

**OPINION 6**  
CONGRESS GEARS UP  
FOR ELECTIONS

**MONEY 9**  
NET DIRECT TAX COLLECTION  
RISES BY 23.5 PER CENT

**WORLD 10**  
5 PRISONERS SOUGHT BY US  
IN SWAP WITH IRAN FREED

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# NEW INDIA'S TRYST WITH DESTINY

## Old paves way for the new Parliament House

RAHUL DATTA/ DEEPAK KUMAR  
JHA/DEEPAK K UPRETI/  
J GOPIKRISHNAN ■ NEW DELHI

Reminiscing the “extraordinary journey” of the country’s democracy in “Sansad”, which would into a relic of the past in another 24 hours, the members in the both Houses of Parliament — the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha — led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke on the milestones in the last 75 years, including many highs and lows which shaped and set the destiny of the nation.

For several members of Parliament, it was a nostalgic trip down memory lanes in the Parliament house by invoking the architects of modern India from first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Gandhi to Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The five-day special session that commenced in the old Parliament was the last in the historic iconic building that will

be now turned into a museum as the MPs of both the Houses would do the rituals of “Grih Pravesh” in the adjacent new Parliament house on Tuesday and then resume the sittings in the afternoon.

“We are saying farewell to the historic building,” the Prime Minister said, adding that though the building was constructed by the British “We cannot forget that the building was built by the labour and sweat of our citizens”.

The Rajya Sabha on its part paid tributes to architects of the Constitution, saying it has stood the test of time with Leader of the House Piyush Goyal, who initiated the debate, stating Parliament upholds democracy. Goyal said while the elected MPs have made big contributions to strengthen democracy, the nominated Rajya Sabha members have also given their best.

Late Dr Chandan Mitra, the then Editor of *The Pioneer*,



Old and new Parliament Houses in New Delhi on Monday

served two terms in the Rajya Sabha with the first as nominated by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government. Mitra served as Chairman of Select Committee of the Insurance laws (Amendment) Bill in 2014 and then Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing

Committee on Commerce in 2016.

Various political parties, including the BJP, the Congress, also called for passing the Women’s Reservation Bill while discussing the “Parliamentary Journey of 75 Years Starting from Samvidhan

Sabha — Achievements, Experiences, Memories and Learnings” on the first day of the five-day special session.

The Parliament house, universally known as “Sansad Bhavan,” was conceived in the circular design by the eminent architects Lutyens and Baker in

1912 and 1913. Its construction spanned from 1921 to 1927, culminating in its inauguration as the seat of the Central Legislative Assembly, the Council of State, and the Chamber of Princes, which also accommodated the Indian Supreme Court until 1958.

Inaugurating the discussion in the Lok Sabha, Modi commended the foresight of first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and subsequent leaders such as Lal Bahadur Shastri, PV Narasimha Rao, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

However, he also brought to light the “cash-for-vote” scandal during the Manmohan Singh Government, urging for reflection on all facets of the parliamentary legacy.

“Who can deny Nehru’s significant contributions?” remarked the Prime Minister, emphasising how politics often intervenes in recognising such achievements. Modi also commended PV Narsimha Rao, another Prime Minister from the Congress, for his pioneering economic policies, which are now yielding positive results for the country.

Reflecting on the establishment of Uttarakhand, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh by Vajpayee, Modi lamented that

the creation of Telangana from Andhra Pradesh during the Congress-led UPA regime led to bitterness and bloodshed in both States.

“In this very Parliament, Pandit Nehru spoke of the ‘stroke of midnight hour,’ and his words continue to inspire us all,” Modi stated, while Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi observed.

Modi highlighted that the most significant achievement of these 75 years is the increasing trust of the common person in Parliament. He expressed hope that the shift to the new building on Tuesday would usher in a new era of hope and confidence. He took a moment to honour those who have guided this House, from Pandit Nehru to Vajpayee. Additionally, he paid tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Chandrashekhar, and Lal Krishna Advani for their enriching contributions.

*Continued on Page 9*

## Historic decision likely today

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

With speculation rife about a possible “historic decision” during the Special Session of Parliament that began on Monday as declared by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Government is expected to table a key Bill on Tuesday in the new Parliament building.

Top Government sources said a decision regarding the Bill was taken during the Cabinet meeting late on Monday chaired by Modi.

The media briefing of the Cabinet decision did not take place as the Government wants to convey the decision directly to Parliament by introducing the Bill in keeping with the Parliamentary conventions.

The Cabinet meeting lasted for over 100 minutes and was chaired by Prime Minister Modi.

Modi is known to spring surprises at the last minute and is also adept in holding government business on sensitive



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media on the first day of the Special Session of Parliament in New Delhi. Union Ministers V Muraleedharan, Pralhad Joshi and Arjun Ram Meghwal are also seen

PTI

matters as closely guarded secrets.

While the Government remained tightlipped on the proposed Bill, there was speculation that the Modi Government is planning to bring a new reservation Bill for enlarging the role of women in Parliamentary and Assembly

elections.

There was no official word on the agenda items before the Cabinet.

Ever since it was announced that the Parliament session would be held from September 18, there have been speculation on various Bills, including the Women’s

Reservation Bill that may come up during the Session.

Amid a demand for the Women’s Reservation Bill, Modi on Monday said the contribution of women parliamentarians has been on the rise over the years.

In his speech in the Lok Sabha on the first day of the special session on Monday, Modi highlighted the changing composition of the House over the years, saying it had become more inclusive with all sections of society finding representation.

“Inclusive atmosphere has kept manifesting the aspirations of the people with full power,” he said.

The Prime Minister noted the contributions of women parliamentarians that have helped burnish the dignity of the House.

“Be it Dalits, oppressed, adivasis, backwards or women, every section’s contribution has increased gradually,” Modi said.

## Aditya delivers on promises

PTI ■ BENGALURU

India’s Aditya-L1 solar mission spacecraft has commenced collecting data that will help scientists analyse the behaviour of particles surrounding Earth, ISRO said on Monday.

The sensors of an instrument on board India’s first solar observatory have begun measuring supra-thermal and energetic ions and electrons at distances greater than 50,000 km from Earth, it said.

“This data helps scientists analyse the behaviour of particles surrounding Earth,” the Bengaluru-headquartered national space agency said in a post on X.

The Supra Thermal & Energetic Particle Spectrometer (STEPS) instrument is a part of the Aditya Solar Wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX) payload.

“These STEPS measurements will persist during the cruise phase of the Aditya-L1 mission as it progresses toward the Sun-Earth L1 point.



They will continue once the spacecraft is positioned in its intended orbit”, ISRO said. Data collected around L1 would provide insights into the origin, acceleration, and anisotropy of solar wind and space weather phenomena, it said. STEPS was developed by the Physical Research Laboratory with support from the Space Application Centre in Ahmedabad.

ISRO had launched Aditya-L1 on September 2 using a PSLV-C57 rocket. The Aditya-L1 spacecraft carries a total of seven different payloads to study the Sun, four of which will observe the light from the Sun and the remaining three will measure in situ parameters of the plasma and magnetic fields.

Aditya-L1 will be placed in a halo orbit around the

Lagrangian Point 1 (L1), which is 1.5 million km from the Earth in the direction of the Sun. It will revolve around the Sun with the same relative position and hence can see the Sun continuously.

STEPS comprises six sensors, each observing in different directions and measuring supra-thermal and energetic ions ranging from 20 keV/nucleon to 5 MeV/nucleon, in addition to electrons exceeding 1 MeV.

These measurements are conducted using low and high-energy particle spectrometers. The data collected during Earth’s orbits helps scientists to analyse the behaviour of particles surrounding Earth, especially in the presence of the magnetic field of Earth.

STEPS was activated on September 10 at a distance greater than 50,000 km from Earth. This distance is equivalent to more than eight times the Earth’s radius, placing it well beyond Earth’s radiation belt region, ISRO added.

## Artist’s flight of fancy

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

As Mumbaikars prepared themselves in a big way to celebrate 10-day-long Ganesh festival from Tuesday, the spotlight turned onto Mumbai’s Khetwadi cha Raja, a Ganpati idol installed by Sarvajani Shree Ganeshotsav Mandal, at Khambata Lane in south Mumbai, theme of which this year is Chandrayan-3’s recent landing on the Moon.

Chandrayan-3 is one of the major themes adopted by the Ganesh Mandals across Mumbai this year.

A majestic 38-feet Khetwadi cha Raja, themed around Chandrayaan-3, will be unveiled on Tuesday morning, as the 10-day festivities get off to an enthusiastic start in Mumbai and various other parts of Maharashtra.

“This year, we have chosen Chandrayaan-3 as the theme to express gratitude to ISRO scientists for their tremendous work in space technology in general and the recent landing

of the spacecraft on the moon in particular. They are the pride of the nation. We would like to celebrate them this year,” president of Sarvajani Shree Ganeshotsav Mandal told *The Pioneer* on Monday evening.

The tall Ganesh idol, made of Plaster Of Paris (PoP), has been crafted by noted idol maker Kunal Patil, while the lavish pandal has been decorated by Kamlesh Rajapuri.

“We intend to narrate the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 through decorations featuring ISRO, the Lunar Rover, the Moon, and all the planets of our solar system. We are presenting the decorations in 3D form with fluorescent theme colours. It will be a new experience for the devotees this year,” Narkar said.

Every year, the Ganesh Mandals adopt contemporary themes for their Ganpati festival decorations. This year, the Ganpati mandals have chosen Chandrayaan-3 launch to Ayodhya’s Ram Mandir as their

theme.

The 350th coronation of the Maratha King Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is another major theme adopted for Mumbai’s most-revered Lalbaugcha Raja (King of Lalbaug), a Ganesh idol installed at Lalbaug in south-central Mumbai.

This year, Lalbaugcha Raja is seated on a throne decorated similar to that of Shivaji Maharaj. The coronation theme revolving around Raigad Fort was the last of the pandals designed by noted art director Nitin Desai, who committed suicide at his ND Studios at Karjat in Raigad district.

Another crowd-drawing Ganesh pandal is the one set by the GSB Seva Mandal’s Ganapati at Sion in north-central Mumbai.

This year, GSB Seva Mandal’s idol has been decorated with ornaments worth over 60 kgs of gold and 336 kgs of silver.

A special feature of this

GSB Mandal this year will be that it will perform special “havans” on Tuesday and Wednesday for the successful Chandrayaan-3 landing and for the construction of Ram Temple at Ayodhya.

The other Ganesh mandals which will draw huge crowds will be idols set up by Tejukaya Mandal, Lalbaug, GSB Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Samiti, Wadala, Kethwadi, 11th Lane, Kethwadi, 12th Lane, Sahyadri Mandal, Tilak Nagar-Chembur, Shri Bal Gopal Ganesh Utsav Mandal, Marine Lines, Fort Vibhag Sarvajani Ganeshotsav Mandal, Fort, Andheri-cha-Raja or the Azad Nagar Sarvajani Utsav Samitee at Andheri.

Like every year, Mumbai will reverberate to the beating of drums, cymbals, chants of “Ganpati Bappa Morya” and “Sukh-karta Dukh-harta” bha-jan, as Mumbaikars take to their homes more than 3 lakh small and medium-sized Ganpati idols to their homes, while Sarvajani Mandals

install 12,000-odd huge idols across the city.

Besides, awareness of water conservation would be at the centre of Ganesh festivities in Maharashtra’s Latur district.

