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INDIA SCORES A BULLSEYE

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra prevailed in an intense and stirring duel with compatriot Kishore Jena after brushing aside a technical glitch to defend his Asian Games gold, while the men's 400m relay team also retained its title as India snared 12 medals on Wednesday to record its best-ever show at the continental showpiece.

In archery, Ojas Deotale's youthful energy blended seamlessly with Jyothi Surekha Vennam's skills, securing India's maiden gold medal in the compound mixed team event and contributing to their best-ever show in archery at the Asian Games, here on Wednesday.

The 21-year-old reigning world champion Deotale dropped a point but a flawless Jyothi made up for it, shooting all perfect scores from her eight arrows to down the second-seeded Korean pair So Chaewon and Joo Jaehoon 159-158.

With this, Indian archers are set to win at least four medals from the ongoing Games, which will better their previous best show at Incheon in 2014 when they bagged a men's team compound gold, one silver and a bronze.

In track and field, Indian athletes delivered seven medals on the day that took India's overall tally to 81 — the best-ever show by the country at the Asian Games. India's previous



best medal haul of 70 came in the last edition at Jakarta.

India are assured of more medals in several competitions and the country is expected to breach the 90-medal mark, if not touch the coveted 100.

Chopra was overwhelming favourite in his event but Jena threw up a huge surprise when he heaved his spear to 86.77m to overtake his decorated compatriot, who had managed 84.49m in his second attempt.

This was after a dramatic start when Chopra's first effort was not recorded due to a malfunction in electronic distance measurement.

The Indian camp was jumping with joy with the two Indians locked in a thrilling battle to out-do each other.

Chopra then responded to the challenge like a true champion and came up with his season-best effort of 88.88m in his fourth attempt to regain the lead. Jena too gave his all to further better his personal-best mark by covering the distance of 87.54m but it was good enough only to finish second behind Chopra.

"I felt very good with my opening throw but unfortunately they could not record that. I am pretty happy for Jena. It really became a tough duel

which I enjoyed thoroughly. We are used to such high level competition.

"When he took the lead it became very interesting. We have to keep telling ourselves that we can overcome the challenge and emerge as best," Chopra said after winning gold.

With his stunning effort Kishore thus sealed his berth for the Paris Olympics. The qualification mark was 85.50. Chopra has already qualified for the 2024 Games with a throw of 88.77 at the World Championships in Budapest in August this year.

Indian quartet of Anas Muhammed Yahya, Amoj Jacob, Muhammed Ajmal Variyathodi and Rajesh Ramesh also sealed the gold for India in the men's 4x400m relay with a timing of 3:01.58.

Indian quartet of Vithya Ramraj, Aishwarya Mishra, Prachi and Subha Venkatesan also claimed a silver in women's 4x400m relay.

Harmilan Bains and Avinash Sable won a silver medal each in women's 800m and men's 5000m respectively.

Earlier during the day, Indian race walkers Manju Rani and Ram Baboo won the bronze medal in the inaugural 35km mixed team event.

Tokyo Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain put up a lacklustre display to settle for a silver as Indian boxers signed off with a haul of five medals at the Asian Games here on Wednesday.



Neeraj Chopra and Kishore Kumar Jena wave the national flag after securing gold and silver medal respectively in the Men's Javelin Throw Final event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou in China on Wednesday

PTI

Disaster from sky

10 dead, 80 missing in flash flood

PTI ■ GANGTOK

At least 10 people died and 80 others, including 22 Army personnel, went missing on Wednesday after a cloud-burst over Lhonak Lake in north Sikkim triggered a flash flood in the Teesta River basin, officials said.

All 10 who died have been identified as civilians including 3 of the dead who were washed up in north Bengal, they said, adding that one of the 23 Army men who had gone missing in the morning was rescued later.

The flood in Sikkim that started around 1.30 am was made worse by the release of water from Chungthang dam, the officials said.

"Five bodies have been recovered from Golitar and Singtam region," Gangtok Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Mahendra Chettri said.

Another official said besides the 22 army personnel, 47 civilians were also missing, while 166 people have so far been rescued, including an armyman. "The health condition of the rescued soldier is stable," Defence Spokesperson Lt Col Mahendra Rawat said. Bodies, including that of a

child, were seen fished out from the flood plains of the Teesta river at Golitar in Singtam by rescue personnel, the officials said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on Wednesday to take stock of the situation, and assured him of all possible support.

The release of water from the Chungthang dam led to a sudden increase in water levels up to 15-20 feet downstream, the defence spokesperson said. "Twenty-two army personnel have been reported missing and 41 vehicles submerged under the slush," he said.

"A steel bridge at Singtam, known as Indreni bridge, 30 km from Gangtok has been completely washed away by Teesta river water early Wednesday," an official said.

According to the Central Water Commission (CWC), the water level in the Teesta river was below the danger mark at 1 pm on Wednesday and there is no flood situation around it. The water level at three stations — Meli, Singtam and Rohtak — on the Teesta is below the danger mark but hovering near it, it added.

AAP's Sanjay held in liquor case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Wednesday arrested Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh in connection with alleged corruption in the Delhi excise policy "scam".

Sanjay is the second high-profile leader in the AAP to be arrested in the excise case after Manish Sisodia, the then Delhi Deputy Chief Minister.

ED officials reached Sanjay's official residence at North Avenue in the morning to conduct searches. After day-long questioning, Sanjay was placed under arrest under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

Sisodia, who is the prime accused in the excise policy case, was arrested by the ED as well as the CBI.

Sanjay is expected to be produced before a designated court on Thursday where the agency will seek permission for his custodial interrogation.

The developments stirred a political slugfest between the AAP and the BJP with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal terming it as a desperate measure by the BJP ahead of the



AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh being arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the Delhi excise policy case in New Delhi on Wednesday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

2024 Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP hit out at Kejriwal accusing him of being the "kingpin" of the alleged liquor policy scam and asserting that "handcuffs" are not far away.

The search and subsequent arrest of Singh comes a day after a Delhi court allowed Raghav Magunta, son of YSR Congress Party Lok Sabha member Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy, and Delhi-based businessman Dinesh Arora to turn approver in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam.

In July, the ED had arrest-

ed Arora in the money laundering case when he was already declared an approver in a related corruption case being probed by CBI.

Arora was arrested after he allegedly gave evasive replies during his questioning by the ED and was not cooperating with the investigation. The businessman is alleged to be a close associate of Sisodia.

In a supplementary charge sheet, the ED has accused Sisodia of receiving bribes from Amit Arora, another businessman and an accused in the case, through Dinesh Arora.

The agency has dubbed this bribe as "proceeds of crime" under PMLA. "Amit paid ₹2.2 crore to Sisodia through Dinesh for getting policy changes in his favour in the GoM report/excise policy 2021-22..."

"This amount is directly a bribe/kickback to a Government functionary and is proceeds of crime under section 2(1)(u) of PMLA, 2002. In this manner, Sisodia participated in the generation of this proceeds of crime," the ED contended in its prosecution complaint (chargesheet in police parlance) filed in May.

The ED and the CBI have alleged that the Delhi Government's excise policy for 2021-22 allowed cartelisation and favoured certain dealers who paid bribes for licences.

Reacting to the searches, AAP alleged, "Sanjay Singh kept on raising questions on the issue of Adani and this is why the raids are being conducted at his residence."

RJD leader Manoj Jha and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti slammed the BJP-led Centre over Singh's arrest and said the government is trying to distract people from the results of the Bihar caste survey.

Abhishek Banerjee gets ED summons

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday served a second summons on TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, this time asking his entire family, including his parents and his wife Rujira Narula Banerjee, to appear at the CGO complex in Kolkata.

The summons has been sent in connection with the role of Leaps and Bounds, a company owned by the Banerjees, in the multi-crore recruitment scam. Chief operating officer of the company Sujay Krishna Bhadra is in jail. While Abhishek is the chief executive officer of the company, his wife and parents Lata and Amit Banerjee are directors.

"Abhishek has been asked to appear on October 9, while his parents have been asked to come on October 6 and 7 respectively... his wife has been asked to come on October 10," an ED official said.

Meanwhile, a Division Bench of the Calcutta High on Wednesday refused to intervene in the earlier single-judge bench order directing the ED to ensure that the probe against Abhishek was not affected.

The single bench of Justice



Amrita Sinha court had reprimanded and ordered the replacement of the investigating officer for the "fishy" investigation and demanded explanations in several areas of the probe. The single bench had wanted to know why no bank account of Abhishek, who is also the nephew of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, had been mentioned apart from enquiring about a specific address at 188A Harish Mukherjee Road where Abhishek lived and the mention of which had been omitted by the agency.

Subsequently Abhishek, an MP from Diamond Harbour

constituency, moved the division bench wondering whether the court which was monitoring the investigation had the power to supervise the probe.

The division bench while delivering Wednesday's order said the ED was duty bound to satisfy the court by clearing its doubts. "Where is the problem if the court says the ED is acting like a novice and where is the problem to deliver the information of the property details that the court has been asking," an advocate quoting the judges said.

Incidentally the ED had earlier submitted before the court that a huge amount of

money raised from the recruitment scam had been laundered through the company in question.

"If she (Justice Sinha) had felt that there was smoke somewhere, she had sought documents to evaluate whether the smoke was still there or it had evaporated. What can the court do if it notices any lapse in the investigation process. The court can always seek documents. What is the problem with submitting those documents to the court?" Justice Sen questioned.

The judge also expressed his discontent over the slow pace of investigation by the ED in the school job case. "It has been almost 19 months since the investigation process started. This is a clear example of utter unprofessionalism," he observed.

The Left and the Congress continued to allege "mutual setting" between the BJP and the TMC. "They will summon but not arrest him because Mamata is helping Modi and the RSS in their designs. One of their party mouthpieces have warned against taking the job scam too far so that it becomes helpful for the Left-Congress alliance in Bengal," said CPI(M) State committee member Kalatan Dasgupta.

Let us hear it for R&R

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi-based Army Hospital (R&R), a premier healthcare institution of the Armed Forces, has accomplished a remarkable milestone by becoming the nation's first medical facility to successfully perform 50 bilateral simultaneous cochlear implant procedures in the past eighteen months.

A cochlear implant is an advanced medical device that empowers individuals with hearing disabilities to seamlessly integrate into society by enabling them to hear through this technology. This option is particularly beneficial for those with severe inner-ear damage who do not experience significant improvement with traditional hearing aids.

Cochlear implants may be placed in one ear (unilateral) or

both ears (bilateral). These implants are often placed in both ears at the same time in children with bilateral severe hearing loss, particularly for infants and children who are learning to speak and process language.

Children get only one cochlear implant in most of the government-funded programmes.

The cost of the equipment has always been a concern, making its outreach limited.

"The cost of the equipment has always been a concern, making its outreach limited. Children get only one cochlear implant in most of the government-funded programmes. The benefit of hearing in both ears far outweighs the cost involved and the Armed Forces Medical Services were quick to realise this," the Defence Ministry said in a statement.



Army Hospital (R&R) doctors conducted 50 bilateral simultaneous cochlear implants in the last 18 months, becoming the only government hospital across the country to accomplish these many successful implants

PTI

However, realising that the benefit of hearing in both ears far outweighs the cost involved,

the Armed Forces Medical Services took a major decision in March 2022 to ensure qual-

ity life to the hearing impaired patients.

It revised the policy for cochlear implant for such beneficiaries in the Armed Forces and simultaneous bilateral (in both ears) implants were included. This was the first policy in the country bringing medical standards at par with developed countries.

The Army Hospital (R&R) is presently being commanded by Lt Gen Ajith Nilakantan who specialises in ENT and Head and Neck Oncosurgery, the statement said.

DG of Armed Forces Medical Services Lt Gen Daljit Singh and DGMS (Army) Lt Gen Arindam Chatterjee have congratulated the Army Hospital (R&R) for taking measures to add quality to the life of the deaf people in the forces and wished many more laurels to the institute.

Privileges Committee to discuss Bidhuri, Danish Ali on October 10

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The first meeting of the Lok Sabha's Privileges Committee on October 10 will hear the complaints by Members of Parliament regarding a dispute involving Lok Sabha member Ramesh Bidhuri and Bahujan Samaj Party MP Danish Ali.

Sources said the committee will hear Bidhuri over the complaints received against him after he used derogatory words against Ali in the House. It would also hear out Ali over his alleged improper conduct during the discussion on 'Chandrayaan-3 Mission' in the House, read the agenda of the meeting as per the sources.

The Speaker, Om Birla, had sent all the complaints he had received from the MPs to the Privileges Committee head-

ed by BJP member Sunil Kumar Singh.

The BJP has also issued a show-cause notice to Bidhuri in response to his comments which he is yet to respond to. However the party after the episode handed Bidhuri with a poll responsibility in Rajasthan which goes to Assembly polls along with others next month.

Oral evidence of Bidhuri, MP, in respect of complaints received from various Members of Parliament against him and Ali for alleged improper conduct during the discussion on 'Chandrayaan-3 Mission' in the House, read the agenda of the meeting as per the sources.

The Opposition parties, which have demanded the strictest action, including sus-

pension of Bidhuri, have been hitting out at the BJP, alleging that it was trying to defend its MP instead of punishing him.

The issue was referred to the House Privileges Committee though the Speaker has already expunged the unparliamentary remarks of the South Delhi MP.

BJP MP Nishikant Dubey wrote to the Speaker, urging him to form an inquiry committee to look into statements made by Ali, alleging that the BSP MP made "highly objectionable" remarks against Prime Minister Narendra Modi that provoked Bidhuri.

Dubey also condemned Bidhuri's comments, saying no decent society can justify them and they cannot be condemned enough.

Durga Puja: Police emphasise on streamlining traffic management

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In anticipation of the upcoming Durga Puja festival, the Senior Superintendent of Police Kaushal Kishore convened a crucial meeting at the office auditorium, with his team and all traffic station in-charges and Deputy Superintendents of Police from the district in attendance. The objective of this strategic meeting was to lay out essential guidelines aimed at maintaining a smooth and efficient traffic system in the city during the festive period.

Under the leadership of the Senior Superintendent of Police, a comprehensive discussion took place to address the unique challenges posed by the surge in traffic during Durga Puja. Recognizing the significance of this festival, which draws a multitude of



residents and visitors alike, the police force aims to ensure that the city's traffic system remains simple, manageable, and conducive to the safety of all.

Key guidelines were communicated during the meeting, focusing on the following aspects: Traffic Flow Management: The authorities underscored the importance

of effective traffic flow management to prevent congestion in key areas. Strategies were discussed to streamline vehicular movement and facilitate the smooth passage of pedestrians.

Guidelines were issued regarding parking arrangements to avoid haphazard parking that often contributes to traffic snarls. Emphasis

TRAFFIC CHAOS AND ROAD ACCIDENTS PLAGUE JAMSHEDPUR, POLICE LAUNCH INTENSIVE DRIVE

JAMSHEDPUR : The bustling streets of Jamshedpur have become synonymous with a persistent woe—traffic snarls and the alarming surge in road accidents. In response to this escalating concern, the Jamshedpur Police, led by ASP Sumit Agrawal, took decisive action on Wednesday. An intensive checking operation was executed in the Sakchi Bazaar area, aimed at curbing the chaos on the roads.

ASP Sumit Agrawal, with an unwavering commitment to public safety, spearheaded the operation. One of the primary issues identified was excessive parking at various locations, exacerbating the traffic woes. Addressing this concern, Agrawal issued a stern warning to those engaging in unlawful parking practices. He emphasized that such actions impede the smooth flow of traffic and pose a risk to

road safety. Highlighting the significance of the ongoing festival season, ASP acknowledged the surge in foot traffic due to shopping activities. However, he underscored the detrimental impact of haphazard parking and the unauthorized setting up of shops on footpaths, which not only obstruct roadways but also contribute to an increased likelihood of accidents. As part of the operation, special attention was

directed towards auto drivers, a significant segment contributing to the traffic landscape. ASP Agrawal communicated specific instructions to all station in-charges to engage with auto drivers, seeking their cooperation in maintaining order on the roads. The appeal was clear—adhere to traffic rules, cooperate with law enforcement, and refrain from actions that disrupt the smooth flow of traffic.

the need for enhanced emergency response preparedness. Clear protocols were discussed to ensure swift action in case of any untoward incidents or emergencies.

The officials expressed confidence in the collective efforts of the police force and the community in upholding a disciplined and efficient traffic system during Durga Puja. The meeting concluded with a call to action, urging all stakeholders to play an active role in contributing to a seamless and safe festive season for the residents of Jamshedpur.

As the city gears up for the vibrancy and celebrations of Durga Puja, the police force's commitment to proactive and organized traffic management stands as a testament to ensuring the well-being and enjoyment of all participants in this joyous occasion.

Sacrifice of Late Dr. Ajay K Singh will not go in vain: SP

VINOD LOHARDAGA PRASAD:

On the martyrdom day of Martyr SP Late Ajay Kumar Singh, an all-religion prayer meeting with floral tributes was organized by Martyr Ajay Kumar Singh Trust and Municipal Council at Ajay Udyan on Wednesday. Mainly present in the program were Martyr SP Ajay Kumar Singh's father Ramashray Singh, SP Haris Bin Zaman, DDC, jaijoti Samanta, Municipal Council Executive Officer Jaipal Singh etc. On the occasion, SP Harish Bin Zaman said that the then brave SP Dr. Ajay Kumar Singh, posted in Lohardaga, made the supreme sacrifice on October 4, 2000 by fighting the Naxalites in the forests of Peshwarar, a highly Naxal affected area of Lohardaga district.

We will not let their sacrifice go in vain. Taking inspiration from him, all of us police



personnel will continue the campaign against Naxalites. He asked the misguided people to return to the mainstream of the nation soon. He also appealed to the residents of the district to cooperate with the police for peace, goodwill and development in the district. Referring to the

heroic story of martyr Ajay Kumar Singh, DDC said that the residents of the district should cooperate with the police and administration in the development of the area. Trust Secretary Chandrashekhar Prasad Aggarwal said that Ajay Udyan has been built in the memory of martyr Ajay Kumar Singh. This park will always inspire all of us to follow the path of duty. Municipal Council Executive Officer said that Ajay Udyan Park was earlier being run by Ajay Trust, but now it is running under the supervision of Municipal Council.

He said that the park will be further developed to keep alive the story of sacrifice and bravery of Martyr Ajay Kumar Singh. Sub Divisional Officer arvind kumar lal CRPF Commandant Rahul Kumar and others also addressed the meeting. Before this, salutes were given by armed soldiers. After that, SP Haris Bin

Zaman, father of martyr SP Ajay Kumar Singh Ramashray Singh, Municipal Council Executive Officer, MP representative cum Trust Secretary Chandrashekhar Aggarwal, MLA representative Nishith Jaiswal, BJP leader Omprakash Singh, Principal of Women's College Sneha Kumar, Rajkishore Mahato, Rajesh. Mahato, police and administrative officers and distinguished citizens of the society paid homage to the statue of martyr Ajay Kumar Singh by garlanding it. An all religion prayer meeting was organized on this occasion.

On the occasion, martyr Ajay Kumar Singh's father Ramashray Singh and others were honored with shawls. The meeting ended with the national anthem. The program was conducted by Ajay Prasad and CT Manager Vijay Kumar. It was told that a football match was organized in the name of martyr SP Ajay Kumar Singh in Peshawar.

Woman kills husband following dispute

PANKAJ : DHANBAD

A strange case of murder has been reported from Damodarpur locality under Dhanbad Sadar police station on Wednesday morning. Mother of two sons aged in between six and eight, Saraswati Hembrom murdered her husband Ajit Hembrom and later attempted to suicide by jumping in village well following a dispute with husband over some issue. Ajit, a mansion by profession, was hit by some hard substance on his head that proved fatal and he died on spot. One of his sons, Aeyan Hembrom said that both had been arguing over issues during the night and when he awoke his mother asked him to go to sleep. In the morning he found his father dead and mother missing and informed grand-parents who reside nearby. When some people went to fetch water in the morning, they found Saraswati standing in neck deep water and informed the police.

Health Minister reviews dengue cases

Dept to ask TMH to waive 50% of the bill for the treatment of poor dengue patients

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

A comprehensive review meeting, spearheaded by Health Minister Banna Gupta, was conducted at the Collectorate Auditorium in Jamshedpur. The meeting addressed the alarming rise of dengue cases in the district. Key attendees included District Magistrate Manjunath Bhajantri, Deputy Development Commissioner Manish Kumar, and other high-ranking officials.

The presentation by the district administration highlighted ongoing preventive measures, hospital admission statistics, medical resources, manpower, and affected areas within the district. Notable impacted Panchayats include Mango, Baridih, Golmuri, Bagbera, Sidhgora, Birsanagar, Bistupur, Kadma, Sakchi, Sonari, Telco, Jugsalai, and Chakulia. Although Mango experienced a recent decline in dengue cases, intensive anti-larva spraying, fogging, and larva testing continue in affected neighborhoods.

