ISIS as part of a sleeper cell.

Shahnawaz, along with two accomplices named Mohammad Imran Mohammad Yunus Khan and Mohammad Yunus Mohammad Yakub Saki, faced arrest by the Kothrud police in Pune on July 18 after attempting to steal a two-wheeler. While the police were en route to their residence in Kondhwa, Pune, for a search operation,

Shahnawaz made a daring escape by leaping out of the police vehicle. Police uncovered that Khan and Saki, who originally hailed from Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, were purportedly implicated in a different terrorism case registered in Rajasthan.

In this case, explosives were found inside a car back in March 2022. Both Khan and Saki carried a reward of ₹5 lakh each for information leading to their capture. On July 22, the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad assumed control of the investigation. As part of their probe, the ATS detained more individuals, including an IT engineer named Qadir Dastagir Pathan and SN Kazi in Kondhwa.

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Khalistanis lay siege to Indian mission in UK

PTI ■ LONDON

A group of pro-Khalistan protesters on Monday gathered outside the High Commission of India here, waving anti-India placards and chanting slogans amid strong Scotland Yard presence.

The protest, which was promoted by British Sikh groups on social media, was organised to draw attention to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations last month of alleged Indian involvement in the killing of wanted terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada.

The allegation has been strongly rejected by the Ministry of External Affairs as "absurd and motivated".

"Sikhs will raise domestic issues, including the suspicious death of activist Bhai Avtar Singh Khandia," reads the call for Monday's protest.

There were several uniformed Metropolitan Police officers on guard and patrolling on foot outside India House, which was cordoned off to restrict the small group of turbaned men and some women opposite the building outside Waldorf Hotel at Aldwych in

central London.

Several police vehicles also patrolled the area throughout the roughly two-hour-long demonstration during which the protesters made speeches in Punjabi and raised pro-Khalistan slogans.

Earlier on Monday, the Sikh Federation (UK) organised a press conference in London to announce a formal request being submitted to the Chief Coroner for England and Wales to open an inquest into the death of Avtar Singh Khandia, a pro-Khalistan UK-based Sikh activist who died in Birmingham in June.

"Given the timing of Khandia's death, and the fact that death threats had been made by those with connections to Indian politics before his death, his case is at the very least suspicious," said Michael Polak, the family's barrister.

Following speculation around the 45-year-old's passing earlier this year, the local West Midlands Police had stated that there were "no suspicious circumstances" surrounding the death. The official cause of death post-mortem was stated as acute leukaemia or blood cancer.

Earlier on Saturday, pro-Khalistan extremists blocked the Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, from entering a gurdwara in Glasgow. The Indian mission dubbed the incident "disgraceful" before reporting it to the UK government.

In a statement issued on Saturday, the High Commission of India in London said that three people from outside Scotland "deliberately disrupted" the visit on Friday evening, and one even attempted to violently force open the diplomatic vehicle as senior diplomats arrived at Glasgow Gurdwara Guru Granth Sahib on Albert Drive.

As they hurled threats and abuses, the High Commissioner (HC) and Consul General of India (CG) decided to leave the premises to avert any further altercation.

"On September 29, 2023, three persons — all from areas outside Scotland — disrupted a planned interaction organised by the Gurdwara Committee for the community, the High Commissioner (HC) and the Consul General of India (CG)," said the High Commission of India statement.

Caste survey opens can of worms

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

The Nitish Kumar-led Government in Bihar on Monday released findings of its long-awaited caste survey, disclosing that Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Extremely Backward Classes (EBCs) together make up a significant 63 per cent of the State's entire population.

The first Caste Census was conducted during the British colonial era in 1872, with the last one taking place in 1931.

The data which could spur demands for similar caste-based census elsewhere is a key agenda of the Opposition INDIA bloc. And this could provide an advantage to Nitish and his alliance in the upcoming elections in the Hindi heartland, where caste-based politics holds significant sway.

The Congress, which is a major constituent of the Opposition grouping called INDIA, has welcomed the announcement while another Grand Alliance partner Lalu Prasad-led RJD has expressed satisfaction that their long-standing demand for a caste census has finally been fulfilled.

The Opposition BJP, however, voiced dissatisfaction with the caste survey, stressing that it did not give an idea of the



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar speaks with the media regarding the caste-based census report in Patna on Monday

"changed social and economic realities" over the years.

State BJP president Samrat Choudhary said his party had "given its consent" for the exercise and would make an assessment of the findings which have now been made public.

According to the data released here by Development Commissioner Vivek Singh, the State's total population stood at a little over 13.07 crore, out of which the Extremely Backward Classes (36 per cent) were the largest social segment followed by the Other Backward Classes at 27.13 per cent.

Backward caste politicians

have long claimed that the population of castes they represented numbered far more than the conventional wisdom based on the 1931 census, which was the last time a caste headcount was conducted and released.

The survey also stated that Yadavs, the OBC group to which Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav belongs, were the largest in terms of the population, accounting for 14.27 per cent of the total.

Dalits, also known as the Scheduled Castes, accounted for 19.65 per cent of the total population in the State, which is also home to nearly 22 lakh

(1.68 per cent) people belonging to the Scheduled Tribes.

Those belonging to the "unreserved" category, which denotes the proverbial "upper castes" who dominated politics till the Mandal wave of the 1990s comprise 15.52 per cent of the total population.

Nitish said he will convene a meeting of all the nine political parties with an electoral presence in the State legislature and the facts and figures will be shared with them.

RJD president Lalu Prasad said declaring the survey will set the tone for a nationwide caste census which will be undertaken if "We form the next Government at the Centre".

Both the leaders have played an instrumental role in the formation of the INDIA bloc, which affirmed its commitment to holding a caste census at a meeting it held in Bengaluru recently.

The survey establishes that the State's population is overwhelmingly Hindu, with the majority community comprising 81.99 per cent of the total population, followed by Muslims (17.70 per cent).

Christians, Sikhs, Jains and those following other religions as also the non-believers have a minuscule presence, together making up for less than one

per cent of the total population.

The grand old party in recent months has pushed for caste census and announced if the Modi Government does not carry out a caste census, it will be conducted as soon as the Congress Government is formed so that every section can get their right.

Interestingly the Congress in 2010 felt, being a secular State, should "discourage community distinction". The Group of Ministers headed by the then Union Minister Pranab Mukherjee decided that caste census is not advisable.

Before that first Prime Minister late Jawaharlal Nehru took a stand against caste census while late Prime Minister Indira Gandhi too followed the Nehru policy.

Another Congress stalwart and former Prime Minister late Rajiv Gandhi had hit out at the VP Singh Government for implementing the Mandal Commission report on OBC reservations by saying it will divide the country.

The caste survey in Bihar was ordered last year after the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre made it clear that it would not be able to undertake a headcount of castes other than SCs and STs as part of the census.

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Gandhi's message of non-violence biggest strength of democracy: CM

Gorakhpur (PTI):

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence is the biggest strength of democracy as he paid tribute to the 'Father of the Nation' on his birth anniversary here on Monday.

Adityanath paid floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Town Hall and former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's statue at Shastri Chowk on the occasion of their birth anniversaries.

During a visit to Gandhi Ashram in Golghar, he spoke to people engaged in yarn spinning there, and also bought some Khadi clothes.

The chief minister said Gandhi showed the strength of non-violence to the world, and described it as the biggest strength of democracy.

"Bapu showed the path of truth and non-violence to the world. We can win over the biggest powers of the world by following democratic principles. Following 'swadeshi', truth



and non-violence, Mahatma Gandhi forced the autocratic British regime to leave the country," he said.

The chief minister said that the 'Swachhjanli' programme, which is going on in all the gram panchayats and local bodies within the state in response to an appeal by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, draws its inspiration from the campaign led by Mahatma Gandhi.

He added that apart from 'swadeshi', truth, and non-vio-

lence, Mahatma Gandhi was also a great advocate of cleanliness.

Adityanath also paid tribute to the former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. He said that Shastri, who gave the slogan of 'Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan' and called for self-reliance along with security, was also a great follower of Gandhi.

The chief minister urged people to remember both the leaders for their unforgettable contribution towards the country and society.



The Nobel Prize in medicine has been awarded to Hungarian-American biochemist Katalin Kariko and American physician-scientist Drew Weissman for enabling development of mRNA COVID-19 vaccines. In the photo above, Katalin Kariko, left, and, Drew Weissman pose with their trophies during the Japan Prize presentation ceremony in Tokyo on April 13, 2022

Nobel for COVID saviours

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Two scientists won the Nobel Prize in medicine on Monday for discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 and that could be used to develop other shots in the future.

Hungarian-born American Katalin Kariko and American Drew Weissman were cited for contributing "to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times," according to the panel that awarded the prize in Stockholm.

The Nobel panel said the pair's "groundbreaking findings... Fundamentally changed

our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system."

Traditionally, making vaccines required growing viruses or pieces of viruses — often in giant vats of cells or, like most flu shots, in chicken eggs — and then purifying them before next steps in brewing shots.

The messenger RNA approach is radically different. It starts with a snippet of genetic code that carries instructions for making proteins. Pick the right virus protein to target, and the body turns into a mini vaccine factory. But simply injecting lab-grown mRNA into the body triggered an inflammatory reaction that usually destroyed it.

Kariko, a professor at

Szeged University in Hungary and an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Weissman, of the University of Pennsylvania, figured out a tiny modification to the building blocks of RNA that made it stealthy enough to slip past those immune defences.

Kariko, 68, is the 13th woman to win the Nobel Prize in medicine. She was a senior vice president at BioNTech, which partnered with Pfizer to make one of the COVID-19 vaccines.

She and Weissman, 64, who is a professor and director of the Penn Institute for RNA Innovations, met by chance in the 1990s while photocopying research papers, according to Penn Today, the university's

news website.

WHY DO MRNA VACCINES MATTER?

Dr Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain's University of East Anglia, described the mRNA vaccines as a "game changer" in helping to shut down the coronavirus pandemic, crediting the shots with saving millions of lives.

"If it hadn't been for the mRNA technology, COVID would have been much worse... Vaccines generally were the turning point in slowing down COVID and the mRNA vaccines were just so much better than all the others," he said, noting that the main vaccine used in the UK, made by AstraZeneca, is barely in use anymore.

"We would likely only now be coming out of the depths of COVID without the mRNA vaccines," Hunter said.

Dr Bharat Pankhania, an infectious diseases expert at Exeter University, said that a major advantage of mRNA technology was that vaccines could be made in extremely large quantities since their main components are made in laboratories.

Pankhania predicted the technology used in the vaccines could be used to refine vaccines for other diseases like Ebola, malaria and dengue, and might also be used to create shots that immunise people against certain types of cancer or autoimmune diseases like lupus.

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Tributes pour in for Gandhi, Shastri

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm in the city on Monday, while tributes were also paid to former PM Lal Bahadur Shastri on their birth anniversaries.

A programme was organised at the district collectorate where District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar hoisted the national flag and paid tributes to both the leaders.

A programme was organised at the Lucknow Municipal Corporation headquarters in the presence of Mayor Sushma Kharakwal, who hoisted the national flag and paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

“Mahatma Gandhi was the main face of India's Independence movement. Today, not only in India but across the world, Mahatma Gandhi needs no introduction. His important role in India's freedom movement cannot be forgotten. The entire country celebrates his birth anniversary as a national festival,” the mayor said.

Municipal Commissioner Inderjit Singh appealed to everyone to follow in the footsteps of Gandhi by sharing his policies and thoughts, and also highlighted his contribution to the country's independence. He talked about adopting the principles of Gandhi not only by the common people but also by people in public service.

Gandhi and Shastri were also remembered at Babasabeh Bhimrao Ambedkar University, where the programme was



(Left) Governor Anandiben Patel paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi's statue at Raj Bhavan. (Right) Visitors at Gandhi book fair at Charbagh railway station

presided over by Vice-Chancellor Sanjay Singh. Apart from the VC, the registrar, teachers, officers, employees and students offered floral tributes to both the leaders. Thereafter, a cleanliness campaign was organised under the leadership of the vice-chancellor.

Meanwhile, the celebrations at SGPGI began with floral tributes to the two great leaders, followed by lamp lighting by director Prof RK Dhiman and others. Prof Dhiman said that the day (October 2) has the same relevance today, or probably even more.

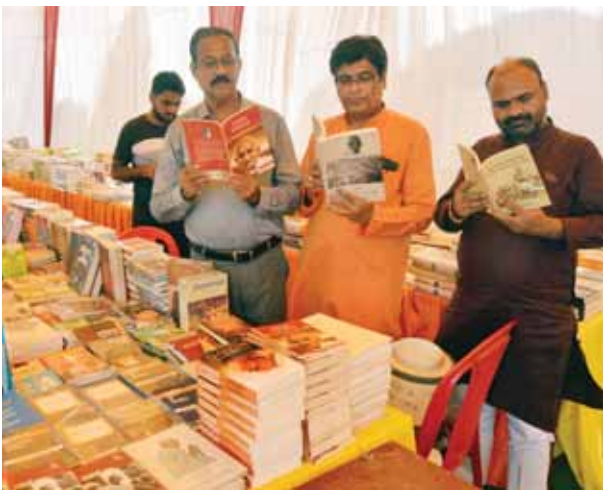
HoD, hospital administration, Dr R Harshvardhan said: “We must try to learn about Mahatma Gandhi as a man by reading about him, internalis-

ing his philosophy. Also, we must think of ways to incorporate his learnings as a health-care provider.”

Avadh Girls' Degree College also organised a programme on the occasion. A documentary on Mahatma Gandhi, made by Namrah Atif Khan, was screened. A yoga dance was performed by NSS volunteers and a documentary on Lal Bahadur Shastri was also screened.

A nukkad natak highlighting Gandhi's ideal of ‘Cleanliness is next to godliness’ was staged by the NCC cadets. College principal Bina Rai spoke on the learning that people need to take from the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Meanwhile, Lucknow University Vice-Chancellor



Pioneer

Prof Alok Kumar Rai, along with the entire university family, paid tributes to both the great personalities.

Under the direction of Sanskritiki director Prof Madhurima Lal, students of the university made a colorful open-theatre presentation on the theme of ‘Gandhiji - Ahimsa Parmi Dharma’. Thereafter, a cultural orchestra band was also inaugurated. The band made the entire campus resound with patriotic songs. After paying homage to the statue of Gandhi, the vice-chancellor reached Lal Bahadur Shastri hostel, where he, along with all the teachers and hostel members, paid homage to the great leader. Gandhi's book was also presented to all those present there.

Meanwhile, the students

of APS Academy in Telibagh gave a message of unity towards the nation through ‘Meri Maati Mera Desh’ and other programmes on Monday. The students and teachers collected soil from their respective areas and placed it in pots to create a symbol of unity. A rally was also organised by the children and teachers to celebrate the message of unity and patriotism. The chief guest was president of Shri Akhil Bharatiya Chandra Dutt Senani Trust SP Mishra, while the special guest was HC advocate Ajmal Khan. The schoolchildren took part in programmes like poster-making, slogan-writing, face painting, board decoration, group song, speech, etc. A film on Gandhi was also screened and ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ was discussed.

CEA predicts UP to lead in electricity demand in 2024

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Central Electricity Authority has predicted an unprecedented surge in electricity demand in Uttar Pradesh, exceeding 32,000 MW during the summer of 2024. Despite being categorised among the BIMARU states, Uttar Pradesh is expected to lead the country in electricity demand.

The demand in Uttar Pradesh is projected to reach 31,917 MW in 2024-25, according to a state-wise electricity demand forecast recently made by the Central Electricity Authority of India (CEA).

This year from June to September the peak restricted demand in UP had crossed 29,000 MW.

Avadesh Verma, a member of the UP Electricity Regulatory Commission advisory committee, said that the demand for electricity was steadily rising due to the rapid increase in the number of consumers. This growth was attributed to the new connections provided under the Central government's SAUBHAGYA scheme, which aims for 100% coverage of households with power connections in both rural and urban areas. In the last five years, Uttar

Pradesh has witnessed the provision of over 1 crore new connections.

“The pace at which the power connections are increasing in the state, the demand in 2024-25 will be much more than what has been projected. To meet the surge in demand during the next summers, UP Power corporation should take up the job of strengthening the power distribution infrastructure and UP power transmission corporation should add new transmission capacity on war footing,” said Avadesh Verma.

The projection by the CEA comes as an alert to the UPPCL, which is already struggling to cope with the galloping rise in demand for power, primarily due to inadequate infrastructure.

UP, according to the forecast, is expected to experience the highest demand in September 2024. The state has been recording the highest demand in August-September for the last few years. The highest peak demand projected for 2024-25 is around 4,000 mw more than the highest peak demand recorded so far this year.

The demand in April 2024 has been projected at 25,379

mw, 28,291 mw in May, 29,853 mw in June, 30,581 mw in July, 31,585 mw in August and 31,917 mw in September.

In October 2024, the demand will come down to 24,929 mw followed by 19,413 mw in November and 22,277 mw in December. The peak demand in January, February and March 2025 has been projected at 23,868 mw, 20,686 mw and 21,956 mw, respectively.

Among other states that may record high peak demand in 2024-25 are Gujarat (24,047 mw), Tamil Nadu (20,806 mw), MP (19,686 mw) and Rajasthan (19,342 mw), as per the CEA projections.

A UPPCL official said the demand forecast made by the CEA was most likely to be true considering the fact that this year also the peak demand had already crossed 29,000 mw mark.

As per a historical report prepared by the UP State Load Dispatch Centre (UPS LDC), the highest peak demand recorded in Uttar Pradesh in March 2011-12 was only 11,767 mw, which rose to 28,284 mw on July 24, 2023. The highest demand in 2021-22 was 23,867 mw in August and 26,589 mw in September 2022-23.

All villages to be connected with bus service by Dec

Lucknow (PNS): Minister of State for Transport (Independent Charge) of Uttar Pradesh Daya Shankar Singh has directed the officials of Transport Corporation and Transport department that as per the directions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, all the villages of the state should be connected with transport services by December this year.

He said that the number of inhabited villages in Uttar Pradesh is 1,00,983 and that of gram sabhas is 59,163. He said that the Chief Minister has given instructions to serve the unserved villages by December.

In accordance with the instructions of the minister, a meeting was organised under the chairmanship of Principal Secretary (Transport) Venkateshwarlu to serve the unserved villages with UPSRTC buses. All the divisional transport officers and regional managers of UPSRTC participated in the meeting in which it was decided to have a field survey to confirm the available information about unserved villages and make it error-free. The survey will be done jointly by the officials of the Transport department and UPSRTC.

The principal secretary said that information about notified routes is available with

UPSRTC and information about routes other than these is available with the Transport department. “The joint exercise and on-site survey of both will make the collection of information convenient and authentic. The survey work will be completed in a week,” he said.

The principal secretary said that a minimum of two teams have been formed for each district. After compiling this report from the depot level, the regional managers/divisional transport officers will send this report to the headquarters by October 10.

Meanwhile, the transport minister said that while conducting the terrestrial survey and proposing the creation of a route, keep in mind that only villages at a maximum distance of one kilometer from the route concerned would be considered serviced. Separate bus services will be operated for villages beyond this distance. He said that it would be mandatory to combine the tehsil and district headquarters related to the operation of the bus service.

He issued instructions that keeping this in mind, the proposal for the routes should be prepared in such a way that the total distance of the proposed route does not exceed a 100 kilometres.

Woman battered to death by husband over dowry

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 25-year-old woman was beaten to death allegedly by her husband in Jankipuram police station area in the wee hours of Monday. ADCP, North, Abhijeet R Shankar said the victim, Puja Awasthi of Sitapur, was not on good terms with her husband Sonu, and the couple had parted ways a few months back. She had been living separately with their children.

He said the police were informed around 3:30 am on Monday that a woman was lying injured on the terrace of a house in Kotwa village.

“A team of police reached there and rushed the woman to KGMU Trauma Centre where she was pronounced dead,” he said. He added that the police registered a case against Sonu based on the complaint given by the victim's parents.

Preliminary investigation revealed that the woman was staying along with her children. She was sleeping on the roof and her children in a room.

Around 3 pm, the accused climbed the wall of the house and reached the roof where he picked a fight with his estranged wife. He then attacked her with a brick, killing her on the spot before fleeing the scene. Her head was smashed with the brick, which was recovered from the crime scene.

Villagers said the incident came to light when the parents of the victim tried calling her, but in vain. The bereaved parents alleged that Puja had been living separately for the last six months due to the atrocious behaviour of her husband, who was forcing her to bring dowry from her house. She had also lodged a dowry case with the Sitapur police.

The police said that the victim was living in the house of her sister-in-law and was searching for a room to shift. The police recovered a blood-stained shirt from the crime

Jail inmate hangs self

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A jail inmate was found hanging inside his cell in Gosainganj police station area on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday. Police said Ujjawal Bhatt of Jai Prakash Nagar in Krishna Nagar was found hanging from an iron angle with a bedsheet tied around his neck.

Meanwhile, a 40-year-old man was found dead in a park at Nishatganj crossing under Mahanagar police station on Monday. Police claimed that the man died of jaundice. The deceased was identified as Rajesh by a man, Sanjay of Chinhat. Sanjay told the police that Rajesh was a labourer and a pavement dweller. Sanjay, who is a tea vendor, said he knew him due to his regular visit to his shop near the park.

In another incident, an unidentified man, aged around 50 years, was found dead in PGI police station area on Monday. Police said he was found lying at the gate of a temple close to a sweet shop in the area.

In another case, a 38-year-old tailor, identified as Shah Nawaz of Katra Bazaar, ended his life allegedly under a bout of depression in Kakori on Monday. He was found hanging from the ceiling. His wife had died 3-4 months back, the bereaved family said.

Meanwhile, the Government Railway Police (GRP) on Monday arrested a vegetable vendor for his suspected role in the murder of a woman at Bakshi-Ka-Talab railway station on Sunday. The accused was identified as Haroon Ali (27) of Madaion. He used to borrow money from the victim. The deceased, Sushila Devi (40), who originally hailed from Lakhimpur Kheri, was a neighbour of the accused in Lucknow. SHO, GRP, Lucknow, Sanjay Kharwar said: “Sushila had given around Rs 7,000 in cash to Haroon when he was facing financial crisis. Few weeks back, she asked him to return the money. However, Haroon expressed his inability and distanced himself from the woman.”

“The accused contacted the victim through someone else's phone and asked her to meet him at BKT railway station where the duo had a heated exchange. Haroon attacked Sushila with a brick and fled the scene,” the SHO said.

scene and it was said that it belonged to Sonu. It further surfaced that Sonu doubted the fidelity of his wife. The police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigation.