In view of this, a water literacy campaign will be held during the Ganesh festivities that start on Tuesday and more than 1,350 Ganpati mandals will be contacted, MLA Sambhaji Patil Nilangekar told reporters.

A motorcycle rally from Nilanga to Latur city and other events have been planned to create awareness among people so that they know the importance of water preservation.

The campaign is part of the “Jal Saksharta Abhiyan”, a citizen’s initiative, and is not political, he said.

The district has received less than 50 per cent of the annual average rainfall this year and the local residents have to make do with only 40-50 litres of water per person per day against the normal quota of more than 100 litres, he said.





## Man kills brother

**Lucknow (PNS):** A man killed his elder brother during a drink session at their house in Ghazipur village of Ghazipur police station area on Sunday night. The accused was later taken into police custody and is being interrogated by a police team.

The deceased was identified as Sunil Kumar Chaudhary (34) of a village in the area while the accused was identified as Sandeep Kumar Chaudhary (32). Preliminary investigation revealed that Sandeep attacked the victim with a knife stabbing the latter in his stomach, neck and his chest and the victim bled profusely. The deceased, identified as Sunil Kumar Chaudhary (34), was attacked by the accused, Sandeep Kumar Chaudhary (32), who stabbed him in the stomach, neck, and chest with a knife. Hearing his screams, eldest brother Satish Chaudhary (38) took him to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital where the doctor declared him dead. According to the family, both the brothers were always in a fight and would quarrel over even the slightest matter.

Hearing his screams, the eldest brother, Satish Chaudhary (38), rushed him to Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, where the doctor declared him dead on arrival. According to the family, both brothers were constantly engaged in fights and would quarrel over even the slightest matters. A case was registered against Sandeep.



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I hereby declare that in school documents of my daughter Swati Mishra her mother's name is wrongly registered as Kanchan Mishra which is wrong while the correct name of her mother is Kanchan Awasthi. Hence, from now in all the school documents of my daughter her mother's name will be known and written as Kanchan Awasthi only. Upendra Kumar Mishra R/o Village & Post-Bilauli Bazar, Tehseel-Mahmoodabad, District-Sitapur

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# City gears up for Ganeshha puja

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Various a pandals and vendors selling Ganeshha idols in makeshift kiosks across the city mark preparations for Ganeshha Chaturthi celebrations which kick off Tuesday. Amongst the prominent pandals set up in the city, the 18th Shri Ganeshha Mahotsav will be organised by Shri Ganeshha Prakatya Committee from September 19 to 28 at Jhulelal Vatika near Hanuman Setu.

Patron Bharat Bhushan Gupta said preparations for setting up the pandal have been done by skilled artisans of Kolkata for the last one month.

He said that the main gate of Bappa's court is being built like a palace, and will be 72-feet high and will also reveal a glimpse of south Indian crafts.

President of the Samiti, Ghanshyam Aggarwal, said the 12,000 square feet pandal is air-conditioned and water-proof.

"There will be separate seating arrangements for men and women. Chairs will also be placed outside the pandal for people to sit in the open and enjoy the bhajans and cultural programmes" he said.

Mr Aggarwal added that this time the common devotees have been insured for Rs 10 crore and Lord Ganeshha, the king of Manautis, has been insured for Rs 25 lakh.

General Secretary Satish Aggarwal said that the 6-foot statue of Bappa has been prepared on the lines of Siddhivinayak of Mumbai.

"Lucknow's sculptor Shrayan Prajapati has prepared the idol of Shri Ganeshha and it was brought to the pandal on Monday," he added.



Pandal of Ganesh Prakatya Samiti

From the security point of view, 25 female and 25 male security personnel will be deputed to look after the arrangements, he said. "Apart from this, 50 CCTV cameras have also been installed in the pandal," he said.

Vice-President and Councillor Ranjit Singh said this time cultural programmes will be organised under Sanjay Sharma of Kolkata and Sidhu Maharaj of Lucknow.

Apart from this, there are a large number of chaat, fast-food and ice cream shops. "Special types of swings are being installed for women and

children. Apart from this food zone, kids zone, game zone, shopping zone, live programme celebrity will be the main attractions" said patron Bharat Bhushan.

He added that *shringera* and *aarti* will take place every day at 10:00 am and 6:00 pm.

"All devotees can participate in this. Apart from this, there will be darshan every day from 10 am to 5 pm and from 6 pm to 10 pm" he said

Shobha yatra and immersion of idol will take place on 28th September.

"On September 28, the

procession of the King of Manautis will start from Jhulelal Vatika and will end at Jhulelal Vatika via University Road, IT crossing, Ramakrishna Math, Shankarnagar, Nazirganj, Daliganj. After the immersion procession, the Ganesh idol will be immersed near Jhulelal Vatika."

The highlights of the festival are *Gajra* on September 20, *Sindoor Abhishek* on September 21, *Durvabhishek* on September 22, *Pashankush* puja on September 23, *Chhappan Bhog* on September 24, *Mahabhishek* and

*Mahamodak* on September 27.

Meanwhile, Manu Shukla from the Pili Kothi Ganeshha celebrations, said that the *sthanpana* of the Ganesh idol at their pandal will take place on Tuesday.

"We make the idol of the Lord Ganeshha ourselves and it is 13 feet tall. The main feature of the Lord Ganeshha celebrations is that our Lord Ganeshha wears a pagdi which is a symbol of being the *mukhiya* of the family. We establish his idol taking him as a *mukhiya* of our family" he said.

"The programmes will include *durvabhishek*, *sindoor*

## Traffic diversions

The Traffic department announced traffic diversions on Tuesday, on the occasion of Ganeshha Chaturthi.

Officials said that roadways buses going from Faizabad to Kaiserbagh will be diverted towards Gomtinagar, from where they will come to Kaiserbagh via CDRI from behind Clarks Awadh, Samta Mulak, Gandhi Setu, PNT, Sankalp Vatika, Chirayajheel.

Roadways and city buses coming to Kaiserbagh from Sitapur Road will go to Kaiserbagh via Madaion, Daliganj Railway Crossing, Pakka Bridge, Shahmina Road, Daliganj Bridge, CDRI and on return via Balrampur Dhal and Shaheed Memorial.

The normal traffic coming from Chowk-Daliganj bridge will not be able to go directly from Clark Avadh trisection to Subhas crossing. This traffic will be able to go to its destination via Chiraiyajheel from Clark Avadh Tiraha.

Traffic coming from Daliganj Bridge-Ikka Tonga Stand intersection will not be able to go towards Nadwa College via Gomti River Bandha (Jhulelal Park). This traffic will be able to reach its destination by crossing the Gomti River Bridge or directly via Umraosingh Dharamshala, from the IT crossing.

Normal traffic from

Telephone Exchange crossing towards Maqbara Road will not be able to go towards Parivartan Chowk, this traffic will be able to reach its destination via Kaiserbagh Bus Stand or CDRI Tiraha, Clark Avadh.

Traffic coming from Nirala Nagar will not be able to go towards Subhash crossing via University Road from IT crossing. This traffic will be able to turn left, right from IT crossing and reach its destination via Nishatganj, Daliganj bridge via Samthar petrol pump.

The traffic coming from Kaiserbagh, CDRI, Clark Avadh trisection will not be able to come towards Subhash crossing. It will be able to go to its destination directly from Clark Avadh trisection via Krishna Medical Center towards Chirayajheel Tiraha.

Traffic coming from Hazratganj crossing and Parivartan Chowk will not be able to go from Subhash crossing towards IT intersection via Hanuman Setu. This traffic will be able to reach its destination via Maqbara Road, Telephone Exchange, CDRI or Chiraiyajheel.

Normal traffic will not be able to go from Hanuman Setu Nadwa Bandha trisection to Nadwa Bandha Road Jhulelal Park, rather this traffic will be able to go to its destination via IT crossing.

*abhishek, maharati mata chowk, sunderkand, rudrabhishek and hawan,*" he added. Manish Gupta from Ganesh Puja (Aliganj) said that arrangements of the puja are being made in Chandrashekhar Park of Aliganj. "The theme of the puja is *Akhand Bharat* — *Meri Maati*

*Mera Desh*. The theme will be made on glass," he added. He said that there will also be a selfie point. He said that the Ganesh puja will run for three days and the programmes will include *sunderkaand* followed by aarti on September 19, *dandiya* along with *phoolon ki Holi* and *rudrabhishek* on September 20".

## Two held for selling adulterated liquor

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two bootleggers selling adulterated liquor by pasting fake barcodes on tetra pack pouches of a popular brand of liquor were arrested by a police team in Madioan on Monday.

The team recovered 52 cartons of illicit liquor, 525 empty tetra packs, a package sealing machine and urea from a factory in the locality.

Those arrested were identified as Shivam and Adarsh of Sitapur. Shivam was employed as a housekeeper with a company, while Adarsh had a private job before they turned to criminal activities to make money. They confessed to their crime and revealed the involvement of one Shivam Jaiswal and his aide, Dharmendra Jaiswal. The English liquor was smuggled from Chandigarh.

They disclosed that the shops from which they used to sell the tetra pack pouches included one that is registered on the name of Shivam Jaiswal's mother, Poonam Jaiswal.

The police registered a case against Shivam, Adarsh, Shivam Jaiswal, Poonam Jaiswal and Dharmendra Jaiswal.

## Lekhpal caught red-handed taking bribe

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A team of anti-corruption organisation caught a Lekhpal accepting a bribe of Rs 15,000 from an applicant in Sadar Tehsil, Gomti Nagar Extension police station area on Monday.

The accused, identified as Avinash Chandra Ojha, was caught red-handed soon after he accepted the bribe from the applicant, Aman Tripathi of Khargapur, for issuing the status certificate.

The accused tried to escape but was chased down by the people present in the campus and handed over to the anti-corruption team, which recovered the bribe amount from him.

The team then informed SDM Sadar Ankit Shukla and later the district administration also recommended action against the culprit Lekhpal and a case was also registered against him.

## Kayakalp on cards for Anganwadi centres

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All Anganwadi centres across Uttar Pradesh will now have provision for clean drinking water, child accessible toilets, group hand washing stations, ramps and other child-friendly facilities.

Government of Uttar Pradesh initiated a state-wide "Anganwadi Kayakalp Campaign" to refurbish and transform basic infrastructure and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities of existing Anganwadi Centers as per national standards and child-friendly norms. This is being implemented under the leadership of District Magistrates in collaboration with the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and Panchayati Raj Department with the aim to create a learning ecosystem for children and to support regular, safe, and joyful pre-school education as per the New Education Policy 2020 and Shiksham 2.0 in the state.

Addressing officials at a day-long workshop in Lucknow, Cabinet Minister of Women and Child Development, Mrs Baby Rani Maurya said, "Kayakalp of Anganwadi centers will play an important role in ensuring better facilities for children. All officials of the department will have

to work together to ensure improved infrastructure, nutrition and education facilities for children at the Anganwadi centers." In Uttar Pradesh, there are currently 1,89,000 Anganwadi centres in both rural and urban areas, providing essential childcare services related to nutrition, education, and health to children under six and pregnant/lactating mothers.

Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Uttar Pradesh, Ms. Pratibha Shukla said, "It is the dream of the chief minister of the state to provide quality pre-school education to children. Through Anganwadi Kayakalp, this dream can be realised by making the facilities and services child-friendly and vibrant." Sarneet Kaur Broca, Director, ICDS said, "Under Anganwadi Kayakalp Campaign, various activities are being undertaken for enhancing the physical infrastructure at Anganwadi centres. The transformation will be done around 18 indicators including provisions for child-friendly toilets, urinals, group hand wash units, ramps with railing, provision of clean and safe drinking water, electricity, repair and renovation of existing structures and other basic amenities. The campaign also focuses on

capacity building and hand-holding of frontline workers for improved services."