Gupta emphasized the importance of ensuring NICU preparedness for treating children, availability of blood and platelets, monitoring dengue testing costs, and providing financial relief to impoverished patients. Post-discharge patient records were stressed, along with directives for comprehensive hospital cleanliness and preventive measures in municipal areas.

In an appeal to the district's residents, the Minister urged cooperation with administration guidelines, emphasizing the need for awareness to curb dengue spread. Preventive measures like avoiding water accumulation, wearing protective clothing, and consistent mosquito net use were highlighted. Representatives from



MGM, District Public Relations, municipal bodies, private hospitals, and Tata Steel UISL actively participated in the meeting, demonstrating a collaborative effort to address the dengue crisis.

Through a presentation by the district administration, it was told what precautionary measures are being taken to prevent dengue, along with the number of patients admitted in the hospital and the condition of treatment, available medical resources and manpower, which areas of the district are more affected. Are affected and awareness programs are being conducted among school children. Mango, Baridih, Golmuri, Bagbera, Sidhgora, Birsanagar, Bistupur, Kadma, Sakchi, Sonari, Sakchi, Telco, Jugsalai and Chakulia Nagar Panchayats have been most affected, however, in the last 10 days, the number of dengue positive cases in Mango area has reduced significantly. There are no dengue positive cases in clusters in all the affected areas of the urban area. Intensive campaigns like anti-larva spraying, fogging and larva testing are being carried out in the houses around the houses where dengue is positive.

While appealing to the people of the district, he said that in order to reduce the spread of dengue, all the citizens of the district will have to be aware and cooperate with the administration. Follow the guidelines given by the district administration regarding prevention. To avoid dengue, do not allow water to accumulate around your house, wear clothes that cover the entire body, and always use mosquito nets.

MGM Superintendent, District Public Relations Officer, officials of municipal bodies, managers of various private hospitals, representatives of Tata Steel UISL were present in the meeting.

CRPF personnel save two from drowning



NITYANAND DUBEY : GARHWA

CRPF troops of 172 Battalion rescued two teenage boys from drowning in Danro river, on Wednesday, and admitted them to District Hospital Garhwa, where one declared dead and another one is undergoing treatment.

CRPF Inspector Pradip Singh said that after receiving information that two local boys were trapped in the strong current of the river Danro near the battalion headquarters, whose water level is currently high.

One of the officer Sub-Inspector/GD Dilghar Oraon, without thinking twice, jumps into the river to save the girl and soon after, another Constable GD Zaharuddin Ansari gets in the river to support him from being swept away by the heavy currents. They rescued both the teenagers. youths trapped in the strong current identified as deceased Shreyans Bhardwaj 13, s/o Satyaprakash Bhardwaj, at Ashoknagar, Garhwa and victim Raj Chaubey, 14, s/o Rajeev Kumar Chaubey, at village- Ranadih, under Kandi police station area.

Amarendra Kumar Singh, Second Commanding Officer Kuldeep Kumar, Second Commanding Officer U.R. Rameshwaram, SHO/GD Sanjay Singh, Hav GD Kaushal Kishore, Haw/GD Mohd Ilyas, who were also part of the relief team.

MP, MLAs, discuss house rent of pensioners with DVC Chairman

SURESH NIKHAR : BOKARO

Talks held with management, MP PN Singh and MLA Aparna Sengupta at DVC headquarters in Kolkata.

The three-hour long meeting of Dhanbad MP PN Singh and Nirsia MLA Aparna Sengupta with Chairman M Raghuram at DVC headquarters Kolkata on Tuesday, regarding increasing the house rent of pensioners by 25 times and other demands, was a ruckus. Ultimately in the meeting the DVC management had to postpone the increase of house rent by 25 times. It was agreed in the meeting that the MP's proposal to amend the housing lease license of pensioners will be presented again to the DVC Board for approval. Till then the increased house rent of pensioners will be kept in abeyance.

Apart from this, issues like increasing the license fee of contract teachers working in DVC by 3 times, shopkeepers etc. were discussed. DVC Chairman M Raghuram and Member Secretary John Mathai assured that the problems of teachers and shopkeepers would be resolved soon. Apart from the Chairman, on behalf of DVC, Secretary John Methai, HR Head Rakesh Ranjan, Real Estate Director SN Dutta, CSR Head NK Verma, Member Finance Arup Sarkar etc. were present in the meeting.



BoB opens new regional office in Ranchi

PNS : RANCHI

Bank of Baroda (Bank), one of India's leading public sector banks, announced the inauguration of its new Regional Office in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The Bank also opened a new branch in Gurdari Village – its 63rd branch in Ranchi and 122nd branch in Jharkhand.

Joydeep Dutta Roy, Executive Director, Bank of Baroda inaugurated the Regional Office in Ranchi, in the esteemed presence of senior bank executives and staff members of the Region. The Gurdari bank branch was inaugurated by Sonam T Bhutia, Zonal Head – Patna and Shankar Mahto, Regional Head – Ranchi Region, with senior Government officials and local villagers in attendance.

The Gurdari branch is located in a remote location in

Gumla district. The branch will serve approximately 245 neighbouring villages, providing banking facilities to around 45,000 villagers.

Sonam T Bhutia, Zonal Head – Patna, Bank of Baroda said, "We are pleased to expand our presence in Jharkhand, deepening our commitment to this vibrant state. The opening of the Gurdari branch increases the Bank's penetration in rural India, providing banking access to unbanked communities and fostering financial inclusion in the region. This branch will also serve some of the ancient tribes of Jharkhand such as Birhor, Asur, Baiga, Kharia and Kurukh."

Founded on 20th July, 1908 by Sir Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III, Bank of Baroda is one of the leading commercial banks in India.

NML celebrates 82nd CSIR Foundation Day, focus on decarbonization

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

National Metallurgical Laboratory (NML) marked the 82nd CSIR Foundation Day with a grand celebration held at the NML Auditorium. The event was graced by esteemed dignitaries, including Nirbhik Banerjee, Executive Director, RDCIS, SAIL, Ranchi; Dr. N.C. Murmu, Director, CSIR-NML; and Aditya Mainak, Administrative Officer, CSIR-NML.

The festivities commence with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolizing the illumination of knowledge and progress. Dr. N.C. Murmu, Director, NML, extended a warm welcome to the dignitaries, NML retirees, scientists, and other invitees present, setting the tone for an eventful day.

The Chief Guest, Nirvik Banerjee, delivered the CSIR Foundation Day lecture, addressing the pertinent topic of "Challenges towards Decarbonization of Indian Steel Industry." His insights shed light on crucial aspects of sustainable practices within the steel industry.



As part of the CSIR Foundation Day celebrations, essay and quiz competitions were organized for employees, fostering a spirit of intellectual engagement. Nirvik Banerjee presented awards for the outstanding performances in these competitions, recognizing the talent and knowledge within the NML community.

Special recognition was accorded to meritorious students, with one-time lump sum cash awards for exceptional achievements in Senior Secondary Examinations. Notable awardees included Abhishek Kumar Sahu, Soumyajit Ghosh, and Debjit Ghosh,

who excelled with scores of 95.33%, 95.0%, and 94.0%, respectively.

CSIR-NML took a significant step forward on this auspicious day by signing an agreement with RDCIS, SAIL, focusing on the "Development of Zn-Al-Mg Based Hot Dip Coating for Steel Strips." This collaboration aims to advance technologies in the metallurgical domain.

In a gesture of knowledge transfer and technological dissemination, two CSIR-NML technologies were transferred to external entities. The technology "Zincometer: A sensing device for Real-time Zinc

coating weight measurement of steel wires in Galvanized line" found a new home in Gamharia-based MSME company M/S Rofestel Instruments. Additionally, the technology for the development of 98-99% pure Ti3AlC2 MAX phase was transferred to M/S Global Nanotech, Mumbai.

The day concluded with the presentation of awards for the essay and quiz competitions. Notable winners included Somnath Das, Amit Prakash, Shashikant Choudhary, Ellife Kumbhar, Chandan Kr. Chowdhary, and Dr. Mrs. Minati Kumari Sahu. Aditya Mainak, Administrative Officer, CSIR-NML, expressed gratitude in the vote of thanks, acknowledging the collective efforts that made the 82nd CSIR Foundation Day celebration a resounding success. The day's events not only highlighted the scientific achievements of CSIR-NML but also underscored the institute's commitment to knowledge sharing, collaboration, and fostering a culture of excellence in metallurgical research and development.

Counterfeit Incense Scam exposed in Jamshedpur

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a significant breakthrough at the onset of the festive season, Incense Sticks major Zed Black raided godowns engaged in the sale of fake incense sticks packaged in counterfeit materials imitating reputable brands. This operation unravelled a major scam impacting India's prayer & puja essentials market. An FIR was registered at Asansol Durgapur Police Commissionerate, West Bengal yesterday post which, counterfeit goods were seized from Mohammad Hilal at Qureshi Mohalla, Asansol North & Mohammad Aslam of Shri Nagar, Asansol North from the godown of Mohammad Muktar residing in Qureshi Mohalla.



Terrorist with Hazaribag roots nabbed by NIA in Delhi

SHAILESH SHARMA: HAZARIBAG

The NIA has nabbed terrorist Shah Nawaj in Delhi, whose roots have been traced back to Hazaribag and Chatra districts. A resident of Chatra, he has his own house in Pagmil Barik cooperative colony. He had completed his education of chemical engineering from Bengaluru. His father is a retired teacher. He was seen in Hazaribag 15 days back.

The Barik colony is a colony where a shootout happened in 2012. He was also arrested by the Hazaribag police in a truck loot case in 2021. After completion of engineering he was married to his college mate Basanti Patel. The NIA of Delhi was searching for him in case of involvement in the ISIS module.

Shah Nawaj's father lived in Barik cooperative colony 10 years ago. He has three sisters and brothers in the family. When Hazaribag police arrested him in 2021, during the interrogation he agreed that he had joined the SIMI (Students Islamic Movement of India).

The statement which was



given by him to the NIA that he kidnapped the owner of Khadim's shoes owner Partho Roy. Hazaribag was always the centre of extremist activities. Two extremists were shot dead in Khergaon Mohalla of the town.

The NIA confirmed that Shah Nawaj was associated with so many extremist organizations and was doing the work for organizations. The NIA will come to Hazaribag and Chatra to investigate the members of his family shortly. The centre for his activities is at Patna. This is the place from where he has done his activities.

CM inaugurates 7th Hi-Tech Medha Dairy Plant in Medininagar

Hands over cheque of Rs 21.9 Cr as Govt incentive to cattle rearers

PNS : RANCHI/DALTONGANJ

Only when the farmer moves forward will the state and the country also move forward. With this resolution, the government is working rapidly towards making farmers and animal herders empowered and self-reliant," said Chief Minister Hemant Soren while dedicating the state's seventh state-of-the-art dairy plant in Palamu to the people of the State today. The CM said that this dairy will prove to be a boon in bringing change in the lives of the farmers and cattle rearers here.

The CM said that farmers should be able to stand on their feet. Their income should increase. They can live a better life. For this, the government is running many schemes. He asked the farmers and cattle rearers to join the government schemes and take advantage of them and also contribute in strengthening the state. If you move one step forward, the government

will support you by moving four steps forward.

Notably, Medha Dairy Plant of Palamu is the seventh dairy plant in the state. This state-of-the-art dairy plant, built at a cost of about Rs 28 crore, will directly benefit about 25 thousand farmers and cattle herders. This dairy will currently have the capacity of processing and packaging 50 thousand liters of milk per day, which can be increased to one lakh liters per day. Four milk silos have been installed here for storage and processing of milk. This dairy plant will be operated by Jharkhand Milk Federation.

The CM said that our challenges are also increasing due to the climate change happening today. Farmers are being affected the most by this. This change in weather is causing floods at some places and drought at other places. Because of this crop production is being affected. If we are not alert now, we will have to be prepared to face



Chief Minister Hemant Soren, Ministers Rameshwar Oraon and Badal along with others during the inaugural ceremony of ultra-modern seventh Medha Dairy Plant in Medininagar on Wednesday. PNS

serious consequences. In such a situation, we will have to move forward in the direction of alternative farming and other related works. For this, the government has also started many schemes. You join these schemes and make yourself financially strong amid climate change.

The CM said that in view of the uncertainty that persists in the weather, the government has started the Birsa Green Village Scheme. Farmers should join this scheme and plant different types of fruit trees in their land. For this, along with planting trees, the govern-



Chief Minister Hemant Soren alongwith Minister Badal Patralekh during inaugural ceremony of ultra-modern seventh Medha Dairy Plant in

ment is also providing financial help to save trees. By taking advantage of this scheme, you can increase your income from agriculture as well as fruits.

The CM said that in a state like Jharkhand, animals are very important for the farmers. In such a situation, to

enrich the farmers with livestock, the government has started the Mukhyamantri Pashudhan Yojana. Under this, animals are being given to farmers and herders at 90 percent subsidy. Not only this, the government is also providing financial assistance for animal sheds. The objective of

this scheme is to increase the income of farmers by connecting them with animal husbandry.

Soren said that we are moving rapidly towards making Jharkhand self-reliant in milk production. He told the farmers and herders that the government can open a dairy plant, but it is your responsibility to run it. The more milk you provide to this plant, the more milk and milk products will be produced here. This will not only strengthen this dairy plant but will also increase your income. He said that if needed, more dairy plants will be established here.

The CM said that Jharkhand is very rich from the point of view of agriculture and forest produce. In such a situation, the government is committed to promoting the forest produce here. In this direction, Sido Kanhu Agriculture and Forest Produce Federation has been formed. Through this, agricultural and forest produce

will also be made available in the market and its MSP will also be decided. Through this, farmers will be able to get fair prices for their products.

It is known that to promote milk production, the state government gives an incentive amount of Rs 3 per liter of milk to the cattle farmers. Under this, a cheque of Rs 21 crore 90 lakh was handed over to the MD of Medha Dairy today by the government as incentive amount for the farmers and cattle rearers here.

On this occasion, Ministers Rameshwar Oraon and Badal, MLA Ramchandra Singh, Secretary to the Chief Minister Vinay Kumar Choubey, Agriculture Secretary Abu Bakar Siddique, Divisional Commissioner of Palamu Manoj Jaiswal, Inspector General of Police Rajkumar Lakra and Deputy Commissioner of Police and Police of the district were present.

Marandi lists achievements of Modi Govt in Sankalp Yatra



BJP State President Babul Marandi addresses a gathering during his 'Shankalp Yatra' at Hussainabad constituency in Palamau on Wednesday. PNS

PNS : RANCHI

State BJP President and former Chief Minister Babul Marandi, continuing with the seventh phase of Sankalp yatra at Hussainabad Assembly attacked the JMM/Congress government and called for forming BJP government for corruption-

free, crime-free governance.

Addressing the public meeting, he said that the Central Government is dedicated to villages, poor, farmers, labourers and women. He said that after Modi ji became the Prime Minister, the first task of his tenure was to construct an Izzat Ghar toilet for mothers and sisters. They

understand the problems of mothers and sisters. He said that Modi ji provided permanent housing to the poor, whereas the state government wasted money being sent by the Central government.

The Prime Minister cares about the poor. Along with gas connection, he also gave subsidies on gas. He said that due to the negligence of the JMM/Congress government, the condition of the Ayushman scheme in Jharkhand is bad. The poor are suffering from health problems. If the government is formed under the leadership of BJP, officials will go door to door to make Ayushman cards. He said that Indira Gandhi did nationalize banks but for big houses and capitalists. Prime Minister Modi ji connected every poor person with banks by opening Jan Dhan accounts. During the Covid period, when the

factories were closed yesterday, Modi ji did the work of depositing the money directly into the account, whereas during the tenure of Rajiv Gandhi, fifteen paise of one rupee was transferred from the Centre. He said that Modi ji is sending grains to the poor but Hemant Soren is black marketing the grains. More than four crore people got the benefit of the housing scheme. Farmers are getting direct benefits. Marandi said that Modi ji has given a big gift to women by bringing a reservation bill in Lok Sabha and Assembly. Under this bill, 33% sisters will get the benefit. He said that Prime Minister Modi ji launched Vishwakarma Yojana for artisans during Vishwakarma Puja. Under this, a budget provision of Rs 13 thousand crore has also been made. Stephen will also be available during training.

He said that for the first time a Prime Minister has worried about barbers, carpenters, blacksmiths and cobblers. He said that the corrupt Hemant government is silent even on appointments, if the BJP government is formed, a large number of recruitments will be done including doctors, nurses in hospitals and teachers in schools.

He said that Atal Bihari Vajpayee fulfilled the dream of a separate state of Jharkhand in 2000, while JMM kept playing in the lap of Congress. Under the BJP government, a network of roads has been laid in the country including Jharkhand. During the 60 years of Congress rule, brides and grooms also used to come in bullock carts. People in the villages did not see electricity. The BJP government provided roads and electricity to every village.

MGNREGA Commissioner chairs meeting on Unnati Project

PNS : Ranchi

MGNREGA Commissioner Rajeshwari B chaired a meeting with the officials regarding the successful implementation of the Unnati Project run under MGNREGA, to complete the training of MGNREGA workers on time and to provide direct benefits to the villagers. Under the 'Unnati' project of the Ministry of Rural Development, skill development of MGNREGA workers up to the maximum age of 45 years is being done, so that they can get a permanent source of income. Under this project, skill upgradation training of 1422 MGNREGA workers has been completed so far in the state. Adding some new links to these efforts, now this financial year under MGNREGA in the state, 200 workers will be given skill development training to the families working under MGNREGA under the Unnati Project, so that many employment options open up for the rural families. They can become self-reliant. Many MGNREGA schemes are operational in the state, the benefits of which are being effectively extended to rural families at the departmental level.

MGNREGA Commissioner, while discussing point by point the work being done under the Unnati Project, directed all the officials to achieve progress as per the target.



2nd 'NCDC Foundation Day' celebrated with great pomp at CCL

PNS : RANCHI

The second National Coal Development Corporation (NCDC) Foundation Day' was celebrated with pomp at Central Coalfield Limited (CCL) Headquarters, Ranchi on Wednesday. NCDC was established on October 01, 1956. Former chairmen, Directors, Senior Officers and Employees of Coal India Limited (CIL) and its other subsidiaries, participated in the event.

Chairman of CIL, PM Prasad welcomed the distinguished guests and addressed all present at the function. He said that NCDC has provided a strong foundation to Coal India. He further said that due to the guidance, experience and legacy of all the mentors and elders, the company has been able to successfully meet the energy needs of the country. He said that Coal India and its subsidiaries will do even better in the times to come and achieve the coal production target of 1 billion tonnes by 2025-26.

Former President Dr MP Narayanan, NC Jha, Former CMD, ECL, SN Singh, former CMD, WCL, RD Rai, Former CMD CCL and CMPDIL, S Verma, former CMD CCL, B Akala, Former CMD CCL, RP Ritolia, Former Chairman and former CMD BCCL, Partho Bhattacharya, Former Chairman and former CMD CCL and BCCL, Gopal Singh, former CMD MCL, Abhiram Sharma, former CMD NCL, i Tapas Kumar Nag, former CMD CCL, Ranjan Kumar Saha, CMD CMPDI, Manoj Kumar and former employees working in NCDC were present. They enhanced the dignity of this function and shared their experiences about the glorious history of NCDC and CCL till now. Senior member of JCSC and former employee of



NCDC, Ramendra Kumar was also present in the program.

CIL Chairman, Prasad and CMD CCL, Dr B Veera Reddy for organizing this event and also thanked for the special honor given to them by CCL.

On the special occasion, Reddy along with Director (Personnel), Harsh Nath Mishra, Director (Finance) Pawan Kumar Mishra, Director (Y&P), B Sairam and Chief Vigilance Officer, Pankaj Kumar, all Welcomed the guests with shawl and bunch of flowers.

Reddy in his welcome address discussed the history of the coal industry highlighting the past of NCDC. While welcoming the guests, he expressed his gratitude to the elders of NCDC for participating in the programme.

Students of DAV Gandhinagar School presented a welcome song in honor of the guests. To make the program entertaining, a pleasing Kathak dance was presented by Gargi Malkani and her team, which was highly appreciated by all present. A short film dedicated to NCDC was also screened on the occasion.

The vote of thanks was given by Director (Yo.P.), B Sairam while the stage was moderated by Priyaranjan, Nisha and Shweta Hansda.

14 BAU students get ICAR JRF, 4 admitted to premier B-schools

PNS : RANCHI

A total of fourteen students of Ranchi Agriculture College batch 2019-23 of Birsa Agricultural University (BAU) have cracked Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) examination of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Besides securing admission in postgraduate courses of Country's top notch agricultural universities, they will also get a monthly fellowship.