Meanwhile, a case of dowry death was registered in connection with the death of a woman, identified as Sushma Pal. She was found dead at her house in Thakurganj on Monday. Deceased's brother Sandeep Pal alleged that her

husband Vijay Pal and latter's girlfriend killed Sushma and tried to make it look like a case of suicide. “Vijay Pal and his family were not happy with the dowry we gave them at the time of marriage, and they used to torture Sushma. Vijay Pal was demanding Rs 7 lakh and a car,” he alleged. He further alleged that Garib Lal, who is the brother-in-law of Vijay Pal's father, would also torture Sushma for dowry.

LDA VC inspects residential schemes

Lucknow (PNS): Vice-Chairman of the Lucknow Development Authority, Indramani Tripathi, inspected the Vasant Kunj and Devpur Para residential schemes on Sunday. During the inspection, the vice-chairman reviewed the progress of the 4,512 buildings being constructed in Sector-I of Vasant Kunj under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. He warned against substandard work by M/s Asia Construction.

The LDA VC instructed the representatives of all six agencies involved in the construction work to adhere to established standards. He emphasised that all construction work must be completed

by December 2023. Following this, he visited 2,256 Prime Minister Awas units constructed in Sector-N, where he directed the relevant officials to address water supply and lighting arrangements. During his inspection of Rashtra Prerna Sthal, the VC LDA urged the acceleration of the museum block's construction and other related tasks.

In response to local opposition, he urged the completion of the boundary wall within a week, with the presence of police if necessary. The Vice Chairman then assessed progress under the Green Corridor Project, instructing an increase in the number of workers to expedite road construction. He

also urged discussions with Jal Nigam officials to resolve issues with a pipeline hindering the project.

Subsequently, the vice-chairman inspected the MIG, LIG, and EWS towers under construction in the Devpur Para housing scheme.

On finding progress to be slow, he cautioned the relevant contractor and insisted on a time-bound completion of the work. During the inspection, it was discovered that nearby illegal societies had encroached upon the scheme, prompting the vice-chairman to issue immediate closure orders. He directed the zonal officer to take action against all illegal constructions or plots near the scheme.



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Shyam Babu to Shyam Babu Rao, Shyam Babu Rao S/o Mohan Lal R/o Jawai Tilaipur, Kaushambi

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Lavkush to Lavkush Kumar, Lavkush Kumar S/o Ramnhi R/o 176 Nandouli Chittapur, Kaushambi

NOTICE

Notify that I have changed my name from Anand Shankar to Anand Shankar Srivastava for all purposes. Anand Shankar Srivastava K/436, Katra, Nawabganj, Barabanki, U.P.

NOTICE

The general public is informed that my name is registered in the records as Shashank Bahadur. I have changed my name from Shashank Bahadur to Shashank Bahadur Singh S/o Dharendra Bahadur Singh Teigaon, PS Sareni, Lalganj, Raebareilly. Therefore, I should be known and recognized by this name in future.

CITYBRIEFS



‘IMPORTANT FOR GIRLS TO BE SELF-RELIANT’

It is important for girls to be self-reliant. It not only gives them self-confidence but also makes them financially independent, Commercial Tax Commissioner Minishti S said while speaking at a programme organised by Hanumat Beauty Pathshala at a city school. Founder of Hanumat Dham Monica Sinha was also present on the occasion. The commercial tax commissioner said that a noble work is being done by Hanumat Pathshala. “The efforts being made to make poor and special class girls self-reliant are commendable. Other people of the society should take inspiration from these works,” she said. Founder and head of Hanumat Beauty Pathshala Rajni Singh said: “We provide four months of free beautician training to girls from poor families, irrespective of the community they belong to. After completion of train-

ing, they are also given a chance to practise the art for two months. After this, items used for every purpose like bags, dresses, etc are provided to all the girls. We have been doing this work for the last 25 years and have trained around 19,000 girls so far,” she added.

WILDLIFE WEEK

Wildlife Week was inaugurated at the Lucknow zoo on Monday by Forest Minister KP Malik. He inaugurated the stalls and photo gallery set up on the occasion. He also inaugurated a model of lion made from scrap and flagged off a rally by schoolchildren. He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath have always called for the conservation of wildlife.

COMBINED MEDIA, HT VICTORIOUS

Combined Media and Hindustan Times registered wins over DD/AIR and

Accredited Journalist XI, respectively, in league matches of the Ekana Media Cup at the KD Singh ‘Babu’ Stadium on Monday. Hindustan Times defeated Accredited Journalist XI by 18 runs while Combined Media edged past DD/AIR by two wickets. Amit Shukla of DD/AIR claimed five wickets, including a hat-trick, in 1.5 overs.

CRICKET TOURNAMENT FROM OCTOBER 4

IFA (CC) is organising the 11th All-India DASCBC Cricket Tournament under the aegis of Defence Account Sports department will compete for the title in men's and women's categories. IDAS, IFA-CC, Harihar Mishra said that the tournament would be played on a T20 format at the CSD Sahara Cricket Stadium, NR Stadium and AS Jaipuria Ground simultaneously. The tournament will be inaugurated by Additional CGDA and

Vice-President of DASCBC Devika Raghuvanshi while IDAS, FA (Defence Services), Rasika Choubey will be the chief guest at the closing ceremony.

EXHIBITION

Social Welfare Minister Aseem Arun visited the Jagdish Chandra Bose exhibition at the UP Police Radio headquarters on Monday. The minister visited each stall and sought information about the latest telecommunication equipment, CCTV cameras and other gadgets. He was accompanied by DGP, Telecommunication, Dr Sanjay Tarde, who briefed him about the technicalities of the equipment. Later, Arun took part as a moderator in a panel discussion on ‘Role of radio police and telecommunication equipment in UP-112 services and their contribution in Set City’. The participants were acquainted with the integration of Saveri Yojana, Women, PRV, Fire and other services in UP 112.



Minister Aseem Arun visited the Jagdish Chandra Bose exhibition

Forestry New Year an innovative effort: Min

Lucknow (PNS): Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Environment, Forest, Zoological Park and Climate Change Arun Kumar Saxena said at a state-level function in Lucknow that it is an innovative effort towards preparing a plan for timely implementation of forestry works and completing it in a timely manner. He was speaking at a programme organised on the beginning of Forestry New Year.

He expressed hope that this effort made for the first time in the state would continue in the coming years.

Saxena said that forestry work like seed collection, growing saplings in nurseries, advance soil work, preparation of plan for tree plantation at local level, tree plantation, scientific harvesting of trees are technical and time-bound activities. Along with this, to increase the green cover, public cooperation and participation on a large scale is necessary in forestry works, especially in tree plantation, reducing human-wildlife conflict and forest management are also important. The minister congratulated the department for planting more than 36 crore saplings.

‘500 monuments existed in city at some point of time’

Lucknow (PNS): Lucknow Bioscope organised ‘The Forgotten Heritage of Lucknow’, a lecture by Dr PC Sarkar at Sanatkada Ka Adda.

Dr PC Sarkar holds a PhD in organic chemistry and is presently working as a principal scientist with the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. He kept the audience hooked throughout as he took them through the lost architectures and monuments of Lucknow with the help of a presentation which contained the archived pictures of old and lost monuments. “Lucknow is known for a limited number of buildings and edifices — Rumi Darwaza, Bada and Chhota Imambaras, and the Residency. The city, however, had several other architectural marvels, which have been described from time to time by various researchers. Unfortunately, many of those have lost their sheen, crumbled away due to apathy and neglect, or simply lost their original architectural features due to alterations and changes in usage patterns,” he said.

“A third category of monuments consists of buildings or structures which had existed at some point in time but no trace of which can be found in present times. These marvels have been mentioned by writers and travellers but hardly documented or described in detail,

and hence one can only conjecture about their architectural features, purpose and eventual destruction. The most prominent among these was the medieval Macchi Bhawan, which was destroyed by the British to set up the KGMC (now KGMU). Other lost structures include the Jalalabad Fort and Moti Mahal,” he recalled.

On what makes a building a monument, he said: “If it's not 100 years old, we don't call it a monument. Lost monuments are those which are completely lost or no longer in their original stricture. Around 500 heritage monuments in Lucknow that existed at some point of time have been identified. These may include palaces, gateways, graves, gardens, mosques, kothis, etc.”

NOTICE

"That the original sale deed dated 02.08.2004 in the name of Rama Tiwari in respect of House No. E-1/121 Block EWS Yojana 39 Daheli Sunapur, Kanpur Nagar duly registered at Book No. 1, Khand No. 5655 on pages 341 to 368 at Serial No. 7621 registered before the Sub-Registrar, Zone-3, Kanpur Nagar has been misplaced, which is not traced out with best effect. The FIR has been lodged by the deponent in respect of misplaced of aforesaid document to Police on line, Lucknow, on 16/09/2023 by LRA No. 20230000618964 wich information has been entered by Nilesh Mishra in police station, if any of the person/institution has demand his claim in respect of the aforesaid documents, which information given to the deponent/ authorized person within 16 days of the publication notice, after that his client has been satisfied that the aforesaid proposed document is of Nilesh Mishra"

Applicant
B.N. Bajpai, Advocate,
Civil Court Campus, Kanpur Nagar
Mobile No. 9450514381

Non-violence strength of democracy: CM



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath paying floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri in Gorakhpur on Monday

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath marked the birth anniversaries of two prominent figures in India's history — Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri — with heartfelt tributes and a commitment to their enduring legacies.

On Monday, the chief minister commenced his day by offering floral tributes to the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at Town Hall in Gorakhpur. He then proceeded to Shastri Chowk, where he paid respects to the former Prime Minister of India, Lal Bahadur Shastri, to his statue. The ceremonies were significant as the nation remembered the birth anniversaries of these two iconic leaders.

The CM also visited the Gandhi Ashram in Golghar, where he remembered Mahatma Gandhi by participating in spinning yarn on a traditional 'charkha'. During his visit to the ashram, he engaged with those dedicated to this age-old

craft, observed the products of khadi and village industries, and made purchases of khadi clothing, thus furthering the cause of self-reliance and 'swadeshi'.

While reflecting on Mahatma Gandhi's enduring message of truth and non-violence at the Gandhi Ashram, Yogi stressed on the global significance of non-violence, which he described as the most potent strength of democracy. He noted that the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was being commemorated across the nation, underscoring the profound impact of his principles.

"Bapu (Mahatma Gandhi) illuminated the world with his advocacy of truth and non-violence. By adhering to democratic principles, 'swadeshi', and truth, he compelled the autocratic British regime to exit our nation," the CM recalled.

Yogi highlighted the ongoing 'Swachhajanli' programme in all gram panchayats and local bodies within the state, a campaign inspired by Mahatma

Gandhi's emphasis on cleanliness and self-reliance.

He underlined that in addition to self-sufficiency, 'swadeshi', truth, non-violence, and cleanliness were significant for Mahatma Gandhi, who tirelessly promoted these values in society.

In addition to paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi, Yogi remembered India's second prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Shastri's famous slogan, 'Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan', encapsulated his vision for self-reliance and security. Yogi encouraged people to remember both the leaders for their invaluable contributions to the nation and society.

The event witnessed the presence of dignitaries such as MP Ravikishan Shukla, Mayor Dr Mangesh Srivastava, MLAs Vipin Singh & Pradeep Shukla, MLC Dr Dharmendra Singh, BJP regional president Sahajanand Rai, district president Yudhishtir Singh, and city president Rajesh Gupta.

Woman among 6 killed over land dispute

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident, just a day after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath hailed the law and order situation of Uttar Pradesh, six people, including a woman, were allegedly murdered in Deoria district over a long-standing land dispute between two families.

The incident triggered panic in the area, prompting police to deploy additional force there. Senior police officials, including Principal Secretary (Home) Sanjay Prasad and Special DG (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar visited the spot along with other senior officials and claimed to have detained 14 persons for interrogation so far.

The investigation revealed that the incident happened in Fatehpur village situated near the Rudrapur police station area of Deoria district. The dispute between the two families had been festering for several years, fuelling the animosity between them. Among the victims were former district panchayat members.

Preliminary reports suggest that the violence erupted when former district panchayat member Prem Yadav was beaten to death in Lehra Tola of Fatehpur on Monday morning.

Subsequently, an enraged crowd gathered at the house of the accused and murdered Satyaprakash Dubey in revenge. The fury of the mob did not subside there, as four innocent people from Dubey's family, including his wife Kiran Dubey

(52), daughters Saloni (18) & Nandini (10), and son Gandhi (15), were also killed.

The mob did not spare Satyaprakash's 8-year-old child Anmol either and attacked him. His condition was said to be critical.

Chaos engulfed the entire village, prompting a swift response from the authorities. A huge number of police personnel were despatched to the scene to restore peace and collect crucial evidence.

Special Director General of Police, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar said that Yadav visited Satyaprakash's house where a heated argument between them resulted in the killing of the former and some of his family members by Satyaprakash's family using a sharp weapon. In retaliation, Satyaprakash's house was attacked by people from Prem's neighbourhood. The mob used sharp-edged weapons and also opened fire with country-made pistols to eliminate Satyaprakash's family.

Taking to X (formerly Twitter), Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath extended condolences to the kin of the deceased and said that the culprits would not be spared.

"I have directed the ADG, commissioner and IG to reach the spot and take stern action against the accused. I have also asked the district administration to provide for the proper treatment of the injured. The culprits will not be spared," he posted.

Opposition parties flay govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) will send a delegation to Deoria to prepare a ground report of the horrific incident of mass murder.

In a statement issued on Monday, CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said that the Deoria massacre has shown a mirror to the UP government over its tall claims on law and order.

"Six people were murdered and the police and administration remained unaware of the incident. Only a few days back in Kaushambi, three member of a Dalit family were shot dead. In this case too, a land dispute claimed the lives of innocents as the district administration let the tension between both the parties escalate. While the embers of Kaushambi's incident are yet to die down, the Deoria incident has come as a chilling reminder. It seems that the UP has been caught in a trend of mass murders under the BJP government. The government has failed, but still it does not miss a chance to pat its back. The Deoria incident should be investigated and accountability should be fixed," the CPI(M) leader demanded.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), UP unit, condemned

the Deoria incident. The party leaders claimed that the state was in the grip of viral fever and dengue. "People suffering from fever are dying due to lack of beds, doctors and nursing staff in hospitals. Despite doing rounds of three government hospitals in the state capital, a child suffering from fever could not get treatment and died," the leaders said.

They pointed out that in the prime minister's parliamentary constituency Varanasi, scores of patients were being returned from hospitals without being given treatment as there was a lack of beds.

"The BJP government of Uttar Pradesh makes tall claims about health services but the ground reality shows that their claims are hollow," the CPI(M) said, demanding availability of adequate stock of medicines, additional beds, doctors and nurses in hospitals.

Meanwhile, in a scathing attack on the BJP government in UP over the Deoria incident, Aam Aadmi Party state incharge and MP Sanjay Singh said on Monday that the even on Gandhi and Shastri Jayanti, six people were brutally murdered, exposing the tall claims of the police and administration. Earlier, he paid tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Singh said both the great

political figures are known for non-violence, love and brotherhood. "It is a sad day today as six people were brutally murdered in Deoria," he said. He also cited several other incident of crime.

"All the claims of the chief minister regarding law and order have been exposed. Is this the improvement in law and order that the CM talks about? The CM holds review meetings everyday, but now it is time for action to ensure law and order in the state," Singh said.

Spokesperson of Rashtriya Lok Dal's UP unit Ankur Saxena said that "the law and order mechanism in the state has virtually collapsed."

Congress also took to X to attack the Yogi Adityanath government. In a post from the official account of the UP Congress Committee, the party said, "Six people have been killed in a land dispute in Rudrapur, Deoria. The law and order of the state has become so bad that even in small disputes, six people are killed openly without fear. There is neither fear of law, nor its respect."

"The Yogi government has transformed this state into such a crime zone that women sitting at home, children, youth and elderly people are not safe, the Congress said.

BJP working on strategy to win over Dalit vote bank for Lok Sabha polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is leaving no stone unturned as it gears up for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, aiming to secure its position at the helm for the third consecutive time as it is diligently working on a strategy to win over the crucial Dalit vote bank, recognising its potential to significantly impact the electoral outcome.

In recent history, be it the elections of 2014, 2017, 2019, or 2022, the Dalit vote bank has consistently supported the BJP, leading to the party's triumph in both Delhi and Uttar Pradesh. As the 2024 elections loom on the horizon, the BJP is revisiting the same blueprint for victory.

At a high-profile gathering of the Scheduled Caste Morcha at the BJP headquarters in Lucknow, senior Dalit leaders from BJP held a brainstorming meeting. A similar congregation was held before the 2022 assembly elections. Now, with an eye on the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Dalit leaders have once again united at the party office.

The BJP has 17 out of 80 Lok Sabha seats from Scheduled Caste (SC). Three Rajya Sabha members from the BJP also represent the SC. The party's dominance extends to the state assembly as well, where 84 seats are reserved for the SC.

In the 2022 assembly elections, the BJP won 63 of these reserved seats, securing an overwhelming majority for the second consecutive term.

However, in the recent Ghosi by-election, the BJP lost to SP by over 40,000 votes, primarily because of the Dalit voters' tepid response. This setback has prompted the BJP leadership to re-evaluate its outreach to the Dalit community. In the recent meeting, discussions centered around how to rekindle the trust of the Dalit community and garner their support once again in the 2024 elections.

UP boasts of a Dalit population of approximately 22%. Jatavs comprise 54% of the total Dalit population. The remaining 46% population comprises Pasi, Dhobi, Kori, Khatik, Dhanuk, and others.

The BJP acknowledges that the Dalits have consistently supported the party since 2014, leading to its continuous ascent to power. As for the Jatav vote bank, it is perceived as a core stronghold of Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

In the 2022 assembly elections, despite securing only one seat, BSP garnered 12% of the vote share, with Jatavs bank being its predominant voters. Consequently, the BJP is particularly keen on winning over this critical vote bank.

To garner the Dalits' support, the BJP has devised a plan

IN THE 2022 ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS, THE BJP WON 63 OF THESE RESERVED SEATS, HOWEVER, IN THE RECENT GHOSI BY-ELECTION, THE BJP LOST TO SP BY OVER 40,000 VOTES, PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE DALIT VOTERS' TEPID RESPONSE

to organise meetings throughout the state. Representatives from various SC communities are invited to attend these conferences which will be addressed by the chief minister, deputy chief ministers, Central government ministers, state president, and senior party officials.

Another significant decision made during the office meeting is to encourage Dalit MPs, MLAs, and ministers to allocate the majority of their development funds to Dalit settlements. This includes prioritising concrete roads, installing hand pumps, improving solar lighting, and enhancing the electricity infrastructure in these areas.

These improvements are expected to be highlighted when

the party representatives seek votes during the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Furthermore, the meeting also stressed on the importance of organising special programmes on the birth and death anniversaries of prominent Dalit leaders, with the active participation of public representatives.

Presently, as part of the Seva Pakhwada (Service Fortnight) initiated by the BJP, the Scheduled Front has commenced the Basti Sampark Abhiyaan (Settlement Outreach Campaign), which aims to engage with the residents of Dalit settlements.

Notably, MPs, MLAs, ministers, and senior party officials are actively participating in this campaign, with a goal of reaching 2,000 Dalit settlements daily over the course of seven days.

BJP's Scheduled Morcha state president Ramchandra Kanojia said that the party officials would strive to visit approximately 30,000 Dalit settlements, including the participation of MPs, ministers, MLAs, Legislative Council members, and Rajya Sabha members. The objective is to connect with the residents of these settlements, understand their concerns, and address them effectively, thus strengthening the BJP's appeal within the Dalit community.

Three farmers end lives in Mahoba

Lucknow (PNS): In shocking incidents, three farmers committed suicide due to debt, financial crisis and crop failure in Mahoba district of Bundelkhand.

Additional Superintendent of Police Satyam said that Santram Rajpur (52) of Karhara area of Charkhari kotwali, committed suicide by hanging himself in his house in Khurd village.

Santram's brother Sandeep said that Santram was struggling with the financial crisis and also had to repay the loan of Rs 1.88 lakh. On Monday morning he had gone to the fields and was deeply shocked to see the damaged groundnut crop.

Santram's brother, Sandeep, mentioned that Santram was grappling with a financial crisis and had a loan of Rs 1.88 lakh to repay. On Monday morning, he had gone to the fields and was deeply shocked to see the damaged groundnut crop. He returned home and locked himself in his room and hanged himself from the ceiling.

Meanwhile, the ASP said that 35-year-old young farmer Gulab Basor committed suicide by hanging himself in his house late night in Churari village of Kulpahar Kotwali on Sunday. However, the reason for the suicide is not clear. The police is investigating the matter.

In another case of suicide reported from Turra village in Panwadi area a dead body of 62-year-old farmer Dillipati Ahirwar was found hanging from a Chilla tree in Pathwa.

In another case of suicide reported from Turra village in the Panwadi area, the body of 62-year-old farmer, Dillipati Ahirwar, was discovered hanging from a tree. Police said that a financial crisis was the reason behind Dillipati's suicide.

After the suicides, there is an atmosphere of panic in the district. ADM Ram Prakash said that revenue employees had been instructed to assess the financial condition of all farmers and assistance would be provided to their families.

Meanwhile, in the Akbarabad area of Dhanari in Sambhal, a tragic incident occurred when a couple and their son were electrocuted by high-tension current while working on connecting wires in the electricity board. Farmer Shauraj Singh (45) died in the accident while his wife Bhuri (42) and son Ramkhiladi (18) sustained serious burns.

In a separate incident, a man was killed while another was seriously injured after being run over by a train while trying to cross a track, police said on Monday. Saheb Yadav (65) was killed on the spot after being hit by the Delhi-Varanasi Shiv Ganga Express at around 11:30 pm on Sunday at the Etawah railway station. Guddu Ram was seriously injured while trying to save him, GRP incharge Shailesh Kumar said.

Janata Darshan: CM Yogi warns officials against negligence

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed the administration and police officials to listen to public issues with utmost seriousness, sensitivity, and attention as well as ensure satisfactory solutions and said that any kind of negligence in this work would not be tolerated.

Yogi heard people during the 'Janata Darshan' held at the Gorakhnath temple complex in Gorakhpur on Monday. After listening to their issues patiently, he gave necessary directions to the officials present there to solve their problems on priority. He referred everyone's prayer letters to the authorities concerned, along with providing instructions for the speedy and satisfactory disposal and assured them that no injustice would be meted out to anyone during his tenure.

While discussing complaints about the police and revenue, the chief minister said that officials must try to resolve

revenue-related issues at the district level to avoid causing inconvenience to people. He firmly stated that any kind of negligence on the part of the officers to resolve people's problems would not be tolerated.

The CM assured people that the government would provide complete help for the treatment of patients seeking financial help.

Handing over their applications to the officials, he said that the estimation process related to treatment should be completed at the earliest and be made available to the government so that the required funds could be released.

The chief minister, who is also the 'Gorakshpeethadhishwar', Yogi performed 'gau seva' (cow service) and fed them jaggery at the 'Gauseva Kendra' of the temple. He sought information about the health and nutrition of all the cows from the cowshed workers and issued necessary instructions.