A baseline survey of 186,000 Anganwadi Centers has been done. Model Anganwadi Kayakalp Learning Labs are being created in every block across the state for upscaling of the initiative.

An online assessment cum planning tool on 18 key Kayakalp indicators with real-time dashboard developed and rolled out in the state jointly with Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan and UNICEF.

Kumar Bikram WASH Officer UNICEF said, "Clean and safe environment is the right of every child. Attractive Anganwadi centers and child friendly water and sanitation services will help in protecting children from diseases and malnutrition and attract children to the centre. All these facilities will ensure quality education, health and nutrition services for the child and contribute to his/her development."

UNICEF is providing technical support to ICDS and Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan in scaling-up equitable, gender responsive, climate resilient WASH in Anganwadi, Anganwadi Kayakalp (pre-schools) interventions in the state.

## CITYBRIEFS

### ELECTED



Spokesman of UP PWD ministerial association CP Srivastava said that former zonal president Surendra Lal Srivastava had been re-elected as patron of the association on Monday. Zonal president Padmnabh Trivedi and others office-bearers congratulated Surendra Srivastava.

### AWARENESS RALLY

A cleanliness awareness rally was

taken out by the NCC cadets of Manak Nagar Railway Inter College in RDSO on Monday, under Swachhata Pakhwada. A seminar on cleanliness awareness campaign was also organised under the chairmanship of RDSO Director General Ajay Kumar Rana. Other present were DG Special (Vendor Development) RK Sinha, DG Special (Engineering) Ramesh Kumar Jha, DG Special (S&T) Rahul Agrawal, ADG SK Jain, and other senior officers.

### REPORT PRESENTED

The three-member delegation of Communist Party of India (ML) presented its report on murder of four

members of a Dalit family on Monday. The party has tasked the delegation to visit the Mohaddipur Gaus village in Kaushambi district on Sunday and prepare a ground report of the incident in which four persons, including three adults and an unborn child, of a Dalit family were shot dead in the early morning of September 15.

### HINDI PAKHWADA

A hindi pakhwada is being organised by the Hindi cell of Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University from September 18th to 29th September. Under this, various types of competitions will be organised for the teachers, employees

and students of the university. Hindi officer SK Tripathi said that through such competitions, efforts are being made to make people aware of their mother tongue. So that people understand its importance and feel proud even at the global level.

### DISTRIBUTED

Goal for All trustees Harshit Singh and Shikhar Pal Singh on Monday distributed school bags, physiotherapy balls and stationery gift hampers to the children of Rainbow Society for Differently-Abled. Director of the society Swati Sharma, Rakesh Verma, Neha Singh and Garima Singh were also present.



# CISH develops baby weaning food products

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Central Institute of Subtropical Horticulture has come up with the technology for developing low cost hygienic and nutritionally rich weaning mix from the nutritionally rich horticultural crops available locally like carrot, sweet potato and mango to increase access to protein and vitamin rich food to the needy growing children of backward areas.

Giving a backgrounder, CISH Director T Damodaran said malnutrition was a major development concern for the global community.

"The prevalence of child malnutrition, though reduced, is still unacceptably high as evident from the fact that about 32 per cent of children under the age of five are underweight and 66 per cent are anaemic in Uttar Pradesh. It is not only the children, but also adults and elderly persons

may be affected by malnutrition; women are at greater risk of malnutrition than men, though they have a major role to play in food and nutrition security of the families in many ways.

Malnutrition in women (50.4 per cent anaemic in UP) especially those who are pregnant or breastfeeding, can set up a cycle of deprivation that increases the likelihood of child malnutrition," he said.

Moreover, he said, micronutrient deficiencies were becoming a major health concern as many vulnerable families lacked the resources or information needed to maintain proper nutrition.

"Weaning period is a very crucial phase in the child's development stage, which, if not done properly, leads to malnutrition and other complications during early preschool age. Ready mix food

available in the market is costly and is not affordable to rural women and children. Rural women are ignorant of food and nutrition requirements of the growing children and lack knowledge about the low cost weaning foods that could supplement the nutritional deficiency in them and their child during the weaning period," he said.

He said addressing this key issue, a team of CISH scientists lead by Dr Abha Singh

had developed a technology for developing low cost hygienic and nutritionally rich weaning mix from the nutritionally rich horticultural crops available locally like carrot, sweet potato and mango to increase access to protein and vitamin rich food to the needy growing children of backward areas.

"The CISH is further refining the technology to develop Vitamin C-rich products which can be incorporat-

ed in the mid day meal to increase iron intake of children from the diet for nutritional security of school-going children with the support of UPSCST (Uttar Pradesh Council of Science and Technology) in the production of baby weaning food. Further, CISH is taking steps to create awareness among the rural women about the importance of the baby weaning foods for a healthy child development," he added.



# Blood donation critical to save lives: CM Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath highlighted the significance of blood donation as the most substantial form of donation during his inaugural address at the Blood Donation Camp organised at Guru Shri Gorakshanath Blood Bank in Gorakhpur.

This event was part of the ongoing Seva Pakhwara, a celebration commemorating Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday, and it saw enthusiastic participation from members and volunteers of the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM).

Emphasising the critical role of voluntary blood donation in saving lives, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath urged society to recognise the importance of this act. He said that one unit of blood, which contained several vital components, could potentially save numerous lives, particularly those afflicted by anemia and various blood-related disorders.

Addressing the gathering, the chief minister encouraged the volunteers, asserting that a lack of awareness often deters individuals from making such contributions. He said that any healthy individual could donate blood without facing any difficulties and stressed the importance of voluntary donations in preventing illegal and unethical practices related to blood procurement, which could pose significant risks to public health.

The chief minister emphasised that raising awareness about blood donation within society can serve as a major preventive exercise against diseases. He urged all healthy individuals to consider donating blood at regular intervals, not only to assist those in need but also to contribute to the betterment of humanity.

He also informed the audience about the evolution of Guru Shri Gorakshanath Hospital's blood bank. In 2005, when it was established, there was no blood separator system in place. However, with the

introduction of a blood separator, the facility can now separate and provide platelets, plasma, and other essential components to patients based on their specific requirements, bringing significant relief to those in need.

Seva Pakhwara, celebrated from September 17 to October 2, marks Prime Minister Narendra Modi's birthday. The blood donation program is an integral part of this initiative, aligning with PM Modi's vision for a stronger and more influential India on the global stage, as reflected in India's leadership within the G-20 community.

Among the attendees were Guru Gorakshanath Blood Bank in-charge Awadhesh Aggarwal, Bharatiya Janata Party state vice-president Dharmendra Singh, regional president Sahajanand Rai, district president Yudhishtir Singh, district in-charge Ajay Singh Gautam, metropolitan president Rajesh Gupta, BJYM district president Satyarth Mishra, Satyendra Sinha and Rahul Srivastava among others.

## Yogi: Welfare schemes should reach all eligible beneficiaries

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday urged officials to approach public issues with the utmost seriousness and sensitivity.

He also stressed the importance of taking strict legal action against those who unlawfully encroach on people's land and pose threats to the vulnerable.

This directive came during the Janata Darshan, held at Gorakhnath temple in Gorakhpur.

During the session, the chief minister personally heard the grievances of around 200 individuals and promptly referred their applications to the relevant authorities for immediate resolution.

The focus of the event was on ensuring government welfare schemes reach all eligible beneficiaries.

Addressing the crucial matter of financial aid for the treatment of severe illnesses, the chief minister instructed officials to expedite the estimation process of treatment costs.

"There is no dearth of money for the treatment of the needy," he said.

Yogi also extended his blessings to the children, who were accompanying their parents, and offered them chocolates.



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath interacting with the students of Alal Residential School in Varanasi on Monday

## Ghosi MLA administered oath of office

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana, on Monday, administered the oath of office to newly-elected MLA Sudhakar Singh.

Singh was elected on the Samajwadi Party ticket in the Ghosi bypoll on September 5.

The Speaker presented a copy of the Rules of Business for conduct of the proceedings of UP Assembly and also wished success to the newly-elected MLA and asked him to take active part in the proceedings of the house.

Senior Samajwadi party leader Shivalp Yadav, party's state president Naresh Uttam and party spokesman Rajendra Chowdhary were also present on the occasion.

The byelection to the Ghosi assembly seat was held due to the resignation of the sitting



MLA Dara Singh Chauhan, who quit and joined the BJP.

The Samajwadi Party retained the seat and its candidate Sudhakar Singh defeated

the BJP candidate Dara Singh by over 42,000 votes in the bypoll.

## SC relieves SIT in Lakhimpur violence case

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

The Supreme Court on Monday relieved the Special Investigation Team (SIT) in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, saying it has already completed its probe and submitted a charge sheet in the trial court.

The case pertains to the incident of violence on October 3, 2021, in which eight people, including four farmers, were killed in Lakhimpur Kheri district's Tikunia.

Issuing the order on Monday, a bench of justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Datta also said that if there arises any necessity to reconstitute the SIT, an appropriate order shall be passed.

The apex court had appointed Justice Rakesh Kumar Jain, a former judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, to supervise on a day-to-day basis the Uttar Pradesh Police SIT's probe into the case.

Three senior IPS officers, SB Shirodkar, Deepinder Singh and Padmaja Chauhan, were part of the SIT.

The top court on July 11 had extended till September 26 the interim bail of Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, who is facing prosecution in the case.

The violence had erupted when farmers were protesting against Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya's visit to the area.

Four farmers were moved down by an SUV. A driver and two BJP workers were then allegedly lynched by angry farmers. A journalist also died in the violence that triggered outrage among opposition parties and farmer groups agitating over the Centre's now-repealed agri laws.

## Ayodhya airport to be completed by October

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Maryada Purushottam Shriram International Airport in Ayodhya is expected to be completed by October, ahead of the inauguration of the Ram temple.

The temple is likely to be inaugurated in January of next year, while commercial flights are expected to commence in November or early December 2023 from Ayodhya.

The new airport, with a development cost of approximately Rs 350 crores, will be suitable for the operation of A-320/B-737 type of aircraft.

The development work includes an extension of the existing runway for the operation of Code -C type of aircraft, terminal building, ATC tower, fire station, car parking, new apron for parking 3 code 'C' type of aircraft and other infrastructure.

The new terminal building, with an area of 6,250 sqm, is equipped to accommodate 300 passengers during peak hours. Passenger facilities include 8 check-in counters, 3 conveyor belts, car parking for seventy-five cars, and bus parking.

In its initial stages, the new airport will connect the temple town with New Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad.

Later, more flights and destinations will be added, thus paving the way for the temple town to be transformed into a big pilgrim centre of north India. Ayodhya, the birth place of Bhagwan Ram, is a holy place and has immense potential to boost pilgrimage.

The airport is equipped to handle commercial flights in different weather conditions and the construction of the runway, as well as the air traffic control tower is complete.



THE TEMPLE IS LIKELY TO BE INAUGURATED IN JANUARY OF NEXT YEAR, WHILE COMMERCIAL FLIGHTS ARE EXPECTED TO COMMENCE IN NOVEMBER OR EARLY DECEMBER 2023 FROM AYODHYA

The necessary groundwork encompassing civil, electrical, IT will be completed by October end.