Nushrat Jahan and Baishnavi Rani have bagged all India rank (AIR) 9 and 17 in social science and plant science respectively. Those awarded JRF include Anish Kumar Raj, Kumari Rani, Meghna Dinkar, Deepshikha and Sadia Noori in physical science, Shyam Sundar Das and Shubham Kumar in agronomy, Baishnavi Rani and Sonu Kumar in plant science, Kaushal Kumar and Sanket Kumar Tiwary in agri business management and Nushrat Jahan and Sushmita Toppo in social science.

Placement Cell Coordinator of BAU, Dr BK Jha informed that besides this glittering performance at



BAU students, who cracked the JRF and B-School exams. PNS

ICAR- JRF, four students were selected for PG programme at Country's premier business schools. They are Pritee Kumari Himmatsingka, IIM Rohtak, Anjali Kumari Upadhyay, MABM, BHU, Khushboo Kumari, Xavier Institute of Management & Entrepreneurship (XIME), Chennai and Akanksha Kumari, Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH) Delhi NCR.

On being entrusted by ICAR, the National Testing Agency (NTA) had conducted the All India Entrance Examinations for admission to Masters (PG) and Doctoral (PhD) programmes in agricultural universities and award of fellowships.

SOREN SKIPS FIFTH ED SUMMONS

PNS: RANCHI

Chief Minister Hemant Soren skipped the fifth summons issued to him by the Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday. The probe agency summoned him for questioning in a money laundering case pertaining to land grabbing in the state, however, Soren failed to appear.

Soren had challenged the ED summons in Jharkhand High Court as he had filed a petition with a plea to stay the summons issued by the probe agency.

Soren moved the state High Court after his petition to the Supreme Court was rejected and he was directed by the apex court on Monday to approach the concerned High Court with his plea



against the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summons.

A bench of Justices Aniruddha Bose and Bela M Trivedi refused to entertain the plea filed by Soren. Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for the Jharkhand Chief Minister sought to withdraw the plea.

The ED wants Soren to appear for recording his statement regarding properties owned, possessed and occupied by him. The ED has served five summons to Soren in less than two months. The CM, on the other hand, has ignored the earlier four summons, which

HC denies bail to former DC

The Jharkhand High Court today refused to grant bail to former Ranchi Deputy Commissioner Chhavi Ranjan, an accused in the multi-crore land scam in Ranchi.

While rejecting Ranjan's petition, a single bench of Justice Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi said that the investigation into the

land scam is not incomplete. Notably, the suspended IAS officer Chhavi Ranjan, who is in jail, had challenged the order of the Ranchi PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) court in the High Court. He had appealed to the High Court that he should be given default bail.

had required him to appear on August 14, August 24, September 9 and September 23. The ED, on its part, has remained persistent, issuing summon after summon.

After the ED's fourth summons on September 23, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

(JMM) General Secretary Supriyo Bhattacharya said it is not binding on CM Soren to obey the summons when he has already sought relief and the matter is pending in court.

The JMM also alleged that there is an effort being

made to target the Jharkhand Chief Minister, who hails from a tribal community. The Centre is using its agency to build a narrative against Soren, but the people of Jharkhand know the truth and will not hesitate to reply to all the tantrums by the BJP, said the party. The ED wants Soren to appear for recording his statement regarding properties owned, possessed and occupied by him. The ED has served five summons to Soren in less than two months. The CM, on the other hand, has ignored the earlier four summons, which had required him to appear on August 14, August 24, September 9 and September 23. The ED, on its part, has remained persistent, issuing summon after summon.



Chief Minister Hemant Soren attended the Brahmbhoj programme of late Jharkhand High Court judge Kailash Prasad Dev. Chief Minister Hemant Soren reached the residence of the late judge in Doranda and paid floral tributes to his portrait. On the occasion, the Chief Minister met his family members and expressed his deep condolences. PNS

Closing ceremony of Hindi Fortnight at IIM-R

The closing ceremony of the Hindi Fortnight, which ran from 14 to 29 September 2023, was held at the Indian Institute of Management Ranchi with the aim of promoting the progressive use of Hindi and increasing the public's interest in Hindi. Kumar Sanjay, Indian Revenue Service, Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Ranchi and Chairman, City Official Language Implementation Committee Ranchi - Narakas (Central Office) was the chief guest of the closing ceremony. In the function, students and employees who won prizes in quiz competition, debate competition, poetry recitation competition and monologue competition held during the fortnight were honoured with certificates. The program was presided over by Director Prof. Deepak Kumar Srivastava and Coordinator, Faculty in Charge Official Language Prof. Prashant Maurya. Vote of thanks was given by IPM student Partha Chandrayan.

Bhoomi Pujan for EXPO UTSAV 2023

JCI RANCHI did BHOOMI PUJAN today for its signature event EXPO UTSAV 2023. Bhoomi pujan at Morabadi ground was done by the President Jc Arvind Rajgariah and his wife Richa Rajgariah. After today's bhoomi pujan the

work has started of installing hangers, tents, stalls etc at Morabadi ground. EXPO UTSAV is scheduled from 12th to 16th October at Morabadi ground Ranchi. This time the hangers will be big enough to accommodate people and hasslefree. The pathways between will be broad enough so that there will be no chaos. President Arvind informed that there will be more than 300 stalls in Premium hanger, German hanger, Real estate hanger, women pink hanger, Auto zone, Furniture zone, Startup zone, Amusement park and Food zone and Mid night carnival etc.

SBPS shines in 2nd Literary Ideation Conclave

The students of Sarala Birla Public School, Ranchi outshine in the 2nd Literary Ideation Conclave organised at Varanasi from September 30th



to October 3rd, 2023. The conclave was dedicated to the signposts of freedom, equality, liberty, equity, environmentalism and social justice. In the category of Lone wolf standing, an inter-school solo quiz, Md. Ammaar Ahmad of Std. X was conferred the title of 'Most promising quizzard'. He also bagged the second runner up position for the same category. For Scriptorium, the creative writing competition, Atishya Singh of Std. XI and Prajnashree Hota of Std. X secured the first position. For Imaginarium, wealth and words out of waste, Vaibhavi Rathour of Std. XI and Apurav Agarwal of Std. X got the Best Jingle Creation award. SBPS revels at the achievement of its students.

RBI holds Essay competition on Gandhi Jayanti

On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti, an essay competition on the topic 'Gandhiji and us' was organized by the Reserve Bank of India, Ranchi on Wednesday. Under this, entries were invited from the students of all the schools of the State, keeping in mind the inspiring incidents related to Gandhiji and the ideas which they wanted to adopt in life. The success of this event and the interest and enthusiasm of the students towards it can be gauged from the fact that Reserve Bank of India, Ranchi received more than 400 entries from all the 24 districts of the State. These entries were first initially scrutinized internally and then evaluated by three experts. Thereafter, a general quiz was also organized for the selected students by calling them at the Reserve Bank of India, Ranchi office on Wednesday.

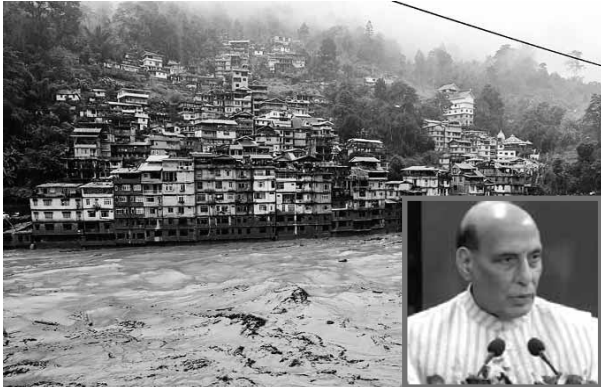
Praying for armymen missing in Sikkim flash flood: Rajnath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday prayed for the well-being of the army personnel who went missing in Sikkim after a cloudburst triggered flash floods in the Teesta river.

The Defence Minister described the glacial lake burst at Lonak in Sikkim as "deeply heart-wrenching" and said relief and rescue operations in the area are in progress amid extremely bad weather.

Twenty-three army personnel went missing on Wednesday following the cloudburst-triggered flash flood in the Teesta river basin, officials said.



"The Glacial Lake Burst at Lonak, Sikkim is deeply heart-wrenching. Relief and rescue operations in the midst of extremely bad weather are in progress. Praying for the well-being

of those army personnel, who are missing due to this tragedy," Rajnath said in a post on X.

The Army's eastern command said 23 personnel went missing following the floods.

"Due to a sudden cloud burst over Lhonak Lake in North Sikkim, a flash flood occurred in the Teesta River in Lachen valley. Some army establishments along the valley have been affected and efforts are on to confirm details," it said in a statement.

"Release of water from the Chungthang dam led to a sudden increase in water level up to 15-20 feet high downstream. This has led to Army vehicles parked at Bardang near Singtam getting affected," it said.

"23 personnel have been reported missing and some vehicles are reported submerged under the slush. Search operations are underway," the Army added.

Modi to launch development projects in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday will launch development projects worth Rs 12,600 crore in Madhya Pradesh and Rs 5,000 crore in Rajasthan during his visit to the two poll-bound states.

In Jodhpur in Rajasthan, the Prime Minister's Office(PMO) said, Modi will lay the foundation stone and inaugurate multiple development projects in sectors like road, rail, aviation, health and higher education.

In Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh, he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of development projects in sectors such as road, rail, gas pipeline, housing and clean drinking water, it said.

Among the health projects



for which he will lay the foundation stone in Rajasthan include a 350-bedded trauma centre and critical care hospital block at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Jodhpur, and seven critical care blocks under the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM) to be developed across the state.

The centre at the AIIMS will be developed at a cost of more than Rs 350 crore, it said.

The statement said the facility will bring a holistic

approach in management of trauma and emergency cases by providing multidisciplinary and comprehensive care to patients while critical care blocks across Rajasthan will augment district level critical care infrastructure, it added.

The prime minister will also lay the foundation stone for the development of a state-of-the-art new terminal building at the Jodhpur airport costing Rs 480 crore and dedicate the IIT Jodhpur campus to the nation as well.

The statement said the campus has been built at a cost of more than Rs 1,135 crore. It is a step towards providing high quality holistic education and building infrastructure for supporting cutting-edge research and innovation initiatives, it said.

Among other projects, he will lay the foundation stone of

multiple road development projects to be built at a cumulative cost of about Rs 1,475 crore and also flag off two new train services in the state.

The PMO said Modi will inaugurate a light house project at Indore, Madhya Pradesh. Built at a cost of about Rs 128 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban, the project will benefit more than 1,000 beneficiary families as part of his vision of "housing for all", it said.

He will also lay the foundation stone of multiple Jal Jeevan Mission projects in Mandla, Jabalpur and Dindori districts worth over Rs 2,350 crore and inaugurate a drinking water project under the same scheme in Seoni district. These projects in four districts of the state will benefit about 1,575 villages of Madhya Pradesh.

India's security concerns extend beyond territorial integrity: Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Underscoring fast changing geopolitical environment, President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday said here India's security concerns extend way beyond preservation of territorial integrity and encompass other dimensions of well-being dealing with economy, environment, energy security and cyber security.

Addressing the faculty and course members of the 63rd National Defence College (NDC) course, who had called on the president at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Murmu said the global geopolitical environment is dynamic and poses numerous challenges.

"In the fast-changing geopolitical environment, we need to be well prepared to tackle any adverse situation. Geopolitical dynamics have changed the security landscape. There is a need to have a deeper understanding of national and global issues. We not only have to secure our national interests, but also prepare for new security challenges like cyber warfare, technology-enabled terrorism and climate change," she said.

The president said updated knowledge and cutting-edge technologies based on extensive research are required to be applied.

"You need to explore innovative applications of



artificial intelligence in addressing current and future challenges. In fact, government agencies and the corporate sector need to join

hands to identify and address these challenges," she said.

The way in which global events are unfolding, "we increasingly realise the

importance of being aatmanirbhar (self-reliant)", globally competent and future-ready to deal with any kind of situation and crisis,

Murmu stressed.

"Today, our security concerns extend way beyond preservation of territorial integrity and encompass other dimensions of well-being dealing with economy, environment, energy security and cyber security among others," she said.

The president noted that the role of the armed forces has also expanded beyond traditional military matters.

"It is clear that future conflicts in the complex defence and security environment will require a more integrated multi-state and multi-agency approach," she said.

Murmu said security and defence are essential for progress and development.

"The real progress of a nation depends to a large extent on how effectively it harnesses resources at its disposal, especially its human resource," she said.

Both civil services and defence services officers must understand the fine points of the constitutional framework in the country's democratic system, the president said.

"This awareness is the first step towards fostering synergy among the functionaries of different services. I am sure that our officers will rise to the dynamic needs of our country," she added.

The NDC course, therefore, plays an important role in preparing military and civil services officers to deal with the complex security

environment of the future in a comprehensive manner, Murmu said.

She noted that the NDC course is a one-of-a-kind course encompassing areas of national security and strategy, along with governance, technology, history and economics.

The president expressed confidence that the holistic approach of learning at the NDC -- comprising research, classroom discussions, insights from eminent speakers and on-ground exposure through national and international visits -- has enriched the course members in terms of facing challenges. A total of 37 officers from 27 friendly foreign countries were present at the event.

Ranbir summoned by ED in Mahadev betting app case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned actor Ranbir Kapoor for questioning on Friday in connection with the Mahadev betting application money-laundering case in Chhattisgarh.

The agency has accused Kapoor of receiving money from the promoters of the app for promoting their product in the virtual (online) space, officials said.

The ED has asked Kapoor to appear at the agency's Raipur office on October 6, they said.

About 14-15 other celebrities and actors are under the ED's scanner in the case and they will also be summoned soon for questioning in the matter, sources said.

The company promoted by Sourabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal was being oper-



ated from Dubai. It was using the online book betting application to enrol new users, create IDs and launder money through a layered web of benami bank accounts, the agency has alleged.

The ED investigation has shown that the Mahadev Online Book App is run from a central head office in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). It operates by franchising "Panel/Branches" to their known associates on a 70-30 profit ratio, the agency had said.

Through large-scale

hawala operations, the proceeds of betting are siphoned off to offshore accounts, it had said.

A huge expenditure in cash has also been incurred in India for advertising of betting websites to attract new users and franchise (panel) seekers, it had said.

The company promoters hail from Bhilai in Chhattisgarh and the Mahadev online book betting application is an umbrella syndicate arranging online platforms for enabling illegal betting websites.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Wednesday granted bail to RJD chief Lalu Prasad, his wife Rabri Devi and their son and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav in the alleged land-for-job scam in the railways. Special Judge Geetanjali Goel granted relief to the accused after they appeared before the court in pursuance of summons issued against them.

The court had on September 22 summoned the accused after taking cognisance of the charge sheet filed against them and other accused, saying the evidence "prima facie" showed commission of various offences, including corruption, criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery. The agency had on July 3 filed a charge sheet in connection with the alleged scam. Prasad is out on bail in



this case as well as fodder scam cases.

It was the second charge sheet filed by the CBI in the case but the first in which Tejashwi Yadav has been named as an accused. The case pertains to Group-D appointments made in West Central Zone of the railways based in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh during Lalu Prasad's tenure as the railway minister from 2004 to 2009 in return for land parcels gifted or transferred by the recruits in the name of the

SC: ED must provide in writing grounds for arrest under PMLA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Changing its earlier judgments, the Supreme Court ruled that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) must supply in writing the grounds of arrest of persons accused under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). A bench of Justice AS Bopanna and Justice Sanjay Kumar in an order on Tuesday said that the accused has a constitutional and statutory right to be informed of the grounds of arrest. It also held that mere reading of the grounds of arrest would not be an adequate compliance with the mandate under Article 22(1) of the Constitution and Section 19(1) of the PMLA.

"To give true meaning and purpose to the constitutional and the statutory mandate of Section 19(1) of the Act of 2002 of informing the arrested person of the grounds of arrest, we hold that it would be necessary, henceforth, that a copy of such written grounds of arrest is furnished to the arrested person as a



matter of course and without exception," the judgment stated.

In an earlier judgment, the Court specifically said that the grounds of arrest should be provided to accused in writing, in what could be a slight addition to the three-judge Bench judgment in Vijay Madanlal Choudary case. In Vijay Madanlal, the Court had held that an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) was not required to be supplied to the accused, and that it was enough if the ED, at the time of arrest, contemporaneously discloses the grounds of such arrest to such person.

"No doubt, in Vijay Madanlal Choudhary, this Court held that non-supply of

the ECIR in a given case cannot be found fault with, as the ECIR may contain details of the material in the ED's possession and revealing the same may have a deleterious impact on the final outcome of the investigation or inquiry. Having held so, this Court affirmed that so long as the person is 'informed' of the grounds of his/her arrest, that would be sufficient compliance with the mandate of Article 22(1) of the Constitution," the Court said in the present judgment. However, such disclosure has to be in writing, the Court underscored.

The apex court made these observations while ordering the release of Pankaj Bansal and his father Basant Bansal, the directors of M3M Group, in a money laundering case related to bribery allegations against a former judicial officer in Haryana. In its judgment, the Court said that the ED was not expected to be vindictive in its conduct and must act with the "highest degree of dispassion and fairness."

Rajnath releases 5th indigenous procurement list of 98 items

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Sustaining the drive to achieve self reliance and 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence and innovation, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday released the fifth positive indigenisation list of 98 items including highly complex systems, sensors, weapons and ammunition. All these items will be procured from indigenous sources by the armed forces. The government had earlier promulgated four Positive Indigenisation Lists comprising 411 military items.

Rajnath also launched 76 challenges for the industry under 10th Defence India Start-up Challenges (DISC 10) and DISC 10 PRIME of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and five problem statements under iDEX for Fauji during the plenary session of 'Swaavlamban 2.0' here.

In addition, two INDUS X challenges under INDUS X Mutual Promotion of Advanced Collaborative

Technologies' (IMPACT) challenges jointly finalised by iDEX and United States Department of Defense (US DoD) were launched by the defence minister.

He also released the Indian Navy's updated Indigenisation Roadmap 'Swaavlamban 2.0'.

The Fifth Positive Indigenisation List was prepared by Department of Military Affairs(DMA)after several rounds of consultations with all stakeholders.

It lays special focus on import substitution of components of major systems besides important platforms, weapon system and sensors and munitions which are being developed and likely to translate into firm orders in the next five to ten years.

Prominent items include Futuristic Infantry Combat Vehicle, Articulated All-Terrain Vehicles, Remotely Piloted Air Borne Vehicles upto 25 Km with 2Kg Payload for Army, Naval Shipborne Unmanned Aerial System, Medium Upgrade Low Endurance Class Tactical

Drone, Electric Light Vehicle for Army, Medium Range Precision Kill System for Artillery, Next Generation Low Level Light Radar for Army, Automatic Chemical Agent Detection and Alarm System.

Other items include Armoured Fighting Vehicle (AFV) Protection and Counter Measures System, Integrated Mobile Camouflage System, AI Based Satellite Image Analysis, Test Equipment for Guided Weapon System for Tank T-90 S/SK, Quantum Key Distribution System for Optic Fiber based Networks (Upto 200 Km range), Very High Frequency Radar, Electro Optic Fire Control System for Naval Platforms, Armour Plates for Cabin Nose Section for Mi-17 Helicopter, Automated Mobile Test System for OSA-AK-M Missile System; Multifunction Aviation Ground Equipment for Air Force, Gravity Rollers for Mi-17 V5 Helicopter and flares of P-8I and MiG 29-K Aircraft.

HAL hands over 1st Tejas LCA to IAF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited(HAL), public sector aerospace conglomerate, on Wednesday handed over the first Tejas Light combat aircraft(LCA)twin seater aircraft to IAF.

The Bengaluru-headquartered company said the twin-seater variant has all the capabilities to support the training requirements of the IAF and augments itself to the role of fighter as well in case of necessity.

Minister of State for Defence Ajay Bhatt was the chief guest during the function in Bengaluru wherein the unveiling of the LCA twin seater, handing over of Release to Service (RSD), Signalling out Certificate (SOC) were conducted in the presence of Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari, among others.

Bhatt said the LCA Tejas symbolizes India's journey towards self-sufficiency in defence manufacturing. This programme has been a shin-



ing example of commitment to reduce country's dependency on foreign aircrafts, and it serves as a beacon of hope for a self-reliant India.

He also said the LCA Tejas program has been an inspiring saga of relentless dedication and innovation. The inception of the LCA Tejas aircraft was rooted in the dream of equipping our Indian Air Force with a world-class indigenous fighter aircraft.

Underlining the significance of LCA Tejas program, Bhatt said the country gained the much-required knowledge of building a cutting-edge fighter aircraft and also developed and nurtured aerospace ecosystem.