Govt's proactive measures helped in flood relief in UP

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government distributed 69,726 foodgrain packets and 4,65,048 lunch packets in the flood-affected districts of Uttar Pradesh and set up 1,310 flood relief centres across 84 tehsils in 20 severely affected districts. Additionally, over 2,647 medical teams were formed to provide essential healthcare services to people in the flood-hit districts.

Yogi had held a review meeting even before the onset of monsoon to prepare the administration for floods and conducted aerial and ground inspections later on to assess the damage and provide relief to people living in the flood-affected areas.

According to the data of the Indian Meteorological department, 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh have experienced excessive rainfall this year, exceeding 120 per cent of the expected rainfall, between June 1 and September 15. Most of these districts are situated in western Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, more than normal rainfall (120 to 80 per cent) has been recorded in 24 districts of the state,

including those in western and central UP, and Bundelkhand.

Meanwhile, 31 districts have received normal rainfall, ranging from 40 to 80 per cent. On the contrary, seven districts have received less than normal rainfall, amounting to less than 40 per cent. Relief commissioner GS Naveen Kumar said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had held a review meeting on flood relief efforts even before the onset of monsoon. During the meeting, the CM emphasised on the need for being prepared to provide comprehensive assistance to both people and livestock in the flood-affected areas.

Yogi further directed the officials to make thorough preparations in advance to minimise the loss of life. All these efforts resulted in massive relief works in the 37 flood-affected districts of the state, leading to minimal loss of life. The relief commissioner said that 37 districts experienced higher-than-normal rainfall, with 34 districts being directly impacted by floods. Among these, 20 districts faced particularly severe flooding, prompting urgent relief efforts. These heavily affected

districts comprised 14 of western Uttar Pradesh, including Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Farrukhabad, Saharanpur, Agra, Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Mathura, Shamli, Badaun, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Shahjahanpur, and Ghaziabad.

Additionally, five districts in the Awadh region, including Barabanki, Kheri, Hardoi, Gonda, and Sitapur, were affected by floods. Purvanchal's Basti district also witnessed significant flooding. In order to provide relief to five lakh people residing in 1,287 villages across 84 affected tehsils in these districts, a total of 1,310 flood posts were established. Additionally, 2,647 medical teams were deployed to address medical-related issues. To ensure that flood victims did not face food shortages, 69,726 food packets were distributed during this period, along with 4,65,048 lunch packets.

Among the districts heavily affected by floods, Farrukhabad ranked first, with 75,453 people from 116 villages affected by it. In response, 52 flood posts were established and 1,003 medical teams were formed, he added.

Semi-nude body of woman recovered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A semi-nude body of a woman, with knife marks on her stomach, was found in the courtyard of a house in Raipura in Chitrakoot on Monday.

The police said that the woman had an illicit relationship with a youth, which resulted in frequent disputes in her house.

According to the information, Ram Bahadur, a resident of Denudha village in the Raipura police station area, works as a security guard in Rajkot, Gujarat. His wife, Rinki Gupta (30), used to reside at home with their three sons and brother-in-law Basant. On a fateful day, her sons had gone to a neighbour's house to play.

The police recovered the knife and sickle lying at the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. The police are expressing suspicion on the family.

Meanwhile, in a horrific incident, the body of a 30-year-old woman was found in three pieces in a field on Sunday. The torso was wrapped in a mattress and stitched with a plas-

tic rope, while the legs were found in two trolley bags in a nearby paddy field.

The villagers, after experiencing a foul smell, informed the police. Barhaj circle officer reached the spot and sent the body for post-mortem. The victim's identity is yet to be ascertained.

Meanwhile, in another killing in Aligarh, a man died after being allegedly assaulted by his neighbours, whom he had accused of molesting his daughter, according to the police.

In another incident, a man killed his wife after she refused to transfer her ancestral land in his name. The police said that Akhilesh (27) of Nehru Nagar in Lalitpur, was detained for killing his wife Aarti (24) on Sunday.

According to Lalitpur Superintendent of Police Mohammad Mushtaq, Aarti refused to transfer the land on Akhilesh's name. In a fit of anger, he struck Aarti with an iron tawa, leading to her death. The SP mentioned that the body was sent for a post-mortem, and the accused was subsequently arrested.

Contribute towards Swachh Bharat with dedication: DM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer while paying floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at the Gandhi Statue, Phool Bagh, on Gandhi Jayanti said the message of cleanliness given by Gandhi is highly relevant today and thus it had to be adopted in the right earnest and each and every person has to contribute towards Swachh Bharat with dedication and devotion. He said for “Swachhta Hi Seva” abhiyan all government organisations need to remain active to ensure India becomes clean and green through their regular efforts. He said more efforts are needed to ensure that the country becomes clean and for this more awareness was needed among masses and the onus rested on the shoulders of the literate class who can convince others the benefits of cleanliness. He said a



District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer paying floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at the Gandhi Statue, Phool Bagh, on Monday

clean and developed India was the dream of Mahatma Gandhi. The DM said it was also necessary that the Swachhta Abhiyan was not stopped but carried out all through the year and each and every persons needs to regularly contribute towards this. He said the one hour 'shramdaan' has worked wonders and if it is continued throughout the year and by all people Kanpur will

be among one of the cleanest cities of the country. Prominent others present were VK Singh, Rinki Jaiswal, Rajesh Kumar, Suraj Kumar and several others.

ACTIVITIES HELD: As a part of the Air Force Family Welfare Association (AFFWA) Day, various activities and competitions were organised on Monday at the Air Force Station here for the personnel.

The event started early morning with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, wherein the personnel of the AF station cleaned the surroundings of the station premises. A cycle race for children and sanginis was organised. A separate cycle race for children in the age group of two to four years, five to seven years, eight to 12 years and 13 to 16 years was organised. A saree walkathon for sanginis was organised where 300 sanginis participated the competition. A separate walkathon was conducted for the air warriors in their traditional dress. A total of 400 air warriors of the station actively participated in the competition and winners for each category were rewarded by Megha Praveen, President AFFWA (Local). The events were a great success wherein all the station personnel took active part in all the events with great zeal and enthusiasm.

KDA celebrates birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Shastri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Kanpur Development Authority (KDA) celebrated the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri with enthusiasm and fanfare on Monday. Secretary Shatrohan Vaishya and other officers offered floral tribute to the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri. Mohd Ashique and his team presented a cultural programme which included the recital of Ramdhun and Babu's favourite bhajan 'Vaishnav Jan Te Tene Kahiye, Je Peer Parai Jane Re' and other patriotic songs. Speakers threw light on the life of both the great leaders. Law Officer SB Rai, SDM Archana Agnihotri, Chief Engineer Ashutosh Srivastava, Additional Secretary Dr Gudakesh Sharma and Secretary Shatrohan Vaishya also addressed the gathering. Secretary Shatrohan Vaishya encouraged people to



KDA secretary Shatrohan Vaishya paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri on Monday.

emulate values of Babu and Shastri in their life. The proceedings were conducted by Law Officer/PRO SB Rai.

ELECTROCUTED: A minor boy was electrocuted while fixing a bulb in his house in Nazafgarh village in the Maharajpur police station area late on Sunday evening. He was identified as Himanshu (12), son of Anshu. After coming into contact with electric cur-

rent, he fell unconscious on the floor. His kin took him to Sarsaul community health centre (CHC) from where in view of his serious condition, he was referred to the Kashiram Hospital where the doctors declared him dead. Of the two sons and one daughter of Anshu, Himanshu was the eldest, a student of class VI. His kin informed that Himanshu was good in studies. On

Sunday evening when he was fixing the bulb he came into contact with a live wire passing through the door and succumbed to his burns.

THREE HELD: The Collectorganj police worked out the case of theft in a temple on Monday. After the theft in Shwetamber Jain Temple of Generalganj on September 29, a case was lodged at the Collectorganj police station. On the basis of CCTV footages and a tip off, the police arrested three youths near Jhakarkati bus stand and recovered the stolen goods. The police team was rewarded a cash prize of ₹25,000. According to the FIR lodged by Vijay Kumar Shah, jewellery and crown worth around ₹6 lakh were stolen from the temple. ACP Nishank Sharma said one of the accused was employed as a 'sevadar' in the temple. They were identified as Dulare, Ramvrichh and Dilip, residents of Gorakhpur.

Non-Violence Day observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhi and International Day of Non-Violence, a national seminar was organised in Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) here on Monday. Presiding over the programme, the Vice-Chancellor Prof Bihari Lal Sharma, while discussing the personality and work of Mahatma Gandhi, inspired every citizen to be free from fear and selfishness and to continuously strive for the protection of humanity. He also remembered the great personality and national contribution of former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and said that Shastri ji, who was born on the banks of Bhagirathi, remained pure and cool like Maa Ganga and always remained dedicated to the public interest.

As the main speaker, Prof



International Day of Non-Violence being observed at SSU in Varanasi on Monday.

Rampujan Pandey explained the principles of ideal life propounded by Gandhi and highlighted the relevance of his standards established in the form of truth and non-violence. Acharya Sudhakar Mishra gave the unique personality of Mahatma Gandhi as a protector of religion and pointed out his unique personality. Acharya Shailesh Kumar Mishra threw light on the impact of Mahatma Gandhi on world politics from a historical point of view and his principles and behavioral aspects from a contemporary point of view. He also explained

in detail the three types of non-violence, Manasa, Vacha and Karmana. The programme started with garlanding the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi after Vedic and Puranic (mythological) Manglacharan and the guests were welcomed by Prof Ramesh Prasad. The vote of thanks was done by Prof Hariprasad Adhikari while the function was conducted by Dr Vishakha Shukla. Prof Mahendra Pandey, Dr Gyanendra, Dr Vijay Kumar Sharma, staff and students of the university were also present.

Centenarian voters honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Election Commission honoured the centenarian voters on the occasion of International Day for Older Persons. On the occasion of International Day for Older Persons, the Election Commission held a programme at the headquarter, tehsils and blocks of the district on Sunday and honoured the voters with more than 100 years of age. The Electoral Registration Officers (EROs), Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) and Booth Level Officers (BLOs) honoured the centenarian voters, having completed the age of 100 years with certificates.

The EROs, AEROs and BLOs apprised the centenarian voters of the arrangements done by Election Commission for them and informed that the Commission has made new arrangements of wheel-chair, ramp, volunteer, free transportation, queue-less voting facility, etc to ensure the maximum participation of the disabled voters (with 40 per cent or more disability) and senior citizen (with more than 80 years of age) in the voting process.

Not only this, the Election Commission has also made arrangements that they do not need to go to the polling centre to vote and rather can exercise their franchises at their homes by filling Form 12D, the ERO, AEROs and BLOs informed and appealed to the centenarian voters to cast their votes by availing the necessary facilities and keep motivating the young voters to fulfill their constitutional duties. The centenarian voters were appealed by these officers to cast their votes as always and remain an example for the younger generation to contribute positively to Indian democracy.

NEW OFFICE-BEARERS: The election of the office-bearers of Varanasi Division Insurance Employees Association (VDEIA) was conducted in its 56th convention held on September 30 and October 1 in the premises of LIC in Bhojpur here. In the presence of the president of North-Central Zone of association Sanjeev Sharma and general secretary Rajiv Nigam, Narayan Chatterjee and Vinod Kumar Srivastava were elected as president and general secretary of the VDIEA respectively for the year of 2023-25.

Cleanliness drive conducted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

On the occasion of the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on Monday, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) activists in South city area carried out a cleanliness drive, felicitated safai karmacharis and distributed Ayushman cards. Party's senior office-bearers, MP and MLAs were also present. They cleaned the Amar Shaheed Ram Prasad Tripathi Dharmshala and surrounding areas in Govind Nagar. The entire garbage was taken to the dumping spot on a handcart. The residents were all praise for the work of party activists who also felicitated the safai karmacharis. Earlier, party workers cleaned the statue of Bharat Mata and offered flowers at her feet. Addressing the gathering, they highlighted the importance of cleanliness which prevents people from spending a lot of money in



The BJP activists taking part in the cleanliness drive in Govind Nagar on Monday.

treating various diseases. Prominent among those present in the drive were district unit president Shivram Singh, MP Satyadeo Pachauri, MLA Mahesh Trivedi, Anil Tripathi, Prakash Vir Arya, Devendra Sabbarwal, Ajit Singh Chhabra,

Rajesh Srivastava, Divyanshu Bajpai, Dharmendra Rai, Anurag Agnihotri, Manoj Pal, Neetu Singh and Shammi Bhalla.

KILLED: A driver was killed and three others were seriously injured when his vehicle coming from Kanpur collided head on with a container going towards Kanpur on the Kanpur-Sagar national highway in Kabrai town of Mahoba around 9 am on Monday. With the help of local residents, police were able to take out the body of driver badly trapped in the vehicle after around two hours. During this period, a massive jam prevailed on both the sides of the highway. The police restored the traffic after taking out body of the driver and sent the injured container driver and two others to a hospital on ambulance.

Meanwhile a motorcyclist was fatally knocked down by an unidentified speeding vehicle near Ghatampur railway cross-

ing on Bhognipur-Chaudagra road in the Ghatampur police station area late on Sunday evening. The police informed the kin of the deceased and sent the body for an autopsy. A probe is on in the matter. Mohammad Arif (22), son of Islam of Chanwar village, Ghatampur, had gone to deliver some material at the in-laws' place of his brother Husain in Gutaiyakheda village on a bike. When he was returning from there late on Sunday evening and reached near the railway crossing on Jahanabad road, a speeding vehicle knocked him down from behind. After falling on the street, he succumbed to his injury on the spot. The passers-by informed the police which rushed to spot and after informing the kin of the deceased, sent the body for an autopsy. Station House Officer (SHO) Vikram Singh said after sending the body to the mortuary efforts were on to trace the vehicle. Further action will be initiated on receipt of complaint, he said.

Mission director of NHM praises DDU Hospital during inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Mission Director of National Health Mission (Uttar Pradesh) Dr Pinky Jowel praised Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Hospital. During her inspection there on Sunday, she said that the DDU Hospital has made its special place among the public through its very special contribution during the Corona period. "Along with this, the hospital has received the Kayakalp Award every year continuously since 2016. In the year 2022-23, it stood first in the entire state in Kayakalp and Eco-Friendly Awards and the hospital has also got NQAS certification at the national level this year," she said. She further said that the hospital has been consistently maintaining its position in the top 10 at the national level under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission programme for the last three months. The Mission Director congratulated the officers and staff of the hospital for these achievements and also encouraged them to work with double enthusiasm to maintain it. She also thoroughly inspected all the wards, kitchen, trauma centre and CT scan centre of the hospital and the medical workers were asked to work with more dedication and promptness. Prior to this, she offered shramdaan at the premises of DDU Hospital and



NHM Mission Director Dr Pinky Jowel honouring an employee at DDU Hospital in Varanasi on Sunday.

inspired the health workers for cleanliness. On the occasion, sweepers Rita Devi, Rita Rai, Shayra, Afsari Begum and Dharmendra were honoured for their excellent work in cleaning the hospital. Divisional Additional Director (Health) Dr Manjula Singh, ACMO Dr SS Kanojia, Acting Chief Medical Superintendent Dr RN Singh, Medical Superintendent Dr Prem Prakash, Divisional DPM of SIFPSA, Divisional Advisor of Quality Dr Praveen Solanki, DPM Santosh Singh, Brajesh Mishra and other officers and employees of the hospital were also present. Later, Dr Jowel visited Cholapur Community Health Centre (CHC), along with AD (Health) Dr Manjula Singh, and inspected the Arogya Swasthya Mela organised there on the eve of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday under the 'Swachhta Hi Seva' programme and Ayushman Bhava campaign. She looked in depth at the services of control

of communicable and non-communicable diseases, maternal child health, family planning and nutrition related services as well as testing and treatment of various diseases. She also inspected the arrangements for ambulances etc and motivated the employees during the ongoing training session on cleanliness. The mission director inspected the newly-constructed Block Public Health Unit at Cholapur and directed the concerned officers that the work should be started after handover of the building. She also inspired the health workers to improve all the services of CHC. The health fair was conducted by Superintendent Dr RB Yadav under the supervision of ACMO Dr SS Kanojia. During this period, Divisional DPM, Health Education Officers, AROs, BAMs, BCPMs and other health workers were also present.

Sunbeam School champ of UP Skill Quest-2023

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Adding another feather to its cap, the Sunbeam School, Lahartara became Champion of UP Skill Quest-2023 (School Category) for the second time in a row. The Sunbeam School, Bhagwanpur stood third in the quest. On the directive of the UP Government, the UP Skill Development Mission (UPDSM) and Invest UP conducted UP Skill Quest-2023 at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan in Lucknow on September 30 and October 1. More than 300 students from over 150 schools of the state participated in the



quest and right teams reached the final round. Like the previous year this year too, the team of Shashwat Mishra and Devansh Gupta of Sunbeam School, Lahartara, Varanasi maintained their lead right from the first round and became the champion by defeating seven teams in the

final round. They got ₹50,000 in cash as the first prize. While the team of Snehit Singh and Vivek Patel of Sunbeam School, Bhagwanpur stood third in the quest and got ₹20,000 in cash. In the previous year, the team of Shashwat Mishra and Aditya Jaiswal of Sunbeam School, Lahartara became the champion of the UP Skill Quest-2022 (First Edition). The questions based on the Indians' legacy, culture of India, India's achievements, famous personalities, history, geography and other subjects were asked in the quest. The winners were given the certificates and

cash prizes. The main objective to conduct the quest is to connect and prepare the youths with the industrial development taking place in UP so that they could avail the opportunities being developed in the state instead of going to Mumbai, Delhi or other places. Chairman of Sunbeam Group of Educational Institutions Dr Deepak Madhok, Director Bharti Madhok and Dy Director Amrita Berman extended their congratulations to the students of both winning teams (1st and 3rd) expressing pride and wished for their prosperous future.

Temple priest found dead

PTI/PNS ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A priest of a temple was found dead with his hands and legs tied in a field in Aanapur locality on Monday morning here, police said. The priest was identified as Manindra Nath Tiwari (50), they said. The police said the body's hands and legs were tied with a cloth and a cloth was stuffed in the mouth. Prima facie it appears that Tiwari died due to suffocation, they said. The body has been sent for the post-mortem and a case is being registered on the complaint of his family members.

DENGUE CASES: Dengue cases are on the rise here. Reports suggest that majority of dengue patients are from the city itself. Six new dengue cases were identified on

Sunday taking the total to 155. District Malaria Officer Dr Anand Singh said out of 155 cases 22 are from other districts and were tested dengue positive here.

Over 800 patients with dengue-like symptoms are visiting hospitals almost everyday, but reports do not confirm it. Dengue cases are coming from Teliyerganj, Govindpur, Bada Bigada, Chhota Baghada, Shantipuram, Rajapur, Ashok Nagar, Mundera, Shivkuti, Civil Lines and adjoining areas. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Ashu Pandey instructed the private doctors to keep the unified disease portal informed about the dengue patients with a view to maintain a record. The CMO has appealed to people not to ignore high fever and body pain and consult a doctor without any delay.

Bhavanjali organised



The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre pays homage to Govind Hari Singhania on his ninth death anniversary on Monday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Sir Padampat Singhania Education Centre (SPSEC) organised a heart-rendering tribute — Bhavanjali for the founder chairman of the institution, Govind Hari Singhania, on his ninth death anniversary on Monday.

The poignant event began with the presentation of illustrative accomplishments of the founder who was not only an eminent educationist but also a prominent visionary with

unwavering perseverance and devotion. He was an entrepreneur, a philanthropist and a fervent admirer of arts, culture and education. The most favourite 'bhajans' were presented. The event culminated with a floral homage paid by the entire staff of SPSEC.

The Singhanians also paid tribute to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi and the former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on their birth anniversary.

V-C highlights Mahatama Gandhi's contribution

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Vice-Chancellor of the Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr Anand Kumar Singh paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and said it will not be any exaggeration to state that Mahatma Gandhi alone had succeeded in forcing the Britishers to leave India.

He said Mahatma Gandhi was one of the finest barristers in South Africa. He chose the mission of serving the motherland and fighting against apartheid. His principle of non-violence has been accepted by the entire world and his prominent missions which he spearheaded were Dandi March, Bharat Chhodo Andolan, Non-Cooperation Movement and boycott of foreign goods and he proved that without turning to violence one's mission can be successful.

He said Gandhiji had a vision that was a clean India and all his life he strived to instil the sense of clean living and clean surrounding among



Indians. He said today India stands as one developed nation and the world looks towards India with awe. He advised the faculty and the students to continue with the cleanliness drive and added that if this was adopted all through the year India will be one of the cleanest nations of the world.

Later the varsity conducted various contests for the students like debate, slogan writing, poster making and various other events. A big number of students took part in the events. The V-C then administered oath to the faculty and the students as well.

District judge flags off cycle rally

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The birth anniversaries of 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri were celebrated with simplicity and joy in the district here on Monday. In the morning, the national flags were hoisted in all government, semi-government offices and schools. Thereafter, tributes were paid to the statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri by garlanding them.

Additional Commissioner Manoj Singh in the Commissionerate Office auditorium, Additional District Magistrate (Civil Supplies) Jawahar Lal Srivastava in the Collectorate's Rifle Club paid homage to the statues of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, District Judge and Chairman District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ajay Kumar Vishwesh flagged off the cycle rally of school-children as part of the cleanliness and awareness campaign in the District Court premises. Thereafter, live telecast of the e-inauguration programme related to cleanliness and awareness campaign organised on the occasion of Gandhi



District Judge AK Vishwesh flagging off a cycle rally on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti in Varanasi on Monday.

Jayanti was seen and heard in the video conferencing hall.

While presiding over the programme organised in the Commissionerate auditorium, Additional Commissioner Manoj Singh informed the people in detail about the life and struggles of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri.

He said that taking inspiration from these great men, we should take a pledge that we will work with complete honesty and transparency for the public interest and welfare of the people in the last line of society. This would be a true

tribute to these great personalities. Presiding over the programme organised at Rifle Club, the ADM (Civil Supplies) Jawahar Lal Srivastava, quoting the life struggles of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, said that Mahatma Gandhi was a priest of truth and non-violence.

He shook the British rule by making non-violence a weapon in the country's freedom struggle, while Lal Bahadur Shastri gave the slogan 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' to make the country self-reliant in the field of food production and its result is being seen today as the

country has become a self-sufficient in food production. He further highlighted his concept of 'Antyodaya', especially regarding the welfare of the weak, thoughts regarding emotional unity, national unity and integrity.

Besides, Gandhian philosophy of life was propagated in schools and colleges and debate competitions/ seminars were organised for students on various aspects of Gandhi's life and emphasis should be laid on bringing equality and harmony in the society by staying away from caste discrimination.