The frequency and the slots of flights to and from Ayodhya will be decided by the Airports Authority of India. While the 400 acres required for the first phase has already been acquired, the remaining has been demarcated for acquisition to feed phase II and III of the project.

Currently, Ayodhya has a small airstrip to handle non-commercial and chartered flights. However, despite the absence of a proper airport, it witnessed an upsurge in the number of pilgrims after the construction of the temple started in August 2020.

Recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that once the temple was opened for devotees, the pilgrim flow to the town could reach an annual mark of 10 crore. During the UP Global Investors' Summit 2023, the Japan-based Hotel Management International

Company Limited (HMI Group) signed an MoU to invest Rs 7,200 crore in launching hotels in prominent tourist centres such as Agra, Ayodhya, and Varanasi.

Meanwhile a string of marquee hotels, including both luxury and budget categories have made a beeline for projects in Ayodhya. More than 25 hoteliers have already registered with portal of UP tourism and nearly two dozen more companies to follow suit.

Currently, there are about 18 quality hotels in Ayodhya with a combined inventory of 600 rooms, the demand of which is expected to witness a sharp jump once the temple is inaugurated.

Interestingly, the planned transformation of Ayodhya is estimated to cost Rs 30,000 crore to the exchequer under 'Ayodhya Vision 2047' theme. These funds are targeted to be invested in about 260 projects pertaining to tourism, aviation, infrastructure, housing, medical, energy, culture, urban development, and transport.

## Govt to launch Swachhata Janaadesh Survekshan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

On Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, the Yogi government is launching the 'Swachhata Janaadesh Survekshan 2023' in all municipal corporations, municipalities and nagar panchayats, scheduled to continue till October 2.

The Urban Development department will conduct the survey under the Swachh Bharat Mission, in which the councillors of all the civic bodies will answer questions related to cleanliness in their wards and also give their suggestions. While launching this campaign Urban Development Minister AK Sharma said that making Uttar Pradesh one of the cleanest states was among the priorities of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"The government was making efforts to maintain cleanliness across the state

through these programs," he said.

He said that about 14,000 councillors from the urban bodies would participate in the 15-day survey and share their response digitally regarding the cleanliness work being done in their wards, the status of cleanliness and numerous other cleanliness programmes.

Additionally, the Urban Development department has generated a QR code that councillors can scan in order to provide the department with insights about their respective wards by responding to 20 questions on a dedicated web page.

In addition to these queries, councillors are also requested to share details about their initiatives to maintain a clean ward. Moreover, their input and suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness and success of the cleanliness campaign will be actively

sought. Principal Secretary of Urban Development, Amrit Abhijat said that to achieve the goals of the Swachh Bharat Mission and creating garbage-free cities, it was necessary to implement the 'Swachhata Janaadesh Survekshan 2023' in every urban body of the state.

"Between September 18 and October 2, the state government will provide recommendations related to urban bodies via the 'Swachhata Janaadesh Survekshan 2023' initiative to municipal corporations, municipal councils, nagar panchayats, and their respective wards," he said.

He said that councillors had been directed to engage in self-assessment regarding cleanliness standards based on 20 specific criteria. The program would utilise dedicated bar codes for this purpose.

The 20 questions to which the councillors have to respond

include issues related to cleanliness along with general questions like their district, municipal body, ward, and ward number. In this, questions have been asked related to the daily operation of the garbage cart in the ward, segregation of wet and dry garbage, door-to-door garbage collection and operation of garbage vans.

Similarly, information has also been sought regarding cleanliness programs in the ward, daily cleaning of wards, availability of dustbins, timely cleaning of dustbins as well as cleaning of drains and ponds.

Additionally, information has also been sought on important topics like a ban on plastic and polythene in the ward and presence of heaps of garbage at various places. They have been asked whether they have ever used the toll-free numbers 1533 and 18001800101 to lodge a complaint related to cleanliness or not.

## Siblings die in house collapse in Barabanki

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A minor boy and his minor sister died after their kutchra house collapsed on them on Sunday night in Kirsia village in the Subeha police station area of Barabanki.

The children's grandparents were also injured in the accident.

Additional Superintendent of Police Akhilesh Narayan Singh said that in the accident, the brother-sister duo, Fian (8), his sister Samaira (6), grandfather, Haleem, and grandmother, Nasreen, got buried under the debris.

He said that villagers made significant efforts to pull them out, but unfortunately, Fian and Samaira succumbed to their injuries.

Their grandparents were rushed to the Community Health Centre, from where Haleem was referred to the district hospital, while Nasreen was currently undergoing treatment.

Meanwhile, in separate incidents in Siddharthnagar and Budaun, five children reportedly died from drowning on Monday, the police said.

## S-I brutally thrashed for molesting girl in Agra

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a bizarre case, a sub-inspector was tied to a tree and brutally assaulted by villagers after being caught in a compromising position with a girl in Agra early on Monday. Upon receiving information, police rushed to the spot and rescued the cop.

The video of the beating of the sub-inspector, Sandeep Kumar, is going viral on social media after that he was suspended and a case was also registered against him. A departmental inquiry has also been ordered in the matter.

Reports said that sub-inspector, Sandeep Kumar, posted at Barhan police station, allegedly entered a villager's and forcibly tried to sexually assault on a girl.

In the meantime, the family members caught him and called the villagers. Agitated with the S-I's conduct, the villagers tied him to a tree and brutally assaulted him.

DCP (West) Sonam Kumar said that S-I Sandeep Kumar had been suspended and orders for departmental action had been issued. Later on the complaint of the family members, the S-I was booked for raping a girl.

Meanwhile in Sitapur, a police constable, who rushed to resolve the dispute

between a man and his wife, was brutally assaulted by the husband for intervening in his family matter.

The man also attempted to strangle the constable, causing him to lose consciousness. The constable was rushed to the district hospital.

Reports said that Sushila Devi, a resident of Shahjani ward, had submitted an application to the police, alleging that her husband, Ranjit, beats her every day. When Ranjit found out about the complaint on Sunday evening, he began to beat Sushila.

Sushila called the police and a police constable, Harmendra Singh, was dispatched to the scene by the police station in-charge.

When Harmendra reached Sushila's home, Ranjeet attacked the him with a stick, accusing the cop of unnecessary intervention in his family matter.

After seriously injuring the sub-inspector, Ranjit fled from the spot. Police rushed to the spot and admitted the injured constable to the hospital.

The Station House Officer, Omveer Singh Chauhan, said that the accused was a known history-sheeter, and a case has been registered against him. Efforts to apprehend him are currently underway.

## 1090 resolves over 2.5 lakh complaints of harassment

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In compliance with the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, 2,58,079 complaints related to various types of harassment against women have been resolved by the Women and Child Protection Organisation from January 1, 2023 to August 31, 2023.

Giving this information here on Monday evening, Principal Secretary, Home, Sanjay Prasad said that a total of 2,71,793 complaints were received by the Women and Child Protection Organisation (1090). Among these, 89,844 complaints were related to phone bullying and cyberbullying.

"2,58,079 complaints have been resolved and strict instructions have been issued to resolve the remaining complaints on priority," he said.

"Since 1,81,949 complaints are

related to other cases, they have been transferred to District Police, GRP and UP 112," Prasad added.

Additional Director General of Police, Women and Child Protection Organisation (1090), BP Jogdand said that till the month of August, a total of 38195 complaints related to cyber harassment had been registered, out of which 33056 complaints had been resolved.

He further said that from January 1, 2022 to December 31, 2022, relief had been provided to the victims through family, friends and relatives (FFR) counseling in a total of 6307 complaints. Apart from this, FFR counseling was done in 3292 complaints till the month of August 2023. Besides, 33056 complaints related to cyber harassment had also been resolved.

## Teen hangs self after being thrashed by school teachers

**Sambhal (PTI):** A 15-year-old boy allegedly died by suicide in a village here on Monday after being thrashed by two teachers at his school, police said.

Danveer's body was found hanging in a room of his house in Kel village in the Gunnaur area here, they added. In his complaint to the police, Danveer's father Bhure Singh said his son was studying in Class 7 at Haribaba Adarsh Public School in the village. Singh alleged that Danveer's teachers Dharamveer and Hemant beat him up at school, after which his son committed suicide out of anger, the police said.



# Three killed in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Three persons were killed when a speeding car knocked down their bike in Kannauj on Monday morning. After the incident, local residents got all the three injured admitted to the medical college where two of them were declared dead by the doctors. The third person was referred to Kanpur but he also succumbed to his injury on the way. After the 'panchnama', the police sent the bodies for an autopsy. The incident took place near Sirsain Purva village under the Thathia police station of Kannauj on Monday morning.

Reports said that Pyarelal (50), Gorelal (45) and Ajay (35) of a family were going to Uttaripura on the bike to attend some urgent work. Immediately after they reached near Bhadausi village turn, a speeding Omni car knocked them down from behind and escaped. At the Medical College doctors declared Gorelal and Pyarelal dead. After first aid and due to his serious condition, Ajay was referred to Kanpur but he also succumbed to his injury on the way. Raids

are on to nail the absconding car driver.

Meanwhile a motorcyclist died after being hit by a school bus in Khapthiha Kalan under Pailani police area of Banda on Monday morning. The bus dragged the motorcyclist with it up to around 100 metres which caused serious injury and led to his killing on the spot. There was a massive jam on the spot. The police rushed to the spot which after sending the body for autopsy got the bus removed for restoring the traffic movement.

According to a report, Om Prakash Vishwakarma (53), son of Ganesh Prasad Vishwakarma of Khapthiha Kalan was going to Aurikuiyan on the bike on Monday morning. Around 7 am the private school bus knocked him down near Kharei. After his bike got entangled with the bus, he kept on dragging with it up to around 100 metres. On his raising alarm, the bus driver alighted from it and escaped. Around 20 children were present in the bus. The police sent the body for autopsy. It was informed that the bus was running at high speed.

**WOMAN DROWNS:** A woman died after drowning in flood water while her husband managed to save himself when their bike suddenly fell from the Atri bridge in a bid to avert collision with a stray cattle in Atri village under Gangaghat Kotwali police area of Shuklaganj, Unnao, on Saturday night. During the postmortem, doctors also observed the killing of a five-month foetus in woman's womb. The father of the deceased lodged a complaint at the Safipur Kotwali police station against her in-laws, including husband, mother-in-law and father-in-law alleging killing of his daughter for dowry. Sunita alias Rita, daughter of Rambabu of Khargaura, Asiwan police station, was married to Shubham, son of Ram Naresh of Barhali, Safipur, on April 28, 2022. The kin informed that on Saturday night the couple was returning home from their aunt Seema's house in Bakhakheda village, Husain Nagar, Sadar Kotwali, on the bike. On their reaching Atri bridge in Atri village in the Gangaghat Kotwali police station area the stray

cattle came before their bike. In a bid to save the cattle, Shubham lost control over the bike which immediately fell into the flood water. Shubham managed to come out of the water while Sunita drowned. Some swimmers jumped into the water and took Sunita out. She was taken to the district hospital where doctors declared her as brought dead. As the spot of incident was under Gangaghat Kotwali police area a panel of two doctors carried out the autopsy which also observed the killing of a five-month foetus in woman's womb. Kotwali incharge Raj Kumar said the incident took place in his police area while the autopsy was carried out according to memo of the district hospital. The kin of the deceased did not lodge any complaint. However, Safipur Kotwali Circle Officer (CO) Rishi Kant Shukla said father of the deceased Ram Babu had submitted a complaint against her in-laws, including the husband, alleging the killing of his daughter for dowry. A probe was on in the matter. On receipt of autopsy report, further action will be taken in the matter, he said.