8 killed, one injured as car rams into parked truck

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Eight people, three women and five men, were killed and one minor sustained serious injuries in a major road mishap that occurred early morning on Wednesday near Karkhiyaon village on Varanasi-Lucknow highway, about 30 kms away from the city, in Phulpur police station when a speeding SUV car rammed into a truck parked along the road. The seriously injured was admitted at a trauma centre in BHU where his condition was said to be stable. The DM S Rajalingam talked to the DM of Pilibhit urging him to contact the family members of the deceased and inform them about the accident.

According to the information, one Mahendra Pal (50), resident of Muzaffarpur in Purnapur police station of Pilibhit district and Vipin (39), resident of Rudrapur in Pilibhit district, along with their family members had come to Varanasi to immerse ashes of his mother Midhana Devi and father Satyapal respectively in Ganga.

After immersing the ashes in Ganga they had darshan and puja in a temple. After having darshan and puja, they were returning to their homes in Pilibhit by a SUV car when the accident took place.

It was said that when they were on the way near Karkhiyaon village on Varanasi-Lucknow highway the car they were traveling in, rammed into a truck parked



The DM S Rajalingam asking about the welfare of injured minor in road mishap from the doctors of Pt Deen Dayal Upadhyay District Hospital.

along the road early Wednesday morning around 4.30 am. The car was said to be going at speed.

After hearing their crying, the local villagers rushed to the spot and reported to the local police and ambulance as well about the accident. On get-

ting information, the police reached the spot and pulled out the people trapped in the car with the help of villagers. Eight died on the spot, while a minor, aged around 9 years and identified as Shanti Swaroop sustained serious head injuries. He was rushed to the Pt Deen

Dayal Upadhyay District Hospital.

After being aware of the major road mishap, the senior police officers reached the accident site and took stock of the information about the road mishap. The bodies were sent for the postmortem examination.

The District Magistrate S Rajalingam reached the district hospital and seeing the condition of the minor as critical, directed the hospital authority to take him to the trauma centre in BHU with a doctor and a counsellor. The condition of the seriously injured minor was said to be stable.

He also held a talk with the DM of Pilibhit and urged him to contact the family members of the deceased and inform them about the great tragedy, Rajalingam informed, adding that the necessary processes were being followed by the police in this direction.

The deceased were of two families, one of Mahendra Pal and other of Vipin. Besides Mahendra Pal and Vipin, four others, killed in the mishap, were identified on the basis of their Aadhaar Cards and mobile phones, as Chandrakali (42), wife of Mahendra Pal, Damodar Pal (43), Nirmala (38), wife of Damodar Pal and Aman Kumar (car driver).

Two deceased could not be identified till filling of this report. The police were waiting for the family members of the deceased for the further process.

Take PMO complaints seriously: DM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam has instructed the officers that the complaints received from the PMO should be taken seriously on priority basis and their prompt and quality disposal should be ensured. He was holding a meeting with the officers of concerned departments at the Rifle Club here on Wednesday. "Any kind of laxity or carelessness in this direction will not be tolerated," he said, adding that the responsible officers of the concerned departments should ensure quality disposal by personally inspecting the complaints received on the spot with positive thinking. He also gave instructions to the concerned officers to immediately repair

the wires and other cables hanging on the electric poles.

Expressing his displeasure over not getting the network of wires hanging in Bhairav Bazar street repaired despite earlier instructions, he gave a final warning to the concerned officers to get it repaired immediately. Regarding the issue of water logging near VDA Colony on Bhojubeer-Sindhora Marg, the officials of VDA, Municipal Corporation, Jal Nigam and PWD were directed to resolve the problem quickly by mutual coordination.

He also directed the officers to immediately resolve the problem of drain and water logging in Gangapur area and sought clarifications from the officers of PWD Provincial Section, Jalkal and Municipal

Corporation for not attending the meeting. Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, ADM (City) and officers of PWD, Electricity and other departments were also present in the meeting.

SWAMISHRI ARRIVING TODAY: After completing his 'chaturmas' stay at Paramhansi Ganga Ashram in Madhya Pradesh, the Shankaracharya of Jyotishpeeth Swami Avimukteshwarananda Saraswati, popularly known as Swamishri, is arriving in this holy city on Thursday evening. All the preparations to welcome Swamishri have been completed, informed his media in-charge Sanjay Pandey.

According to him, during his stay in the city where Swamishri was born and

brought up till his appointment as the Shankaracharya, religious rituals will be held for the people who died during the corona pandemic period. He said that a programme of Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapurana Katha will be organised and Vedic Brahmins will perform 'tarpan' and other religious rituals. He said that the Mukti Katha will be telecast live between October 7 and 13 on 56 channels through OTT.

Pandey said that some time ago, Swamishri had announced that religious rituals will be organised in Kashi during Pitru Paksha for the peace of the souls and salvation of those who died in the country and abroad during the corona pandemic period and those whose last rites could not be performed as per the rituals.

1,600 degrees to be awarded in IIT (BHU) convocation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The 12th convocation ceremony of the Indian Institute of Technology (Banaras Hindu University) will be organised on Friday at Swatantrata Bhawan from 9 am. Giving this information in a press conference held here on Wednesday, the Director of the institute Prof Pramod Kumar Jain said that in this convocation, 1,660 meritorious students will be awarded degrees. In this, 954 BTech, 247 IDD, 223 M Tech/MPHarma and 44 MSc students will be awarded degrees. More than 192 researchers will be awarded doctorate degrees. A total of 66 students will be awarded 108 medals (106 gold and two silver) and awards.

The chief guest of the ceremony will be Dr Sameer V Kamat, Secretary, Department of Defence (R&D) and Chairman, Defence Research



Director Prof PK Jain addressing a press conference at IIT (BHU) in Varanasi on Wednesday.

and Development Organisation (DRDO).

The ceremony will be presided over by Padma Shri Dr Kota Harinarayan, Chairman of the Board of Governors.

Prof Jain said that this year two students will be given the

President's Gold Medal and the Director's Gold Medal for their excellent achievements in all fields. President's Gold Medal will be awarded to Divyansh Chandra Roy, BTech, Electronics Engineering, for overall outstanding performance in academics at the BTech level in the institute and Raghav Soni, BTech, Electronics Engineering, will be awarded the Director's Gold Medal for outstanding performance in all areas and displaying organisational and leadership abilities.

The Director further said that alumni are an important part of any institution. The Distinguished Alumnus Award is the highest award given by IIT (BHU) to its alumni in recognition of their achievements. A total of nine alumni will be honoured with the Distinguished Alumnus/Alumna Student Award 2023-24 in the convoca-

tion this year. These include Ghanashyam Prasad (Electrical-88) in the Professional field, Prof Alok Gupta (Mining-88) in the Academic field, Sudhir Singh (Civil-93) in the Industry/ Entrepreneurship field, Manu K Vora (Chemical-68) for Public Life, Vikas Agrawal (Chemical-95) and Soumya Sarkar (Mechanical-79) for distinguished service to the institute and Prateek Maheshwari (Mechanical-11), Dr Akshay Kumar Rathore (Electrical-03) and Abhilash Sridharan (Metallurgy-08) will be honoured with the Young Alumnus Achiever Award.

Prof Jain said that after the convocation, the DRDO Industry Academy-Centre of Excellence (DIA-CoE) will be inaugurated by Dr Sameer V Kamat at 6 pm. The rehearsal before the convocation ceremony will be held on Thursday at 4 pm at Swatantrata Bhawan, BHU.

Passing out parade of Agniveers held

VARANASI (PNS): 114 Agniveers of the second batch marched smartly on the drill ground of the 39 Gorkha Training Centre (GTC) and crossed the 'Antim Pag' to enter into the folds of 3 & 9 Gorkha Rifles of the Indian Army. The parade was reviewed by Brigadier Rajeev Nagyal, Sena Medal, Vishisht Seva Medal, Commandant 39 GTC here on Tuesday.

After 31 weeks of basic and advanced military training,



Brigadier Rajeev Nagyal at passing out parade of Agniveers at 39-GTC.

Agniveers were transformed from young boys into disciplined soldiers. The POP marks the culmination of the rigorous training at 39 GTC which excels in transforming young boys into strong mentally fit, tough and battle ready soldiers.

The Commandant 39 GTC inspired the young hearts of Agniveer 002 batch by complimenting them for their hard work and outstanding performance. In his address, he mentioned the importance of train-

ing and exhorted the young soldiers to take pride in their uniform and country and wished them good luck for their next role.

The proud parents of the young soldiers were seen filled up with mixed emotions having a sense of pride in their children.

The historical event culminated with the parents being awarded the 'Gaurav Padak', a medal that symbolises their sacrifice to the nation.

Ajay Kumar Saroj bags silver in Asian Games

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

In the ongoing 19th Asian Games in China Ajay Kumar Saroj (26) made everyone proud by bagging a silver medal in the 1,500m race.

Hailing from a small village Kajiani (in Soraon block), Ajay had actively taken up sports since his teenage years.

He used to practise in the ground of Meva Lal Inter college of his village under the supervision of his father Dharamraj. His four siblings too are into athletics.

His father, a plumber by profession, never let his meagre income come between the dreams of his children. And for that, he didn't even shy away from borrowing money to buy shoes and kits for his kids. "I was a good runner during my school days but after early marriage and later kids, the talent somewhat lost its shine but then when my kids started showing interest, I guided them and steadily all the four of them showed vast potential. Since I

had limited income and yet I wanted my kids to be star runners one day, I took the job as a plumber and we somehow managed our kitchen and even borrowed money to buy shoes and kits for them," Dharamraj told the media.

First it was the eldest of the five, Ajit, who followed his father's wish and soon the daughters — Shashi and Shastri joined too. Ajit has won gold medals in national level competition in 800m and 1500m race.

Shashi and Shastri too have won medals in national level competitions in 10,000m and 5,000m races. Shastri has also won Indira Marathon.

However, in due course of time, Ajit got a job in Railways under sports quota. He is presently posted at Jamshedpur. As the condition of the family started improving, Ajit started helping and encouraging Ajay.

Ajay's mother Rani Devi said: "Many a times Ajay used to borrow shoes from his friends to participate in com-

petitions. Despite all the hardship, he always believed that he would change the destiny of the family and bring laurels for the country."

Presently Ajay is working in Railways. He has won gold medals in the 1500m event at the 2016 South Asian Games and 2017 Asian Athletics Championships. He has also won Gold in 1500m event at the South Asian Games 2019.

SEMINAR CONCLUDES: The department of English and Modern European Languages of the Allahabad University successfully hosted a three-day national seminar sponsored by ICSSR on the topic 'Epistemic (In)Justice and the Shaping of Indian Society' which concluded here.

The first plenary session of the concluding day of the seminar began with a lecture by Ashok Jahnavi Prasad who spoke on science and democracy and Prof Sumit Chakraborty from Presidency University delivered a thought-provoking lecture about how

intellectuals such as Bankim proposed three narratives; namely Dharma, Science and History.

Later, Tajuddin Ahmed spoke on writings of Muslim women and their revolution. Vinod Kumar Singh from DU, spoke about Adivasi narratives.

The second plenary session, held online, was presided over by Prof Manoj Kumar. The speakers in this session were Prof Amulya Purohit from Ravenshaw University who spoke about epistemic injustice in the classroom, Prof Sushant Kumar Mishra from Nalanda University who spoke on theological uniformity with reference to European history.

On the first day the participants had the privilege to listen Prof Anamika, winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award, who talked extensively about feminism, hyper-feminism and the condition of women, followed by Prof Christel Devadawson's lecture on epistemic injustice.

Property worth ₹ 8.25 cr of Vijay Mishra's kin attached

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Property of Satish Mishra, nephew of mafia don-turned politician Vijay Mishra, worth ₹ 8.25 crore was attached on Tuesday by the Bhadohi police in Allahpur area. Satish owned a big two-storey building in Allahpur in the name of his mother-in-law and wife. The Bhadohi police acted on an order of Bhadohi District Magistrate Gaurang Rath

either by him or his gang men to attach or demolish them.

DUES CLEARED: An octogenarian here contacted the Excise department and cleared the dues of licence fee of liquor shop pending against his name for about five decades. He settled the entire dues of ₹1.48 lakh in one go.

The individual does not want to reveal his identity and maintains what he did was his personal choice. However, the excise department is upholding this case as an example for other defaulters to follow. There are 73 defaulters from the district who have not paid their licence fee for long.

This unique case comes at a time when realising dues from defaulters has been a major challenge for the excise department and various schemes too are introduced from time to time to settle the

dues. Of the 74 cases, many are over three decades old.

The department includes the licensees on the list of defaulters who do not deposit the full fee after obtaining the licence of liquor shop. The interest on their outstanding amount increases year after year.

Although the department had lost all hopes of getting back the amount from this person, a few days ago the default-er approached the officers and after showing the documents, deposited an amount of ₹ 1.48 lakh and took no dues certificate.

Excise inspector Avnish Pandey said "He had taken the licence of a liquor shop from the department in 1972-73 but did not deposit the fee of ₹ 74,000 which increased over the years. The licence fee remained outstanding and later the liquor shop was closed.

Even after the shop was closed, the licensees did not come forward and the principal amount and interest kept increasing. By March this year, this amount had increased to ₹ 6.74 lakh."

Meanwhile, the department came out with a one-time settlement scheme. According to Pandey, "One fine day this individual contacted the office and sought information about his dues. After this, his liability was settled at ₹ 1.48 lakh," he added.

District excise officer Jitendra Kumar Singh said: "Although we don't know what exactly went into the mind of this particular while clearing his dues at the winter of his life. Surely, he is an inspiration for other defaulters. Others should also come forward and clear the outstanding dues for which this scheme has been launched."

Woman hangs self due to domestic discord

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): Due to domestic discord, a married woman hanged herself in Helipar locality under Shivkuti police station here on Tuesday night. The police reached the spot on Wednesday morning and sent the body for post-mortem. Police are interrogating the family members. During initial interrogation, the police came to know that a family feud took place between Shivani and her husband Anand over eating cucumber while having dinner at night.

During initial interrogation, the police came to know that a family feud took place between Shivani and her husband Anand over eating cucumber while having dinner at night.

locked from inside they went into the room and found Shivani's body hanging.

On getting information, police force was sent to the spot. When the police arrived, both the children and family

members were present in the house. Anand had gone out somewhere. After interrogating the family, the body has been sent for the post-mortem. No complaint has been filed yet from any side.

AIR SHOW: When devotees and locals visited the Sangam area on Tuesday evening they were surprised and thrilled to witness high-speed sorties of several fighter jets that zoomed past over the twin rivers with deafening sound. It was part of practice drill of Indian Air Force fighter jets ahead of the October 8 air show to commemorate the 91st anniversary of IAF. A stunning display of fighter jets like Tejas and SU30, C-130, Apache attack helicopters along Sarang choppers, Chetak and Harvard trainer aircraft left the onlookers completely spellbound. "These fighters and

choppers will continue to do their practice sessions everyday which will give the local populace an idea of the might of IAF and finally they can watch the air show on October 6 and 8," said defence PRO, Gp Capt Samir Gangakhedkar. Till Tuesday, several fighters had arrived at IAF base of Prayagraj including C-130. After this initial phase of practising, a full-dress rehearsal would be held on October 6. Apart from these fighters, choppers and aircraft, vintage aircraft Tiger Moth too has reached Prayagraj and started practice. As locals were not informed in advance regarding the practising session, the were left surprised to witness the manoeuvres of these fighters. Equally attractive was the low-flying by the Sarang choppers which performed some basic manoeuvres to start with their practice.

DM: Ensure proper sanitation & illumination in mela area

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate (DM) Priyanka Niranjan at a meeting organised in Collectorate on Tuesday reviewed the progress in works for organising the Navratri Mela at Vindhyaachal asked the officials to submit a detailed report about the works done till October 7 to City Magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh so that necessary action could be taken to complete them within the stipulated time. She said all roads as well as the streets have to be repaired cleaned properly.

She directed the officials of nagar palika, zila panchayat and development authority to ensure proper sanitation and illumination in entire mela area.

The EO Nagar Palika was

specifically directed to ensure cleaning as well as barricading at the Ganga ghats where the devotees have to take bath. The EO was directed to provide changing rooms at the ghats and temporary toilets for the devotees.

The AMA zila panchayat was directed to ensure availability of motor boats equipped with all necessary facilities related to safety measures besides all information related to divers, including home address and phone numbers. Regarding the 24-hour availability of potable water at important places, the nagar palika was directed to make available 15 water tankers, jal nigan – eight and zila panchayat – seven water tankers and place them at the identified 30 places and ensure regular supply of water to the devotees.

In the meeting the issues like police arrangements, transportation and other arrangements were also discussed. The DM said no laxity in work will be tolerated at all.

ARRESTED: The Kachhawaan police arrested a cattle smuggler carrying a reward of Rs 25, 000 after an encounter on Tuesday. Ram Bachan Yadav of Launda village under Alinagar police station, Chandauli, was an accused in a case registered at Rajgarh police station but was at large for months. On being tipped off by an informer about the presence of the accused in the area the Kachhawaan police informed the authorities. As per the strategy the command was handed over to circle officer (CO) Sadar Shailendra Tripathi. The accused opened fire during police raid but was

nabbed. The police recovered a countrymade gun of 315 bore from the possession of the criminal along with cartridge. The police sent the accused to jail.

DRIVE: Chairman Cooperative Bank Jagdish Singh Patel while interacting with the media on Tuesday thanked the entire team for its hard labour and said it was their achievement that the district secured 16th place in the state regarding the one month membership drive. He said not only farmers but skilled and non-skilled labourers also took membership. He said that the bank had planned to provide the loan up to Rs 3 lakh to the members at the interest of three per cent per year. Vice-chairman Vipul Singh and others were also present during the press conference.

Raising the pitch

Rahul's 'Jitni abaadi, utna haq' slogan is being dissected across political spectrum

The Indian political system has been since the very beginning interspersed by one too many slogans; some inspiring, some catchy and a few downright ugly. Mentioning even a few would be a Herculean task, but 'Angrezo Bharat Chhodo' to 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan' to 'Garibi Hatao' to 'Mandal Kamandal', 'Tilak, taraazu aur talwaar' and 'Mandir wahin banayenge' are quick to jump to mind. The important thing is that these phrases oftentimes play a pivotal role in moulding public opinion and shifting support for a particular party. Now, with the 2024 general elections almost here, Congress' senior leader Rahul Gandhi has coined the latest, 'Jitni abaadi, utna haq'. The Gandhi scion has unmistakenly been enthused by the recent revelations of Bihar's caste census; along similar lines he and his party have been vociferously demanding a pan-India caste census for some time now. In his hurry to own the initiative, however, Rahul seems to have jumped the gun somewhat and uttered just a little more than what he actually intended to convey: The need for equitable distribution of resources and opportunities among. The ongoing discourse around it highlights the complex dynamics of Indian politics where identity, regionalism and nationalism often intertwine. The slogan has understandably caused a stir within the Congress and invited a sharp and swift rebuke from none less than Prime Minister Modi, who wondered whether Rahul and the Congress were against the interests of minorities.

He opined that the nation's poor, whichever caste or religion they belonged to, must have the first right on its resources. Wasting no time in seizing upon the controversy, Modi accused the Congress of playing 'divisive politics.' He argued that such slogans serve to only create discord and hinder national unity. Critics of the Congress also allege that it is exploiting regional grievances to gain electoral advantage, a tactic frequently used by regional parties to consolidate their support base. They apprehend that the slogan could polarise the electorate even along regional lines, eroding the party's broader appeal. As the Congress seeks to reinvent itself and regain its political relevance, it will need to carefully consider the messaging it adopts and the potential consequences of such messaging. While it may appear to be a call for social justice, it has divided the party internally. Some members argue that it underscores the importance of addressing regional disparities, which is a legitimate concern. They believe that it resonates with voters who have long felt neglected by the Government. However, other party leaders express reservations, arguing that the slogan might be interpreted as promoting identity politics, potentially alienating voters who don't belong to regions with high population densities. The slogan also raises questions about the Congress' strategy as it attempts to regain its footing in electoral politics, with certain analysts believing that its adoption of identity-based slogans is an attempt to counter the BJP's successful use of nationalistic and cultural appeals.



People watch the overflowing Dassam Falls, after continuous rains, in Ranchi

PTI

Is IAF's engine crisis finally over?

India has become the fifth country in the world to produce jet engines but are we self-sufficient yet?