Modi's cleanliness message from Kashi becomes mass movement

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

By using a shovel from Assi on the banks of 'Mokshadayini' Ganga and a broom in the streets of Banaras in November, 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given the message of cleanliness to the country, which has now become a mass movement. Later, the campaign gained momentum when Yogi Adityanath became the Chief Minister in 2017 as he linked the cleanliness system of the religious, spiritual and cultur-

al city to the Kashi Integrated Command Centre (KICC), due to which the entire waste management started being monitored from this centre and it has resulted in improving the cleanliness conditions of ghats, streets and main roads.

Nagar Swasthya Adhikari Dr Narendra Pratap Singh said that for solid waste management, a team of more than 6,000 people starts cleaning and door-to-door garbage collection from early morning and takes it to the processing plant. "This entire management is

monitored from KICC," he said, adding that, here the attendance of employees is taken through 130 biometric devices. Besides, he said that 174 locations of 20 garbage houses are also monitored with 433 cameras. "270 garbage trucks are tracked with GPS. 902 volume sensors and other sources measure the amount of garbage generated by the city. About 700-800 tonnes of garbage is generated daily in Varanasi, Dr Singh informed, adding that the roads are cleaned with mechanised

cleaning machines and water is sprayed to remove dust. Apart from this, cleanliness of 235 public and community toilets is also taken care of.

Swachh Bharat Mission, which has been running for nine years, has taken the form of a mass movement with public participation. In Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency Varanasi, state Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is paying special attention to development as well as keeping the city clean.

Spl cleanliness campaign launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the auspicious occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, 'Special Cleanliness Campaign 3.0' was launched by the Department of Posts in Varanasi region. Postmaster General (PMG) of Varanasi Region Krishna Kumar Yadav, while garlanding the statue of the 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhi in a function organised at the Varanasi Cantt Head Post Office, motivated all the officials of the Department of Posts to make the vision of Swachh Bharat and Swachhata Hi Sewa meaningful as thought by Mahatma Gandhi.

He also gave a call for active participation in the cleanliness campaign, which will run till October 31. He also delivered the message of environment protection by planting saplings of Rudraksha, Aawala and Ashoka in the Head Post Office premises



PMG KK Yadav launching a special cleanliness campaign 3.0 in Varanasi on Monday.

with the Director of Postal Services (Prayagraj) Gaurav Srivastava, Superintendent of Posts Vinay Yadav and Assistant Director Brijesh Sharma. Besides, Yadav administered the cleanliness pledge to the employees. He also inspired them to contribute in keeping their environment clean by

being a part of this special campaign and gave the message of better health, fitness and cleanliness.

During the event, postal employees also motivated the people by running a cleanliness campaign in the post office premises, postal colony, parks, garden and surrounding areas.

Assistant Account Officer Santoshi Rai, inspectors (Posts) Shrikant Pal, Inderjit Pal, Dilip Pandey, Postmaster Varanasi Cantt Arvind Sharma, Rahul Verma, Anand Pradhan, Rakesh Kumar, Manish Kumar, Anurag Shukla, Gyan Sagar and others were also present.

Swachhata Pakhwada ends at BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As per the guidelines of the Ministry of Railways, 'Swachhta Pakhwada' organised from September 16 concluded in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) here on Monday on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi when the General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda and other senior officers paid tributes to the 'Father of the Nation'.

Principal Chief Electrical Engineer SK Srivastava, Principal Chief Materials Manager Rajneesh Gupta, Principal Chief Medical Officer Dr Devesh Kumar, Principal Chief Personnel Officer Ranvijay, Chief Vigilance Officer Pramod Kumar Chaudhary, Chief Materials Manager Trilok Kothari, Chief Mechanical Engineer (Service) Neeraj Jain, Chief Engineer Vinod Kumar Shukla, Chief Safety Officer SB Patel, Chief Electrical Engineer (Loco) Arun Kumar Sharma, Chief Electrical Engineer (Inspection) MK Singh, Deputy Chief Personnel Officer Shyam Babu, Senior Personnel Officer (Headquarters) Raj



GM Basudev Panda inaugurating the concluding function of Swachhta Pakhwada at BLW in Varanasi on Monday.

Kumar Gupta, Public Relations Officer Rajesh Kumar, Staff Council's member Naveen Sinha and other heads of departments, officers and employees present there and

they took a pledge for cleanliness while lighting the lamp and offering floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi.

The entire cleanliness fortnight programmes were imple-

mented under the guidance of Chief Safety Officer SB Patel under the auspices of the Safety department with the cooperation of all other departments.

Shiv Ganga Express best organised train

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The most popular 12559/12560 Banaras-New Delhi Shiv Ganga Express has been declared as best organised train while Siwan as best station in A and A1 category, Ghazipur City best station in B category, Chhapra best organised coaching depot and Banaras Railway Colony best organised residential colony under Swachhta Fortnight. All of them were awarded by Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava on the occasion of the 154th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in a function organised at the Officers' Club at Lahartara here on Monday. The DRM paid floral tributes to the portraits of 'Father of the Nation' Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and administered an oath to the employees to voluntarily keep their residences and workplaces clean and adopt environment friendly behaviour.

The winners were rewarded with shields. Banaras Coaching Depot Officer Vineet Ranjan received shield for Swachhta Rail Train Shiv Ganga Express, while Chief Health Inspector/ Bhatni Amit Kumar Mishra, Chief Health Inspector for Swachh Station A1 category/ Siwan Radheshyam Raman, Chief Health Inspector for Swachh Station B Category/Ghazipur City Usha Yadav, Chief Health Inspector for Swachh Railway Colony, Banaras, Kamlesh Singh, Coaching Depot Officer Ajit Kumar for Swachh Office Chhapra Coaching Depot/Chhapra were honoured with citations.

Along with this, in order to



DRM VK Srivastava felicitating an employee in Varanasi on Monday.

conclude the Cleanliness Fortnight organised by Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) under the theme of 'Swachhta Hi Seva', cultural programmes were organised under the aegis of Environment and Housekeeping Management (EnHM) department.

The prize distribution programme was inaugurated by lighting the lamp by the DRM along with chairperson of Divisional Women's Welfare Organisation Monica Saxena and others. On the occasion, the DRM presented plants and handmade jute bags to the officers.

In the cultural programme organised on this occasion, cleanliness songs were presented by the members of

Mandal Kala Samiti and a captivating dance drama was presented by the children of NER Junior High School.

An inspirational street play was staged by the members of Bharat Scouts and Guides District Association, Varanasi to stop the use of plastic, increase public awareness about cleanliness and adopt nature friendly behaviour.

At the end of the programme, the artistes and children who performed well were appreciated and rewarded by the DRM.

Earlier, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar welcomed everyone. Additional Divisional Railway Manager (Infra) Roshan Lal Yadav, ADRM (Operations) Rajesh

Kumar Singh, Chief Medical Superintendent Dr RJ Chaudhuri, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (C&W) Anubhav Pathak, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction) RN Singh, Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer Rajat Priya, Senior Divisional Engineers Rishi Srivastava, Satyam Singh and Anuj Verma, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Operation) Anil Srivastava, Senior Divisional Safety Officer Balendra Paul, Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Abhishek Singh, Divisional Personnel Officer Vivek Mishra, Assistant Commercial Manager AK Suman, Assistant Commercial Manager Prashant Kumar and others were also present.

Floral tributes paid to Gandhi, Shastri

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Swachhta Pakhwada closing ceremony was organised at the North Central Railway (NCR) headquarters on Monday where tributes were paid to the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri on their birth anniversary. A cycle rally was organised at North Central Railway (NCR) headquarters to mark the occasion.

The Swachhta Pakhwada was celebrated in the NCR from September 16 to October 2. During the conclusion of Swachhta Pakhwada on Monday a function presided over by Additional General Manager (AGM) Chandra Prakash Gupta was held at the NCR headquarters. The programme started with the AGM and other officers offering floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi



and Lal Bahadur Shastri. The AGM also released a pamphlet and it was distributed among the people present to create awareness about cleanliness.

A cycle rally was also organised. It started from the NCR headquarters and ended at the Rail Gaon railway colony stadium. A large number of senior officers and staff of NCR headquarters, including

the AGM, enthusiastically participated in this rally.

Senior officers of various departments of NCR and a large number of officers, employees and their families were present.

TRIPLE MURDER CASE: Action is being initiated against the police and the Revenue department officials and staff whose 'negligence' and 'parti-

san attitude' claimed the life of an elderly Dalit person, his pregnant daughter and son-in-law in Mohiuddinpur Ghaus village of Kaushambi district. The incident had taken place on September 15 and the matter had reached the chief minister. Kaushambi SP Brijesh Kumar Srivastava after preliminary inquiry, sent SO of Sandeepan Ghat Kotwali Dilip Singh and out post incharge of Harraypur to Police Lines.

Subhash, son of the deceased Hori Lal Pasi, met the chief minister and told him that the 'illegal' act of the chakbandi officials led to this triple murder. District Magistrate Sujit Kumar found three lekh-pals of Chakbandi department prima facie guilty and placed them under suspension. The assistant chakbandi officer is also under scanner and his suspension has also been recommended.

Cycle rally to create awareness about air display

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

To spread awareness amongst the local people about the air display at Sangam on October 8 a cycle rally was conducted on Monday from the headquarters Central Air Command (CAC) to Sangam and back. The event was flagged off by Dr Suneeta Kapoor, president, AFFWA (Regional). Air Marshal RGK Kapoor, Air Officer

Commanding-in-Chief, CAC led the team comprising 35 air warriors who participated in the rally with lot of fervour. The rally reached Sangam near VIP Ghat braving heavy rain. The public was informed about the visibility of aerial display from Sangam Ghat, Saraswati Ghat, Arail Ghat, Jhusi side of Sangam, Shastri Bridge and surrounding areas. The rally spread the message of awareness about the aerial display to

the citizens of Sangam city. AOC-in-C explained that the first aircraft flight in our country was from Naini in 1911. He lauded the efforts in Swachhata Abhiyan and felicitated the shramiks (workers) who participated in cleanliness efforts in Sangam area. He expressed gratitude to media and its personnel in their endeavour to spread awareness about the aerial display and urged people to witness the unprecedented

display in large numbers. The air warriors also interacted with the local population and informed them about the air display over Sangam. They exhorted them to witness the event 2:30 pm onwards on October 8 from one of the locations at Saraswati Ghat, Jhusi village, Shastri Bridge or Arail Ghat. The rally also offered an opportunity to youth to know about various exciting career options in the Indian Air Force.

Stress on dedication, honesty for progress of nation

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The birth anniversary of Father of the Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was observed across the district on Monday. District Judge Anmol Pal after hoisting the national flag and garlanding the portraits of the heroes paid his tributes in a programme organised under the aegis of the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) in the Civil Court. He said it will be a real tribute to the leaders if we followed their path honestly. He exhorted the people to adopt the path of dedication and honesty for the progress of the nation. Secretary of the DLSA and ADJ Lal Babu said Gandhi was committed to cleanliness.

District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan after hoisting the tricolour at the Collectorate building garlanded the statue of Gandhi at Gandhi Ghat. She garlanded



District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan paying tributes during a programme to mark the birth anniversary of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister Lal Bhadur Shastri at the Collectorate on Monday

the statues of heroes, including Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, at Shaheed Udayan. Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhinandan garlanded the portraits of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri at the Police Lines.

Additional Superintendent

of Police (ASP/City) Srikanth Prajapati and Circle Officer (CO) Sadar Shailendra Tripathi hoisted the flag at the police office, CO (City) Ajay Singh at City Kotwali, CO (Lalganj) Manjari Rao at Lalganj police station, CO (Operation) Anil Kumar Pandey at Madihan police station and CO

(Chunar) Uma Shankar Singh at Chunar Kotwali. At the Rajdeep PG College Kailhat a day-long programme was organised and Director RB Singh addressed a gathering.

MISHAP DEATH: One person died in road mishap in an area under Kachhawaan on police station on Sunday. According to a report, Azad Kumar Bind (55), a resident of Bachchhaanv Meerapur village under Mirzamurad police station in Varanasi was on the way on his bike when it was hit by a vehicle near Barapur village under Kachhawaan police station. After the accident the vehicle driver managed to flee from the spot.

On getting information the police reached the spot and brought the victim to the hospital where the doctor declared him as brought dead. On the basis of the papers recovered from his pocket the police informed the kin of the victim and completed the legal formalities.

Power play

Mamata sends her troops to Delhi to embarrass the Centre over non-payment of dues

While the BJP brass is busy formulating strategy for the upcoming Assembly elections in five States and meeting voters there, the wily West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has unleashed a 4,000-strong contingent in Delhi under her TMC MP and nephew Abhishek Banerjee's charge. Mamata's party leaders and cadres are here for a two-day protest rally to highlight the NDA Government's apathy towards non-payment of Central scheme funds to the State's workers. Interestingly, while the BJP is seeking action in the poll-bound States, Mamata has brought her fight right at its very doorstep and fired the Capital's political atmosphere. The rally has garnered attention for several reasons, ranging from demands for the release of funds to the TMC's clash with the Enforcement Directorate (ED). Another interesting point remains as to why Mamata chose to hold her mega show of strength in faraway Delhi and what the BJP feels about it. The two-day protest in Delhi was prompted by mounting concerns



over the Centre's alleged neglect of West Bengal's development and the delay in releasing funds for vital schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Thousands of TMC leaders and supporters descended on the national Capital with a resolute mission — to voice their grievances against the Central Government.

On Gandhi Jayanti, the TMC MPs embarked on a sit-in at Rajghat to highlight their dedication to the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. The peaceful rally followed with TMC supporters and MGNREGA job card holders marching together to air their concerns. However, it was not a smooth ride for the TMC cadres from

Bengal to Delhi, with them facing unexpected hurdles. Initially, a special train was booked for the TMC supporters and MGNREGA job card holders, along with the party's 'panchayat pramukhs'. But the Railway Ministry abruptly cancelled the train, forcing the TMC to arrange for private buses to transport its supporters. Adding to the intrigue, the Enforcement Directorate summoned Mamata's nephew and party's number 2 leader Abhishek Banerjee for questioning on October 3, coinciding with the rally. Abhishek, however, has chosen to ignore the ED summons. As the rally unfolds, the nation awaits the outcome of this high-stakes showdown between the prominent parties. Though Mamata is challenging the BJP in the Capital, she has a lot to answer to people in her home State as there have been alleged irregularities in the disbursement of MGNREGA salaries by her Government, besides numerous cases of misappropriation of such funds. Union Minister Smriti Irani has also questioned the rationale behind the rally as TMC has failed to ensure even the minimum wages to tea garden workers in North Bengal. The BJP Minister is currently in Bengal, where she met tea workers in Siliguri. On the other hand, Mamata is a strong leader in her State and an important member of the INDIA bloc; her message in Delhi is indeed something the BJP must be watching very carefully.

PICTALK



Army personnel briefs students about a weapon during an event of 'Veer Gatha', in Kolkata

PTI

Orders by Govt officers are for the larger good

It is imperative to abide by just orders promulgated by Govt servants in public interest and any objection to such orders, must be through legal channels

What we often come across is the law of contempt concerning courts. It may pertain to maligning the reputation of the judiciary or for that purpose obstructing the functioning of the court. The law of contempt concerning court has now been well established and the educated section across the country mostly have a rough idea about the same if they keep themselves informed by print or electronic media, including social media.

This article aims to bring into the limelight the less known and less discussed issue, which is disobedience of orders that are duly promulgated by government authorities. We have witnessed such orders during an unprecedented time of covid pandemic. As a citizen, we are at the centre of such orders. For brevity of our understanding, I should inform you that such orders are being promulgated under various acts, one such being the Epidemic Disease Act of 1897. Under the said act, Sections 2 & 2A, give powers to the state government and central government respectively to



take such decisions and pass such orders which may help contain the infectious disease. Section 3 of the Epidemic Disease Act imposes a penalty for disobeying any order or regulation made under this act. It makes the act of disobeying or abatement punishable under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code. For instance, if we take the step of price capping by the respective state governments on the treatment of COVID-19 in private hospitals, passing an order under this act or any other act for the time being in force, they impose a duty on private hospitals not to charge above the limits fixed by government authorities.

If private hospitals are charging more than the limit imposed by the government, they are inviting prosecution u/s 188 of the Indian Penal Code i.e., Disobedience to an

order duly promulgated by a public servant. Bombay High Court in the case of HLA Shwe v. State of Maharashtra peeled section 188 and mentioned its ingredients as follows - The order must be duly promulgated by a public servant authorised to do so; The order directs the accused to abstain from certain acts; Accused was aware of such order; Accused disobeyed such order and lastly, such disobeying resulted in obstruction, annoyance or injury.

This section is part of chapter X of IPC which deals with contempt of lawful authority of public servant. Prosecution under this is slightly different to that of other offences where the victim himself/herself reports the crime to police officials. Cognizance under this chapter X of IPC can only be taken under section 195 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) which requires a written complaint by a public servant concerned or of some other public servant to whom he is administratively subordinate. This means, that if a person 'X' is aggrieved that he has been charged more than

the prescribed amount (as prescribed by the government during covid times) in a private hospital for Covid19 treatment, he cannot directly report that to the police station and ask the police to register FIR under section 188 of IPC, but he needs to report the same to the official or ministry that promulgated such order and it will be upon the written complaint of such ministry or official that an action can be brought against the private hospital under section 188 of IPC.

In India, we very well know that crimes often are not reported by individuals because of a lack of awareness which further encourages the wrongdoer; initiative should be taken by the government to check the implementation of their orders. This can be done by audits and taking the views and experiences of the intended beneficiaries of those orders. Therefore, for a peaceful society to exist, it is imperative to abide by just orders promulgated by public servants and any objection to such orders, should only have legal recourse.

(The writer is an advocate in Delhi; views are personal)



KISHLAYA MISHRA

BJP-AIADMK split: What next?

The AIADMK-BJP split does not augur well for the BJP which is trying hard to get a foothold in southern India

Could the split between the AIADMK and BJP be permanent? If so, this could hurt the BJP's chances of winning in Tamil Nadu since the AIADMK had supported them since J Jayalithaa's passing in 2016. The decision to end its partnership with the NDA on a national and state level may put the BJP at a disadvantage.

The future political landscape could have an impact on the upcoming 2024 elections. It could cause a shift in power among Tamil Nadu parties and their alliances. This may result in the AIADMK losing the support of the Modi government, which has acted as a powerful ally.

According to experts, the separation between the BJP and AIADMK is expected to be temporary. The leaders of both parties have advised their members to refrain from making negative comments about each other. The BJP seeks more support in the Southern region and hopes to secure additional seats through partnerships.

Last week, former AIADMK minister Munuswamy announced that his party is severing ties with the BJP and NDA. He accused the BJP state chief, Annamalai, of deliberately tarnishing the reputation of respected party members, including former Chief Ministers CN Annadurai and Jayalithaa.

The decision may have a significant impact on state and national politics. AIADMK is the lone major partner of the BJP at the national level. Previously, NDA included bigger parties like Shiv Sena, Akali Dal, Telugu Desam, and AIADMK. Still, now only AIADMK remains in the alliance. For the BJP, the loss is more significant. Despite earnest efforts, it has not established a substantial presence in Tamil Nadu — the power switches between the DMK and AIADMK since 1967. The AIADMK has ruled 30 out of their 50 years.

Tamil Nadu has two main political parties: AIADMK and DMK. AIADMK is a popular party with a large membership of two crore people, and it offers an alternative to DMK. The DMK and AIADMK, the two main



Dravidian parties, have both supported the BJP at different times.

For decades, The BJP has faced a tough challenge in winning over voters in Tamil Nadu. The Dravidian movement started by EV Ramaswamy Naicker has taken deep roots in the form of DMK and AIADMK parties. The party only secured 3% of the vote in the last Lok Sabha elections. In comparison, the two Dravidian parties had a solid 25% base.

Since 2016, the AIADMK party has experienced continuous defeats in all elections. It has no charismatic leaders like Jayalithaa or founder MG. Ramachandran — both matinee idols. The party's performance in the most recent Assembly polls in 2021 decreased the seats won, from 136 to 75. The DMK-Congress coalition took control of the government. In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, AIADMK only secured one seat, a significant drop compared to their previous 37. Meanwhile, the DMK coalition's seats increased from 0 to 39. Consequently, AIADMK cadres view their connection with the BJP as a hindrance. The BJP's attempt to win over voters in Tamil



THE UPCOMING LOK SABHA ELECTIONS ARE SIGNIFICANT FOR THE BJP, WHILE THE AIADMK FOCUSES ON THE 2026 ASSEMBLY POLLS

Nadu failed due to differing ideologies. The Dravidian parties are non-believers, while BJP's primary election strategy is centred around Ram Temple in Ayodhya earlier and Sanathan dharma now.

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections are significant for the BJP, while the AIADMK focuses on the 2026 Assembly polls. The outcome will largely depend on the coalitions formed by the two Dravidian parties. Prime Minister Modi is determined to secure a third term in the 2024 elections.

Insiders suggest that Annamalai's behaviour was not the main reason for the split.

Despite numerous complaints, AIADMK is unhappy that the BJP has not taken action against Annamalai. There is a more significant disagreement over seat sharing. Both parties failed to win seats in Tamil Nadu in the 2019 elections due to a lack of shared ideology. Annamalai has suggested running independently in the election, and some BJP members are considering the idea. Annamalai wants to form a coalition with smaller parties.

AIADMK chief Edapadi Palaniswamy has successfully

united the party and worked with senior leaders to prevent the re-entry of Sasikala, TTV Dhinakaran, and former Chief Minister O. Panner Selvam. It is a no-no for him even if the BJP provides them seats under its quota. Palaniswamy was able to remove them from AIADMK and now holds complete control. He apprehends that once they entered, his authority would diminish.

The ruling DMK coalition apprehends it could be affected, and some suggest that Congress may ally with the AIADMK. The results will depend on the number of seats won by each alliance.

The upcoming Lok Sabha elections are crucial for the DMK, AIADMK, Congress and BJP. Among them, the BJP stands to gain or lose the most. Factors such as caste, financial resources, and political influence will also play a significant role in the election. The BJP needs to perform well in the Five States Assembly polls. While BJP is ahead, in politics, a week is a long time, and anything can happen in the next six months leading up to the Lok Sabha elections.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DISTURBING INCIDENT IN THE UK

Sir — The incident that occurred on September 29th, involving the Indian High Commissioner to the UK, Vikram Doraiswami, being prevented from entering a Gurdwara in Glasgow, Scotland, is a deeply condemnable and disturbing event. During this incident, some radical elements not only blocked the envoy's entry but also resorted to threats and abuse. They even attempted to open the envoy's locked car, which fortunately was thwarted due to the timely intervention of the event organizers. The UK, being aware of the potential threat from such extremist elements, should have taken adequate security measures for the visiting Indian envoy.

It is essential to acknowledge that the Khalistan ideology has very limited support among Sikhs in India. The majority of Sikhs in India lead peaceful lives and have made significant contributions to the nation in various fields, including defense and trade. Sikhs in the armed forces have played a pivotal role in defending the nation against external threats from countries like China and Pakistan. Only a small fraction of radical elements resort to violence to pursue their objectives.