# NSI director Prof Mohan felicitated

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

In recognition to the innovative technologies developed and efforts made in converting Indian sugar industry into a hub of clean, green and renewable energy, Prof Narendra Mohan, Director, National Sugar Institute (NSI) was felicitated at the conference on Integrated Strategy for Green Renewable Energy held at Pune by Sharad Pawar, Member of Parliament in the presence of Dinesh Jagdale, Joint Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India. As a result of the business model suggested by Prof Mohan which resulted in balancing sugar demand supply and production of bio-electricity from bagasse, ethanol both from molasses and juice, compressed bio-gas from filter cake, the viability of the sugar industry had improved a lot, said Sanjay Khatal, President Cogeneration Association of India. Prof Mohan said the key to successful sustainability will ultimately depend on the progress in sugarcane productivity without increasing the cultivated area and decreases the environ-



mental impacts without lack of coordination between public policies, stakeholders and markets which would have benefits.

Addressing the gathering Prof Mohan informed sugarcane, also known as bagasse, was a renewable, fast growing resource that was grown for a number of purposes. He said bagasse was the dry pulpy fibrous residue that remained after stalks were crushed to extract their juice. He said the leftover fibrous residue called bagasse after juice extraction process was commonly combusted to generate heat or electricity for in-plant use. He said after fermentation the fermentation broth containing approximately five-12 per cent ethanol by weight was termed as beer.

He said strong potential existed in India for bioelectricity to meet the rising, domestic demand for energy and in order to fill the anticipated need, precise assessments of the resource potential were necessary as well as regularly-tracked resource inventories and apt policy. He said studies addressing these aspects of energy management were specifically being carried out at NSI. He said results showed that UP had the potential to produce 27.05 million tonnes of usable bagasse annually. He said in conjunction with the ongoing growth path for India and energy access considerations, the NSI recommended more strategically-focused energy policies, including auctions, regular resource-

mapping and zoning that can catalyse biomass energy adoption while mitigating the greenhouse gas footprint of India.

**PROGRAMME:** The College Development Council, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Dr Rajesh Kumar Dwivedi, while addressing an awareness programme for the differently abled children held in collaboration with NSS and Pushpa Khanna Memorial Centre said it was the duty of every person to instil confidence in people who were differently abled, to inculcate confidence in them and make them think positive. The key speaker was Ruma Chaturvedi, Director Pushpa Khanna Memorial Centre who advised the people how to handle differently abled people. She said first and foremost was to seek permission before offering help. She said one need not assume that people with disabilities will always require some assistance in leading their lives and the first step was to treat them as equals. She said few disabled people may suffer from lack of self-esteem and confidence and many of them don't like sympathy and so don't stare at them.

# Idol of Lord Ganesha installed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

With the installation of the idol of Lord Ganesha, the seven-day festival of Nutan Balak Ganeshotsav Samaj Seva Mandal began at Nana Fadnavis Ka Bada, Durgaghat here on Monday. However, the idol of Lord Ganesha, a replica of Mumbai's famous Lalbagh Ka Raja, of Shri Kashi Maratha Ganesh Utsav Samiti will be installed at Agrawal Bhawan, Ashbairo to mark the beginning of its five-day festival on Tuesday. The festival is also being celebrated in the city at several other places because a good number of Marathi fam-

ilies have been living in the city for centuries. It is the 95th year of Ganeshotsav at Sharda Bhavan in Augustya Kund area, which was started in 1929 by Pt Gaurinath Pathak and since then the puja was organised every year. Apart from this, the week-long festival of Shri Kashi Vishwanath Chaturvish Ganpati Mahotsav is also being celebrated at Shri Kashi Vidya Mandir at Machhodari (Ghai Ghat). Earlier, the idol of Nutan Balak Ganeshotsav Samaj Seva Mandal was brought to the festival venue in a palki (palanquin) with the traditional verse 'Gajanana La Neu Ghar' from the local Dudhvinayak area.

The installation of the idol was done by festival secretary Rakesh Gajanan Kelkar and president Pradeep Narayan Dongre under the guidance of Vedmurti Animesh Vireshwar Datar and Pandit Hemant Joshi. Then Sahasranamacharan (Durva) was performed. The inaugural function was presided over by Dr Binda Paranjape, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, BHU, while the chief guest was leading industrialist Vijay Choudhary. Several cultural and other programmes were organised and meritorious students of schools run by the organisation were honoured. The programme was conducted by

Soumitra Prabhakar Shukla. The festival of Shri Kashi Maratha Ganesh Utsav Samiti will be held from September 19 to 23 and the festival will begin at 9 am on Tuesday with the installation of idol made by the artisans of Mumbai in a grand pandal. The programme of Maha-Aarti will be performed daily at 9 pm apart from tableaux and jagran programmes. For the success of the festival a committee has been formed, informed senior patron Manik Rao Patil. Patron Santosh Patil, Suhas Patil, advisor Tana Ji Patil, Hanmantrao More, Chandrashekar Shinde, president Anand Suryavanshi and others were present.

# V-C: India has to focus on digitalisation of newer techs for optimal food production

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology, Dr Anand Kumar Singh, while inaugurating the Scientists



Outreach Programme organised jointly by Buyer Crop Science Ltd said today the emphasis was on the digitalisation of agriculture which described integrating cutting-edge digital technology into the farm production system, including artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, uncrowded aviation systems, sensors and communication networks. He said in the current times India had to focus on the digitalisation of newer technologies to have optimal food production and this rested on the scientists. He said it increased agricultural productivity and lowered production costs. He said it also lessened chemical application in crop production and uplifted the socio-economic status of farmers and promoted the effective

and efficient use of water resources. Dr Singh said digital technologies can support trade in agriculture and food products by connecting private sector suppliers to new markets and enabling new ways for governments to monitor and ensure compliance with standards and to provide faster and more efficient border procedures that were essential for perishables. He said another area of importance was application of robots in agriculture, especially at the harvesting stage. He said emerging appli-

cations of robots or drones in agriculture included weed control, cloud seeding, planting seeds, harvesting, environmental monitoring and soil analysis. The V-C citing a few technological advances in recent years said it had led to the development of many agricultural robotic advancements use machine vision technology to avoid hazards, identify crops, and even determining if they were ready to be harvested. He said machine or computer vision typically involved a camera or multiple cameras feeding information to the robot that allowed it to locate and access the crops around it. He said machine vision made it possible for robots to perform tasks like weed picking, growth monitoring, harvesting, sorting and packing. Dr Singh said another technology employed in agricultural robots was machine learning which provided an advanced method of identifying collision paths that can help autonomous vehicles learn to adapt and avoid new or

unexpected hazards in their paths. He said it also enabled picking and quality control robots to learn as they go, and to develop the best methods for identifying and executing their tasks. Over 255 students took part. The vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Rakshita.

**CELEBRATED:** The members of Advanced Centre for Materials Science (ACMS) along with respective faculty coordinators of various ACMS Labs celebrated the Vishwakarma Puja on Monday at the IIT-K. This year the family members of the staff colleagues participated in the Puja. The staff members from the Material Science Programme (MSP) and Material Science and Engineering (MSE) Department also joined their colleagues for the puja. Later an open house was organised for children and spouses of the staff. The objective was to apprise the family members, especially young children, about the facilities and activities at ACMS.

# Varanasi honoured for TB performance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

At the inauguration of Ayushman Bhava Seva Pakhwada, Varanasi was honoured at the state level for its better performance under the National Tuberculosis Eradication Programme (NTEP) and the Prime Minister TB Mukti Bharat Abhiyan. In the Ayushman Bhava ceremony held at Lucknow Raj Bhawan on Sunday, Governor Anandiben Patel honoured Varanasi's District Tuberculosis Officer (DTO) Dr Piyush Rai with a citation. On this occasion UP Minister of State for Medical Education and Health Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh, Principal Secretary Partha Sarathi Sen Sharma and other officials were



present. Under the Ayushman Bhava campaign and NTEP, Varanasi has achieved a score of 84.5 per cent in the state. With this achievement, Varanasi has got 10th position. The DTO Dr Piyush Rai said that so far this year, 72 per cent of TB patients have been notified in government medical units against the target. In this sequence, 59 per cent of TB patients have been notified in the private

sector. A total of 67 per cent TB patients have been notified so far against the target. Dr Rai said that 99 per cent are people who were tested for HIV and diabetes. Of the total patients, 90 per cent of bacteriologically confirmed patients were tested for Universal Drug Susceptibility Testing (UDST). At present the TB success rate of the district is 91 per cent. Under the Nikshay Nutrition

Scheme, 81 per cent beneficiaries have been given Rs 500 every month directly into the bank accounts of the patients. Treatment of 77 per cent drug resistant TB (DRTB) patients was started with immediate effect. Chemoprophylaxis therapy is being given to 91 per cent of children under five years of age. 72 per cent of such TB patients are being given TB Preventive Therapy (TPT). Seen this way, the total score of Varanasi is 84.5 per cent. Dr Rai said that 2447 Nikshay Mitras have been registered in the district. At present a total of 7770 TB patients are on treatment. In this, 6570 tuberculosis patients have been adopted by Nikshay Mitras. The process of adoption of the remaining TB patients is going on, he added.

## Prabhat Pheri taken out in BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As per the instructions of Ministry of Railways, Swachhata Pakhwada (Cleanliness Fortnight) is being celebrated in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) from September 16 to October 2 on the guidance of General Manager (GM) Basudev Panda under the auspices of the Safety department

in which various programmes including Prabhat Pheri, Shramdaan, tree plantation etc are being organised. In this direction, a Prabhat Pheri was taken out on Monday morning for creating cleanliness awareness. The procession was flagged off by SB Patel, Chief Safety Officer, BLW from the site of Kundan Loco display near Central Market in BLW premises.

# Vishwakarma Jayanti celebrated in IFFCO



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Vishwakarma Jayanti was celebrated at the Central Workshop (Mechanical) of IFFCO Phulpur plant. Chief host Senior Executive Director Unit Head Sanjay Kudesia performed the puja, hawan and aarti of Lord Ganapati and Lord Vishwakarma. Dev Shilpi Lord Vishwakarma is considered the God of construction and creation. On the occasion machines were worshipped in all departments of the IFFCO plant. The decorated tableau of Chandrayaan-3 Vikram Lander

was the centre of special attraction. JGMs respectively Sanjay Vaish, MD Mishra, AP Rajendran, PK Patel, Ratnesh Kumar, Dr Anita Mishra, Arvendra Kumar, HOD Human Resources Shambhu Shekhar, President, IFFCO Officers' Association Sonu Tiwari and general secretary Swayam Prakash, president, IFFCO Employees' Association Pankaj Pandey and general secretary Vinay Yadav, all officers and employees were present. At the end prasad was distributed among the people.