Months after United States' Defence giant GE Aeronautics signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India's Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the US Congress has given clearance to the deal for manufacturing F414 jet engines in India for HAL's Light Combat Aircraft Tejas Mark 2. The MoU was signed when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on a two-day state visit to the US in June this year. Although the MoU was signed when PM Modi was in the US in June itself, however, according to the process, the State Department notified the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 28. The deal is significant because the US treats jet engine technology as a "Crown jewel" and hasn't shared similar tech with even its closest allies. For its part, India has lagged in jet engine technology, a gap that the agreement can bridge, helping bolster both India's aerial power, especially in the backdrop of the fragile situation with China at the Line of



Actual Control, and its ambition of building a domestic defence industrial base. GE Aerospace would transfer 80% of its technology to India for the manufacture of F414 fighter jet engines under this agreement. Under the Transfer of Technology (ToT) provision, both the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft, which is now under construction and will have twin engines, and the LCA (Light Combat Aircraft) Mark II will be powered by the India-specific GE-F414 INS6 engine, which will be introduced by Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) early next year and enter service by the end of 2024. The 4.5 generation Mark II Tejas, which would replace the Mirage 2000 and MiG-29 aircraft and carry roughly 6.5 tonnes of missiles and munitions, will be powered by the GE-F414 engine in place of the 4+ generation LCA Tejas

Mark II's GE-404 engine. A replacement for the MiG-21, the LAC Mark I can only carry 3.5 tonnes of missiles and ammunition and has half the operational range and warfighting capability of the Mark II. For the Indian Air Force, India intends to construct more than six squadrons, and it also intends to export the fighters to other interested nations. The twin-engine Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) being developed by ADA, the nodal agency under DRDO for the development of LCAs, will likewise be powered by the GE-F414 engine. The LCA Mk2 will have improved range, enhanced survivability, better situational awareness for pilots, network-centric capabilities, and the ability to quickly switch from one role to another. Some other fighter planes powered by the F414 engine include Boeing F/A-18E/F Super Hornet, Boeing E/A-18G Growler and Saab JAS 39E/F Gripen NG. Apart from this, New Delhi has also decided to develop a jet engine in collaboration with France. France company Safran and

DRDO will be working jointly on this project. It is pertinent to note that with India and the US signing this deal, India became the fifth country in the world to produce jet engines, joining the United States, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom. The deal will not only bolster India's military capabilities and expand defence production, the deal will also assist in replacing India's ageing fighter fleet. The partnership is being considered as a "Big game changer", as it forms the basis for future indigenous engines that will power fighter aircraft. India is using the American engine for the indigenous aircraft after the setbacks in developing an indigenous jet engine, with the project to develop the Kaveri engine not giving the expected results. However, a version of the Kaveri engine is being used to power the Ghatik drone. This Deal has come to life at a very critical juncture from the context of India's fighter aircraft ecosystem. (The writer is a freelancer; views expressed are personal)



RAHUL KAMBLE

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Homegrown terrorists run berserk in Pakistan



BHOPINDER SINGH

Pakistan's attempts to blame India or other neighbours for terrorist attacks are unconvincing as the country is facing challenges from within

Earlier last month, nine Pakistani soldiers were killed as a convoy was attacked by "terrorists", in the Bannu district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Days earlier, a police vehicle was ambushed in the neighbouring Lakki Marwat district, killing two policemen. While the province was always restive and lawless, this time the identity of "terrorists" (a term generously adopted by Pakistan, finally) was a matter of concern. It was not the usual suspects of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that was responsible, but an independent outfit that had supposedly mutated, thereof. A new entity by the name of Lashkar-i-Sufyan Karvan had owned up to the Bannu attack. In both cases, the target was unequivocally the 'establishment' (read, Pakistani security apparatus).

A completely different impulse and purpose for the "terrorist" besets the neighbouring Balochistan Province, which has had secessionist undercurrents and their grouse is the purported indifference, exploitation and loot of its people and resources. The Chinese-funded takeover of the Gwadar Port and the other China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) imperatives that brought precious little for the Baloch themselves, added even more salt to the injury, hence the persistent armed insurgency against the State and its 'establishment'. Amidst all this furnace of terror that Pakistan has metastasised into, is the sectarian angularity of the Sunni-Shia divide. The likes of Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), Jundallah etc., have their rationales and passions to unleash violence. Finally, there are Pan-Islamic groups who don't necessarily have a geographical sense of aspiration but a more societal one that could morph into pursuing the agenda like a 'Caliphate' e.g., by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province, or even a regional-sectarian force like the Tehreek-e-Jafaria Pakistan (TeJP) that is supposedly supported by Iran. So, as Pakistan reels and implodes with various "terror" attacks, it takes time to attribute the same to one force or



the other, as seemingly every section of the society has something to settle against someone else! The historical and puerile attempts of passing the buck onto India/RAW or neighbours like Afghanistan or Iran are becoming increasingly unconvincing as the gunpowder and matchstick are all within the cauldron of self-created Pakistan, which is now an explosive tinderbox. Pakistan does not require outside help to explain its situation and every terror attack is therefore faced with a 'Whodunit' conundrum. No one is quite sure of the presumed reason for anyone to perpetuate violence and bloodshed, anymore. The latest "terror" attack, albeit, without any ownership or attribution yet, took place in the nondescript Mastung district of Balochistan. Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has confirmed at least 55 deaths, as a suicide bomber blew himself up targeting a 12th Rabiul Awwal procession, outside a mosque. In an unprecedented move, the auto-instinctive presumption of the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was countered by its immediate denial. Yet another deadly attack took place on the same day targeting a Police Station's Mosque in the Hangu township of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa killing five people, at least

“NO EXECUTION OF AN ATTACK OF THIS MAGNITUDE AND INTENSITY CAN BE DONE BY A ‘LONE-WOLF’ MODEL AS IT NEEDS A SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

had telltale signs and familiar targets, but not so for the Mastung attack. In a sign that is even more worrisome, the lack of ownership or attribution to a known force, suggests a possible new strain of societal degradation, if that were to be possible. The rote Pakistani government reaction of a headless chicken with a deflected call-out to the "enemy that wanted to destroy religious tolerance and peace in Balochistan with foreign blessings" continued, with frankly no takers. Mastung is not unfamiliar with terror, as in 2018 over 125 people were killed in a similar suicide attack. The purported attacker had targeted a political rally and the Islamic State-Khorasan Province had claimed responsibility. The Saga of bloodshed in Mastung was reiterated in the year 2017 killing 28 (but there was a political angle with the targeting of the convoy of Deputy Chairman Senate), in the year 2014 killing 24 (sectarian angle targeting Shia pilgrims) and in the year 2012 killing 20 (targeting buses with remote control). But the latest attack on a procession celebrating the Holy Prophet's birthdate, composed of a heterogeneous populace beyond sectarianism or partisanship, or pointedly at any element of the 'establishment', is simply beyond standard explanation.

No execution of an attack of this magnitude and intensity can be done by a 'lone-wolf' model as it needs a significant amount of planning. Though the exact date of the Holy Prophet's birthdate is sometimes disputed amongst Islamic theorists and often the headline Wahabis, Salafis etc., do not partake in the Mawlid or Eid-e-Milad un-Nabi celebrations as they take it for a recent innovation. Interestingly, while it is celebrated in our sub-continent, the officially Salafi countries like Saudi Arabia and Qatar do not recognise. But disagrees with the same reached a level that it warrants a deadly attack is a matter of deeper enquiry – however, the same cannot be discounted given the recent reach of Wahabi or Salafi sensibilities in Pakistan. An extremist Egyptian Maliki, Taj-al din had equated it to a haram (forbidden) activity by pronouncing that it was, a "bida that was introduced by idlers, and a delight to which gluttons abandon themselves". It is a puritanical and revisionist view that could have possible takers in Pakistan which is in the throes of religiosity. For now, the 'Whodunit' conundrum stays. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AVOIDABLE CONTROVERSY
India's heptathlon athlete, Swapna Barman, couldn't defend her title in the Asian Games 2023, finishing in 4th place, just 4 points behind her fellow Indian, Nandini Agasara. In the process, Nandini secured the bronze medal in the women's heptathlon event, while the defending champion Swapna returned home without a medal. However, Swapna caused controversy on social media when she claimed that the athlete who won bronze is a 'transgender' and shouldn't have been allowed to participate in the event. She later deleted her post, stating, "I have lost my Asian Games bronze medal to a transgender woman at the 19th Asian Games held in Hangzhou, China. I want my medal back as it goes against the rules of our Athletics. Please help and support me." It's shocking! As a passionate sports lover, I watched all seven events of the women's heptathlon. Swapna underperformed in all events and made a spectacle of herself by crying when she failed. Moreover, it is not only unprofessional but also baseless to make allegations against a fellow athlete like Nandini Agasara by claiming she is a 'transgender' in front of the world. People are shocked by Swapna's attempt to judge Nandini's gender. In sports, one must compete and accept defeat gracefully. If you can't handle defeat, you are not suited for any sport. I've witnessed Swapna's growth, and I urge her to show sportsmanship and think twice before accusing her fellow countrywoman. In my opinion, Swapna should face consequences for such remarks and be barred from future events, in line with the norms for unprofessional behaviour. Indians were disheartened to see this India vs. India battle unfold in the Hangzhou Asian Games. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Tragic Deaths in Maharashtra
It is truly appalling and tragic that as many as a dozen newborns and an equal number of adults died in a government-run hospital in Nanded, Maharashtra, in a single day. Currently, seventy individuals are reported to be in critical condition. This situation is exacerbated by a shortage of medical facilities and staff, with many nurses being transferred and not replaced. Numerous machines are out of order, and the hospital, with a capacity for 500 patients, is currently accommodating 1,200. There is also a shortage of essential medicines, and the hospital environment is unhygienic. Additionally, the food supplied falls far below prescribed standards. In general, healthcare facilities in most government-run hospitals are subpar, reflecting government negligence. Those in power should be held accountable for such lapses, but they often evade responsibility. The Right to Services Act should be made mandatory, ensuring quality services across all sectors to ensure that taxpayers receive value for their contributions to government funds. Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

CASTE SURVEY CREATES RIPPLES
Definitely, Bihar's caste-based survey has created a political ripple across the country. While Nitish Kumar boasts that this data can be used for inclusive development policies, growth-oriented programs, and educational reforms, the BJP has criticized it as an attempt to mislead the poor. This data will likely prompt the state to revise its existing reservation policy to increase the quota for the OBCs. The caste-based survey has justified the need to amend the reservation system to provide greater benefits to the OBCs and EBCs. The Modi Government has sidestepped this issue for political reasons for a long time. The caste-based survey indeed highlights the economic status of the people, and demands may arise for a similar survey nationwide. Zeeshan | Kazipet

BLACK MONEY IS A BIG ISSUE
Every year, approximately five percent of the GDP flows out of the country due to money laundering. While a 0.2 to 0.4 percent change in GDP sparks discussions, it's crucial to note that despite demonetization and digitization, black

money remains a significant problem. According to the UN Drugs and Crime Office, in the year 2021-22, when India's GDP exceeded 3 trillion dollars, approximately \$159 billion (about Rs 10 lakh crore), equivalent to five percent, was illicitly funneled abroad. This staggering figure erodes the economy like termites. Additionally, a FICCI-run organisation reports that illegal trade, drugs, arms, terrorism, and organized crime are more prevalent in India than the average of 122 countries. This problem persists, with tax evasion of around Rs 1 lakh crore occurring through fake invoices in import and export. Black money was a prominent issue in the 2014 general elections, with promises of recovery under a BJP government. However, the web of black money is proving challenging to break, let alone reduce. Even an organisation like SEBI, following a money laundering investigation ordered by the Supreme Court, has concluded that it reached a dead end. Nawas | Kollam

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FIRST COLUMN

GOD AND HIS MANY FORMS

God takes many forms; it does not matter which form you believe in



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

God is one and will eternally be so. And He takes many forms and incarnates as decided by Him. We are aware of His incarnations as Lord Ramachandra and Lord Krishna. We, on the other hand, are many souls and take different bodies, as deserved. Lord Krishna has described in some detail what God is like in the Bhagavad-Geeta. This article is about some of His incarnations and forms taken by Him.

Before I take it up, let me address the need for taking up so many forms by Bhagavan, and why we must not differentiate between them. All of us are different packages with specific natures, desires, attachments, etc. Therefore, it is obvious that we will be attracted to different forms of God. For example, I am helplessly attracted to Lord Krishna. I have a photo of my beloved Lord hanging on the right side of my bed. I routinely look at Him, do 'namaskar', pray to Him for guidance and help, thank Him for His 'kripa', etc. On the other hand, my mother was a staunch devotee of Lord Ramachandra. She read 'Sundar Kand' of the Ramacharitra Manas routinely till the very end of her life. Lord Ramachandra's photo dominated her 'pooja-ghar'. My mother-in-law has taken Mother Durga as her sole shelter. Durgaji's large photo hangs behind her bed, and there is an idol of her beloved mother on the right side of her bed.

God's different incarnations represent some qualities, which stand out. For example, Lord Ramachandra has been famously called 'Maryada Purushottama', because He upheld 'Maryada' throughout His presence on the planet Earth. Lord Krishna, as His name suggests, attracts. The word 'Krishna' is made from 'dhatu' krish, which means what attracts. I am well and truly attracted to my Lord. Then, there is Lord Narsimha,

who incarnated to punish Hiranyakashipu, who was torturing his devotee, Prahlad. God took the form of half man and half lion. The head was that of a lion and had a human torso. This 'avatar' is known to remove all evils against His devotees and protect them from all harm. I turn to Him when I am fearful and 'tamoguna' has become dominant in me. Is it not wonderful that we have so many forms of God to choose from? These multi-forms help us to worship God anywhere there is a temple of whatever form of God.

Describing some more forms of God, Lord Shiva comes to mind. The literal meaning of the word Shiva is auspicious. Mahadeva is part of the trinity composed of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. He was worshipped most famously by Lord Ramachandra in His incarnation in the 'treta yuga'. And there is the world-famous 'Kashi Vishwanath temple', which is visited by millions every year including many foreigners. I had the good fortune of having His 'darshan' there many times. Lord Narayana is another form of God. In this form, the Lord has four arms carrying a lotus flower, a conch, a mace and a chakra.

Chanting the holy name Narayana is believed to reinforce the good and annihilate the bad. Mother Kali is another form of God. Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa was her very famous devotee. She is regarded as the ultimate manifestation of 'shakti' (cosmic energy). And we all know why Shakti is so crucial to exist well. I am blessed to have a magnificent Kali temple close to my residence. Lord Ganesh is worshipped by one and all. He is prominently known as the remover of obstacles. It is no wonder that all auspicious activities are begun with the chant of 'Shri Ganeshaya Namah'. Hanumanji is especially known for His devotion to Lord Ramachandra in His incarnation. Hanumanji carried out many extremely difficult tasks for his beloved Lord. He is here with us on the earth to support/help us.

Lakshmiiji, who is worshipped in homes all over, especially at the time of 'Deepawali', is God's form of opulence. She brings prosperity, welfare and a good future. We should benefit from worshipping any of the multiple forms of God. They all add up, there is no loss of any kind.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views expressed are personal)

Pardhis: The traditional custodians of Cheetahs



BKP SINHA



ARVIND KUMAR JHA

The ‘pardhis’ have the knowledge that could significantly enhance the reach and effectiveness of our conservation efforts

The introduction of cheetahs into India has indeed sparked intense debate. The cheetahs were introduced in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh marking a significant milestone for the \$5 million project. Authorities maintain that reintroducing a top predator like cheetah can enhance the area's overall biodiversity by restoring the predator-prey balance. The presence of cheetahs can significantly attract tourists, potentially boost the local economy, and increase funds for conservation. On the scientific front, it can provide valuable data on reintroduction methodologies and challenges, which can be applied to similar projects worldwide for this species classified, by the IUCN as "vulnerable". Further, for the local communities, the presence of a historically significant animal can foster a sense of pride, furthering the cause of conservation.

The fate of this esteemed conservation endeavour hangs precariously in the balance. Nine cheetahs, six adults and three out of four cubs born in India, have succumbed to a tragic fate due to a multitude of afflictions. These reportedly include renal failure, physical injury, humidity-related infestations. Three of the first litter of four died apparently due to frailty, malnutrition, and dehydration. Concerns raised by many experts over the labelling of the cheetah's 'introduction' as a 'reintroduction' and positioning of the translocation as an example of the dilution of scientific rigour need much more serious consideration. Although the concerned international experts do not find the number of deaths alarming, many experts do not consider Kuno, a largely deciduous forest with sparse grasslands, as an ideal habitat for African cheetahs and opine that merely housing a few cheetahs is hardly an answer to the claimed restoration of India's grasslands.

The declared notion of cheetahs filling a unique ecological niche as a predator is also seen as not well-founded, given that Kuno already has a myriad of native predators. They mention that the resident blackbucks vanished when the habitat transitioned into woodlands with isolated tall grass segments. It is feared that with competition and challenges in finding suitable prey, cheetahs could venture beyond their intended territories, causing human-wildlife conflicts. Some international experts have also raised the issue of limited consultation with experts in cheetah ecology before the translocation.

History reveals that the habitat of the Asiatic cheetah in India was spread across scrublands, bushlands, arid and semi-arid terrains, and a mix of low hills and plains interrupted by rocky plateaus. Wildlife hunting, in general, was a specialized profession. Pardhis, a conglomerate of eleven types based on hunting methods and targeting wild animals, largely followed the geographical spread of relevant ecosystems as they roamed.

A set of astute and occupationally differentiated specialized hunters from amongst them were called 'Cheetah Pardhi' who applied a kind of very strong bird lime to the branches of the trees cheetahs inhabited, or set their snare traps made from deer guts near trees marked and revisited by the cheetahs either for claw sharpening or for relieving themselves. The Cheetah Pardhi community capitalized on this behaviour. They



trapped, trained, and deployed cheetahs for hunting; or traded them to the elites, princely states, and zamindaris.

Records show that Akbar had a remarkable assembly of 9,000 cheetahs. His successors Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb were also fond of hunting using trained cheetahs, leopards, and hawks. For this 'pardhis' were highly sought after by the royalty. The cheetah population in the wild faced a severe decline over time due to excessive hunting.

As time passed, the aristocracy's enduring fascination with these creatures prompted them to import African cheetahs, particularly post-1918. The era marked a surge in the import of African cheetahs to India, with previous records indicating just one specimen imported in 1890-91 for Calcutta's Alipore Zoo. With the royals of Baroda, Bhavnagar, and Kolhapur playing pivotal roles, by 1920, African cheetahs had largely supplanted their Asiatic counterparts in Indian captivity. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the use of sophisticated weapons coupled with the British Government's bounty system rewarding the killing of cheetahs, leopards, and other wildlife drastically reduced their numbers. The ancient art of cheetah trapping in India soon faded, and the Asiatic cheetah also, once widespread, left only fleeting footprints around the sal-bearing areas of central India, eventually disappearing entirely.

Anthropological literature indicates the bond between the Pardhis and the animals they trapped and tamed. The process was intricate, requiring immense patience and a deep understanding of the animals

(The writers are former Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, UP and Maharashtra; views are personal)

ning for trapping, grit, perseverance, tact, and knowledge of tools and equipment. However, what remains paramount, is the pardhi community's profound understanding of wildlife and ecosystems. The British declared the 'pardhis' as a criminal tribe in 1871. As a community, the 'pardhis' expertise wasn't just for sport; it was an art, a livelihood system, and hunting was bound by customs that sustained their tribe and the resource base. It's a fact that many hunting-related provisions in the wildlife-related rules in India were adopted from the unwritten conservation-oriented rules followed by the 'pardhis'.

Hunting licences were utilised primarily by the influentials till 1991, after which hunting was banned. Interestingly, hunters became some of the best conservationists. Though the tag of 'criminal tribe' was removed by the Government in 1952 for the Pardhis, the perception of enforcement agencies hardly changed. While the ban on hunting criminalised 'pardhis' livelihood system, they, once integral to India's wildlife and hunting legacy, found themselves completely marginalised. Some of them occasionally succumb to the allure of organised smugglers who exploit their skills to hunt tigers. The Pardhis' transition from admired hunters to those labelled as criminals, and eventually to ecological refugees in their homeland is truly poignant.

The current project dubbed the "world's first intercontinental large wild carnivore translocation project," presents unique challenges. The cheetahs being imported must adjust to an alien ecosystem with a qualitatively different food web and climatic conditions that sharply contrast with their native habitat. The impact of the cheetahs on and their response to

the existing biocomplexity and connectance will present new challenges that need to be addressed successfully. To ensure the project's success, we must adopt a purely professional approach, champion collaborative problem-solving over blame games; synergise efforts of all the stakeholders with genuine openness to feedback; prioritise the development of vacated village areas into grasslands; create conservation breeding enclosures for cheetahs; establish robust healthcare system and engage with locals with appropriate capacity building, awareness. In addition to the above, it's paramount to also source and harness the traditional knowledge of the cheetah 'pardhis' for the purpose. Today, the Forest Department's initiative of employing ex-poachers, sandalwood and rosewood smugglers in Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala and Kabini Wildlife Safari, Karnataka; and locals as guides in Kas plateau in Maharashtra, are a few examples of recognition and utilization of indigenous people and their knowledge. Integrating them into wildlife conservation efforts can be a win-win situation.