The recent incident in Scotland, as well as the July attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco, serves as a stark reminder that these extremist elements, although numerically small, continue to exist and have grown more emboldened. These incidents are not isolated and are part of a concerning trend, with extremist elements expanding their reach in countries like Canada, the US, the UK, and Australia. This situation demands serious attention from the international community.

Ramesh G Jethwan | Bengaluru

UKRAINE AID QUESTIONED

Sir — The United States narrowly escaped a government shutdown crisis as a bill was passed at the eleventh hour on Saturday, providing emergency funding to federal services. Notably absent from the bill was any mention of continued aid to war-torn

World Cup Excitement



Cricket enthusiasts in India are thrilled as the World Cup inches closer to our doorsteps. The Indian cricket team is poised to compete on home turf, aiming to seize the championship and bring glory to the BCCI. Preparations are progressing as scheduled, with strategic

changes in the team composition to provide opportunities to our top players. Fortunately, we have a wealth of talent, boasting the world's finest all-rounder and the number one bowler. The team is ready to unleash their full potential in various venues. The round-robin format of the tournament offers us a promising path to qualify for the knock-out stage, despite even odds.

However, we must address concerns about the team's fitness and fielding prowess, which need improvement. With the best squad at our disposal and a well-balanced team, the 2023 World Cup is a golden opportunity to secure a major victory. Let's rally behind our team and hope for a triumphant campaign!

CK Subramaniam, | Mumbai

Ukraine, raising concerns about the suspension of monetary assistance. The passage of this bill ensures uninterrupted operation of US federal services for the next 45 days.

Failure to approve funding for federal departments and agencies by October 1 would have resulted in a complete government shutdown, with far-reaching consequences, including furloughs without pay for federal employees and a significant economic impact.

While the immediate threat of a shutdown has been averted, there remains the looming challenge of securing government funding in the weeks ahead. Differing viewpoints, particularly among right-wing lawmakers, could lead to further crises, emphasizing the need for a more bipartisan approach.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MINORITIES

Sir — I am writing to express my deep concerns about the discrimination faced by Muslims and religious minorities in India. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar's recent statement denying discrimination against minorities is contradicted by alarming statistics. Between 2014 and

2018, there was a shocking 786% increase in hate crimes against minorities. Ethnic violence has persisted for four months in Manipur against minorities, and attacks on Christians have quadrupled between 2011 and 2022.

Furthermore, instances of hate speech by BJP members and leaders, targeting Muslims, have been on the rise. Muslims have been lynched, houses demolished, and violence inflicted upon them merely due to their faith. The government's silence on these matters is deeply concerning. Propaganda films like 'Kashmir Files' have further exacerbated tensions, and religious institutions like mosques and dargahs have been attacked.

The organized violence against Muslims since the current government came to power has created a climate of fear among ordinary Muslims in the country. Discriminatory laws and divisive rhetoric only worsen the situation. It is crucial that we acknowledge these issues and work towards a more inclusive and harmonious society.

Zakir Hussain | Kazipet

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

TOLERANCE IS THE KEY TO PEACE

Tolerance can bring about lasting peace in the world



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

Most of us have come across many such situations in life where- in the question of Tolerance comes up and we are required to choose whether to tolerate or retaliate. If, for example, a person who has no control over his tongue or is uncultured, impolite, short-tempered and ill-mannered talks in an offensive or insulting language or behaves rudely and roughly with us, then what would we do?

Well! A cultured and spiritualised person, under such a situation, would choose to tolerate, because he knows very well that when tolerance is lost, temper is also lost and the loss of both means the loss of mental balance. Hence, in such a situation, one should not feel hurt, injured or mauled and should not think of revenge. Instead, one should pity such a person and give him vibrations of peace to recover from his temper. This kind of approach or attitude would enable one to remain calm, composed and dignified. Tolerance, in such provocative situations, is a Value that saves one's life. Tolerance, joined by humility, has great Value even as a matter of policy, strategy or tactic.

So, if one loses tolerance in such hot situations even for a moment, one may even lose one's life or face a still more complicated situation, fraught with grave consequences and unpredictable repercussions. Looking at it from this angle, one can say that tolerance is not only a high-class virtue and moral value but it is a non-violent strategy for self-defence and survival and also a weapon for victory. Remember! Our tolerance and Humility can melt or mellow the minds of our bitter critics and opponents while it enables us to be in a state of peace. It creates harmony in the course of time and even the most arrogant person, at some point in time, expresses appreciation of our amazing tolerance in the face of grave aggravation. Along with this, we should also learn to forget and forgive some lapses and shortcomings of others in the spirit of friendliness or brotherhood, or else we cannot have goodwill, amity co-operation and peace.




However, most people ask this question: how long should we allow our tormentor to continue with his cruel acts, his nefarious designs and his dirty ways? Should we tolerate injustice? If we do so, wouldn't it mean our silent consent to his acts of depriving those who deserve justice? Also, it would mean our connivance in his acts of punishing those who are not at fault. Isn't it a kind of self-imposed servitude, servility and slavery? The answer is that we must put forth our moral resistance. We must make our disapproval manifest through our non-cooperation in such acts. Better still, we must use our skill of persuasion at proper moments. We must make efforts to enable this man of blinded intellect to see the real nature of his act and the attendant evils and the following consequences.

We must have the spiritual power to change his heart, to transform him from being stone-hearted. We must try to give a healing touch to this mentally and morally sick person. We must pity him rather than lose our moral sense and react with a feeling of rancour and vengeance. That would be our tolerance. But the question that ultimately comes up is whether we have that spiritual power to transform a sinner into a saint. For that, we must check our stock of spirituality and fill ourselves with the power again through Yoga-Meditation as one would recharge one's battery with the help of a dynamo. With our high spiritual power, we can use tolerance as a tool of social transformation and can be God's instrument for uplifting a man, fallen from his seat of morality.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist; views expressed are personal)

Turning challenges of food insecurity into opportunity

Food loss can impact food security and nutrition by influencing the four aspects of food security: food availability, access, utilisation, and stability



TAKAYUKI HAGIWARA

Food insecurity, hunger and environmental degradation are being aggravated by food loss and waste, globally. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) estimates that — in terms of economic value — 14 per cent of the world's food is lost from post-harvest up to, but not including, the retail level. In India, 4-6 % of cereal and 5-12 % of vegetables are being lost every year.

FAO on the fourth International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste (IDAFWL), calls upon the need to adopt the Food Loss Index (FLI) methodology and monitor losses throughout the supply chain from production to consumption. In collaboration with FAO, IASRI-ICAR

Timeless traditions: Thathera metal craft


Thathera metal craft has been on the UNESCO list for almost a decade now, but the struggle of the artisans making these utensils continues



SUKHDEV SINGH

Despite the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage inscription of the thathera craft of Jndiala Guru since 2014, the financial and social condition of the craftsmen has not improved much. Recognising the cultural heritage worth of the 'thathera' metal craft in Jndiala Guru, in its 9th session held in Paris in 2014, UNESCO 'Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) for the Safeguarding of Intangible Heritage' decided to inscribe the craft on its list. This is the first metal craft from India to find a place in UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Thus, not only Punjab but India should be proud of it. "But just the pride cannot feed the craftsmen and keep the craft vibrant", says a craftsman seeking anonymity.

S Hardev Singh of the 'father' community says, "The younger generation is opting out of this family profession because it neither earns money nor respect. Although Ayurveda recognises the advantages of eating in copper, bronze and brass utensils, the 'use and throw' cheaper alternatives are pushing it out of use". Instead of popular cosmetic measures, the government should take concrete steps of waiving taxes and continuing the old quota system of issuing scrap as the raw material directly and only to the working craftsmen to reduce the cost and prices of objects to face the competition. Further, it can help market the products as art pieces and utilitarian objects. The government can check the entry of middlemen who buy raw materials from the Indian Army on auction and then distribute them among the craftsmen to produce objects for them at low labour rates. "In the current practice, a craftsman has no claim of ownership of the product and after the day-long hard work earns only 500-600 a day", a craftsman quips. He asks, "Is this the value of skill or the wage of labour? How would my son like to pursue this profession?"



THE SCIENCE OF AYURVEDA IN INDIA RECOGNISES THE RELEVANCE OF THESE METALS FOR HEALTH

(The writer is a retired professor from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar; views are personal)

Recently, the Punjab government has declared the Thathera Bazar a Heritage street and built a gate at the street entry symbolising the value of the craft, but has neither waived off its share in GST nor taken any serious steps to help them improve their condition. The question is how the gate and the heritage street status would help if there were no craftsmen in the street.

The UNESCO recognition has, of course, created some hype in the media. Some agencies have succeeded in getting the study projects sanctioned adding to their profiles and justifying their jobs but have not advocated the case forcefully enough to deliver at the ground. Some art and craft dealers have tried to reap benefits by tagging the products with UNESCO recognition to sell them at premium prices while the craftsmen continue to work as labourers at low rates.

This is where the shoe pinches and the government should step in to save the craft, the craftsmen and the cultural heritage of the state. The thathera craft is practised at several other places in India but the uniqueness of the craftsmen in Jandiala Guru is their continuance as a community to practice the family tradition of handmade copper and brass utensils. The ten to twelve-generation tradition of fathers in Jandiala Guru and their craft is a journey of place and people in and through time. The knowledge systems transmitted from generation to generation and the continued relevance of their products to the people make the craftsmanship a 'living tradition', fulfilling the three-tier criterion of 'people, place and time' to identify the craft as the Cultural Heritage.

According to the Amritsar District Gazetteer of 1883, "Besides the city [Amritsar]...the only trade centre worthy of notice is the town of Jandiala, which is known for its manufacture of brass and copper vessels in which it has a brisk export trade" (p.117). If so, the trade perfected worthy of export must have started during the days of Maharaja Ranjit Singh or before.

While the utensils are tangible objects, traditional knowledge, skills and art are intangible. Both the craft and its knowledge conventions have been recognized in the UNESCO inscription. The craftsmen of Jandiala Guru use the conventional knowledge and skills of 'forging' instead of 'casting' metal to shape it as a utensil. Using the method of forging, they hammer the metal plates with the help of a mallet. After heating the plates in a small hand-driven furnace, they consistently thump and beat a plate to make it malleable and ductile.

Then the parts of a utensil are made by cutting, heating and curving the metal sheet; then these parts are joined with each other. There are five methods for joining of metals: soldering, brazing, flux, riveting and welding. The fathers of Jandiala Guru use brazing and riveting. Brazing is a process of joining two or more metals by pouring a molten filler metal into the joint. The utensils made from the metal sheets are then cleaned with diluted acid and scrubbed with tamarind water and sand. The whole process of polishing is carried out with hands and feet. This final process brings out the rich texture and colour of the metal. Finally, the utensils are ornamented with hand-engraved designs with patterns of delicate dents of small size and round shapes looking like small stars.

Utensils are art objects "produced not only for their use but also for their beauty possessing an artistic image which expresses their function". Thus the contribution of craftsmen to the development of culture and civilization, on the one hand, and to the fulfilment of utilitarian and aesthetic needs, on the other, has been great in human history.

Eating and cooking in the mud, copper, brass and bronze utensils is good for health and taste. The science of Ayurveda in India recognizes the relevance of these metals for health. The references to Bronze for health healing can be found in several tracts like Ashtanga Samgraha/ Hridaya, Rajtarangini and Bhayprakash. In contrast with glass, plastic and steel, bronze shows nil microbial presence one hour after being washed in hot water. Copper is said to kill harmful bacteria and viruses. It helps prevent cell damage and slow ageing due to its antioxidant and anti-carcinogenic properties.

As copper, which is well known as a biocide, is the major content in alloy metal of brasses, utensils made from brass have the beneficial effect of restricting the growth of microorganisms. While the craftsmen must be acknowledged as educated and skilled worthy of social respect and honour; their craft must be supported and promoted as our precious cultural heritage.

Gehlot Government destroying Rajasthan: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday made a scathing attack on the “corrupt” Ashok Gehlot-led Congress Government in Rajasthan and accused it of destroying the State as he made it amply clear that party’s election symbol “Kamal” is the “only face” of the BJP in the assembly poll.

The Prime Minister claimed that Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot had already “accepted defeat” by requesting him not to stop schemes initiated by the Congress in Rajasthan.

Addressing a rally in Chittorgarh, Modi said Rajasthan tops the list when it comes to crime, riots, atrocities against women, Dalits and backward classes and also mentioned the incident of behead-

ing of a tailor in the state. The Prime Minister also addressed public meeting in another election bound state of Madhya Pradesh and inaugurated and laid foundation stones for projects worth over Rs 19,000 crore there.

“Nearly 2.25 lakh families will enter into their new homes before Dussehra, Dhanteras and Diwali this year,” said Modi in Gwalior.

In Madhya Pradesh Modi slammed Opposition forces as “anti-development” saying “they have hatred towards growth because of their politics.”

“Our target is to ensure Madhya Pradesh emerges as one of the top three states; your votes will help achieve this goal, he said adding “Next five years crucial for Madhya Pradesh’s development; double



engine government is necessary in the state”

BJP ensured ‘BIMARU’ tag was removed from Madhya Pradesh; party brought MP among top 10 states in terms of development, said the Prime Minister. Rajasthan top the list when it comes to crime, riots, atrocities against women, Dalits and backward classes, Modi said at a rally in Chittorgarh.

In Chittorgarh public rally, the prime minister said that he feels pain when atrocities against daughters take place anywhere in the country but charged that the Congress has made this a tradition in Rajasthan.

He also assured the people that all public schemes initiated by the Congress government will continue if the BJP is elected to power in Rajasthan. “Gehlot knows that the

countdown of the Congress government has started. He in a way has congratulated the BJP by publicly requesting that the schemes should not be stopped. I assure you that BJP will not stop any scheme of public interest but will try to improve it. This is Modi’s guarantee,” he said.

The prime minister said if his party his voted to power, action against the corrupt and those involved in the alleged paper leak mafia will be taken.

In Chittorgarh rally, Modi also gave a clear indication that no chief minister face will be projected in the poll-bound state.

The BJP, he said, will contest the assembly election on the party’s symbol ‘lotus’. “Hmara chehra kamal hain, Umvedwar kamal hai, usiko jitana hain”, he said.

Former chief minister Vasundhara Raje, BJP state president CP Joshi, leader of opposition Rajendra Rathore, union minister Arjun Meghwal were among the political leaders present at the rally.

There has been much speculation whether Raje will be declared the chief ministerial face by the BJP in Rajasthan.

Modi will visit Chhattisgarh and Telangana on Tuesday to launch a slew of development projects in the two poll-bound states.

The Prime Minister’s Office said Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects worth more than Rs 26,000 crore from Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh and more than Rs 8,000 crore from Nizamabad in Telangana.

Arsh Dala planning terror attacks: Intelligence

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Designated “individual terrorist” Arshdeep Singh Gill alias Arsh Dala, based in Canada, involved in various criminal activities such as extortions and murders in India through his network of gangsters has now diversified his network to perpetrate terror attacks in the country.

Arsh Dala has formed an association with another US-based terrorist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun of banned terror outfit “Sikhs for Justice” for fanning anti-India activities, an Intelligence dossier has warned.

Arsh Dala has been designated “individual terrorist” under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967.

“It has come to notice that Arsh Dala has formed an association with USA-based Gurpatwant Singh Pannun of



Sikhs for Justice. It has been learnt that Arsh Dala and Gurpatwant Singh Pannun have concluded to carry out suspicious activity in Gurdaspur in Punjab,” the report said.

The dossier further said, “Previous activities of Gurpatwant Singh Pannun suggest that he might look to hoist pro-Khalistan flags and graffiti on Government buildings and other public places but

his collusion with Arsh Dala this time suggests that they might try to carry out some terror activity.”

Dala, according to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), has been operating from Canada for the last three-four years and allegedly executed many killings in Punjab over the last few years. “He has been guiding and commissioning terrorist acts and also promot-

ing terror, violence and large scale extortion in India on behalf of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF). Besides smuggling weapons from Pakistan, they (Dala and his associates) were also involved in recruitment of youth to carry out acts of violence and terror in the country at the behest of the KTF” the NIA had earlier said.

NIA had registered a suo moto case on August 20, 2022 under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 in connection with the terror activities of banned Khalistani terrorist organisations in India.

The agency has been cracking down on individual terrorist outfits and terrorists conspiring to smuggle terrorist hardware, such as arms, ammunition and explosives besides raising funds for carrying out terrorist acts in the

country.

The syndicates run by Dala, Lakhbir Singh alias Landa and Lawrence Bishnoi among others have been alleged to be spreading their mafia style criminal networks in the northern States of India and were involved in commission of many sensational crimes, such as the murder of popular singer Sidhu Moosewala, and large-scale extortions from businessmen and professionals.

Their crimes, according to the NIA, included killing of Maharashtra builder Sanjay Biyani, as well Sandeep Nangal Ambia, an international Kabaddi organiser in Punjab.

Many of these conspiracies were found to have been masterminded from abroad, including Pakistan and Canada, or by leaders of syndicates lodged in jails, according to the NIA.

India, Tanzania to bolster defence ties on Army Chief Pande’s visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Tanzania will review the entire spectrum of their bilateral defence ties and explore ways to further bolster them during Army Chief General Manoj Pande’s four-day visit there starting Monday.

Giving details of his schedule, army officials said here, the visit reinforces the long-standing defence ties between the two countries.

Pande will visit Dar es Salaam, the Tanzanian capital, the historical city of Zanzibar, and Arusha. He will engage in discussions and meetings with a host of dignitaries and senior officers from Tanzania.

During his visit, the Army chief is likely to call on



Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

Officials said high on the agenda are the planned meetings with Defence Minister Stergomena Lawrence Tax and Chief of Defence Force General Jacob John Mkunda. Pande will also be visiting Zanzibar and call on President Hussein Ali Mwinyi. In addition, interac-

tion with the Commander of the 101st Infantry Brigade General Saidi Hamisi Saidi is also scheduled.

Pande will also be addressing the National Defence College and interacting with Major General Wilbert Augustine Ibuge Commandant and the faculty. Additionally, a meeting with Brigadier General Stephen Justice Mnkande, Commandant of the Command and Staff College, Duluti is also planned during the visit.

The visit also coincides with the 2nd India Tanzania Mini DEFEXPO being conducted at Dar-es-Salaam which will showcase the growing prowess of the Indigenous defence industry complex of India, they said.

ICG’s pollution control vessel arrives at Indonesian port

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a significant demonstration of India’s commitment to address regional marine pollution threats, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship Samudra Prahari, a specialized Pollution-Control Vessel, arrived at the port of Tanjung Priok, Jakarta, Indonesia, on Sunday, Coast Guard officials said here on Monday.

This visit, a part of India’s Association of South East Nations (ASEAN) initiatives for Marine Pollution Response, underscores India’s expertise and collaborative efforts in tackling regional maritime challenges, particularly those related to marine pollution threats.

During this overseas deployment from September 11 to October 14, the specialized Pollution Control Vessel earlier made port call in Bangkok, Thailand from September 16 to 20. Equipped with a Chetak helicopter in Pollution Response configuration, the vessel highlights



India’s commitment to enhancing pollution response capabilities in the region, officials said.

As a part of an overseas exchange program, the ship has aboard 13 National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets, who will participate actively in the ‘Puneet Sagar Abhiyan’ thereby giving the Abhiyan an international reach. This program focuses on beach cleanups and similar activities, fostering collaboration with partner nations.

The ship received a warm

welcome from BAKAMAL (Indonesia Maritime Security Agency) band playing fanfare and other welcoming military tunes as a gesture to their Indian friends.

During the four day stay of ship at Jakarta, ICG ship will engage with BAKAMLA in professional exchanges, cross-deck visits, tabletop exercises, Pollution Response demonstration, Joint Yoga session, joint exercises, as well as official and social engagements, including visits to capacity-building facilities.

1 held, weapons seized after raids in CPI(Maoist) conspiracy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday arrested one person and seized weapons, cash and incriminating material in raids across Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in the Munchingiputtu CPI (Maoist) conspiracy case.

Multiple raids were carried out across 62 locations in the two States, leading to the arrest of one Chandra Narasimhulu, a State Executive Committee Member of the Pragathiseela Karmika Samakya (PKS), from Satya Sai district of Andhra Pradesh, the NIA said in a statement.

A pistol, along with 14 rounds, was seized from the location. An amount of 13 lakh was seized from one of the premises in Kadapa district, while Maoist literature and documents were seized from other locations, it said.

The raids covered 53 locations in Guntur, Palanadu, Vijayawada, Rajhmundry, Prakasam, Bapatla, Eluru, East Godawari, Dr BR Ambedkar Konaseema, Visakhapatnam,



Vizianagaram, Nellore, Tirupati, Kadapa Satya Sai, Anantapur, and Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh. Nine locations were raided in Telangana in the districts of Hyderabad, Mahabub Nagar, Hanumakonda, Ranga Reddy and Adilabad, the agency said.

“The custodial interrogation of the arrested accused is expected to yield further information about the conspiracy relating to the attempts of various frontal organisations to further the activities of the proscribed CPI (Maoist) outfit,” it said.

The frontal organisations

include Civil Liberties Committee (CLC), Amarula Bandhu Mitrula Sangham (ABMS), Chaitanya Mahila Sangham (CMS), Kula Nirmulana Porata Samathi (KNPS), Patriotic Democratic Movement (PDM), Pragathiseela Karmika Samakya (PKS), Praja Kala Mandali (PKM), Revolutionary Writers Association (RWA) or Viplava Rachaital Sangam (VIRASAM), Human Rights Forum (HRF), Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP) and Indian Association of Peoples Lawyers (IAPL).

Ships of Navy’s 1st Training Squadron on visit to Malaysia



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As part of the Indian Navy’s Along range deployment in South East Asia, the ships of First Training Squadron (1TS) -INS Tir, INS Sujata, and ICGS Sarathi are on a visit to Port Klang, Malaysia from September 30 to October 3, navy officials said here on Monday.

During the visit the activities being undertaken by the crew of 1TS include various pro-

fessional and community interactions, training exchanges, cross deck visits and sports fixtures with personnel of Royal Malaysian Navy, as well as ships open for visit of school children, they said.

The deployment of 1 TS is aimed at exposing the trainees to the sociopolitical, military and maritime linkages of India with the friendly countries in the Indian Ocean Region and strengthening of bilateral engagements between the two Navies.

Personal consumption, possession of e-cigarettes violation of law: Ministry

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of no let up in cases of air travellers arriving with e-cigarettes at various airports in the country, Union Health Ministry has clarified that its personal consumption as well as possession of any such devices in any form, quantity or manner is in violation of the Prohibition of Electronic Cigarette Act (PECA) 2019.

The clarification was sent to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MCA) last month, official sources said, adding it will strengthen the enforcement of the ban.