# Lower Ganga basin may face drought in near future: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A study by researchers of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has concluded that the lower Ganga basin could experience agricultural drought in near future due to decreasing areal mean rainfall. The study has been carried out by Prof RK Mall and PhD scholar Pawan Kumar Chaubey, from the DST-Mahamana Centre of Excellence in Climate Change Research (DST-MCECCR) at the Institute of Environment and Sustainable Development (IESD) of the university. The study explored the new possible hotspot regions for future urban flooding due to the increasing pattern of heavy rainfall. It also calls for timely efforts by policymakers to manage the excess (less) water situations. Prof Mall said, "Global warming increases the risk of hydro-climate extremes such as floods and droughts worldwide. The increasing rate



of atmospheric heat increases the water content, which is the leading cause of extreme events. The widespread variability in extreme events has affected manmade and natural systems." The study shows the changes in the hydroclimate extremes under low to high-emission scenarios of the 12 best models of Coupled Model Intercomparison Project Phase 6 (CMIP6) climate model, he added. The study found that the frequency of extreme rainfall is expected to increase over the Western Ghats and Northeast river basins, while an increase in heavy rainfall inten-

sity (14.3%) is projected over the upper Ganga and Indus basin. Also, approximately 4%-10% of the heavy rainfall is projected to increase over the western part of Indian River basins (IRBs) during the near (2021-2040) and mid (2041-2060) future. Due to the intensification of extreme rainfall, Western Ghats, Indus, West, and Central Indian River basins will be highly vulnerable. Major cities like Mumbai and Pune, situated in the west-flowing river basins, would be at a high risk of urban flooding due to the increasing future precipitation extremes. The lower Ganga river basin is found to experience a decrease in monthly mean precipitation of approximately 7 to 11 mm/day in the near future. India's Eastern Ghats river basins were found to have decreased approximately 20% in daily precipitation, however, in the far future, it is projected to increase approximately 15%. The results show that

changes in the frequency of heavy rainfall are expected to be more over the IRBs. In addition, the research also identifies the major hotspots of highly populated cities that come under different river basins for urban flooding, which could help policymakers in designing appropriate adaptation and mitigation strategies.

The research team used high-resolution CMIP6 Climate model to examine the future hydro climate extremes over the different River Basins of India. This model uses various meteorological and environmental parameters to make projections about climate in the future. The work has been supported under the Climate Change Programme of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India. The findings of the study have been published in the internationally renowned journal Earth's Future by the American Geophysical Union.



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**Tender Enquiry No.105/CHP/EMC-450/GHTP/2023 Dated 15-09-2023**  
SE-MM-II/GHTP, Lehra Mohabbat invites E-tender for the work of "CHP-GHTP STAGE-I (2X210MW) & STAGE-II (2X250MW) Breakdown, Shutdown, Preventive & Routine Maintenance of Electrical system as per Tender Specifications under Coal Handling Plant/ Electrical Maintenance Cell on Lump sum basis at GHTP. For detailed NIT & tender specifications please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 15-09-2023, 18:00 PM onwards.  
**Note:-** Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

**GHTP-76/23**  
**76155/12/2191/2023/27943**  
**Dated CHD : 9/18/2023**

**HORNBILL FINANCE LIMITED**  
Regd. Off.: Grace Mansion, Circular road, Dimapur, Nagaland- 797112  
CIN: U65929NL2002PLC006840, Email: [hfl.ngl@gmail.com](mailto:hfl.ngl@gmail.com)

**JOINT PUBLIC NOTICE**  
PUBLIC NOTICE is hereby given that the shareholders of Hornbill Finance Limited, a company incorporated under the companies Act, 1956 and Registered with Reserve Bank of India vide Certificate Number B.08.00167 dated 07.11.2003 as a Non-Deposit taking Non-Banking Finance Company, with its Registered office situated at Grace Mansion, Circular Road, Dimapur, Nagaland- 797112, are intended to transfer the ownership and control of the company through the sale of shares to (1) TV Gopinath (2) K K Vijayakumar (3) Rajeevu M A (4) Dr Indira K R and (5) Tiatemjen K Jamir (collectively referred to as 'Acquirers'). The new management / shareholders seek to acquire 98% of shares from existing shareholders.  
The new directors to be appointed are (i) Shri TV Gopinath, #446, Vishwamanava Double Road, Kuvempunagar, Mysore 570023. (ii) Shri K K Vijayakumar, Kompara, Anickad West PO, Kottayam- 686503 and (iii) Shri Rajeevu M A, Manakkunathu House Paduva PO, Mattakkara, Kottayam 686564, and the resigning directors are (1) Chuba Pongen, H/no 009, Grace Mansion, Circular Road, War-09, Supply Colony Dimapur Sad, Dimapur, Nagaland - 797112 (2) Yongya Chingmak, H/No 1053, Block-1, NH-29, Near Woodstock School, Padampukuri Village, Padampukhuri, Dimapur, Nagaland - 797116 and (3) Tiatemjen Kezevilhou Jamir, H/no-247, Block 3, Chekiye Village, Chekiye, Dimapur, Nagaland - 797115. The proposed transaction will help the company to expand its business operation in other states too. The company can leverage the expertise of the new management in achieving the desired goals.  
The above Notice is being given pursuant to RBI Circular NBR, (PD) CC, No.065/03.10.001/2015-16 dated 9 July, 2015 and subsequent relevant Regulations. The RBI vide letter No. GWH.DOS.ADM.No.S151/01-09-167/2023-24 dated 8 September 2023 has provided their 'no objection' to the Company for aforesaid change in its control and management.  
In case of any objection in respect of the above-mentioned sale / transfer of control/management, the same may be communicated in writing stating therein the nature of interest and grounds of objection within 30 days from the date of publication of this notice to Hornbill Finance Limited at its registered address with a copy to aforementioned new shareholders at their respective address or to the above mentioned Email ID. This Public Notice is being issued jointly by the Company and the above-mentioned Acquirers.

Dimapur  
17.09.2023

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# Complete preparations ahead of PM’s visit, says CM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspected the proposed visit sites of Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Monday evening and instructed the officers to complete preparations on time by launching a campaign on war footing. The PM is proposed to arrive in his parliamentary constituency (Varanasi) for a day-long visit on September 23 when he would stay here for 5-6 hours.

To check the preparations, Yogi first landed at the helipad of his own ‘dream project’ Atal Residential School set up at Karsada. The PM during his visit will formally inaugurate all such schools set up at divisional level in all the 16 divisions of the state to impart standard education to the kids of construction workers as well as orphans of Covid-19 pandemic. During his visit, the CM spent a good time visiting the smart classrooms as the first session there has already started giving admissions to boys and girls from four districts of the divisions. He inquired about the children studying there and their families and also took information about the education system being provided in the school.

He also took detailed information from the children regarding the arrangements for their accommodation, food, education etc. The CM blessed the children to study diligently and progress in life with all their might. He also instructed the officers present on the spot and the school principal to provide a high level education system to the children as per the intention of the govern-



CM Yogi Adityanath inspecting PM's public meeting site at Ganjari in Varanasi on Monday evening.

ment. During the inspection, Yogi interacted with the children in the classroom and took information about their studies. During this, the CM also examined the quality of education by questioning the children about the words written in English on the digital sign boards installed in the classrooms. During the inspection of the classroom, he was seen in the role of a teacher on the sign board. He also saw the school library and the demo of the school's design.

As many as 80 students have been admitted in the school of the age group of 6 to 14 years and they will be provided free quality education in primary, junior high school and secondary school by the state government. The school, built on 12.25 acres with a cost of Rs 66.54 crore. Among the students taking admission in the school, there are 40 boys and 40

girls. Education and boarding facilities will be free for these students. Sports and entertainment facilities will be provided to the children by the government. The CM was accompanied by three local UP Ministers Anil Rajbhar, Ravindra Jaiswal and Dayashankar Mishra ‘Dayalu’ apart from District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam, Chief Development Officer Himanshu Nagpal and other officers.

Then the CM reached Ganjari in Rajatalab area where an international cricket stadium will be built. The PM will lay the foundation stone of the stadium and address a public meeting also there. It will be the first international standard stadium being constructed by the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI) in India and for this land has been provided by the state government. After

reaching there, the CM inspected the stage, pandal, sitting and other arrangements and asked about all the details from the Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma. MLAs Neelkanth Tiwari and Awadhesh Singh, Mayor Ashok Tiwari, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya and others were also present there.

Later, after the on-site inspection, the CM held a meeting at Circuit House and reviewed the development works and law and order apart from all the preparations for the PM's visit. He also offered prayers at Kaal Bhairav and Kashi Vishwanath temples. During his visit, the PM will also attend a programme at Rudraksh International Convention Centre at Sigra where he will give awards to the winners of Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav.

# Nitish can’t be trusted: Chirag

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Nitish Kumar will certainly ditch the Opposition alliance, said LJP leader Chirag Paswan while discussing Bihar politics here on Sunday.

Chirag had arrived here to console the Dalit family of which three members had been killed a couple of days ago. Son of Ram Vilas Paswan, Chirag is considered to be a prominent Dalit face in NDA.

Nitish had his eyes on the

chair of prime minister and the day he will realise that his dream will not be fulfilled while remaining a part of INDIA, he will waste no time in separating himself from the alliance and search for new partners.

His previous records say that he can go to any extent to grab power. He can join hands with the arch rival Laloo and can ditch him to garner support of the BJP on the other hand.

Time will come soon when Nitish will say good bye to the Opposition alliance, in which he had not been made even convener.

Earlier he was enthusiastically attached to INDIA, but his detachment is quite visible now on different issues. He had ditched the NDA in the past and is the time to do the same with INDIA bloc.

Nitish and Laloo have come together in Bihar to grab power at any cost even by sup-

porting ‘corruption’ of the RJD.

On being asked for his political comments, Paswan first said that it was no time to discuss politics as he had arrived here for a totally different purpose, but later attacked Nitish Kumar and Laloo family.

He also showered praises on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the success of G-20 summit. India is on a totally different platform at present, he added.

# Motorcycle rally taken out

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

To spread awareness amongst the residents about the air display at Sangam on October 8 a motorcycle rally was taken out from the Headquarters Central Air Command to Sangam and back. It was flagged off by Air Vice Marshal JS Mann Vayusena Medal, ACAS Ops (Offensive) and 35 air warriors participated in it with great zeal.

The air warriors interacted with the local populace and informed them about the air display over Sangam and exhorted them to witness the grand event on October 8, from 02.30 pm onwards. The rally also offered an opportunity to the youth to know about the various exciting career options in the Indian Air Force.



# Workshop on bird watching and documentation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Bird lovers and wildlife enthusiasts from Lucknow, Ayodhya, Kanpur and other parts of Uttar Pradesh had a unique opportunity to interact with eminent birdwatchers and photographers and bird data scientists at the state's first workshop on bird watching and documentation organised by Bengaluru-based organisation ‘Bird Count India Collective’ here. This unique workshop was organised under the supervision of Dr Arpit Bansal- Advanced Laparoscopy and Cancer Surgeon and an acclaimed wildlife and bird photographer. A quiz was also organised at the workshop also attended by some students and teachers from SHUATS Naini.

The Wildlife Institute of India members and volunteers also attended the workshop.

Addressing the gathering Dr Arpit Bansal said UP has some fascinating bird species and it calls for their proper documentation and conservation efforts. The eBird.org is one such prestigious online site on which the birdwatchers can upload all details of bird species they have spotted and clicked, besides track bird species in different states in India. “The eBird.org assisted me in organising my short birding trips at the right places. This in turn



helped me getting the picture of 1120th bird species found in India and claiming the sixth spot for spotting/clicking over 1100 bird species in India as per eBird.org. Therefore, it is very important for all the birdwatchers to regularly document the presence of bird species on sites like eBird.org, as it will help in their conservation efforts,” he pointed out.