The 'pardhis' are not merely a tribe. They are the custodians of centuries of wisdom, their lives intricately woven into the tapestry of local ecosystems and cultures. Yet, they bear the unjust stigma of being a criminal tribe, a label that overshadows their rich heritage and intimate understanding of nature. Once this stigma is removed, the 'pardhis' has the potential to become invaluable allies in our conservation efforts. Their knowledge, honed over generations, could significantly enhance the reach and effectiveness of our current approaches. The choice to harness this wisdom or let it dissipate into oblivion lies with us.

Empowering through consent: Shaping a safer society

Consent is pivotal as it respects individual autonomy, fosters safety, maintains ethical standards, and promotes healthy, respectful relationships

Childhood is a treasured and formative phase in a person's life, marked by innocence and growth. However, for some, this period can turn into a time of great difficulty and hardship. Those who have endured the traumatic experience of child sexual abuse comprehend the immense emotional weight associated with harbouring dark secrets. In such cases of abuse, the individual often finds themselves trapped in a cycle of fear and shame, which can prevent them from reaching out for help or disclosing their suffering.

Startling statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2021 reveal that around 38.1% of India's child population experienced various forms of sexual offences. The alarming figures continue as children grow up, with nearly 30% of women reporting spousal violence and marital rape. The year saw over 17,000 cases of sexual harassment, more than 11,000 assault cases, and a staggering 31,677 reported rape cases.

Raising awareness about consent is critical, especially among adolescents. Consent is fundamental to safe relationships, respecting bodily autonomy and personal choices from age 1 to 101. Research conducted across the globe suggests that educating adolescents on the concept of consent can lead to fewer incidents of sexual assault but needs more evidence-based data.

Youngsters need to understand what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate physical contact. This awareness must also extend to married individuals who may experience spousal violence without comprehending the concept's relevance. Often, the issue of consent is overlooked within marital relationships, with a mistaken belief that it is acceptable merely because the two individuals are married.

It is with this context that the World Association of Sexual Health (WAS), an organization committed to providing universal access to Sexual Health, Rights, Justice, and Pleasure, annually observes World Sexual Health Day, with the focus this year on 'Consent'.

Sex education plays a pivotal role in introducing consent awareness. India's efforts began in 2005 with the 'Adolescence Reproductive and Sexual Health Education' (ASRH) project, providing age-appropriate information on topics like puberty, contraception, and STIs while promoting healthy attitudes towards sexuality, gender, and relationships. Despite these initiatives, the majority of Indian schools, both public and private, lack any form of sex education in their curriculum.

To bridge this gap, the government introduced the 'Adolescent Education Program' (AEP) in 2007 in partnership with NACO and UNICEF. The program builds life skills for adolescents to cope with the changes associated with growing up and provides education on HIV prevention, teen pregnancy, and substance use.

However, discussions on 'consent' and 'attraction' remained absent from these programs until the initiation of India's RISE program in 2020. This initiative educates female college students on gender, relationships, sexual violence, and bystander intervention, emphasizing the involvement of both genders in future prevention efforts. Additionally, the "Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition, and Redressal) Act" was enacted, emphasising the need to create secure environments for women.

In 2012, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act aimed to safeguard minors under 18 from sexual offences. The legislation criminalises child sexual abuse, establishes special courts for expeditious trials, and imposes penalties based on the severity of the offence. It has been suggested that children should be educated about POCSO laws and child-friendly procedures.

In the realm of physical and sexual interactions, 'consent' is a cornerstone. Hence, in tandem with governmental actions, sexuality educators, intimacy coaches, and sex therapists are also leveraging digital platforms like social media and interactive apps to promote awareness about sexual, reproductive, and mental health among a wide audience. Social for-profit enterprises have also been exploring this space to create social impact through sustainable business models.

For instance, educator Pallavi Barnwal, through GetIntimacy, tackles intimacy and sexuality challenges to enhance relationship satisfaction. On the other hand, ThatMate, a social enterprise, utilises its app to provide counselling, self-management, and sex education to teenagers in semi-urban and rural regions.

A holistic strategy involving educational reform, legal progress, and grassroots efforts is essential. Empowering women, reshaping relationship norms, and promoting consent education in a culturally sensitive manner is the way forward. Let's make 'Consent' the bold title of our societal narrative.



ROSHAN YEDERY

(The writer is Sector Lead, Healthcare, Villgro; views are personal)

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Bus plummets 15 m from elevated road in Venice, 21 killed

AP ■ VENICE

A bus carrying dozens of people plummeted 15 metres (50 feet) from an elevated road in Venice, Italy, causing a fiery crash that killed 21 people and injured at least 15, mostly foreign tourists returning to a nearby campsite.

Those who died in the Tuesday night crash included at least five Ukrainians, one German citizen and the man who was driving the bus, according to Venice prefecture.

At least two of the dead were children, Venice prefect Michele Di Bari said, adding that many of the people involved in the accident were “young”. Nine people were in critical condition, hospital officials said late Wednesday morning, including a 3-year-old girl from Ukraine.

Firefighters worked until dawn Wednesday to clear the wreckage. Later in the morning, traffic was slowly passing the spot where the bus burst through a guardrail and a rusted fence. Passersby stopped to contemplate the accident. A couple of locals said that the overpass was more than 60 years old and that nothing similar had ever happened there, while a man wearing a biker jacket stopped his motorcycle to tie to a post a bouquet of plastic flowers. The bus was carrying foreign tourists from



Venice's Piazzale Roma to the Hu campground on Tuesday evening when it fell from an elevated street next to railway tracks in the borough of Mestre, catching fire. Tourists frequently stay in boroughs across the lagoon from the canals of Venice's famous historic centre to find cheaper accommodations.

The injured, including five in serious condition, included French, Spanish, Austrian and Croatian nationals, local officials said. The Spanish Foreign Ministry said on Wednesday that two people from Spain were injured in the accident, and both were in hospital and in good condition.

The reason for the crash was unclear. Venice city councillor Renato Boraso said the driver, Alberto Rizzotto, was experienced. Local prosecutors are investigating if he felt ill.

Rescuers noted that the fact that the bus was electric contributed to the massive fire and made rescue operations more difficult. Godstime Erheneden was in his apartment near the accident when he heard a crash outside. He rushed outside and was among the first to enter the bus. “When we went in, we saw the driver right away. He was dead. I carried a woman out on my shoulders, then a man,” Erheneden told the local newspaper il Gazzettino.

Britain is not a racist country: Rishi Sunak

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Rishi Sunak addressed his first Conservative Party conference as party leader in Manchester on Wednesday and used his own elevation as the country's first Indian-origin Prime Minister as proof that the UK is not a racist country and that his skin colour was not a “big deal”. Dubbed as the most important speech of his political career nearly a year after he took charge as Tory leader, there was a lot riding on the 43-year-old leader's address to the governing party activists ahead of a general election expected next year.

After a warm and personal introduction by wife Akshata Murty, who praised his “honesty, integrity and strength of character,” Sunak went on to lay out his plans for what he hopes would win him the British public's mandate at the next polls.

“Never let anyone tell you that this is a racist country. It is not,” said Sunak. “My story is a British story. A story about how a family can go from arriving here with little to Downing



Street in three generations,” he said.

He went on to point to his frontline Cabinet members in the audience, among them Indian-origin Home Secretary Suella Braverman and Energy Secretary Claire Coutinho, as reflective of what the Tories offer migrant families, including “even the chance to become Prime Minister”. Reflecting on when he was first chosen by the local Conservative Association to contest from the stronghold of Richmond in North Yorkshire, a seat he has held as MP since his win in 2015, Sunak claimed people in other countries couldn't understand it.

“One American magazine even sent a reporter to Yorkshire to write about how ‘a candidate of the wrong race [could] cost the Tories one of the safest seats in England?’ But they should not have projected their own prejudices onto our country. The people of North Yorkshire were not interested in my colour, but my character,” shared Sunak.

“I am proud to be the first British Asian Prime Minister, but you know what, I'm even prouder that it's just not a big deal. And just remember: it was the Conservative Party who made that happen, not the [Opposition] Labour Party,” he added.

During the speech that will define the remainder of his term as Prime Minister until the next elections, Sunak's mantra was long-term decisions to transform the UK for a brighter future. He drew a line under an issue that had been brewing for days and cancelled the remainder of the High Speed-2 (HS2) railway project to instead invest GBP 36 billion in wider transport projects. Besides, he also made a

series of announcements across health and education sectors including plans to increase the smoking age.

“I propose that in future we raise the smoking age by one year, every year. That means a 14-year-old today will never legally be sold a cigarette and that they — and their generation — can grow up smoke free. We know this works,” he said.

On the education system, he added: “We will introduce the new rigorous, knowledge rich Advanced British Standard which will bring together A-Levels and T-Levels into a new, single qualification for our school leavers. First, this will finally deliver on the promise of parity of esteem between academic and technical education because all students will sit the Advanced British Standard.

“Second, we will raise the floor, ensuring that our children leave school literate and numerate because with the Advanced British Standard all students will study some form of English and maths to 18, with extra help for those who struggle most.”

US: Canadian allegations against India ‘serious’

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Canadian allegations regarding India's involvement in the killing of a pro-Khalistan separatist are “serious” and need to be investigated fully, the White House has said. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), was killed in Surrey, British Columbia on June 18. India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020.

Tensions flared between India and Canada last month following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations of “potential” involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Nijjar. India has angrily rejected the allegations as “absurd” and “motivated”.

The claims made by Canada were discussed when visiting External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met here last week,

John Kirby, Coordinator for Strategic Communications at the National Security Council in the White House told reporters at a news conference here.

“The issue was discussed. We'll certainly leave it to those two countries to talk about their bilateral relationship,” Kirby said in response to a question.

“We've been clear, these allegations are serious, they need to be fully investigated and of course, as we've said before, we urge India to participate actively in that investigation,” Kirby said. Jaishankar, who also met his counterpart Antony Blinken during his visit, told journalists in Washington last week that the governments of India and Canada will have to talk to each other and see how they resolve their differences over the issue and underlined that the larger issue of “permissiveness” must be flagged and

addressed. State Department's Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters at a separate news conference that it's critical that Canada's investigation proceeds and the perpetrators are brought to justice.

“We also have, as we've previously said publicly and privately, urged the Indian government to cooperate in the Canadian investigation and cooperate in those efforts,” he said.

The US, he said, has seen the reports on the diplomatic staffing levels for the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi.

“But I don't have anything further to offer on those reports and certainly don't want to get into hypotheticals and take this process one step at a time. As it relates to our Indo-Pacific strategy and the focus that we continue to place on the region, that effort and that line of work is going to continue,” he said.

Shooting at US University wounds 5

Baltimore (AP): Five people were wounded, none critically, in a shooting outside a residence hall at Morgan State University in Baltimore on Tuesday, according to authorities, who urged students to take shelter on the campus of the historically Black college.

The Baltimore Police Department initially said officers were on the scene for an “active shooter situation” around 9:30 p.m. Police kept the campus on lockdown for hours and provided little information about their investigation.

The gunfire shattered windows at a residential building that's on the same block as a city police station.

Police Commissioner Richard Worley said the five victims, four males and one female, are between the ages of 18 and 22.

Pope challenges leaders at UN talks to slow global warming before it's too late

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis shamed and challenged world leaders on Wednesday to commit to binding targets to slow climate change before it's too late, warning that God's increasingly warming creation is fast reaching a “point of no return”. In an update to his landmark 2015 encyclical on the environment, Francis heightened the alarm about the “irreversible” harm to people and planet already under way and lamented that once again, the world's poor and most vulnerable are paying the highest price.

“We are now unable to halt the enormous damage we have caused. We barely have time to prevent even more tragic damage,” Francis warned.

He took square aim at the United States, noting that per-capita emissions in the US are twice as high as China and seven times greater than the average in poor countries.

Pope conducts meeting on church's future

Vatican City (AP): Pope Francis opened a big meeting on the future of the Catholic Church on Wednesday by saying it was in need of repair to make it a place of welcome for “everyone, everyone, everyone”, not a rigid barricade riven by fears and ideology. Francis presided over a solemn Mass in St. Peter's Square to formally open the meeting, which progressives are hoping will lead to more women in leadership roles and conservatives are warning could split the church.

Rarely in recent times has a Vatican gathering generated as much hope, hype and fear as this three-week, closed-door meeting, known as a synod. It won't make any binding decisions and is only the



first session of a two-year process. But it nevertheless has drawn an acute battle line in the church's perennial left-right divide and marks a defining moment for Francis and his reform agenda. In his homily, Francis acknowledged the ideological divisions at play but urged the faithful to put them aside and instead listen to the Holy Spirit.

While individual, household efforts are helping, “we can state that a broad change in the irresponsible lifestyle connected with the Western model would have a significant long-term impact,” he said.

The document, “Praise God,” was released on the feast of St Francis of Assisi, the pontiff's nature-loving namesake, and was aimed at spurring negotiators to commit to binding climate targets at the next round of UN talks in Dubai.

Francis weighed in on a key and contentious point of negotiations — whether countries should agree to a phase out of coal, oil and natural gas, the fossil fuels that are causing climate change.

He is for it. As fast as possible even, he wrote. He lamented that “the necessary transition towards clean energy sources, such as wind and solar energy, and the abandonment of fossil fuels is not progressing at the necessary speed”.

3 scientists win Nobel Prize in chemistry

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in chemistry for their work on quantum dots — tiny particles that can release very bright coloured light and are used in electronics and medical imaging.

Moungi Bawendi, of MIT; Louis Brus, of Columbia University, and Alexei Ekimov, of Nanocrystals Technology Inc., were honoured for their work with the particles, just a few atoms in diameter, and that “have unique properties and now spread their light from television screens and LED lamps,” according to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which announced the award in Stockholm.

“They catalyze chemical reactions and their clear light



From left: Scientists Moungi Bawendi, Louis Brus, Alexei Ekimov

can illuminate tumour tissue for a surgeon,” the academy said.

Quantum dots' electrons have constrained movement, and this affects how they absorb and release visible light, allowing for very bright colours.

In a highly unusual leak, Swedish media reported the names of the winners before the

prize was announced. “There was a press release sent out for still unknown reasons. We have been very active this morning to find out exactly what happened,” Hans Ellegren, the secretary-general of the academy, told the news conference where the award was announced. “This is very

unfortunate, we do regret what happened.” The academy, which awards the physics, chemistry and economics prizes, asks for nominations a year in advance from thousands of university professors and other scholars around the world.

A committee for each prize then discusses candidates in a series of meetings throughout the year. At the end of the process, the committee presents one or more proposals to the full academy for a vote. The deliberations, including the names of nominees other than the winners, are kept confidential for 50 years.

Ekimov, 78, and Brus, 80, are early pioneers of the technology, while Bawendi, 62, is credited with revolutionizing the production of quantum dots “resulting in almost perfect

‘Bangkok mall shooting suspect used modified blank-firing handgun’

Bangkok (AP): The teenage boy who allegedly shot two people dead and wounded five others inside a major shopping mall in the center of Thailand's capital used a blank-firing handgun that had been modified to fire real bullets, police said on Wednesday.

The suspect was arrested less than an hour after the first gunshots on Tuesday afternoon at the Siam Paragon mall, one of Bangkok's biggest and most upscale shopping destinations. Video on social media showed a long-haired teenage boy in the custody of police. Thai media reported the 14-year-old was a student at a

greatly by the pandemic.

Unions representing Kaiser workers in August asked for a \$25 hourly minimum wage, as well as increases of 7% each year in the first two years and 6.25% each year in the two years afterward.

They say understaffing is boosting the hospital system's profits but hurting patients, and executives have been bargaining in bad faith during negotiations.

“They're not listening to the frontline health care workers,” said Mikki Fletchall, a licensed vocational nurse based in a Kaiser medical office in Camarillo, California. “We're striking because of our patients. We don't want to have to do it, but we will do it.” Kaiser has proposed minimum hourly wages of between \$21 and \$23 next year depending on the location. Since 2022, the hospital system has hired 51,000 workers and has plans to add 10,000 more people by the end of the month.

Bangkok private school. Police Chief Torsak Sukvimol said he had a record of being treated for mental illness and gave an incoherent account of his actions after his arrest, claiming that voices told him what to do.

Police on Wednesday declined to provide more details about the boy, citing privacy laws. Police Col. Tiammetha, told The Associated Press that the suspect has five charges lodged against him: premeditated murder, attempted murder, possession of a firearm without a permit, carrying a firearm in a public place without a permit, and shooting in public without a permit.

Akshata makes political stage debut for ‘best friend’ UK Prime min

PTI ■ LONDON

Britain's Indian First Lady, Akshata Murty, made a surprise debut on the political stage on Wednesday when she stepped out to introduce “best friend” Rishi Sunak for his maiden speech as UK Prime Minister to the Conservative Party conference in Manchester. Murty, during her light-hearted and personal speech, claimed her husband was unaware of her “gate-crashing” as the warm-up act to the centrepiece of the annual conference and that her decision had also surprised their daughters, Krishna and Anoushka.

The 43-year-old daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayan Murthy went on to share her pride in Sunak's many achievements and how it was his “honesty and integrity” that had first attracted her to him when they met as students at Stanford University in their 20s.

“Rishi and I are each other's best friends; we are one team and I could not imagine being anywhere else than here today to show my support to him and to the party,” said Murty. “Rishi and I met when we were 24 when we were both studying abroad in America. Right from the very beginning, I was struck by two things about him...his deep love for his home, the United Kingdom, and his sincere desire to ensure as many people as possible have a chance to have the opportunities he was lucky enough to have had. It completely energised him. Being with Rishi was the easiest decision of my life,” she said.

According to Murty, the one word that encapsulates her husband is “aspiration”, which drives him to work for a better future for the UK. “Sometimes when the going gets tough, I remind Rishi that he's fighting for his values. That he's fighting for this party's values, knowing that it's a hard road ahead. That success is hard one,” she said.



During the lighter moments in her speech, Murty confirmed media reports about Sunak's preference for rom-coms and described him as “fun, thoughtful and compassionate”.

“He has an incredible zest for life. What drew me to him most was his strength of character, his honesty, his integrity, with a firm understanding of right from wrong. It's what I'm still drawn to, even today, after 14 years of being married,” she said.

“Rishi, you know this, you know that doing the right thing for the long term even when it is hard is the right thing to do. I hope you also know how proud you make our girls and me every single day,” concluded Murty, to sustained applause from the Tory gathering as a visibly moved Sunak stepped out onto the stage.

During his much-anticipated address, Sunak opened with the central theme of the Tory conference to say that Murty was the “best long-term decision for a brighter future” he had made.

Sunak said since he became Prime Minister in October last year the government has “done good things in that time”. He went on to highlight that the political system over the last 30 years had incentivised easy decisions short-term rather than the right ones.

“It doesn't have to be this way, I won't be this way,” he declared.

Republican party in disarray after House votes out McCarthy

Washington (PTI): The opposition Republican Party plunged into a crisis as its Speaker Kevin McCarthy lost the gavel after a small group of its Congressmen joined hands with the Democratic Party in an unprecedented vote in the House of Representatives.

Eight Republicans led by Congressman Matt Gaetz voted against McCarthy along with the Democrats in a 216 to 210 votes on Tuesday afternoon. Congressman Patrick McHenry was declared Speaker pro tempore as the two parties chalk out their future course of action. This is the first time since 1910 that a House voted on whether to remove a sitting Speaker. “The reason Kevin McCarthy went down today is because nobody trusts Kevin McCarthy. Kevin McCarthy has made multiple contradictory promises. And when they all came due, he lost votes from people who maybe don't even ideologically agree with me on everything,” Gaetz told reporters soon after the vote. Gaetz and his team were upset that McCarthy entered into a deal with the Democrats to prevent a government shutdown.

On September 30, the House of Representatives voted to pass a continuing resolution with the support of more Democrats than Republicans which was quickly passed by the Senate and signed by the President. The new deadline to fund the government is November 17.

“Today's vote to remove Kevin McCarthy as Speaker of the House is an unprecedented action that showcases the dysfunction and infighting within the House Republican Caucus,” Indian American Congressman from the Democratic Party Ami Bera said.

Improve corporate governance, FM asks company secretaries

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday urged company secretaries to rededicate themselves for better corporate governance, as India gears to become a developed nation by 2047.

Addressing the 55th Foundation Day of the Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI), the finance minister said it is time to "rededicate ourselves for and towards better corporate governance... We cannot see our value systems being diluted... Corporate governance is an issue on which all of us are committed."

Praising ICSI, she said, the high standard set by the institute is well recognised across the world.