There has been cases of confiscation of vaping devices from travellers passing through Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata, Delhi and Bhavnagar airports. The travellers argue that they had purchase them for personal use.



Just last month, Bengaluru Customs officials had held two persons for allegedly smuggling 1,590 packets of e-cigarettes worth Rs 15.9 lakh from Malaysia

The ministry said that though there is no explicit mention of prohibition of individual use of e-cigarette in PECA, the law has been enacted to prohibit the production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement of e-cigarettes.

“Therefore, possession of

e-cigarette within the country in any quantity is not possible without contravening the provisions of PECA, 2019,” said Dr Pulkesh Kumar, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Health.

The ban includes a prohibition on all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, Heat Not Burn Products, e-Hookah and similar devices.

The law was enacted in the interest of public health and to protect the people from harm, the health ministry said.

Despite heavy penalties and imprisonment, e-cigarettes are reported to be widely available across a range of sources including tobacco vendors, general stores, and online providers.

The health ministry has also launched an online portal to facilitate reporting of violations under PECA. This portal will allow the ministry

to take necessary action on violations.

Anyone can report these violations at “http://www.Violation-reporting.in”.

The government has also expressed concern regarding the alarming rise in its use amongst youth.

In May, the ministry issued a public notice for effective implementation of the Act. Later in July, the ministry sent notices to 15 websites selling e-cigarettes, asking them to stop advertisement and sale of such products.

The ministry, earlier in February, had written to all states and UTs to ensure effective compliance of the government’s ban on e-cigarettes.

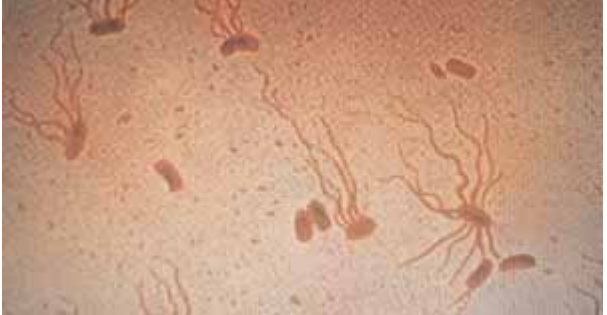
In a letter addressed to chief secretaries of all states and Union territories, it had flagged the sale of e-cigarettes at stationary stores near educational institutions.

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Grappling with two highly antibiotic resistant strains of typhoid fever, India is now scouting for indigenously developed improved point of care (POC) test that can help distinguish the duo variants so as to ensure effective management of the life-threatening disease.

In this connection, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Union Health Ministry has invited expression of interest (EOI) from the manufacturers and research institutes for development of diagnostic In Vitro kits for diagnosis of the drug resistant strains.

The move follows concerns that existing typhoid diagnostic tests, such as the Widal test, TUBEX, Typhidot, and Test-It (KIT), have shown sub-optimal sensitivity and specificity to the two serovars namely Salomonella. Typhi (S.



Typhi) and Salmonella enterica serovar Paratyphi (S. Paratyphi) which have become resistance to many antibiotics.

Moreover, the S Typhi and S Paratyphi strains are indistinguishable, thus making it crucial for clinicians to differentiate between them before starting antibiotic therapy due to their different antibiotic susceptibility profiles, said an ICMR scientist on the need for next generation in vitro kits.

“There is an urgent need for indigenously developed, improved typhoid POC tests

that offer higher sensitivity and specificity. Such tests would enable healthcare professionals to promptly and accurately diagnose typhoid, leading to more appropriate and targeted treatment, which in turn, could result in better patient outcomes and reduced antibiotic misuse,” further added the scientist.

While the morbidity and mortality of S. Typhi make it a greater public health concern, the increasing prevalence of S. Paratyphi in certain regions necessitates a next-generation

diagnostic test capable of detecting both the strains, she explained.

Improved disease diagnostics will support the government in guiding interventions program efforts to prevent the diseases, said the ICMR scientist on the need for the next generation detection kit.

“S. Typhi, the bacterium responsible for typhoid fever, has developed resistance to multiple antibiotics, including three frontline agents. India is bearing a high burden of the disease. It is estimated that there are 11-21 million cases of enteric fever worldwide each year, resulting in 120,000-160,000 deaths.

“Due to lack of proper diagnosis and heterogeneity of disease, the exact burden of disease is unclear but extrapolation of regional data estimates 586 cases per 100,000 person-years typhoid/paratyphoid incidence in India,” said the scientist.

India to clock 6.5% growth in FY24: Rajiv Kumar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian economy will grow at around 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal as the country's macroeconomic situation is benefiting from the reforms that have been taken up in the last nine years by the Narendra Modi-led government, former NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar said on Monday.

Kumar further said that India needs and can grow at 8 per cent-plus as that level of economic growth is required to meet aspirations of the country's young population and to generate sufficient jobs for its workforce. "My growth projection (of

India's GDP growth in FY 2023-24) is 6.5 per cent. "And I think we can easily maintain this (growth) over the next few years," he told PTI in an interview.

India's GDP growth in 2022-23 was 7.2 per cent, lower than 9.1 per cent in 2021-22.

According to Reserve Bank of India's projections, India's GDP is likely to grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Kumar further said, "Macroeconomic situation India is benefiting from the reforms that have been implemented in the last nine years. Therefore, both the external macroeconomic balance as well as the domestic ones are in good

shape." He said that India's current account deficit is manageable, the country's foreign exchange reserves are sufficient to cover about 11 months of imports and the foreign direct investment flows are continuing.

On the domestic side, Kumar said inflation is beginning to come down to the target levels and the government tax revenues have shown a good 16 per cent increase over last year. "So, this will take care of the fiscal situation and lead to fiscal consolidation. As a result of this improvement, the rating agencies have improved their ratings and JP Morgan has included India in its international bond indices," he said.



According to Kumar, the only weakness that he sees is that the private corporate investment is not yet responding in the manner that "we would expect, but that also is beginning to improve as demonstrated by

the increase in bank credit growth over the last six months".

Expressing concern over decline of India's exports between April and August by about 11 per cent compared to the same period last year, he said,

"This reflects our age old situation which is that India's export performance is strongly correlated with the global trade performance."

Kumar pointed out that as the global trade has weakened, India's exports performance has also weakened given the weak demand in Europe, the US and other developed economies.

"We have to change this. We must do whatever we can to ensure that our exports have a greater share of world markets," he said.

On some US-based economists' claim that India is overstating economic growth, Kumar said that the Ministry of Statistics and Programme

Implementation (MoSPI) must take a firm position and give enough reasons as to why they are using the wholesale price index (WPI) deflator and not the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as GDP deflator.

"And that needs to be firmly established once and for all," Kumar emphasised.

Meanwhile, India's real GDP growth was 7.8 per cent on a year-on-year basis in Q1 FY24, as per the Income or Production Approach.

Recently, former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian, in an article, argued that India's GDP is not measured from the expenditure side and measured only from the income

side. This tends to over estimate GDP growth.

Last month, chief economic advisor V Anantha Nageswaran rejected criticism of "statistical discrepancy" in the first quarter GDP data, saying when the same statistical authority reported the severest contraction in the first quarter of 2020, the naysayers had called it credible as it suited their narrative.

The article by Nageswaran was written in light of debates over India's economic performance and economist Ashoka Mody, a Princeton University professor, raising concerns regarding the country's GDP growth rate for the first quarter of the financial year 2023-24.

Lava eyes 10% smartphone market share in 2 years with investment of ₹600 crore in R&D, marketing

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Home-grown mobile devices maker Lava International expects to capture 10 per cent market share in under Rs 30,000-priced smartphone segment on account of up to Rs 600 crore investment in product development and marketing in the next two years, a senior company official said.

Lava International President Sunil Raina told PTI that at a time when several Indian mobile phone companies succumbed to the pressure of aggressive pricing of foreign players around 2016-17 coupled with challenges posed by demonetisation and GST implementation, Lava focussed on its core strength and re-worked on the growth strategy.

The company relaunched its smartphone business with a small pause with focus on customer experience around devices and providing repair service at home, Raina said.

He said that the company has realised that technology has to be competitive for growth along with visibility.

"With branding and product development, we will invest Rs 500-600 crore in the next two years with a large part of it will go in product development," Raina said.



He said that the company has decided not to load smartphones with bloatware — which are pre-loaded apps on mobile phones.

"We have decided we will not put out any bloatware in the phone. We have taken some hit on what could have been earned from bloatware only because we don't want to compromise on consumer experience. I also believe that bloatware is going to be short-lived because consumers don't like it and what consumers don't like doesn't last long," Raina said.

He said that consumers are very unhappy about bloatware because they get irritated with unwanted advertisements, unwanted notifications and bloatware makes devices slow and very vulnerable to security issues.

Raina said most of the brands are not providing software updates on the devices that patch security loopholes and improve performances of the devices.

"In the last 2-3 years, we have not missed any single update," he said.

Raina said that the company has over 800 service centres but still decided to come up with "service at home" where the company sends engineers to the home of consumers for repair.

"In Agni 2, we have gone a step ahead and started giving replacement at home if their is any hardware fault," he said.

While the India smartphone market has recorded continuous decline in shipment since April 2022, Raina said that with new strategy Lava's smartphone busi-

ness grew over 200 per cent last year and this year it is growing at the rate of 300 per cent.

"We expect to grow by 100 per cent on average in the next 2-3 years. Our plan is to get 10 per cent market share in sub-Rs 30,000 price range smartphones. Right now we have around 2 per cent share," he said.

Lava president said that the company will leverage its retail channel strength as well as boost online growth to meet the target.

The company at present sells products through 1.2 lakh retail stores which largely include feature phones only.

Lava claims to have 25 per cent share in the feature phone segment.

"We will fully leverage our offline strength. As of now we sell our product through 1.2 lakh retailers. Smartphones are not present in the entire 100 per cent of that universe. We will look at taking smartphones to most of the outlets and strong presence across all geographies in the country," Raina said.

Lava also plans to strengthen online business to meet its target. "Online earlier used to account for 10 per cent of our total sales. Now online contributes 25 per cent of our total which we will grow further," Raina said.

Remarkable 5G adoption drives India's global speed ranking 72 places higher, says Ookla

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The mobile download speeds in India have seen significant boost with launch of 5G services, and the country has climbed 72 places higher to clinch 47th spot in Speedtest Global Index, according to Ookla.

This puts India not only ahead of its neighbours like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan, but also some G20 countries, such as Mexico (90th), Turkey (68th), the UK (62nd), Japan (58th), Brazil (50th place), and South Africa (48th place).

India's speed performance has seen a 3.59 times increase



since the introduction of 5G, with median download speeds improving to 50.21 Mbps in August 2023, from 13.87 Mbps in September 2022.

"This improvement has led to India's rise in the Speedtest

Global Index, moving up 72 places, from 119th place to the 47th position," it said.

The 5G deployments have led to an improved overall user experience across all telecom circles with operators investing in

backhaul infrastructure.

The launch of 5G technology by operators like Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel has led to a substantial increase in 5G subscribers, and operators still have ambitious roll-out plans, with the deployment of a significant number of 5G base stations across the country.

In fact, 5G has not only brought faster speeds but also higher customer satisfaction, as indicated by the Net Promoter Score (NPS), which shows that 5G users in India consistently rate their network operators more positively compared to 4G users.

Sebi extends deadline to confirm or deny market rumours

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has extended the deadline for mandatory confirmation or denial of market rumours by listed companies.

The deadline has been extended for the top 100 listed companies by market capitalisation to February 1, 2024, from October 1 this year at present, according to the latest circular by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi).

Similarly, for the top 250 list-

ed entities, the rule will kick in on August 1, 2024, from the current requirement of April 1, 2024.

The rule is aimed at strengthening the corporate governance of listed entities.

"It has been decided to extend the effective date of implementation of...The LODR (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) rules for top 100 listed companies by market capitalisation to February 1, 2024, and for top 250 listed companies by market



capitalisation to August 1, 2024," Sebi said.

Earlier in June, Sebi notified rules asking these listed compa-

nies by market capitalisation to confirm, deny, or clarify any market rumour reported in the mainstream media.

As per the disclosure requirements, these companies will have to "confirm, deny or clarify any reported event or information in the mainstream media, which is not general in nature and which indicates that rumours of an impending specific material event" are circulating amongst the investing public within 24 hours from the reporting of the information.



WhatsApp bans 74 lakh accounts in August

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Meta-owned WhatsApp banned 74 lakh accounts in August, keeping in line with IT rules, according to the latest India monthly report by the messaging platform.

Of these, 35 lakh accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users.

The 'user-safety report' contains details of user complaints

received and the corresponding action taken by WhatsApp, as well as WhatsApp's own preventive actions to combat abuse on the platform. "Between August 1 and August 31, a total of 7,420,748 WhatsApp accounts were banned. 3,506,905 of these accounts were proactively banned, before any reports from users," it said.

An Indian account is identified via a +91 phone number.

Google with HP partnership start producing Chromebooks in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Google in partnership with HP has started manufacturing Chromebooks in India, the PC maker said on Monday.

The Chromebook devices are being manufactured at the Flex Facility near Chennai, where HP has been producing a range of laptops and desktops since August 2020.

"We're partnering with HP to manufacture Chromebooks in India - These are the first Chromebooks to be made in India and will make it easier for Indian students to have access to affordable and secure computing," Google CEO Sundar Pichai on Monday said in a post on X.

An HP spokesperson confirmed that the production of Chromebooks has started in India.

New Chromebooks are available online from a price range starting at Rs 15,990 apiece.

HP is one of the applicants under the government's Rs 17,000 crore production-linked incentive scheme for IT hardware.

Chromebooks come at a



lower price compared to notebooks with proprietary operating system.

A joint statement of Google and HP said Chromebooks are leading devices in K-12 education, helping over 50 million students and teachers across the world.

The local production of Chromebooks expands HP's India-made PC portfolio.

HP has been expanding its manufacturing operations in

India since 2020, and from December 2021, started manufacturing a wide range of laptops in India, including HP EliteBooks, HP ProBooks, and HP G8 series notebooks.

It has also expanded its portfolio of locally manufactured commercial desktops by adding various models of desktop mini towers (MT), mini desktops (DM), small form factor (SFF) desktops, and a range of All-in-One PCs.



Power consumption grows 10.7% to 140.49 billion units in September

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's power consumption grew 10.7 per cent to 140.49 billion units in September mainly due to increased use of cooling appliances amid unusually humid weather conditions.

In the year-ago period, power consumption stood at 126.91 Billion Units (BU), higher than 112.43 billion units in September 2021, according to government data.

The peak power demand met — the highest supply in a day — rose to 239.97 GW in September. The peak power supply stood at 199.50 GW in September 2022 and 180.73 GW in September 2021.

The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during summer. The demand did not reach the projected level in April-July due to unseasonal rain.

The peak supply, however, touched a new high of 224.1 GW in June and before dropping to 209.03 GW in July. Peak demand touched 238.19 GW in August.

Spokesperson of the Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd, which supplies electricity to 70 lakh people in Delhi, told PTI that the demand has remained higher mainly due to unusually higher temperature levels this year.

The spokesperson said in the coming months, demand is expected to remain on the higher side due to festivities.

In September, the Tata Power Delhi Distribution's power consumption was estimated at 1,110 MU (million units), compared to 1,035 MU in a year ago.

Shriram General to diversify: Official

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Shriram General Insurance has planned to diversify its product portfolio by focusing more on the non-motor segments like marine, fire, during the current financial year, a top official said.

Motor insurance has been the core of the business for the Jaipur-based firm accounting to about 92 per cent, company Chief Underwriting Officer Shashi Kant Dahuja said.

As part of the diversification plan, the company would launch new insurance products under the fire, marine, engineering segments, he said.

"The idea is to double our non-motor business to around 15 per cent in two to three years from the current 7-8 per cent," Dahuja told PTI in an interaction.

The non-motor business was growing at 70 per cent, he said.

To strengthen its presence in the non-motor business, he said the company would launch products in cyber insurance, pay as you drive, theft and pet insurance, soon.

"As a business strategy we don't want to be excessively dependent on one vertical and we also want to diversify our products slowly and increase our non-motor portfolio to 15 per cent over the next 2-3 years," he said responding to a query.

For the quarter ended June 30, 2023, Shriram General Insurance reported a profit of Rs 98 crore, up by 37 per cent over the corresponding quarter of last year.

The Gross Written Premium during the quarter under review was at Rs 560 crore, up by 39 per cent from Rs 401 crore registered in the same period of last year.

On the overall business growth targeted, he said the company has set a plan of growing 30 per cent during the current financial year.

"This year, we will grow the overall business by 30 per cent. The general insurance industry grew by 12 per cent between April and August this year, but our growth has been strong and



we hope the momentum continues for the remaining months," he said.

On the surge in electric vehicles in the domestic market, he said the sales of EV insurance policies were growing faster and the company issued policies worth Rs 82 crore during last financial year.

"EV is a good business for us. Last year, we wrote policies worth Rs 82 crore, while we have achieved that mark in the first six months of the current financial year, we expect Rs 200 crore in this segment, by the end of this fiscal," he said.

Dahuja said the company was also expanding its employee base with plans to add 700 people during the current financial year.

"The growth in business will be driven by aggressive recruitment of employees and agents. We have 3,780 employees now and will recruit another 700 in the current fiscal," he explained.

"Similarly, we have nearly 63,000 agents and that will increase to 1.50 lakh over the next couple of years," he said.

On the medical policy segment, he said the company would grow this segment as it was witnessing traction in the market in the 'Benefit-based health insurance' category.

"Shriram General Insurance will also grow its medical policy segment. Insurers offer two types of products - indemnity based and benefit-based policy. The most commonly known health insurance is the indemnity-based health insurance which is popularly known as Medicaclaim," he said.

FROM PAGE 1

MOST WANTED TERRORIST NABBED IN DELHI

The agency applied sections of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against Khan, Saki, and the other individuals implicated in the case.

The course of the investigation took a significant twist when Khan and Saki disclosed that Shah Nawaz had stored acid in the vicinity of Bopatghar near Kondhwa. To secure the acid and various chemicals employed in the creation of explosives, the NIA enlisted the help of the Bomb Disposal and Detection Squad. In addition, the ATS seized various other materials and discovered 500 gigabytes (GB) of data on the laptops and mobile phones of the suspects.

According to sources, Abdullah ran a diaper store at Pune that was used to assemble explosive devices. Rizwan Ali is from Delhi. He and his younger brother were arrested in 2018 for alleged ISIS links, but security agencies could not find evidence against them.

He was released after a de-radicalisation programme. He went to Pune again after two years and told his family that he is running a computer business. He married and lived there with his wife. The couple returned to Delhi after Rizwan's father started keeping unwell. Two months back, he left his home.

The Delhi Police Special Cell is among several agencies working with the NIA to crack down on terror networks across several States.

CASTE SURVEY OPENS CAN OF WORMS

The Bihar Government allocated Rs 500 crore for the survey and it briefly ran into rough weather when it was stayed by the Patna High Court which was hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the exercise. However, the deadline it then set, of February 2023, was overshoot and the survey itself could take off no sooner than January 7 this year. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said the caste census of Bihar has proved that 84 per cent of people in the State are OBCs, SCs and STs and their share should be according to their population. "Out of 90 secretaries of the Central Government, only 3 are OBC, who handle only 5 per cent of India's budget. Therefore, it is important to know the caste statistics of India..." Rahul said in a social media post.

NOBEL FOR COVID SAVIOURS

"It's possible that we could vaccinate people against

abnormal cancer proteins and have the immune system attack it after being given a targeted mRNA shot," he explained. "It's a much more targeted technology than has been previously available and could revolutionise how we handle not only outbreaks, but non-communicable diseases."

Nobel Committee member Gunilla Karlsson Hedestam said the prize could go some way to addressing concerns among skeptics about the speed with which COVID-19 vaccines were developed.

She said the award highlights "the decades of basic research that's behind this kind of work." HOW DID KARIKÓ AND WEISSMAN REACT? Karikó said her husband was the first to pick up the early morning call, handing it to her to hear the news. "I couldn't believe it," she said. "I was very much surprised. But I am very happy."

Before COVID-19, mRNA vaccines were already being tested for other diseases like Zika, influenza and rabies — but the pandemic brought more attention to this approach, Karikó said.

"There were already clinical trials before COVID, but people were not aware," she said.

Thomas Perlmann, the secretary of the Nobel Assembly who announced the prize, said both scientists were "overwhelmed" by the news when he spoke to them shortly before their names became public.

At least 10 die after church roof collapses in Mexico

AP ■ CIUDED MADERO (MEXICO)

The roof of a church collapsed in northern Mexico during Sunday Mass, killing at least 10 people and injuring around 60, authorities said as searchers probed in the wreckage throughout the night and into Monday morning looking for survivors and more victims.

Approximately 30 parishioners were believed to have been trapped in the rubble when the roof caved in, officials said.

Searchers crawled under the roof slabs and officials brought in dogs to help search for possible survivors.

The Tamaulipas state police said about 100 people were in the church at the time of the collapse.

The state security spokesman's office said early Monday that 10 people had been confirmed dead from the

collapse, which it described as likely being caused by a structural failure." The office said 23 of the 60 injured remain hospitalized, with two in serious condition.

Tamaulipas state police said units of the National Guard, the state police and state civil defense office and the Red Cross were involved in the operation.

The Mexican Council of Bishops issued a statement saying that "we join in prayer at the tragic loss of life and those injured." Bishop José Armando Alvarez of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Tampico said the roof caved in while parishioners were receiving communion at the Santa Cruz church in the Gulf coast city of Ciudad Madero, next to the port city of Tampico.

The diocese later posted a list of people who had been injured, including a 4-month-old baby, three 5-year-olds and

two 9-year-olds. The number of young victims — police officers said three of the dead were children — may have been due to the fact that baptisms were to take place at the church.

"We lament the painful loss of people who were there celebrating the baptism of their children," Alvarez wrote. At the same time, there were signs of hope.

"From underneath the rubble, thanks to Divine Providence and the work of the rescue teams, people have been pulled out alive!" Alvarez's diocese wrote in a statement posted on its social media accounts. "Let's keep praying!"

He also called on anyone who had wood to donate to bring it to the church, apparently to shore up the roof while rescue teams crawled inside.

Photos published by local media showed what appeared

to be a concrete and brick structure, with parts of the roof fallen almost to the ground.

Security camera footage from about a block away showed the unusual, gabled roof simply collapsed downward.

Walls did not appear to have been blown outward, nor was there any indication of an explosion, or anything other than simple structural failure.

The roof appeared to be made of relatively thin poured concrete, and photos distributed by state authorities showed the roof slab resting on the top of pews in some parts of the church. That left open the possibility there were air spaces for any survivors.

"At this time, the necessary work is being performed to extract the people who are still under the rubble," Alvarez said in a taped message. "Today we are living through a very difficult moment."