A scientist with Bird Count India Collective Ashwin Viswanathan said birds and biodiversity in general are declining across the world. To address this India has set ambi-

tious goals of reversing this loss, and restoring ecosystems. As part of initiative State of India's Birds 2020 report was the first attempt to assess the conservation status of majority of India's bird species. It identified 101 species of high conservation concern, which require focused efforts. The report also suggests that birds that live in key habitats like open ecosystems, rivers and coasts have declines and so has the population of raptors, migratory shorebirds and ducks. Project coordinator with Bird Count India Mittal Gala said they have identified some

bird species in UP that needs high conservation efforts. These species are Indian skimmers black-bellied tern, little tern to name some. If birdwatchers regularly document the details of birds they have clicked/spotted on ebird.org or other similar sites, the data analysts will get clear picture of the bird count, their population trend, nesting sites etc and they will go a long way in conservation efforts. She also appreciated the efforts being done by Dr Bansal in highlighting the birds population in Prayagraj region.

# CP, V-C inspect Modi’s visit site in SSU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Commissioner of Police (CP) Mutha Ashok Jain, along with Vice-Chancellor (V-C) Prof Bihari Lal Sharma and other university officers, inspected the site on Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) campus here on Monday afternoon where during one-day visit to his parliamentary constituency, Prime Minister Narendra Modi may visit on September 23.

During the visit, the PM may see the amazing store of rare manuscripts kept in Saraswati Bhawan Library in the university. Both the CP and V-C took stock of preparations and other arrangements. Registrar Rakesh Kumar, Chief Proctor Prof Dinesh Kumar Garg, Dr Padmakar Mishra, Prof Jitendra Kumar, Ramvijay Singh and other officials were present.

The V-C Prof Bihari Lal Sharma himself is taking stock of the entire preparations for which various committees on cleanliness and other types have been formed at the university level. Along with this, other concerned officers are



CP MA Jain, V-C Prof BL Sharma inspecting Modi's visit site on SSU campus in Varanasi on Monday.

also busy in discharging their responsibilities.

**CONFERENCE OF ‘HAEMOCO’ HELD:** The Indian College of Haematology and Oncology Society in association with Bharat Vikas Parishad Varuna Seva Sansthan Trust organised its 2nd national conference of ‘HAEMO-

CON, 2023’ in Cantonment area here.

In the closing session of the conference held on Saturday, the chief guest and National President of Indian Medical Association (IMA) Dr Shard Agrawal and Member, NMML, Ministry of Culture, Government of India Prof

Kamlesh P Josphipura and ex-Director, IMS, BHU Prof VP Singh jointly released a book ‘The Textbook of Clinical Hematology’.

The Fellowship was also given by the organisation to as many as 25 doctors including Dr Sharad Agrawal, IMA National President.

# G20 event increased India’s reputation, says economist

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

President of Indian Economic Association (IEA) Prof Ghanshyam N Singh said that successfully hosting of the G20 event has increased the country's reputation across the world and now India has become a leader in the world. He was addressing an online National Conclave on ‘future challenges of emerging India’, organised jointly by IEA and Harishchandra Post-Graduate College (HPGC) as the chief guest. He said that at present our country is the fifth largest economy in the world but there are still both internal and external challenges for the future, for which efforts should be made to overcome through other organisations like G20. He was of the opinion that the Russia-Ukraine war should be ended through dialogue.

The Conference President of the IEA and former Vice-Chancellor (V-C) of Manipur University Prof Adya Prasad Pandey, while presenting a keynote address, said that

the biggest challenge facing emerging India is unemployment and the government can reduce it by running skill development related programmes. Along with this, he said that for sustainable and inclusive development, we will have to pay attention to rural development along with cities. He said that there should be proper utilisation of resources in the country and human values should be developed and this will reduce the problems of the country, he added.

Prof RK Upadhyay talked about two types of challenges (internal and external) facing emerging India. Among the internal challenges he talked about the population, unemployment, education and inequality and to deal with these challenges, he suggested promotion of manufacturing. He said that we can achieve demographic dividend through our increased population. Dr Manish Hindvi said that there is no economic development without an increase in income. Dr Anil Kumar Thakur said how income inequality and

crime are increasing due to unemployment.

Prof Shyam Pal said that most of the population of our country lives in villages and earn their livelihood from agriculture. The government's aim was to double the income of farmers but it could not be achieved as there is no price stability in agriculture hence the lower class is not getting the benefit of development. Dr Udhham Singh of KMCL University, Lucknow said that income inequality is increasing day by day, there is a need for labour reforms and agriculture.

Presiding over the conclave, HPGC Prof Rajnish Kunwar said that our country is facing both internal and external challenges. Under internal challenges, problems like poverty, unemployment, starvation exit and under external problems there are border disputes and country security is important and there is a need to keep the country safe. Prof AK Tomar, Chief Conference Coordinator of the IEA said that poverty and unemploy-

ment can be removed from the country by increasing public expenditure on education, health and skill development in our country, which will help in the development of the country. Prof Jagadish Singh, Regional Joint Secretary of IEA and Head of Economics department, HPGC said that our country is moving towards a five trillion dollar economy and the country is facing both internal and external problems.

Dr DK Asthana, General Secretary IEA said that everything cannot be left in the hands of the government. Technical support was provided by Dr Monika Varshney and Karunesh Ojha. Prof Shashi Jain, Dr Remmiya Rajan P, Dr Vikram Singh, Prof Ripu Daman Singh, Prof Mukulika Hitkari, Dr Vivek Singh, Dr Priya Mittal, Dr Anju Aggarwal, Dr Tarun Kumar Dwivedi, Prof Hanuman Prasad, Prof Praveen Sharma, Dr Marutesh, Dr MS Khan, Dr Poonam Gupta, Dr Sahab Singh, Dr Rachna and Dr Archana Mudgal also participated.

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Two youths died and one was seriously injured in a head-on collision between bikes under Chunar police station on Sunday. Yogendra Kumar (24) of Pathara Dasaundhi under Dehat Kotwali police station was going home on his bike from Chunar area via Dagmagpur when at Bargawaan village it collided with the bike of Ram Kumar (30) of Bargawaan under Chunar police station. Jay Prakash (26) of Madhupur, Sonbhadra, was sitting the pillion rider on the bike of his brother-in-law Ram Kumar at the time of the accident. On information the police admitted the injured to a nearby hospital where the doctors declared Ram Kumar and Yogendra as brought dead while Jay Prakash was referred to the Trauma Centre, Varanasi. SHO Chunar police station Sanjeev Singh said the family members of the victims had been informed.

**PM’S BIRTHDAY:** The birthday of PM Narendra Modi was celebrated throughout the

district on Sunday. Giving details to the media at BJP office on Sunday district president BJP Brij Bhushan Singh said that at all its Shakti Kendras workers organised the programmes and made plan for further activities. He said the party had decided to observe the birthday of the PM as ‘Seva Pakhawara’ from September 17 to October 2. It started on the birthday of Modi and will conclude on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri. To make people aware about the programmes related to public welfare a bike rally was taken out under the leadership of Ram Kumar Vishwakarma, he added.

About other activities during the fortnight the BJP president said apart from blood donation on a large scale by the youth wing of the party the workers will help eligible persons to avail themselves of the benefit of different welfare schemes. The workers will find out names of the needy and ensure to easy availability of the facilities, he added. On the occasion MLAs Ratnakar

Mishra, Rama Shankar Singh Patel and Anurag Patel, chairman Zila Panchayat Raju Kanaujia, chairman Cooperative Bank Jagdeesh Singh Patel, workers Sanjay Yadav, Gyan Prakash Dubey and others were also present.

**COUPLES REUNITE:** Under Project Milan programme four couples reunited through the Family Counselling Centre (FCC) located at Police Lines on Sunday. The said couples were living separately due to misunderstanding over trivial issues and cases were brought to the police. The police had referred the cases to the FCC and after separate sittings the couples agreed to live together. Incharge of the centre sub-inspector Shashi Tiwari, constable Pinki Jaishwal and counsellors Nirmala Rai and Prakash Chandra along with others were present during the counselling.

**INSPECTED:** Executive Engineer Distribution Division-II of UP Power Corporation Rajesh Kumar while inspecting the ongoing works under Vindhya Corridor

project on Sunday asked the officials to complete the work of laying of underground cable at Vindhyachal within the stipulated time frame. The laying of underground cable IN Vindhyachal town was to be done for a length of 4.2 kilometres in four streets for which Rs 12 crore has been allocated. He said for connection to residents 32 distribution boxes were to be installed and the target was to complete the work within this month in view of Navratri Mela. During the inspection he warned to workers to speed up the work and complete it on time otherwise remain prepared to face the music.

**ARRESTED:** The Vindhyachal police on Sunday arrested an accused of enticing a minor girl away. One person had lodged a named first information report (FIR) on Sunday alleging that the accused enticed his minor daughter away.

SHO Vindhyachal Arvind Mishra took the case seriously and the girl was recovered and the accused was nabbed by the police team and sent to jail.



## Old giveth way...

The first day of Parliament's special session was its last in the old building

It can now be said with certain confidence that there is nothing special about the special session of Parliament, which got under way yesterday after prolonged suspense regarding the agenda. The only highlight may perhaps be that Parliament will henceforth assemble in the new building. The Government wanted to hold the monsoon session in the new building but could not since it was not ready then, so, it appears, it thought of a special five-day session. In a way, the move is to showcase the new Parliament House and bid adieu to the old building which would now be a relic serving as a museum. While most MPs were nostalgic about parting ways with the old building, they also hailed their new working place in the grand, state-of-the-art Parliament House. The special session began with an address by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the Lok Sabha, where he talked about several significant events that have taken place on the old premises. He also hoped that the old building will continue to inspire generations with its rich



heritage. The Prime Minister took this opportunity to also enumerate the important Bills passed by his Government, pointing out that several historic decisions and solutions to issues pending for decades were reached in the old building. "The House will always say proudly that (abrogation of) Article 370 became possible due to it. GST was also passed here. One Rank One Pension was witnessed by this House. Ten per cent reservation for the economically weaker sections was successfully allowed in the country for the first time without any dispute," he said to thunderous applause.

Earlier, MoS (Parliamentary Affairs) Arjun Ram Meghwal had informed the MPs that Indian Parliament's "journey of 75 years will be discussed throughout the day" but that did not happen. Instead, the day was all about speeches from the Treasury benches and the Opposition, mainly the Congress. Opposition leader Mallikarjun Kharge did not mince words in attacking the Government over its alleged misuse of CBI-ED in muzzling the dissenting voices. Quoting Nehru, he said he believed that the absence of a strong Opposition meant that there were significant drawbacks in the system. If there is no strong Opposition, it is not right. Now that there is a strong Opposition, the focus is on weakening it through ED and CBI, he claimed. The special session will include five sittings across five days, with a focus on discussing eight legislative items. Additionally, there will be deliberations on the "parliamentary journey of 75 years", encompassing achievements, experiences, memories and learnings. However, how much business is actually transacted in the House remains to be seen. But the bleak possibility of the Government sneaking something up its sleeve and shocking the parliamentarians at a time suited to it appears dimmer each passing minute. We should also, as a responsible nation, not play into paranoia and celebrate the old yielding place to the new: It was simply about shifting from the old building to the new.