She appreciated the decision of the ICSI to waive off registration fee for Agniveer, defence personnel and families of mar-



tyrs for enrollment in company secretaries course.

The other decision, to donate Rs 11 lakh for the education of daughters of martyrs, is also praiseworthy, she noted.

The Finance Minister said the government has taken significant steps to promote ease of

doing business like decriminalisation of minor offences, introduction of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, simplification of regulatory frameworks, tax reforms, and removal of unnecessary and archaic compliance or laws.

As many as 39,000 unne-

cessary compliances have all been removed, along with 1,500 archaic laws, she said.

Since 2014, for the kind of FDI reforms that the government has undertaken, she said, India has received about USD 230 billion in the last three financial years, which means interest of companies to get invested in India and to run businesses here is now very clearly pronounced.

"And that's where corporate good governance, which you as company secretaries can bring in, makes a difference," she said.

Speaking on the occasion, Corporate Affairs Secretary Manoj Govil said, the number of companies and LLP incorporation during the year is higher by 11 per cent compared to last year.

With regard to the winding-up process, Govil said, it has come down from 180 days to 100 days during this year.

Hindustan Zinc signs deal to deploy GreenLine's LNG-powered trucks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hindustan Zinc Ltd has signed a deal to deploy GreenLine Mobility Solution Ltd's LNG-powered fleet in its supply chain and transportation operations, India's first and the only LNG-fuelled heavy trucking logistics company said on Wednesday.

In a statement, GreenLine said it will invest Rs 200 crore for deploying LNG-powered trucks for Hindustan Zinc's road logistics.



commitment of our management and employees. Deployment of LNG vehicle align with our approved SBTi targets to reduce 50 per cent of absolute Scope 1 and 2 GHG emissions and further reduction of 25 per cent of absolute Scope 3 GHG emissions by FY2030 from the base year FY2020."

By introducing LNG vehicles, the company is not just showcasing its commitment towards decarbonising Indian mining but also paving the way for a transport revolution, he said. "This is yet another step towards our vision of net-zero by 2050 or sooner, and we look forward to scaling this up in the coming months."

Anand Mimani, CEO, GreenLine, said, "Indian corporate leadership is committed to reducing their carbon footprint, and we are enabling their mission with our green logistics solutions. Clean, green mobility

solutions will play a very important role in helping industries achieve their sustainability goals."

Hindustan Zinc is committed to achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

GreenLine's LNG-powered trucks, manufactured by Blue Energy Motors, reduce toxic emission significantly compared to diesel - CO2 by up to 30 per cent, SOx by up to 100 per cent, NOx by up to 59 per cent, particulate matter by up to 91 per cent and CO by up to 70 per cent.

GreenLine has collaborated with multiple organizations to create India's first and only integrated green logistics ecosystems to make LNG trucking a reality in India, paving the way for widespread adoption of LNG fuelled long haul trucks by showcasing its immense advantages for corporates, the statement added.

Adani firm shares climb 3 per cent as IHC hikes stake

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Adani Enterprises Ltd climbed more than 3 per cent on Wednesday after Abu Dhabi conglomerate International Holding Company (IHC) raised its stake in the Adani group's flagship firm.

The stock jumped 3.22 per cent to Rs 2,464.40 on the BSE. During the day, it rallied 4.76 per cent to Rs 2,501.40.

On the NSE, it climbed 3.22 per cent to Rs 2,464.30.

Days after selling its stake in two of Adani group companies, Abu Dhabi conglomerate IHC on Tuesday said it has raised its stake in Adani Enterprises Ltd to above 5 per cent. IHC raised its stake from 4.98 per cent to 5.04 per cent through open market purchase, according to a stock exchange filing by AEL.

IHC separately said, "This strategic increase reflects IHC's conviction in the world leading incubation model of AEL."

Stating it has increased its stake in AEL to above 5 per cent, IHC said it believes that "the inherent strength of airports, data centres, green hydrogen, and various other verticals being incubated under AEL and that AEL is poised to uniquely capitalise on India's robust growth journey."

'Unsecured loan growth high, but RBI unlikely to put regulatory restrictions'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Unsecured loans are on the rise, but the Reserve Bank is unlikely to put regulations to curb the same, a top official of India Ratings and Research said on Wednesday.

The domestic credit rating agency, a part of the Fitch Group, feels there are no issues on asset quality as a result of the fast-paced growth in the portfolios as yet, its head for financial institutions Karan Gupta told reporters here.

Gupta said most of the unsecured lending by banks is to salaried individuals, especially ones with whom banks already have a long relationship, giving them a look into cash flows while making the lending calls, he said, adding events like major job losses can hurt the asset quality.

It can be noted that banks have been reporting very high growth in the retail unsecured books for the last few months, leading to concerns over its possible impact on asset quality. RBI's financial stability report also flagged the risk, pointing out that the credit card NPAs for state-run lenders is over 16 per cent.

There have been reports of the central bank mulling moves like upping the risk weights associated with such products, like credit cards, personal loans etc.

When asked about reports



of RBI mulling an increase in risk weights, Gupta said the worry surrounding the segment is not so high which may result in such a move.

In its mid-year review of the banking sector outlook, India Ratings said banks, especially the private sector ones, are focusing on unsecured lending products to protect their margins, which have come under pressure.

Gupta said the net interest margins are set to compress by 0.15-0.20 per cent to 3.41 per cent for the banking system as a result of the struggle for deposits, which will increase the rates offered to depositors.

The current spike in deposit growth to over 13 per cent due to the withdrawal of the Rs 2,000 notes that has got additional funds of over Rs 3.5 lakh crore to the system, the agency said, adding that the growth may be transitory.

The agency upwardly revised its FY24 deposit growth

estimate to over 12 per cent, and maintained the view that credit growth will come at 13.5 per cent.

The NPAs will reduce further to 3.2 per cent at the end of the fiscal for the banking system, it said.

The private capital expenditure is at the cusp of revival, and companies can start to invest in the next six months, the agency said.

The non-bank lenders' loan growth will slow down to 15-16 per cent in FY24, as against 20 per cent, the agency said, adding that such lenders will experience an uptick in NPAs and also credit costs.

The microlending segment's growth has been retained at 20-30 per cent, but the agency said that there is a higher likelihood for it to come at the lower end of the expectation due to aspects such as upcoming general elections and over-leverage among borrowers, the agency said.

National action plan for green shipping promotes eco-friendly practices: DG Shipping

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The National Action Plan for Green Shipping promotes eco-friendly practices and incentives for low-emission ships, positioning India's maritime sector for a prosperous and environmentally responsible future, Director General of Shipping Shyam Jagannathan said on Wednesday. Speaking at the 13th edition of the South Asia's largest maritime exhibition and conference — INMEX SMM India 2023 — here, Jagannathan also said that the sector's vision encompasses quadrupling port capacity, clean energy fuel hubs, and cruise tourism growth, among others.

The three-day conference, which is being hosted in the city in collaboration with German exhibition organiser Hamburg Messe und Congress, will cover several issues concerning the industry, including green shipping and digitalisation, among others. "The plan promotes eco-friendly practices and incentives for low emission ships, positioning India's maritime sector for a prosperous and environmentally responsible future," Jagannathan said.

He said that the recent achievements in the shipping sector include doubling major ports' capacity, substantial waterway growth, increased cruise passengers and seafarers, expanded solar power, and lighthouse tourism.

NPCI to sign pact with Al Etihad Payments for cross-border ties

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NPCI International Payments Ltd, the international arm of the National Payment Corporation of India, will ink an agreement with Al Etihad Payments on Thursday in Abu Dhabi to facilitate cross-border transactions, an official said.

The MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) will be signed on development of domestic card scheme of UAE based on India's RuPay debit and credit card stack, the official added.

The agreement will be signed in the presence of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, who is leading a business delegation to Abu Dhabi from October 5 to October 6.



Goyal will co-chair the eleventh meeting of India-UAE High-Level Task Force on Investments along with Sheikh Hamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Managing Director of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority.

The meeting will be attended by Mohamed Hassan Alsu-

waidi, Minister of Investment, MD and CEO of ADQ; Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi, Minister of State for Foreign Trade; Khaled Mohamed Balama, Governor of the Central Bank of the UAE; and Ambassadors of both countries (Abdulnasser Alshaali, UAE Ambassador to India, and Sunjay Sudhir, Ambassador of India to UAE).

Goyal will also hold bilateral meetings with Khaldoon Al Mubarak, CEO and MD, Mubadala, besides members of UAE-India Business Council, top business leaders from both countries, and major food importers from GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) and Egypt.

In 2022, the National Pay-

ments Corporation Of India (NPCI), the umbrella organisation that offers UPI services, signed an MoU with France's fast and secure online payment system, called Lyra.

In 2023, UPI and Singapore's PayNow signed an agreement, allowing users in either country to make cross-border transactions.

The UAE, Bhutan, and Nepal have already adopted the UPI payment system.

NPCI international is in talks to extend the UPI services in the US, European countries, and West Asia.

UPI is an instant real-time payment system developed by NPCI facilitating inter-bank transactions.

'Significant growth opportunities in battery storage'

PTI ■ NOIDA

There is significant growth opportunity in the Indian Battery Energy Storage System market largely driven by technological advancements in new battery technologies, experts believe.

Moreover, adopting sustainable recycling methods is crucial because the market for recycled EV batteries in India is predicted to reach 128 GWh by 2030, said Yogesh Mudras, MD of Informa Markets in India, the firm that organised the Renewable Energy India Expo here. Over 700 exhibitors, more than 900 brands have converged for the expo, which is expected to attract around 40,000 visitors over the next three days. "The upcoming period is expected to bring lucrative growth opportunities for the Indian BESS market (Battery Energy Storage System), driven by technological advancements in new battery technologies aimed at energy storage and India's ambitious goal to achieve approximately 500 GW of renewable capacity by 2030," Mudras said.

Markets fall for second day on unabated foreign fund outflows

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices ended lower by 286.06 points on Wednesday, extending their previous day's fall, due to unabated foreign fund outflows and weak trends in the US and Asian markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex went lower by 286.06 points, or 0.44 per cent, to settle at 65,226.04. During the day, it plunged 633.33 points, or 0.96 per cent, to 64,878.77.

The Nifty declined 92.65 points, or 0.47 per cent, to end at 19,436.10. Among the Sensex firms, Axis Bank fell over 4.38 per cent, emerging as the biggest laggard. State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, UltraTech Cement, Bajaj Finserv, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Maruti, and Larsen & Toubro were the other major laggards.



Nestle, Hindustan Unilever, HDFC Bank, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, HCL Technologies, and Asian Paints were among the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge fell 1.52 per cent and smallcap index declined 0.96 per cent.

Among the indices, metal tumbled 1.98 per cent, realty declined 1.83 per cent, utilities (1.42 per cent), capital goods (1.33 per cent), industrials (1.22 per cent), services (1.02 per cent), commodities (1 per cent), and oil & gas (0.87 per cent).

FMCG, IT and tech were the gainers.

Overseas investors are

pulling out funds from the Indian equity markets as the current rally in US dollar and bond yields is making emerging market assets less attractive," Shrikant Chouhan, head of research (retail), Kotak Securities Ltd, said. "Despite our strong macroeconomic growth performance, India is not insulated from global problems, and hence any correction in global markets due to worries over further rate hikes would have a rub-off effect here," he said.

"Strong US jobs data is reinforcing Fed's hawkish stance and multi-year high US bond yields is signalling an impending interest rate hike. Globally, investors are adopting a risk-averse strategies due to inflation concerns and the strengthening US dollar," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

IN BRIEF

RITES OBSERVES 'SWACHHATA HI SEVA' CAMPAIGN

Gurugram: RITES Ltd, a prime transport infrastructure consultancy and engineering firm, organised 'Shramdaan' for the mega cleanliness drive 'Ek Tareekh, Ek Ghanta, Ek Saath' across its offices and sites. The cleanliness drive was a run-up to the nationwide 'Swachhata Hi Seva' campaign organised by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), Government of India.



POWERGRID ACQUIRES PROJECTS IN RAJASTHAN, ANDHRA

New Delhi: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a Maharatna PSU under Ministry of Power, Government of India, has acquired Bhadla III Transmission Limited (BIITL) from PFC Consulting Limited under Tariff Based Competitive Bidding (TBCB) for establishment of Transmission System for evacuation of power from REZ in Rajasthan (20GW) under Phase-III Part B1. POWERGRID has also acquired Ananthapuram Kurnool Transmission Limited (AKTL) from PFC Consulting Limited under TBCB for establishment of Transmission Scheme for Solar Energy Zone in Ananthapuram (Ananthapur) (2500 MW) and Kurnool (1000 MW), Andhra Pradesh.

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY HOLDS MUSICAL CONCERT

Amaravati: In a ground breaking and awe-inspiring event, the Null (Infosec) Chapter — VIT-AP University, in collaboration with the Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (AIR Centre) and the IIEC in VIT-AP, proudly presented "Harmony Unleashed", India's first-ever AI musical concert". This event was a true testament to the power of technology and innovation in the world of music.



POWERGRID SIGNS MOU WITH GURUGRAM, JHAJJAR

Faridabad: Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) Northern Region-I, Faridabad has signed an MoU with District Commissioner, Gurugram and District Commissioner, Jhajjar on September 27, 2023. The MoU with District Commissioner, Gurugram aims at providing financial assistance towards procurement of medical equipment (One Basic Life Support Ambulance & One X-ray Machine); Sanitation equipment (Two Garbage Collection Vehicles, 50 dustbins) for Village Jamalpur District Gurugram, while the DC Jhajjar MoU included financial assistance towards procurement of 2 Advanced Life Support Ambulances for the use of District Hospital Jhajjar.



Strides Pharma gets USFDA nod to market HIV drug

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Strides Pharma Science on Wednesday said its subsidiary has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic version of Gilead Sciences' Atripla tablets which are indicated to help control HIV infection. Singapore-based Strides Pharma Global, a stepdown wholly-owned subsidiary of the company, has received approval for Efavirenz (600 mg), Emtricitabine (200mg), Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate (300mg), (EET)

tablets from the US Food & Drug Administration (USFDA), the drug firm said in a statement.

The company's product is bioequivalent and therapeutically equivalent to Atripla Tablets of Gilead Sciences LLC, it added.

As per IQVIA, Efavirenz, Emtricitabine and Tenofovir Disoproxil Fumarate tablet (EET) has a market opportunity of USD 7.5 million in the US.

Shares of Strides Pharma Science ended 2.51 per cent up at Rs 508.20 apiece on the BSE on Wednesday.

National Turmeric Board: Exports may touch USD 1 bn by 2030

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday set up National Turmeric Board with a view to promoting production of the herb having medicinal value and increase its exports to USD 1 billion or Rs 8,400 crore by 2030.

"With the focused activities of the board, it is expected that turmeric exports will reach USD 1 billion by 2030," a commerce ministry statement said.

According to the statement, the Centre on Wednesday notified the constitution of National Turmeric Board.

The board will focus on development and growth of turmeric and turmeric products in the country, it added.

Briefing media about the issue, Union Minister Kishan Reddy said the decision fulfils the long-pending demand of farmers of Telangana.


He said the board will not only help farmers of Telangana, but also of Maharashtra, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Assam, Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal.

He also said farmers in Telangana did not wear slippers

or shoes for the past 15 years to press for their demand of setting up of a dedicated board for turmeric.

"Our cadres have distributed slippers to the farmers of Telangana after this announcement," he said.

The government has chalked out a plan to increase turmeric exports to Rs 8,400 crore, or USD 1 billion, per annum (by 2030) from the existing Rs 1,600 crore, said Union Minister Anurag Thakur, while briefing the media about the Union Cabinet decision in its meeting on Wednesday.



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TENDER NOTICE

MPMKVVCL, Bhopal, invites following bids from manufacturers through e-tendering :-

Tender Specification Number	Particulars	Approx. Value (Rs. Lacs)	Tender Fee including GST (in Rs.)	Date of Pre-Bid Conference	Date of Opening of Tender
MD/MK/04/989	Annual Maintenance Contract (AMC) for SCADA Part-B Line Equipments namely Auto Reclosure, Sectionalizer, 2/3/4 Way RMUs and 11kV & 33kV Fault Passage Indicator (FPI) installed under MPMKVCL, Bhopal.	357.00	11,800/-	20.10.2023 at 3:00 PM	31.10.2023 at 3:00 PM
MD/MK/04/990	Supply & installation of wireless technology enabled energy meters alongwith consumer indexing, monthly meter reading & energy Audit in selected areas under MPMKVCL Bhopal on DBFOOT basis	4766.00	17,700/-	16.10.2023 03.30 PM	30.10.2023 03:30 PM

Other details and full Tender documents would be available on Company website <https://portal.mpcz.in> & Govt. Website <https://mptenders.gov.in> shortly.
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CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER (PROC.)

MAN UTD RISK EARLY CL EXIT

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United crashed to a 3-2 defeat at home to Galatasaray on Tuesday to leave the Red Devils in danger of an early exit from the Champions League.

United have lost their opening two games of a Champions League group for the first time as new goalkeeper Andre Onana had another night to forget in Europe.

Rasmus Hojlund twice gave United the lead, but Galatasaray fought back to win away from home in the Champions League for the first time in 10 years thanks to goals from Wilfried Zaha, Kerem Akturkoglu and Mauro Icardi.

"We were totally in control and then we shot ourselves in the feet by giving goals away," said United boss Erik ten Hag.

"We have to defend in such moments and in certain areas better than we did."

Onana accepted responsibility after his error allowed Bayern Munich to open the scoring in United's 4-3 defeat in Germany to start Group A.

The Cameroonian was at fault once more for the crucial moment that saw Casemiro sent-off for conceding a penalty on 77 minutes.

Icardi missed the spot-kick, but quickly made amends to score the winner against 10 men.

United's 1-0 defeat at home to Crystal Palace on Saturday meant Ten Hag's men are also off to their worst ever start to a



Premier League season with four defeats from seven games.

Progress to the last 16 of the Champions League now looks an uphill task.

Bayern beat FC Copenhagen 2-1 away to move onto six

points, with Galatasaray four clear of United with four games to play.

Hojlund provided the one note of positivity on an otherwise costly night for United.

The young Danish striker's

start to life at Old Trafford was hampered by a back injury, but he is quickly showing why United splashed out £64 million (\$78 million) for a 20-year-old.

"He scored two brilliant goals," added Ten Hag. "I think

especially the second where he was on his own and used his power and strength. It was a great finish."

"It was my first match in the Champions League, it was an explosion of emotions at that

moment," said Zaha, who surprised many by turning his back on the Premier League to move to Turkey.

"What is important for me is to raise Galatasaray's name to the place it deserves - that is at the top."

CASTRO STRIKES LATE

Braga overturned a two-goal deficit to win 3-2 at Union Berlin on Tuesday, an injury-time strike from Andre Castro helping to spoil the German side's home Champions League debut.

Sheraldo Becker took advantage of Union's early dominance to score a first-half brace.

Braga, top scorers in the Portuguese league this season, fought back immediately, Sikou Niakate pouncing on a rebound to score, before Bruma unleashed a stunner to level the scores early in the second half.

In the fourth minute of injury time, Castro, subbed on with three minutes remaining, slid a fierce shot into the bottom left corner, to give his side the win.

PSV Eindhoven snatched a 2-2 draw at home against Sevilla in the other game in the group courtesy of Jordan Teze's stoppage-time equaliser after a late flurry of goals in the Netherlands.

Marcus Thuram struck the only goal as Inter Milan won 1-0 at home to Benfica in Group D. Inter are level on four points with Real Sociedad, who beat Salzburg 2-0 earlier in the day in Austria.



RC Lens comeback stuns Arsenal in CL

AP ■ LENS

Arsenal slumped to a first defeat of the season on Tuesday as Lens came from behind to win a pulsating Champions League clash 2-1 in France thanks to a fine second-half strike by Elye Wahi.

Gabriel Jesus gave the Premier League side an ideal start when he opened the scoring in the 14th minute to silence a raucous Stade Bollaert.

But Adrien Thomasson soon brought last season's Ligue 1 runners-up back on level terms and the visitors saw Bukayo Saka limp off before half-time.

Wahi, the 20-year-old striker who became Lens' club-record signing when he joined at the start of the campaign, then fired home in the 69th minute and his side held on for a famous victory.

"I am very proud of the players," said Lens manager Franck Haise, who took over the team in the second division in 2020.

"To beat Arsenal certainly makes it one of the most memorable games in my time at Lens."

The result lifts them above Arsenal to the top of Champions League Group B on four points, one above Mikel Arteta's side.



Meret hands Real Madrid win at Napoli

AP ■ NAPLES

Alex Meret's unfortunate own goal handed Real Madrid a 3-2 win at Napoli on Wednesday which moved the Spanish giants top in Champions League Group C.