UK Treasury chief to hike min wage Tax cuts ruled out while inflation stays high

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Britain's Treasury chief announced a hike in the national minimum wage on Monday, as the governing Conservative Party tries to persuade voters it is on the side of those who are struggling financially.

But Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt ruled out tax cuts, saying they would fuel inflation. "I do want us to have lower taxes," Hunt told Sky News before his speech. But he said "it's very difficult to see" it happening this year.

That message was not what many Conservatives at the party's annual conference wanted to hear. Hundreds of them packed a room to applaud as former Prime Minister Liz Truss — whose seven weeks in office plunged Britain's economy into crisis — demanded Hunt slash taxes in his fall budget next month. Hunt told the Conservatives' annual confer-



ence that the hourly rate for workers 23 or older will rise in April from 10.42 pounds (\$12.70) to at least 11 pounds (\$13.40). The exact amount will be set after a recommendation by the Low Pay Commission, an advisory body. Hunt said that will mean a raise for more than 2 million workers.

Hunt also pledged to toughen the rules on social benefits in an attempt to stem the flow of working-age people out of the workforce, a trend that has accelerated since the coronavirus

pandemic. "Those who won't even look for work do not deserve the same benefits as people trying hard to do the right thing," he said. The party is trying to sprinkle voter-pleasing measures such as the pay increase at the conference, which may be the last before a national election due in 2024. But the government's spending power is constricted by the UK's sluggish economy and stubbornly high inflation that hit double digits last year and now stands just below 7%. The right-of-centre Tories, in power since 2010, are lagging far behind the centre-left opposition Labour Party in opinion polls. Voters are weary after years of political turmoil over the UK's exit from the European Union, the coronavirus pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who took office just under a year ago, is facing grumbling — and even open rebellion — from some Conservative members and lawmakers. Sunak steadied the economy after his predecessor Truss crashed the pound and trashed Britain's reputation for fiscal prudence with her tax-slashing economic plans. She left office after just 49 days. Many Conservatives doubt whether Sunak — the party's fifth leader since 2016 — can restore its popularity to the level that saw the party win an 80-seat majority in the 650-seat House of Commons in 2019. The prime minister then, Boris Johnson, resigned in mid-2022 amid scandals over his ethics and judgment. In recent weeks, Sunak has sought to take the initiative with a clutch of measures depicted as easing the economic burden on taxpayers. He has delayed a ban on selling new gas and diesel cars and watered down other green measures that he said imposed "unacceptable costs" on ordinary people.

‘At least 13 killed in Spain nightclub fire’

Madrid (AP): A fire broke out in a nightclub in the southeastern Spanish city of Murcia on Sunday, killing 13 people and injuring several others, authorities said. The fire started around 6 a.m. in the popular Teatre nightclub and quickly tore through the venue, according to Spain's state news agency EFE. It was not immediately clear what caused the fire. A video shared by Murcia's fire service showed firefighters trying to control flames inside the nightclub. Police and emergency services worked to secure the interior of the club to avoid a possible collapse and were trying to locate and identify the bodies. Officials said the death toll could increase. The city council declared three days of mourning with flags flown at half-staff on public buildings throughout the region of Murcia.

Fire at Egypt police HQ injures 38

Cairo (AP): A huge fire broke out early Monday at a police facility in northeastern Egypt, injuring at least 38 people before firefighters were able to extinguish the blaze several hours later, authorities said. The cause of the fire, which ripped through the multistory police headquarters in the Suez Canal province of Ismailia, was not immediately clear.

Interior Minister Mahoud Tawfiq, whose ministry oversees police forces, rushed to the site in the city of Ismailia, about 125 kilometres (77 miles) northeast of Cairo. He said a committee was set up to investigate the fire.

Hossam Abdel-Ghaffar, a spokesperson for the Health Ministry, said in a statement that 12 of the injured were treated at the site, while 26 others were taken to hospitals.

All but two suffered from

breathing difficulties; seven of the injured were treated and discharged, he said.

It was not immediately clear how many police were in the building at the time. Local media reported that the police building was severely damaged in the blaze.

Videos circulating on social media shows flames and black smoke pouring out of the building.

The state-run MENA news agency said firefighters managed to put out the fire after several hours.

Safety standards and fire regulations are poorly enforced in Egypt and have been linked to many deaths.

In August 2022, a fire at a packed Coptic Orthodox church during morning services in Cairo killed 41 worshippers in what was one of Egypt's deadliest fires in recent years.

Trump denounces civil fraud case as a ‘scam’

AP ■ NEW YORK

Former President Donald Trump denounced the civil fraud case over his business practices as a politically motivated "scam" as he arrived defiantly for a trial in the lawsuit, which could cost him control of Trump Tower and other prized properties.

"This is a continuation of the single greatest witch hunt of all time," he said as he made a voluntary trip to a New York court for a trial that has high stakes for him.

"It's a scam. It's a sham," the Republican said, reiterating claims that New York Attorney General Letitia James' suit is a politically motivated attempt to thwart his return to the White House.

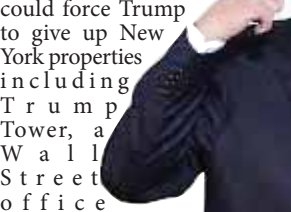
"What we have here is an attempt to hurt me in an election," he charged, adding: "I don't think the people of this country are going to stand for it." He looked away from

James, a Democrat, as he passed her on the way into court, with a disgusted look on his face.

The suit accuses Trump and his company of deceiving banks, insurers and others by habitually lying about his wealth in financial statements.

Judge Arthur Engoron already has ruled that Trump committed fraud in his business dealings. It is a non-jury trial, so Engoron will decide on six other claims in the lawsuit.

James, a Democrat, is seeking \$250 million in penalties and a ban on Trump doing business in New York. The judge's ruling last week, if upheld on appeal, could force Trump to give up New York properties including Trump Tower, a Wall Street office



building, golf courses and a suburban estate. Trump, the Republican front-runner in the 2024 presidential race, has denied wrongdoing. He says that James and the judge are undervaluing such assets as Mar-a-Lago, and that it didn't matter what he put on his financial statements because they have a disclaimer that says they shouldn't be trusted.

In posts overnight on his Truth Social site, he said he was going to court "to fight for my name and reputation," denounced the case as "A SHAM," and called on the attorney general and judge to resign.

Before the trial Monday, James reiterated that he had a "strong belief" that Trump committed fraud in his business dealings. He said he was going to court "to fight for my name and reputation," denounced the case as "A SHAM," and called on the attorney general and judge to resign.

position that Trump for years engaged in "persistent and repeated fraud."

"No matter how powerful you are, and no matter how much money you think you have, no one is above the law," she said on her way into the courthouse.

Trump isn't expected to testify for several weeks. His trip to court Monday marked a remarkable departure from his past practice. Trump didn't go to court as either a witness or a spectator when his company and one of its top executives was convicted of tax fraud last year. He didn't show, either, for a trial earlier this year in which a jury found him liable for sexually assaulting the writer E Jean Carroll in a department store dressing room. In some ways, though, this new trial comes with higher stakes. James, a Democrat, is seeking \$250 million in penalties and a ban on doing business in New York.

Engoron's ruling of last week, if upheld on appeal, would also shift control of some of his companies to a court-appointed receiver and could force him to give up prized New York properties such as Trump Tower, a Wall Street office building, golf courses and a suburban estate. Trump called it a "a corporate death penalty." In a post Sunday night on his Truth Social platform, Trump wrote that Engoron is "unfair, unhinged, and vicious in his PURSUIT of me."

Engoron will decide on six remaining claims in James' lawsuit, including allegations of conspiracy, falsifying business records and insurance fraud.

James' lawsuit accused Trump and his company of a long list of falsehoods in the financial statements he gave to banks. In a recent court filing, James' office alleged Trump exaggerated his wealth by as much as \$3.6 billion.

Smoky haze on Indonesia’s island prompting calls for work from home

AP ■ PALEMBANG (INDONESIA)

More than 300 forest and peatland fires on Indonesia's Sumatra island caused hazy skies across the region on Monday, prompting government officials to ask people to work from home. The military, police and local government were working together to extinguish the fires, which were burning in 316 places across South Sumatra province, but their work was complicated by the extreme dry weather, said Iriansyah, the head of the South Sumatra Disaster Management Agency. The smoky haze drifted from the fires toward Palembang, the capital of South Palembang province, causing unhealthy air conditions for the area's 1.7 million people. "There is a high potential for people to suffer from respiratory tract infections, coughing, shortness of breath and eye irritation," said

Iriansyah, who like many Indonesians uses only one name. The government in South Sumatra last week called on schools to delay their opening time, as the haze tends to decrease during the day. But on Monday, the schools asked students to attend classes online, as the air quality had worsened and was categorised as "dangerous." "We are worried as the haze is getting worse in Palembang...Many children are sick and we can only pray that this disaster will pass quickly," Umi Kalsum, a private sector worker and mother, told The Associated Press on Monday.

Forest and peat fires are an annual problem in Indonesia that strains relations with neighboring countries. Smoke from the fires has blanketed parts of Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia and southern Thailand. Some parts of Malaysia said they experienced smoke from the Indonesian

fires since last week. Malaysia's Environment Department chief Wan Abdul Latiff Wan Jaffar last week said the return of smog in some parts of the country was due to hundreds of forest fires in Indonesia. "Overall, air quality in the country has deteriorated," he said in a statement. "Forest fires that occur in the southern part of Sumatra and the central and southern parts of Kalimantan, Indonesia have caused haze to cross borders." But Siti Nurbaya Bakar, Indonesia's Environment and Forestry Minister, said in a statement on Monday there has been no transboundary haze from Indonesia to Malaysia. Satellite data from Indonesia's Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics Agency shows that the haze in Indonesia was in several areas in Sumatra and Borneo islands. Wind direction in Indonesia is generally from southeast to northwest-northeast.

Work starts on turning Adolf Hitler’s birthplace into police station

Braunau am Inn (Austria) : Work started Monday on turning the house in Austria where Adolf Hitler was born in 1889 into a police station, a project meant to make it unattractive as a site of pilgrimage for people who glorify the Nazi dictator.

The decision on the future of the building in Braunau am Inn, a town on Austria's border with Germany, was made in late 2019. Plans call for a police station, the district police headquarters and a security academy branch where police officers will get human rights training.

On Monday, workers put up fencing and started taking measurements for the construction work. The police are expected to occupy the premises in early 2026. A years-long back-and-forth over the ownership of the house preceded

the overhaul project. The question was resolved in 2017 when Austria's highest court ruled that the government was with- in its rights to expropriate the building after its owner refused to sell it. A suggestion it might be demolished was dropped.

The building had been rented by Austria's Interior Ministry since 1972 to prevent its misuse, and was sublet to various charitable organisations. It stood empty after a care centre for adults with disabilities moved out in 2011.

A memorial stone with the inscription "for freedom, democracy and liberty. Never again fascism. Millions of dead remind us" is to remain in place outside the house.

The Austrian government argues that having the police, as the guardians of civil liberties, move in is the best use for the building. AP

‘India will help maintaining sites connected to Gandhi in S Africa’

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

India will assist in maintaining all sites connected to Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa, the Indian envoy here said on Monday as the world marked the 154th birth anniversary of the global peace icon.

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, High Commissioner Prabhat Kumar paid floral homage to the bust of Gandhi at the Constitutional Court premises here, which was once a prison where the Mahatma and his followers served sentences during their resistance to discriminatory laws.

Gandhi served four terms of imprisonment between 1908 and 1913 here, including his very first sentence in South Africa.

The bust was unveiled in 2012 by then-President Pratibha Patil when she paid a visit to South Africa. "In all my postings abroad, I have always garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi and now in South Africa, where I am doing so for the first time, it is very special, because Gandhiji was here for 21 years," Kumar said.

After the garlanding, Kumar visited permanent exhibitions at the venue dedicated to the lives of both Gandhi and Nelson Mandela, who served 27 years as a political prisoner of the apartheid government before becoming South Africa's first democratically-elected president in May 1994.

The diplomat said he is also looking forward to attending the installation of a seven-foot statue of Gandhi at Tolstoy Farm, the once-thriving commune established by Gandhi about 30 km south of Johannesburg during his tenure as a lawyer in the city.

After falling into complete disrepair due to vandalism, only the foundation of Gandhi's original zinc and wood home was left, surrounded by tall grass, until interventions by Gandhian activist Mohan Hira and the Mahatma Gandhi

CJ, Maha minister mark Gandhi Jayanti in London

London (PTI): The Chief Justice of India, Justice Dhananjaya Yeshwant Chandrachud, and Maharashtra Minister for Cultural Affairs Sudhir Mungaitwar were among the special guests at the annual Gandhi Jayanti celebrations in London on Monday. The Indian diaspora gathering at the iconic Gandhi statue at Tavistock Square in London, assembled by the Indian High Commission in London and India League, included floral tributes to the Mahatma and addresses reflective of his message. Students of the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in London performed a selection of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite bhajans, including 'Raghupati Raghu' and 'Vaishnava Jan', as community leaders and parliamentarians gathered for the sombre ceremony which concluded with a Buddhist prayer. "Today, on his 154th birth anniversary, we remember Mahatma

Gandhi for his teachings, wisdom and compassion for humankind," said Justice Chandrachud in his address to the gathering.

"Mahatma Gandhi is a name that is known to every one in the world. A name which stands for the principle of truth and non-violence. A name which calls for universal peace. A name which inspires hope that we shall make our world a better place than it was before," he said. The Chief Justice described Bapu, as he is lovingly known in India, as a guiding light for all Indians in a spiritual sense.



Remembrance Organisation (MGRO).

With support largely from the Indian government, Tolstoy Farm has now been restored to some extent with a fruit orchard, a Peace Garden with flowers and shrubs, and a library.

Hira arranged for an artisan from India to sculpt the latest statue at his residence here before moving it to Tolstoy Farm. Kumar pledged further support for Tolstoy Farm.

"The support from India will continue...all the places connected with Mahatma Gandhi (in South Africa) will receive attention from the government of India," the envoy

said. Standing next to a wall-sized image of the two leaders together, prepared for the exhibition although they had never met, Kumar reflected on the special relationship between Gandhi and the African National Congress (ANC) led by Mandela. "Gandhiji was here and the ANC got a lot of inspiration from Gandhiji and thereafter Nelson Mandela also always admired Gandhi and said a lot about him, so this exhibition is an inspiration for all of us, Indians and South Africans," he said.

The exhibitions are very popular among foreign tourists, who visit the site daily.

Nobel in medicine goes to two scientists

Karikó, Drew Weissman’s work enabled creation of vaccines against COVID-19

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Two scientists won the Nobel Prize in medicine on Monday for discoveries that enabled the creation of mRNA vaccines against COVID-19 and that could be used to develop other shots in the future. Hungarian-born American Katalin Karikó and American Drew Weissman were cited for contributing "to the unprecedented rate of vaccine development during one of the greatest threats to human health in modern times" according to the panel that awarded the prize in Stockholm.

The panel said the pair's "groundbreaking findings ... fundamentally changed our understanding of how mRNA interacts with our immune system." Traditionally, making vac-



cines required growing viruses or pieces of viruses — often in giant vats of cells or, like most flu shots, in chicken eggs — and then purifying them before next steps in brewing shots.

The messenger RNA

approach is radically different. It starts with a snippet of genetic code that carries instructions for making proteins. Pick the right virus protein to target, and the body turns into a mini vaccine factory. But simply injecting

lab-grown mRNA into the body triggered an inflammatory reaction that usually destroyed it. Karikó, a professor at Szeged University in Hungary and an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, and Weissman, of the University of Pennsylvania, figured out a tiny modification to the building blocks of RNA that made it stealthy enough to slip past those immune defences. Karikó, 68, is the 13th woman to win the Nobel Prize in medicine. She was a senior vice president at BioNTech, which partnered with Pfizer to make one of the COVID-19 vaccines. She and Weissman, 64, who is a professor and director of the Penn Institute for RNA Innovations, met by chance in the 1990s while photocopying research papers, according to Penn Today, the

university's news website. Dr. Paul Hunter, a professor of medicine at Britain's University of East Anglia, described the mRNA vaccines as a "game changer" in helping to shut down the coronavirus pandemic, crediting the shots with saving millions of lives.

"If it hadn't been for the mRNA technology, COVID would have been much worse," he said. "Vaccines generally were the turning point in slowing down COVID and the mRNA vaccines were just so much better than all the others," he said, noting that the main vaccine used in the UK, made by AstraZeneca, is barely in use anymore.

"We would likely only now be coming out of the depths of COVID without the mRNA vaccines," Hunter said.

INDIA MAKE QUARTERS IN ALL SIX TEAM EVENTS

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian archers showed tenacity and authority in equal measure to storm into the quarterfinals in all the six team events of the Asian Games here on Monday.

The Indians played five team elimination rounds and dropped just one set on way to their respective quarterfinal matches in both recurve and compound sections.

India have got a bye into the quarters by virtue of topping the qualifications in the women's compound team event.

India remained in contention in all five gold medals up for grabs in compound section with all the four archers — Ojas Deotale, Abhishek Verma, Jyothi Surekha Vennam and Aditi Swami — progressing to their respective individual quarterfinals in the afternoon session.

In the recurve section, Dhiraj Bommadevara and Ananu Das advanced, while India's campaign ended in women's individual section, in the only blip of the day.

First, it was the top-seeded compound mixed team of Ojas Deotale and Jyothi Surekha Vennam, who showed the way as they dropped just one point from 16 arrows to eliminate UAE's Amna Alawadhi and Mohammed Binamro 159-151.

The duo will take on formidable Malaysia (No 8 seed) in the quarters, and thereafter, they should have an easy draw till the final.

Then, the Indian recurve mixed pair duo of Ananu Das and Ankita Bhakat were at their resilient best and overcome a first-set deficit to defeat Malaysia in a three-setter.

The fifth seeded Indian duo of Das and Ankita rallied to beat the Malaysian team of Syaqlera Binti Mashayikh and Muhamad Zarif Syahir Bin Zolkepli 6-2 (39-38, 37-36, 39-33).

The Malaysia pair enjoyed a 2-0 lead with three 10s including one X in the first set. But, the experienced Indian duo bounced back with two 10s and went on to draw level, as the Malaysians crumbled under pressure.

The Malaysians hit the red-ring (8) once and went on to lose the second by a slender one-point margin.

There was more misery in store for the Malaysians who shot into the red ring thrice (8-8-8), while Das-Ankita drilled in three perfect 10s en route to a six-point win in the third set.

The Indian pair sealed the issue with three more 10s in the fourth set and set up a last-eight clash against the fourth-seeded Indonesians.

Should they overcome the Indonesian challenge, the Indians may run into the top-seeded Koreans in a potential semifinal clash in the Olympic-qualifying event.

There are six quota spots available from the Asian Games — the recurve mixed team winners and two archers ranked high in the individual events.

CAMPAIGN ENDS IN WOMEN'S INDIVIDUAL RECURVE SECTION



In compound men's team event, the second-seeded Indian trio of Ojas, Abhishek Verma and Prathamesh Jawkar thrashed 15th seed Singapore (Woon Teng NG, Lee Chung Hee Alan, Jun Hui Goh) 235-219.

The Indian triumvirate had a cautious start and had four 10s to take

a 58-55 lead. But the Indians came on their own from second end onwards and dropped just three points to rout their rivals by a 16-point margin.

The compound men's team is pitted against lower-ranked Bhutan in the quarters and will likely face the third seeded Chinese Taipei in the

semifinals. The top-seeded Indian women's compound team of Jyothi, Aditi Swami and Parneet Kaur, who got a bye into the quarters, will open its campaign against ninth-seeded Hong Kong, who ousted Bangladesh 225-218.

The Indian men's recurve team

of Das, Dhiraj and Tushar Shelke beat Hong Kong's Kwok Yin Chai, Law Kwun Pok Lucien and Wn Chun Kit 6-0 (58-47, 57-49, 57-55) in a lopsided contest.

The third-seeded Indians, who face lower-ranked Mongolia (No 11) in the last-eight, have an easy draw till the final, with Korea and Japan in the top half. The unfancied women's recurve team of Ankita Bhakat, Bhajan Kaur and Simranjeet Kaur also shone through, ousting 12th seeded Thailand.

The fifth-seeded Indians won 5-1 (49-47, 54-54, 55-54) and are pitted against fourth-seeded Japan in a tough quarterfinal match-up.

ARCHERS EXCEL IN INDIVIDUAL ELIMINATIONS

Reigning world champion Deotale began with an easy defeat of Ahmad Alshatti (Kuwait) 148-138. He then overcame Chen Chieh-Lun of Chinese Taipei 146-145 in a tough contest.

The fourth seeded Verma defeated Belal Ayman Alawadi of Saudi Arabia 147-139, and then ousted Nguyen Van Day (Vietnam) 146-142 to make the last-eight.

Verma and Deotale are in the opposite halves and will head for a potential final clash, should they win their respective semi-finals.

Jyothi and her protege Aditi, once again, are headed for a possible face-off after sailing into their respective quarters without much fuss.

Aditi had beaten Jyothi 145-149 in the semifinal before becoming the world champion at Berlin in August this year.

Jyothi beat Anuradha Wijesinghe Karunaratne of Sri Lanka 145-132, and then accounted for Fatimah Saad Mahmood Almarshhadani 146-141.

Aditi prevailed over Imanyung Rai of Nepal 149-137, while she overwhelmed Syahara Khoerunisa of Indonesia 148-146.

In recurve section, Ananu Das beat Bin Mohamad Khairul Anuar of Malaysia 6-4 (27-27, 29-28, 24-28, 26-26, 29-28) in a challenging five-setter.

He then overcame Robert Nam of Tajikistan 7-1 (28-26, 28-28, 26-25, 28-26) to make the last-eight.

Dhiraj Bommadevara had to come through a tie-breaker to make the quarters with a tough 6-5 (27-27, 28-30, 28-27, 28-27, 25-29) (10-8) win over Muhammad Hakim Ahmed Rubel of Bangladesh.

The Army man rallied to beat Lam Dorji of Bhutan 6-2 (27-28, 30-29, 30-26, 28-27).

India's campaign ended in women's individual section. Bhajan made a pre-quarters exit, going down to reigning Olympic champion An San of South Korea 3-7 (28-27, 25-28, 28-28, 27-28, 27-28).

Ankita lost to Rezza Octavia in the second round, enduring a 5-6 (26-27, 28-27, 27-28, 25-25, 26-25) (9-10) defeat in the shoot-off.



Parul, Priti bag silver and bronze in 3000m steeplechase

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

India's Parul Chaudhary and Priti secured silver and bronze medal respectively in the women's 3000m steeplechase at the Asian Games here on Monday.

Parul clocked 9:27.63 sec to claim the silver medal ahead of compatriot Priti, who made a strong finish to clinch the bronze with a personal best time of

9:43.32 sec.

Winfred Mutile Yavi of Bahrain won the gold with a Games record timing of 9:18.28 sec.

In August this year at the World Championships held in Budapest, Parul registered a national record in 3000m steeplechase with a time of 9:15.31 sec, and in the process qualified for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

AP ■ HANGZHOU (CHINA)

China is simply relentless in its domination of the Asian Games.

At the games five years ago in Jakarta, Indonesia, the country won 132 gold medals and 287 medals overall.

This time, into Day 9 with five full days remaining, China has already broken its mark for gold medals and is very close to matching the overall total from five years ago. With 290 gold medals awarded, China has won almost half - 141. Its overall total stood at 255, just short of the 287 mark set in 2018. Host nations typically get a "home field" bounce when hosting the Olympics or a large multi-sport event like the Asian Games.

ROLLER SKATING: Skater Jung Cheolwon crossed the line in Monday's 3,000-meter relay and began to celebrate thinking he'd won the gold medal for South Korea.

But he was shocked when the scoreboard showed South Korea had finished second to Taiwan, which clocked 4 minutes, 05.692 seconds. South

Korea finished in 4:05.702.

Jung apologised to his teammates for his costly error.

"I made a rather big mistake," the 27-year-old Jung said. "I didn't come at full speed to the finish line. I let my guard down too early. I am very sorry."

KURASH ENDS: Uzbekistan failed to completely dominate the ancient martial art of kurash, which has its roots in the Central Asian country. The sport debuted in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

Uzbekistan won four of the seven gold medals available. But China picked up two gold and Iran added another.

On Monday on the closing day, Liu Yi of China defeated Zahra Bagheri of Iran 3-0 in the women's 87-kilogram division, and Sadeq Azarang of Iran defeated Kim Ming-yo of South Korea 10-0.

On Sunday, Yu Dan of China won the women's 70-

footsteps, she has completed MBBS from SRM Medical College in Chennai, and has also done Masters in Clinical Embryology. "My mother runs a hospital and I have joined there. I have taken a break for the Asian Games. I will join after I reach home," said Aarathy. "It is difficult at times to divide time between studies and my sport but I was able to manage it with support from my family and my husband," she said.

Aarathy trains at the Nehru Indoor Stadium in Chennai.

"I trained for two hours in the morning and two hours in the evening. Before the Asian Games, we took special permission to train longer there."

Aarathy married Tamil Nadu cricketer Sandeep Warrior in 2019 and she said he is her "best supporter".

"I am continuing my passion and he has not told me anything to change it after marriage. He is very supportive."

Talking about the bronze medal in Hangzhou, she said, "Skating for 22 years has obviously paid off. I'm very happy about the younger players who have come into the team. They did a good job and kept calm."

"Sadly, roller skating is not an Olympic sport. But winning bronze will definitely open up a lot of opportunities for the players because skating is not on the priority list in India."



4:34.861s to bag the third place on the podium behind gold medalists Chinese Taipei (4:19.447) and silver winner South Korea (4:21.146).

"Winning bronze will definitely open up a lot of opportunities for us because we are not on the priority list in India. Sadly, this isn't an Olympic sport,"



kilogram final against Donya Aghaei of Iran.

Yu is a former judoka that China has moved into kurash because of its similarities to other martial arts.

"In terms of throws and grips, there are many similarities between wrestling, judo

and kurash," Yu said. "It has helped me a lot."

TRIATHLON: Japan completed its sweep of the triathlon gold medals by winning the mixed relay on Monday.

Kenji Nener won the men's gold on Friday and Yuko Takahashi added the women's

title on Saturday. Both ran on Monday in the winning team event, which saw China take the silver and Honk Kong the bronze.

"It was tough," Takahashi said. "I was almost dead at the end, but I gave it everything."

Many triathletes competed in the world championships in Pontevedra, Spain, on Sept. 22-24 and then rushed to China.

ESPORTS: Esports wrapped up Monday as one of the most talked about events at the Asian Games.

Going into bronze- and gold-medal games, China led the medal table with three gold and four overall. South Korea had two gold and also four overall. Thailand was the only other nation with gold and also had four overall. Taiwan had four overall but failed to win gold.

Malaysia won the bronze on Monday in Dota 2, defeating Kyrgyzstan 2-0.

20 cuts and 26 stitches later, Aarathy rises to win medal

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Things looked gloomy for Aarathy Kasturi Raj after a nasty fall in May that required 26 stitches to treat more than 20 cuts, including few deep ones on her forehead.

But, with her physician mother by her side, the Indian roller skater recovered in time to win a historic bronze medal at the Asian Games. Her goal achieved, Aarathy, who has completed her MBBS, will rejoin her mother in running the hospital they own.

Aarathy suffered the injury during training exactly four months before the start of the continental showpiece.

The 29-year-old said it was scary but she took the injury in her stride and recovered quickly after rehabilitation with her physician mother taking care of her.

"I had a scary incident on May 26 this year and I had 26 stitches. There were deep cuts on my forehead," Aarathy told PTI after playing a part in the bronze medal win in the women's 3000m team relay. "I started training on the bike, did rehab."

Daughter of a businessman



father C Kasturi Raj and gynaecologist mother Mala Raj in Chennai, Aarathy took to skating at the age of seven and after frequent falls, numerous bruises and bleeding, she is now an Asian Games medalist.

"It's a dream come true moment. I took to this sport at the age of seven and since then, it has been my passion."

"My parents wanted me to play some sport and my mom

was the one who was behind this," said Aarathy.

Having competed in several national and international events, Aarthy has won more than 100 medals. She was also ranked world number five.

Asked why she took up a sport which can injure her often, she said, "Every sport involves some risks of getting injured. It is part and parcel of sport."

Following in her mother's



Ghosal progresses, Joshna exits from Asian Games

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Star Indian squash player Joshna Chinappa made a shock exit from the women's singles event but veteran Sourav Ghosal sailed into the quarterfinals of men's singles at the Asian Games here on Monday.

Taking the court first, Chinappa lost 1-3 to lower-ranked Heo Mingyeong of South Korea in the pre-quarterfinals.

The 37-year-old, who received a first-round bye, went down 4-11, 12-10, 9-11, 8-11 in 37 minutes to the South Korean, ranked 158th, in the round of 16. The result is a major upset as Joshna was a medal favourite.

The Chennai player had won a singles bronze in the 2018 edition.

She also has two silver medals and as many bronze in team events at the Asian Games, including the one she picked up in this edition last week.

She has been hit by injuries recently and lack of game time has pushed Joshna to as low as 70 in the world rankings.

The other Indian in the fray, Tanvi Khanna progressed to the quarterfinals with an easy 11-1, 11-3, 11-2 win over Arichaya Chujit of Thailand.

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Anahat Singh and Abhay Singh continued its winning run to enhance its chances of making the quarterfinal.

The duo cruised to a 2-0 (11-5, 11-6) win over Thailand's Anantana Prasertatranakul and Arkaradet Arkarahirunya to stay on top in group D.

Indian women's kabaddi team plays out 34-34 draw against Chinese Taipei



PTI ■ HANGZHOU

In an unexpected start to its campaign, the Indian women's kabaddi team was on Monday held to a surprise 34-34 draw by Chinese Taipei in a Group A match at the Asian Games here.

The Indians were made to work hard throughout the contest by their opponents, who earned a bonus point on the last raid of the match to force a draw.

The women side's next assignment will be against South Korea on Tuesday, while the men's team will take on Bangladesh in their Group A match.

India team official V. Tejaswini Bai attributed the draw to nervousness and asserted that her girls will win gold.

"Our team will fight and our team will win. Today we were a little bit nervous, but from now on we will be more relaxed and we will win. I believe and I hope we will win gold," She added the Chinese Taipei team had improved over the years.

"They are a very good team and they have improved a lot. They are very focussed in kabaddi and I'm happy for that." After seeing today's perfor-

mance, kabaddi aficionados would have been reminded of the shocking defeat the Indian women's team suffered at the hands of a gritty Iranian side in the gold medal match at the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games.

The Indian women's team did not have an ideal start today but recovered well to finish ahead at the end of the first half.

Defender Hsiu-Chen Feng troubled the Indians, who scripted a late recovery to finish 17-15 after the first half.

For India, Ritu Negi earned the first defensive point through an ankle hold, while Pooja Hathwala took the bonus point in the second half.

India managed to extend their lead by five points at 23-17 before grabbing a 26-20 lead at one stage, but thereafter the Chinese Taipei side came back roaring to level the scores.

Towards the end of the game, Nidhi claimed that she had a touch but the referees did not agree. Pooja then managed a raid point, which took the scoreline to 32-32.

India once again took the lead but the Chinese Taipei side kept coming back and walked off with a drawn result.

Kohli skips optional practice session due to personal reasons

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

India's star batter Virat Kohli didn't join the team's optional practice session here due to personal reasons but is expected to link up with the squad before the second warm-up game against The Netherlands here on Tuesday.

Kohli had left for Mumbai from Guwahati for some emergency personal reasons on September 30 and wasn't available for the afternoon training session at the local college ground here.

"It was an optional session. He is expected to join the squad soon and could play the warm-up game if required," a BCCI source privy to developments told PTI on condition of anonymity.

On the day, skipper Rohit Sharma, batter Shreyas Iyer and pacer Mohammed Shami also skipped the session which was attended by the likes of Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah and veteran spin duo Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja.

The World Cup warm-up



match against the Dutch will be the last chance for India to get some game time before the start of tournament proper against Australia in Chennai on October

8. The Indians had a full-fledged session with Gill, Surya and KL Rahul batting for a considerable amount of time against the likes of Bumrah and Mohammed

Siraj. Ashwin and Jadeja also rolled their arm over for considerable period of time as they both are going to play a massive

role in this World Cup on tracks which are expected to offer turn.

SURYA WILL BE IN MY XII, SAYS SHASTRI

The warm-up match could be also a chance for Suryakumar Yadav to press his case for a first XI berth ahead of Shreyas Iyer or Ishan Kishan.

"I will be watching him very closely," Ravi Shastri said on ESPN Cricinfo.

"If your top-order is firing, you will play him or Shreyas Iyer? If all guys get runs, that guy becomes X factor in big game. The damage he can do along with Hardik (Pandya), they can take the game away. In Indian conditions, your top order will rarely struggle. Surya will always be in my XII," Shastri said.

But Shastri believes that one should look at the conditions.

"If the track is flat, then it's Surya and if conditions are tough, then Shreyas," said the former head coach.

"Play him (Surya) before the semi-final not just in the semi-final."



Rachin: From cheering for NZ at bar in 2019 to being part of 2023 World Cup batch

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Rachin Ravindra found the Knight of July 14, 2019, one of the longest and hardest to endure as he watched New Zealand's heartbreaking defeat to England in the ODI World Cup final sitting in a Bengaluru pub.

Ravindra, then all of 19 was on an annual trip to India with his father's cricket club and the roller-coaster experience of watching the final is still etched in his memory.

New Zealand losing that final to England on the boundary count-back rule divides opinion to this day. Rachin, whose first name is inspired by the first names of Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid, remembers that night as it was yesterday.

As a budding cricketer dreaming to represent New Zealand one day, the Indian-origin cricketer was shattered with the outcome of the game and the desire to represent New Zealand grew stronger.

Cut to 2023, he is among the fast rising cricketers in the New Zealand set-up. Primarily a batter, who also takes his left-arm spin very seriously, Rachin has already made a statement with a gutsy 97 as an opener in the World Cup warm-up against Pakistan here last week.

Born to Indian parents in Wellington, Rachin has a strong connect with the cricket mad nation with his family roots in Bengaluru. It was fitting that he made his Test debut in India two years ago and now he is set to make his World Cup debut here.

"Looking back on my Test debut, it was a special and emotional time. Being able to play in India, the fanfare around the game here, to be able to experi-

ence that is pretty special.

"My parents come from Bangalore and it is amazing to play a World Cup here," the 23-year-old PTI referring to the Kanpur Test which he was able to draw for his team while batting alongside number 11 Ajaz Patel.

From watching previous World Cup as a fanboy to now being part of the next one, it has been a pretty "cool" journey for Rachin.

"It is actually quite a story. My dad takes a bunch of age group boys to India (annually) and we were in Bangalore on a senior trip. We were watching the final (2019) in a stock exchange bar.

"I watched the whole final. It was unbelievable and such a rollercoaster experience with the high and lows of the game. Having Indian supporters around us was pretty cool. It is an experience I will never forget."

New Zealand is probably the most liked team on the planet but on that night, no pleasantries were exchanged in that bar. A couple of days ago, New Zealand had ended India's run in the semifinals.

"All of us were New Zealanders, so we were massively going for the Black Caps but quite a few Indians were going for England, probably because of the emotional hangover from the semifinal.

"That created a nice little atmosphere there as we all know how the game went," recalled Rachin.

Did he think then that he will be part of the 2023 batch?

"It has been a great ride. You always think one day you might get a chance. Being a 19-year old at that time, few years into professional cricket, you have those dreams to be part of a World

Cup. It is pretty cool how it has come to fruition," he said.

Experience of cricket tours to India with my dad will come in hand

Rachin, who opens for Wellington back home but bats in the middle-order for New Zealand, feels the experience of playing age-group cricket around the country will help him in this World Cup as the team travels all around India for its nine league games.

"For sure. Any sort of experience playing in India goes a long way. Grateful for these tours of India in my younger days. Goes a long way in playing spin and how to bowl in these conditions, face different type of seamers on different wickets.

"The conditions over here are so different to what we get back home. I think it will definitely come in handy. Prior to this World Cup, I have played in Hyderabad, Chennai, Bangalore, up North.

"It gives you a bit of sense of belonging and calms you down knowing you have played here," said Rachin, whose father Ravi Krishnamurthy has been his coach since childhood.

Rachin might not get to open in the tournament proper like he did against Pakistan but he has already made a statement. However, he is fully aware of his role in the side.

"Naah (laughs)," he responded when asked about opening the innings regularly. "It was a nice wicket to bat on. To be fair I do open for my domestic side, have always been an opener so nice to get the opportunity for New Zealand. Whatever role I get hopefully I would be able to do it," he added.

South Africa lack good all-rounder at No 7, going into World Cup: Graeme



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

South Africa are lacking depth in their batting in the absence of quality all-rounders, an aspect that could affect the team's chances in the World Cup, reckons former skipper Graeme Smith.

There was a time when South Africa boasted of world class all-rounders like Lance Klusener, Jacques Kallis and even a bowling all-rounder like Shaun Pollock but Temba Bavuma's team doesn't have a quality batter at No. 7.

"Where they fall short is, they don't have a lot of depth in batting like some of the other teams have. Who is going to be that all-rounder for them at No.

7? Marco Jansen or someone else," Smith said during an exclusive interview with PTI.

For South Africa to succeed, left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj's control and wicket-taking ability will go a long way, in case Bavuma wants to leave an impression as a leader.

"Whether they go with two spinners or not but Keshav Maharaj needs to have an outstanding tournament. Obviously, he has Tabraiz Shamsi on his wings but reliability of Maharaj is key to Temba as a captain," said Smith, who scored nearly 7000 runs in ODIs.

The 42-year-old, who retired in 2014, is also hopeful that Kagiso Rabada will carry a lot on his shoulders in the

absence of Anrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala due to injuries. "Rabada, we all know how world class he is and we would like him to have an incredible World Cup tournament. Always carries a lot on his shoulders and you need a couple of key players to play well and then push through knock-out of the tournament and give yourself good chances back-to-back to hold that trophy." Nortje's absence will hurt South Africa on those batting friendly tracks.

"I think Nortje in particular, to win in India in a long tournament, you need players who can contribute. Nortje's pace through the air, wicket-taking ability is certainly going to be missed."

The key to South African campaign will be the top six batters, he said. "If South Africa need to be successful, they would need their 6-7 big players to really have a great World Cup. If you look at top-order you have Quinton, Temba and in that middle-order, really you have really good players of spin, power players like David Miller, Heinrich Klaassen and Aiden Markram that's going to be key area for South Africa if they are going to be successful."

Spain's women's team players Putellas, Rodríguez, Paredes appear before judge

AP N MADRID

Two-time Ballon d'Or winner Alexia Putellas and two of her teammates in Spain's women's national team appeared before a judge Monday as witnesses in the investigation of former soccer federation president Luis Rubiales for his kiss on a player.

Putellas, Irene Paredes and Misa Rodríguez all answered questions from the judge in Madrid. Rodríguez appeared in court in the Spanish capital, while Putellas and Paredes testified through video conference from Barcelona.

Spanish state prosecutors have accused Rubiales of sexual assault and coercion for kissing Jenni Hermoso on the lips without her consent during the awards ceremony after the Women's World Cup final in August.

A couple of federation officials and former national team coach Jorge Vilda, who was replaced not long after winning the World Cup in Australia, have been summoned as investigated parties. They are set to appear



before the judge next week. Vilda was among those accused of allegedly trying to convince Hermoso to back Rubiales after the kiss.

Rubiales eventually resigned and the players ended their boycott of the national team after being given some guarantees of change within the federation. Some federation officials have already been fired as a result.

Hermoso is also expected to testify at some point.

According to a sexual consent law passed last year, Rubiales could face a fine or a prison sentence of one to four years if found guilty of sexual assault. The new law eliminated the difference between "sexual harassment" and "sexual assault," sanctioning any unsolicited sexual act.

Fenesta Open: Sureshkumar begins title defence with win over Kesharwani

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reigning men's singles champion Manish Sureshkumar of Tamil Nadu began his title defence at the Fenesta Open National Tennis Championship with a win over Uttar Pradesh's Maan Kesharwani here on Monday.

The No. 4 seed overcame an early challenge from Kesharwani to win 6-4 6-4 and advance to the second round at the DLTA Complex.

Kesharwani's shots from the baseline looked to disrupt the defending champion's rhythm but Sureshkumar was soon back in his groove, playing accurate forehands and backhands to win the match.

The No. 2 seed Karan Singh of Haryana also began the tour-



nament with a comfortable 6-4 6-2 win over Jagmeet Singh.

No. 7 seed Ishaque Egbal of West Bengal defeated Gujarat's Dhruv Hirpara 6-2 3-6 6-1 to reach the second round. In women's singles, No.4 seed from Maharashtra, Vaishnavi Adkar made a positive start, defeating Sonal Patil 6-3 6-2.

No. 5 seed Sharmada Balu

also made a winning return to the Fenesta Open, defeating Telangan's Paavanii Paathak 6-2 4-6 6-1 to advance.

Sureshkumar said after the match that he was looking to defend his title this year.

"Last year was a good experience as I went on to win the tournament and I would like to continue the same. I played my

first match today and I was not feeling very sharp but as I play more matches here I will get into the groove, and hopefully, I will be able to repeat what I did last season," said Sureshkumar.

The Under-18 boys' category saw top seed Chandan Shivaraj of Karnataka defeat Tamil Nadu's Kavin Karthik KS 6-1 6-3, while Aditi Rawat of Haryana beat Swasti Singh 6-0 7-5 in Under-18 girls' section to move into the second round.

The Fenesta Open offers a prize pool of over Rs 21.5 lakh along with kit allowance for the junior categories.

Over the years, the tournament has witnessed the participation of players such as Rohan Bopanna, Somdev Devvarman, Yuki Bhambhani, Sania Mirza and Rutuja Bhosale.

Liverpool says it will 'explore range of options available' after VAR controversy at Tottenham

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool criticised the Professional Game Match Officials Limited and warned it will "explore the range of options available" following the VAR controversy at Tottenham.

PGMOL, the referees' governing body in England, admitted Video Assistant Referee officials Darren England and Dan Cook failed to act after Luis Diaz' 34th-minute strike at Tottenham on Saturday was wrongly disallowed for offside. Still images of the incident showed Tottenham's Cristian Romero playing Diaz offside.

The decision was made when the Premier League match was goalless but after Curtis Jones had been contentiously sent off following Darren England's intervention. Liverpool went on to lose 2-1, ending the game with nine players.

The officials were stood down from duty for the rest of the weekend but Liverpool says it will pursue the matter.



A statement read: "Liverpool Football Club acknowledges PGMOL's admission of their failures last night. It is clear that the correct application of the laws of the game did

not occur, resulting in sporting integrity being undermined. We fully accept the pressures that match officials work under but these pressures are supposed to be alleviated, not exacerbated, by the existence and implementation of VAR."

Liverpool said it was "therefore unsatisfactory that sufficient time was not afforded to allow the correct decision to be made and that there was no subsequent intervention."

"That such failings have already been categorized as significant human error" is also unacceptable," the club's statement added. "Any and all outcomes should be established only by the review and with full transparency."

Liverpool said it need to explore its options, "given the clear need for escalation and resolution."

PGMOL had earlier acknowledged that "a significant human error" occurred in the first half of the game and said it would conduct a full review.

Medvedev through to semifinals at China Open, Swiatek wins on debut in Beijing

AP ■ BEIJING

Third-ranked Daniil Medvedev overcame a second-seed stumble to beat Frenchman Ugo Humbert 6-4, 3-6, 6-1 and advance to the semifinals of the China Open on Monday.

The Russian struggled to find his usual fluid game in the first two sets but sprung to life in the third set to shake off the 36th-ranked Humbert and

progress to his 10th semifinal of the year. "I'm kind of happy that I managed to raise my level in important moments, except a game in the second set," Medvedev said. "It's great that I managed to still find in this tough match these moments of consistency, which is enough to win. That's what you have to do."

The Russian will next face either eighth-seeded Alexander

Zverev or Nicolas Jarry, who play later Monday. Second-ranked, and top-seeded, Carlos Alcaraz plays his quarterfinal match against seventh-seeded Casper Ruud in a night match.

Making her first appearance at the China Open, second-ranked Iga Swiatek advanced to the second round with a 6-4, 6-3 victory over Sara Sorribes Tormo. The Pole fired 27 winners and made 25



unforced errors, breaking serve a total of seven times in the win.

"You have to be patient with her because she's running for every ball," Swiatek said of her No.55-ranked Spanish opponent. "I kind of wanted to just be solid and be intensive but not make too many mistakes with risking."

Swiatek will next face Varvara Gracheva.

Seventh-seeded Ons Jabeur,

winner of the Ningbo Open last week, beat Ashlyn Krueger 6-3, 6-4 and ninth-seeded Caroline Garcia was a 6-2, 6-4 winner over Kateryna Baindl.

China's Wang Xinyu beat wildcard Vera Zvonareva 6-4, 6-3 and 11th-seeded Daria Kasatkina defeated Mayar Sherif 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (8).

Third-ranked Coco Gauff plays her first-round match later Monday against No.20-

ranked Ekaterina Alexandrova. Jelena Ostapenko, seeded 13th, had a walkover into the round-of-16 after Linda Noskova withdrew due to illness. Ostapenko will face either fourth-seeded Jessica Pegula or Anna Blinkova next.

Also in the second-round, Anhelina Kalinina defeated Daria Saville 6-2, 7-6 (5) and Jasmine Paolini beat Yuan Yue 2-6, 6-3, 6-4.

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