Italian international goalkeeper Meret could do nothing to stop Federico Valverde's powerful, deflected shot crashing out off the bar and back into the goal off his outstretched arm 12 minutes from the end of an entertaining clash in Naples. That unlucky rebound maintained Madrid's perfect start to the group stage and moved them three points clear of both the Italian champions and Braga, 3-2 winners over bottom side Union Berlin earlier on Tuesday.

"It was a difficult match,

very hard-fought right until the last minute," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti to Sky Sport in Italy. "It seems absurd to me that that goal is given as a Meret own goal... Valverde is a great player and a great midfielder, he creates a lot and that was a great strike."

Vinicius Junior and Jude Bellingham scored the away side's other goals on former Napoli coach Ancelotti's return to southern Italy, giving Madrid a half-time lead after Leo Ostigard headed the hosts in front in the 19th minute.

England midfielder Bellingham, who also set up Vinicius' smart low finish, has now scored eight times in his first nine Madrid matches in all competitions and looked a class above most of the other players on the pitch.

Bayern come from behind to beat Copenhagen

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

Teenage Bayern Munich striker Mathys Tel struck late as his side came from behind to beat FC Copenhagen 2-1 in their Champions League clash in the Danish capital on Tuesday.

Bayern lacked fluidity and struggled against an impressive Copenhagen side, who grabbed the lead early in the second half thanks to Lukas Lerager's opener.

With Bayern in danger of losing their first Champions League

group stage match since September 2017, Thomas Tuchel's men upped the ante, Jamal Musiala equalising with a superb solo effort.

Tel, brought on in the 77th minute alongside Thomas Mueller with just seven minutes remaining, collected the ball from the Bayern veteran before unleashing a winner past the helpless home goalkeeper Kamil Grabara.

Super-sub Tel has now scored five of his six goals after coming off the bench and ensured Bayern



won their 15th group stage match in a row.

Tuchel told Amazon Prime he had been trying to replace Musiala when the forward scored the equaliser.

"He's returning from a muscle injury and we'd tried to take him off," Tuchel said with a smile.

Bayern captain Joshua Kimmich thanked Mueller and Tel, who came off the bench to combine for the winner. "We've got great quality on the bench and they've saved us often this season."



Lovlina settles for silver

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Tokyo Olympic medallist Lovlina Borgohain put up a lacklustre display to settle for a silver as Indian boxers signed off with a haul of five medals at the Asian Games here on Wednesday. Parveen Hooda couldn't overcome the height disadvantage against two-time world champion Lin Yu Ting of Chinese Taipei in the women's 57kg semifinal to sign off with a bronze.

Borgohain's defensive performance cost her the gold as she was out-punched in the lop-sided final. The reigning world champion was thrashed by home favourite and two-time Olympic medallist Li Qian in the 75kg final.

With Borgohain's loss, India's campaign came to an end. The country's boxers thus signed off with five medals, including one silver and four bronze. In the last edition, India had won a gold and a bronze.

"I gave my best but could not bring the gold. I am happy with my performance. I will try to change the colour of the medal in the Olympics," Borgohain said after the bout.

Neymar scores first Al Hilal goal

AP ■ TEHRAN

Brazil star Neymar opened his account for Al Hilal finally on Tuesday, scoring in his side's 3-0 victory in the Asian Champions League against Iran's Nassaji Mazandaran in Tehran.

The former Paris Saint-Germain forward, signed in August for a reported 90 million euros (\$94 million), grabbed the second in the record Asian champions' win at the Azadi Stadium.

The goal, a sweeping left-footed finish on 58 minutes, represented Neymar's first for Hilal in five matches. Former Fulham striker Aleksandar Mitrovic had opened the scoring on 18 minutes with a header, with substitute Saleh Al Shehri securing the result in injury-time to lift the four-time winners, runners-up last year, top of Group D.

Navbahor, 2022 Uzbekistan Super League runners-up and Champions League debutants, had earlier on Tuesday secured a 3-0 win at home to India's Mumbai City in Namangan.

In Group A, 2003 winners Al Ain maintained their 100-per-cent record with a 4-2 home success against Turkmenistan's Ahal, while Saudi side Al Fayha ran out 2-0 winners at home to Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor. Al Ain



of the UAE are top, three points ahead of Ahal and Fayha.

In the East Asian side of the draw, South Korea's Incheon United made it two wins from two in Group G with a 4-0 victory at home to Filipino side Kaya-FC Iloilo. Japanese champions Yokohama F Marinos are second in the group after rebounding from an opening defeat to Incheon by defeating

Chinese side Shandong Taishan 1-0 on Tuesday.

In Group I, Japan's Kawasaki Frontale sit top following a 1-0 victory at home against South Korean champions, and 2020 Asian Champions League winners, Ulsan Hyundai. Malaysian club Johor Darul Ta'zim jumped into second with their 4-2 win away at Thailand's BG Pathum United.



Hashimoto nails team gymnastics world title for Japan

AP ■ ANTWERP

Daiki Hashimoto delivered with his final routine to ensure Japan regained the team gymnastics world title on Tuesday in Antwerp, less than 10 months ahead of the Paris Olympics. Japan, last year's silver medallists, scored 255.594 to finish 1.80 points ahead of defending champions China.

"I've competed in team event since 2019, but only got silver and bronze medals," said Hashimoto. "Finally, I got a gold medal, which is the one I really wanted. I'm very happy."

China finished by putting up the best score on the rings. That put the pressure on Japan's last man Hashimoto, but he nailed his final landing on the horizontal bar to seal victory.

The United States complet-

ed the podium with 252.428 points. Great Britain were fourth on 249.461. Japan, who had dominated qualifying on Sunday, took the team title for the seventh time. Hashimoto, Olympic all-around and high bar champion two years ago in Tokyo, and his team-mates won Japan's first world crown since 2015. They had finished on the podium in the three world championships after that.

Having squeezed into the final with an eighth-place qualifying finish, the Chinese bounced back on Tuesday, but two falls on the high bar cost them dearly. On Thursday, Hashimoto will attempt to become the first man to win back-to-back world all-around titles since compatriot Kohei Uchimura took the last of his six consecutive victories in 2015.

Satwiksairaj-Chirag, Sindhu & Prannoy in last eight; Srikanth out



PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Kidambi Srikanth bowed out but top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty came up with a smashing performance to enter the quarterfinals as India had a mixed day in office in badminton competition of the Asian Games here on Wednesday.

In a contest that lasted a marathon 84 min-

utes, Satwik and Chirag prevailed 24-22, 16-21, 21-12 against Indonesian duo of Leo Rolly Carnando and Daniel Marthin, who were not willing to concede even an inch to the celebrated Indian duo, ranked No. 3 in the world.

Two-time Olympic medallist PV Sindhu and world championships bronze medallist HS Prannoy also sailed into the quarterfinals of the women's and men's singles events respectively with straight game wins.

However, it was curtains for Srikanth as he went down against Japan's Kodai Naraoka, a world championships silver medallist, 16-21, 17-21 in pre quarterfinals.

Former world champion Sindhu won the round of 16 match against Putri Kusuma Wardani 21-16, 21-16, sealing it in her favour without breaking a sweat against the hapless Indonesian. Sindhu will line up against China's He Bingjiao in the quarterfinals, and will fancy her chances against the Chinese having denied her a medal at the Tokyo Olympics two years ago.

Bingjiao won 21-10, 21-4 against Rasila Maharaj of Nepal.

Prannoy also booked his spot in the quarterfinals as he beat Kazakhstan's Dmitry Panarin 21-12, 21-13.

However, Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand were knocked out in the round of 16 by the Korean pair of Kim Soyeong and Kong Heeyong. The Koreans won 21-15, 18-21, 21-13.

Earlier, India's Tanisha Crasto and Sai Prathee Krishna Prasad were also bowed out in the Round of 16 after a defeat to Malaysia's Toh Ee Wei and Chen Tang Jie.

The Malaysian duo won 21-18, 21-18.

ENG FACE NZ IN WC OPENER

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A golden generation of England cricketers who have transformed the white ball format template forever will begin their 50-over World Cup title defence against an injury-battered New Zealand in a repeat of the 2019 final here on Thursday.

England are an ageing side alright, but few will dare to bet their green bills against Jos Buttler's outfit to add a third World Cup to their shelf in four years, as they are also the current T20 World Cup holders.

Trying to win that elusive ICC World Cup, New Zealand will be in a state of worry for more than one reason.

They will not have captain Kane Williamson, who though had played the warm-ups, and senior pacer Tim Southee in their ranks as both are still on the recovery path after respective surgeries.

Southee's fitness will be monitored closely as he is recuperating from a recent surgery on his fractured thumb. He had dislocated his finger during the ODI series against England.

But that is only a tip of their bigger concerns. The Ahmedabad pitch is generally an ally of batsmen, and England have a bionic batting line-up for whom skull-crushing their rivals is a favoured hobby.

The whole ferocity surrounding their batting has only gone up after the return of Ben Stokes, as he had decided to come out of retirement for the big event.

The maverick all-rounder has a troublesome knee that may curtail his role as a bowler in the tournament, but Stokes loves big occasions.

He had left indelible marks on two World Cup finals in 2019 and 2022, and to count him out to do an encore will be naïve.



But Stokes will not be the only batting Cyclop, the Kiwis will have to negate on the morrow. England have one of the longest batting orders. They have explosive batters in Liam Livingstone, Jonny Bairstow and Harry Brook and then more conventional batters like Joe Root and Dawid Malan.

Additionally, their experience of playing in the IPL will certainly add to their ability to understand and adapt to the varied conditions at eight different venues for nine group stage games.

Then they have a slew of all-rounders like Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes and Sam Curran, who played a decisive role in Australia during last year's T20 World Cup.

Their bowling unit also not to be undermined. Mark Wood's express pace and IPL experience give England some edge, but leg-spinner Adil Rashid will also be a vital cog in their bowling department.

However, England will miss their leading wicket-taker from the 2019 edition - Jofra Archer. The pacer is on a comeback trail after injury, though he has been included in the squad as a reserve.

On the other hand, without Williamson and Southee, New Zealand certainly lost a big chunk of experience and fire but the Kiwis have consistently punched above their weight in the ICC tournaments.

Their final appearances in the 2015 and 2019 50-over

World Cups and in the 2021 T20 World Cup will underscore that point.

Daryl Mitchell's form combined with the sturdy Devon Conway at the top will give New Zealand confidence, but stand-in captain Tom Latham's lean run could be of some concern as the left-hander has averaged just 25.93 with only three fifties in 17 ODIs this year.

But they have some strength-boosters in their line-up. James Neesham and Glenn Phillips are hard-hitters and they also know the Indian conditions well, courtesy the IPL stints.

Will Young is also having a good run this year in ODIs, scoring 578 runs in 14 matches at 44.46 and he can provide the

Kiwis with a solid option at No. 3, where he averages over 53.

The absence of Southee is a big miss for the Kiwis especially with new ball.

But the Black Caps will hope that pacers Matt Henry, who has 10 wickets from 14 matches, veteran Trent Boult and Lockie Ferguson, last edition's highest wicket-taker for them with 21 wickets, can make their presence felt.

Boult's form is encouraging too for them, as the left-arm pacer has warmed up well for the World Cup with 10 wickets in five games.

On paper, England might have an edge as it was shown in the recent ODI series which they won 3-1. But when it comes to England and New Zealand, past

records can be safely tossed away through the window.

SQUADS:

England: Jos Buttler (captain & wk), Joe Root, Jonny Bairstow (wk), Harry Brook, Liam Livingstone, Dawid Malan, Ben Stokes, Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, Sam Curran, David Willey, Adil Rashid, Mark Wood, Reece Topley, Gus Atkinson.

New Zealand: Tom Latham (captain & wk), Devon Conway (wk), Will Young, Kane Williamson (not available vs England), Mark Chapman, Daryl Mitchell, James Neesham, Glenn Phillips (wk), Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Ish Sodhi, Trent Boult, Lockie Ferguson, Matt Henry.



Southee 'unavailable' for 1st match: Latham

AP ■ AHMEDABAD

New Zealand's Tim Southee will miss the World Cup's opening match against holders England and potentially some of the following matches due to an injured thumb, stand-in-skipper Tom Latham said on Wednesday.

The Black Caps will be without regular captain Kane Williamson (knee injury) and Southee (thumb injury) at the tournament's opening match in the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday. Williamson played the team's first warm-up purely as a batsman and then fielded as well in the second warm-up, but Southee still awaits his first outing in India. "No Kane and no Tim as well," Latham told reporters ahead of the opener.

"He (Southee) is unavailable for selection. He is recovering nicely, it has been nearly two weeks post-surgery, so fingers crossed he keeps recovering.

"It's a bit of a day-by-day process. But fingers crossed he'll be available sooner rather than later as well."

Southee, who dislocated his thumb in a one-day against England more than three weeks ago, underwent surgery and said doctors had to "chuck in some screws and a plate" to boost his chances of playing in the 50-over showpiece event.

Southee played a key role in his team's runners-up finish in the 2019 edition but missed the dramatic final defeat to hosts England at Lord's.

The Kiwis are still hunting for their first World Cup title after making eight semi-final appearances in 12 editions.

They come into the tournament as the underdogs, with most pundits handing the favourites tag to either India or England. "We are not focused on what people are predicting; from our point of view we are solely focused on what we have to do," said Latham.

"If we can play our brand of cricket in these conditions -- which is pretty different to the last two ODI World Cups, in Australia and England."

He added: "If we play to the best of our ability then we are hard to beat on the day."

OTHER SPORTS

India enter Asian Games men's hockey final

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

India defeated South Korea 5-3 in a hard-fought semifinal to enter the title clash of the men's hockey competition at the Asian Games here on Wednesday.

The Indians, who had an easy run in the pool stages recording big wins, were made to toil by the Koreans despite taking a 3-0 lead in the first quarter.

India, who won a bronze in the last edition, will be eyeing a repeat of the 2014 Incheon Asian Games, where they won the yellow metal. A gold in the ongoing Asian Games is of huge significance for the Tokyo Olympics bronze medallists as it will ensure their direct entry into the 2024 Paris Games.

Hardik Singh (5th minute), Mandeep Singh (11th), Lalit Kumar Upadhyay (15th), Amit Rohidas (24th) and

Abhishek (54th) were the goal-getters for India, while Manjae Jung (17th, 20th, 42nd) scored a hat-trick for Korea but it went in vain.

The Indians started from where they had left in the pool stages and came out attacking from the onset.

It was all about Indian attack and Korea's defence in the opening quarter as the Harmanpreet-led side mounted continuous raids on the opposition defence.

It took just five minutes for India to take the lead through Hardik, who scored from a rebound after Lalit's initial try was saved by Korean goalkeeper Jaehyeon Kim.

The first quarter saw fast-paced continuous attacks from the Indians and their tactics bore fruit again in the 11th minute when Mandeep deflected in his 10th goal here from a Gurjant pass.



Just at the stroke of the first quarter, Lalit was at the right place to push in a rebound after Harmanpreet's reverse hit was saved by the Korean goalkeeper to hand India a 3-0 lead.

The Koreans looked more purposeful in the second quarter and got their act together to put pressure on the Indians

with two quick goals.

Stunned by Korea's fight-back, the Indians got their composure back and went back to their tried and tested possession hockey, which yielded results when Rohidas stepped up in Harmanpreet's absence to flick in a penalty corner.

Known for their fighting spirit, the Koreans looked in no mood to give up and put relentless pressure on the Indian goal after the change of ends.

Korea's pressure jolted the Indians as they conceded another penalty corner and another variation was perfectly deflected in by Jung to register his hat-trick and reduce the scoreline.

Trailing by just one goal, the Koreans played high-pressure hockey in the fourth and final quarter but the Indians defended in numbers to keep their opponents at bay.



India men and women thrash Thailand in kabaddi



PTI ■ HANGZHOU

India continued their impressive run in kabaddi with both the men's and women's teams thrashing their Thailand counterparts in the Asian Games here on Wednesday.

While the seven-time champions' men's team outclassed Thailand 63-26, the women's side prevailed 54-22 in two Group A matches at the Xiaoshan Guali Sports Centre.

Looking to regain its Asian Games gold medal, the Indian men's team, which had slipped to a bronze medal at the 2018 Jakarta edition, took a commanding 37-9 lead at half-time.

India did not take much time to inflict the first all-out on Thailand within the first few minutes of the start of the contest.

Soon, India got a point in the raid before tackling the last man in from Thailand to force a second 'all-out'.

Pramot Saising, the last man in for Thailand, went for the raid but was thumped down as India inflicted a third 'all-out' at the stroke of half-time.

India continued their dom-

ination in the second half and inflicted another 'all-out' on Thailand to take a 53-17 lead.

The Thai players faltered in their raids time and again as India continued to extend their lead in the second half.

But Thailand showed some fight in the second half as India won the half 26-17 to seal the contest.

The Indian men's team had earlier registered an emphatic 55-18 win over Bangladesh on Tuesday. After the men's team recorded a fine victory, the women's side, last edition's silver medallists, got on the mat against Thailand and dished out a solid performance, grabbing a dominating 32-9 lead in the first half before leading 22-13 in the second half.

The team thus topped their group to qualify for the semifinals.

On Tuesday, the women's side had recorded a 56-23 win over South Korea in their second Group A game. In the men's event, India are clubbed with Bangladesh, Chinese Taipei, Thailand and Japan in Group A, while Iran, Korea, Pakistan and Malaysia form Group B.

Squash: India on course for best ever showing

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

India's Saurav Ghosal outclassed Henry Leung of Hong Kong in the men's singles semi-finals to remain firmly on course for a second gold medal at the Hangzhou Asian Games here on Wednesday.

Having played his part in the men's team triumph, the world number 19 from India was far too good for the 52-ranked Henry and completed a dominating 11-2, 11-2, 11-6 victory in 33 minutes.

India could end up with an

unprecedented three gold medals from the squash courts with the mixed doubles duo of Dipika Pallikal and Harinderpal Sandhu also reaching the title clash, to be played on Thursday.

Second seed Ghosal will meet top seed Eain Yow Ng in the final on Thursday. The Indian had beaten his Malaysian rival in four games in the team semifinals.

Having missed a golden chance to step on the top of the singles podium in 2014, the 37-year-Ghosal will be determined to end his sixth and probably last



Asian Games on a high.

Though his Hong Kong opponent was much younger, Ghosal was superior on both tactical and physical side of the

game.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Indian pairing of Dipika and Harinderpal won 7-11, 11-7, 11-9 against Hong Kong's Lee Ka Yi

and Wong Chi Him to make the final. However, it was heartbreak for the second Indian pair of Abhay Singh and Anahat Singh as they lost to Aifa Binti Azman and Mohammad Syafiq Bin Mohd Kamal of Malaysia 11-8, 2-11, 9-11 in the other mixed doubles semi-final.

"It's good to have won. Every round is important. I feel like everyone has come prepared. We knew that we had to stick to our plan, play to the best of our ability and just forget about the results. The results will come," Dipika said.

Afghanistan dump SL out of Asiad, B'desh survive

AP ■ HANGZHOU

Afghanistan skipper Gulbadin Naib hailed his "superstar" side on Wednesday after they beat defending champions Sri Lanka by eight runs to book an Asian Games semi-final against Pakistan.

Bangladesh will meet India in the last four, also on Friday, after scraping home by two runs in a massive fright against Malaysia.

After being sent in to bat, the Afghans were dismissed for just 116 in the 19th over on a Hangzhou pitch

offering pace, sharp turn and fierce bounce.

Seamer Nuwan Thushara bagged 4-17 with Noor Ali Zadran's 51 the only resistance.

Sri Lanka's target looked gettable, but they blew the run chase with experienced quick Naib's 3-28 and young leg-spinner Qais Ahmad's 3-16 doing the damage as they were bundled out for 108.

"Every guy in the team is like a superstar in Afghanistan. A lot of our players are playing franchise league cricket (around the world) so they have



a lot of experience now," said Naib. "We didn't put a good total on the board, but the guys on the field out there were brilliant and have really shown their class."

T20 cricket has been played at the Asian Games twice before, at Guangzhou 2010 and Incheon 2014, with Afghanistan runners-up both times, to Bangladesh and then Sri Lanka.

Bangladesh stayed on track for a second title, but only just, after managing a miserly 116-5.

They were on the brink of defeat with Malaysia needing five runs off the final over, after Virandeep Singh's sumptuous 52 put the Malaysians within reach of a major upset.

But Bangladesh held on thanks to a tight last over from Afif Hossain, who called on all his experience from 63 T20Is to keep his country alive.

"One good thing was we didn't lose hope, we didn't give up the game until the last ball," said Bangladesh skipper Saif Hassan after Malaysia were restricted to 114-8.

"Everyone, especially Afif, held their nerve."