### PICTALK



An eco-friendly Ganesha idol is made by using at least 5,000 biscuit packets for Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Chennai PTI

## G20 Summit: Towards a just world order

Challenges remain, and the road ahead is not free of headwinds but a strong push has been made

The just concluded G20 meeting in Delhi has been an unqualified success. India, while fulfilling its responsibility of holding the G20 Presidency, has demonstrated an inspiring championship of the issues of the Global South. The path of the G20 summit, from Indonesia last year to India, to Brazil later this year and from there to South Africa, augurs well for the rightful assertion of the Global South within the international community.

Like most other international bodies, the G20 carries with it a cause of concern – as it contains the world's most powerful and influential in its origins. The path of the upcoming summits, as it traverses through the nations of the Global South, however, provides hope of giving momentum to the next phase of decolonisation.

The first phase of decolonisation, which concluded by the middle of the last century, saw strong momentum embodied by nationalist struggles leading up, with a few notable exceptions, to the physical ouster of occupiers and the first steps of liberation of the Global South.



From quite early on, the Global South realised the need to build collective energies to counter the hegemonies of the Global North, and this saw the Bandung Conference in 1955 and the Non-Aligned Movement that continued to the early 1990s. With a hiatus brought about by the end of the Cold War, we see today renewed recognition of the need to resist the continued hegemony of the Global North.

In that context, the decision to welcome the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 will shape the ideas of planetary futures. Powered by the suffering of plundered pasts, popular momentums and a youthful future, there can be little doubt that the peoples and states of the African continent will eventually define the future of equality and justice together with the other nations of the Global South. The G20 New Delhi

Leaders' Declaration, adopted as a consensus document, shows four key departure points. These include the issue of climate justice, the expressed need for debt restructuring, the agenda of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls and the war in Ukraine.

Climate action also presents a significant arena for decolonisation. Peoples and nations of the Global South have contributed the least to the climate crisis and yet suffer the most. Within the G20, the G7, in particular, carry the historical responsibility for most damage and, therefore, must shoulder the burden/weight of reparations and compensation for damage. Indeed, climate justice needs to adopt the principle of common but differentiated responsibility. The document spells out the need for adequate climate financing by the Global North.

The Delhi Declaration brought a sharp focus on global debt vulnerabilities, especially as related to low- and middle-income countries. Progressive opinion has long pushed the agenda of debt cancellation, as the pos-

itive impact on people from the Global South would be immense.

As a reiteration of the feminist sentiment to consign patriarchy to the dustbin of history, the Delhi Declaration has called for gender equality and empowerment of women and girls. While legal frameworks for women's rights exist in most countries, achieving gender equality in social and economic spheres remains challenging. This could be the defining moment for women of the world with the G20 endorsing the vision of a feminist future.

Challenges remain. Most important is whether the agreements coming out of G20 will go beyond the symbolic and escape the subterfuge of Greenwashing and market solutions, which have proven only to benefit business owners. Symbols, rhetoric and broader participation must translate into tangible and urgent ground action. Such legacies live only when the most vulnerable see them realised.

(The writer is executive director of Action Aid Association. Views are personal)



SANDEEP CHACHRA

## Congress gears up for elections

Congress leaders are upbeat after the weekend Congress Working Committee meeting in Hyderabad

They are ready to plunge into poll mode. The CWC, the Party's highest policy-making body agreed on several contentious and sensitive topics and planned its future course. The meeting was the first after Mallikharjun Kharge became party president. The Gandhis had a strong presence, with Sonia, Rahul, and Priyanka attending the conference. Following three productive gatherings of the Opposition coalition in INDIA, the CWC members voiced their backing for Rahul Gandhi's leadership and their intention to move forward with the Bharat Jodo Yatra 2-0. There was a sense of assurance and positivity in the air. The choice of Hyderabad as the capital of bifurcated — Telangana is significant as assembly polls are due in three months. The Congress has lost both bifurcated states — Andhra Pradesh since 2014.

After considering the political, economic and security situations, the CWC, emphatically declared that it is fully prepared for the upcoming Assembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha. Congress presented itself as an alternative to the BJP with the support of the INDIA coalition.

Congress leaders are optimistic about INDIA alliance. The Grand Old Party wants to play a primary role in the coalition and criticised the Modi government's failure on all fronts, particularly in Manipur and Kashmir. One of the 14 resolutions said, "The CWC reiterates the Congress party's resolve to make the INDIA initiative an ideological and electoral success so that our country is freed from divisive and polarising politics, the forces of social equity and justice are strengthened, and the people get a Union Government that is responsible, responsive, sensitive, transparent and accountable." In essence, this will be the thrust of the poll campaign.

This message serves as a reaffirmation of the Party's unwavering commitment to its alliance partners. There have been doubts about it because of the inherent contradictions among the players. The Party strategized for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assem-



bly elections in Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, and Mizoram. It took note of the challenges including differing views between the central leadership and specific state units on forming alliances and adjusting seats with some members of the INDIA coalition.

According to internal assessments, the Party expects trouble from within its Punjab, Delhi, and West Bengal ranks. Party leaders in Punjab and Delhi don't support the rival Aam Aadmi Party. In West Bengal, the state leadership competes directly with the Trinamool Congress.

In Rajasthan, the Congress and BJP are closely competing for power. Based on internal surveys, the Congress party has a slight advantage in Chhattisgarh and a stronger position in Madhya Pradesh. Party insiders also report that the Congress is gaining momentum in Telangana. The Party organised a two-day event to celebrate Hyderabad Day on September 17th, which marks the city's inclusion in India in 1948.

Resolutions about legislative business in Parliament mainly centred on rejecting proposals to review the Constitution. The Party demanded the one-third women's reservation Bill and augmented

THE GRAND OLD PARTY WANTS TO PLAY A PRIMARY ROLE IN THE COALITION. IT HAS CRITICISED THE MODI GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE ON ALL FRONTS

reservation limits for SCs, STs, and OBCs. These measures aim to win over various voter groups.

The CWC also opposed a proposed Bill to amend the salary, allowance, and service conditions of the Chief Election Commissioner and the two Election Commissioners. They argued that the bill may harm the independence of the Election Commission.

The CWC has opposed the BJP's proposal of "one nation, one poll," citing it as unconstitutional. Nevertheless, the Modi government has established a committee, led by former President Ram Nath Kovind, to explore the feasibility of conducting coexistent elections for Lok Sabha, state Assemblies, municipalities, and panchayats.

One resolution criticized the heartlessness of the BJP for celebrating Modi's G20 achievements during a crisis in Jammu and Kashmir, disrespecting the sacrifice of security personnel.

Meanwhile, the Congress is careful and avoids controversial topics by stating that they believe in the principle of sarva dharma sambhavana. Significantly, at a public rally in Madhya Pradesh, Prime Minister Modi recently accused INDIA bloc of trying to eliminate Sanatana culture

and making it a political agenda for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. At the public rally following the CWC, Sonia Gandhi made six promises for the upcoming Telangana elections. Sonia has announced several benefits, which are as follows:

1. Women will receive a monthly sum of ₹2,500.
2. Farmers and tenant farmers will receive an annual amount of ₹15,000.
3. Home loans who need them.
4. Homeless will receive house sites and a sum of ₹5 lakhs.
5. Programs to support the development of young people.
6. Medical assistance to all needy citizens.

These benefits were aimed at attracting voters with freebies.

The Congress, however, has yet to reveal its new narrative, while it is clear that ideology is the central plank. The Congress has to work hard to improve its position. The success of the Party will depend on several factors, including seat sharing, candidate selection, Alliance, resources, and worker support. But the worker's morale has been boosted.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### A REMARKABLE VICTORY IN THE ASIA CUP

Sir — India achieved a remarkable victory in the Asia Cup by defeating Sri Lanka by 10 wickets, securing their eighth title across formats. Sri Lanka was bowled out for a mere 50 runs, marking the lowest-ever ODI total against India. Pacer Mohammed Siraj made history by becoming the first Indian to claim four wickets in a single over in international cricket. He also joined the ranks of the quickest bowlers to secure an ODI five-wicket haul.

Winning the Asia Cup final held significant importance for India as it allowed them to establish a winning mindset and peak at the right time before the World Cup. This victory will undoubtedly boost the players' confidence and momentum heading into the upcoming event. We, the Indian people, hope for further success in the World Cup, aiming to bring glory to our nation.

Tauqueer Rahmani | Mumbai

### A SIGNIFICANT STRIDE IN JUSTICE

Sir — The Supreme Court has taken a momentous step towards enhancing transparency and addressing the persistent issue of case backlog. The integration of real-time case data from the Supreme Court with the National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) portal holds the promise of being a game-changer. The NJDG is an extensive database that encompasses information regarding orders, judgments, and case details from numerous district, subordinate courts, and high courts throughout the nation. It was established as part of the e-Courts Project.

This integration ensures that the NJDG portal will consistently provide up-to-date information on cases pending before the Supreme Court. Currently, the NJDG holds a vast repository of 23 crore orders and judgments, spanning both civil and criminal cases. This development is crucial in addressing India's persistent issue of case backlogs, with approximately five crore cases pending nationwide.

It is imperative for both central and state governments, who are significant lit-

## Unveiling of new parliament building



India is poised to mark history with the unveiling of the new Parliament House, a symbol of the nation's indomitable spirit and its relentless pursuit of progress. This state-of-the-art infrastructure is set to welcome the presiding

members of Parliament, speakers of both houses, and various nominated and invitee dignitaries. It boasts a seating capacity of approximately 1272 seats for members of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

The existing Parliament building, constructed in 1927 under the supervision of British architects Lutyens and Baker, has witnessed the evolution of Indian politics up to the 75th year of the country's independence. In the face of rapid developments and dynamic changes, the Central Vista project is poised to inscribe the history of New India with greater accountability and responsibility.

Dimple Wadhawan | Kanpur Nagar

igants, to actively participate in reducing this backlog. This can be accomplished through investments in judicial infrastructure, filling judicial vacancies, and curbing frivolous litigation. However, the most effective solution involves a comprehensive overhaul of the judicial system, encompassing digitalisation of workflows and procedural reforms. The NJDG, established in 2015, plays a pivotal role in these reforms, utilising technology to expedite the delivery of justice. Recently, the Union Cabinet approved Phase III of the e-Courts Project. This integration in making judiciary more efficient and transparent.

Bishal Kumar Saha | Murshidabad

### PROTECTING THE OZONE LAYER

Sir — The slogan "Ozone for Life" and the theme of fixing the ozone layer to reduce climate change take center stage on this year's International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer. On September 16, 1994, the UN General Assembly pledged to protect it from harmful ultraviolet rays and phase out ozone-depleting substances within a specified timeframe. While the extent of the ozone layer's depletion is still under scrutiny, recent findings from scientists worldwide indicate an overall healing trend. A

new UN report provides encouraging insights into the state of our Earth's protective shield, projecting its recovery within approximately 43 years. This could save the lives of 2 million people annually.

Direct exposure to harmful UV rays poses a significant threat to various species and can lead to skin cancer, cataracts, reduced agricultural productivity, and disruptions in marine ecosystems, thereby disturbing the delicate balance of Earth's ecosystem. In light of such alarming revelations, the Kigali Amendment in 2016 extended the protocol's scope to include hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), potent greenhouse gases. The Kyoto Protocol in Japan in 1997 emphasized the need to reduce greenhouse gases, indirectly contributing to the protection of the ozone layer. The Montreal Protocol in 1987, ratified by 187 countries, and the Kigali Amendment have significantly curbed the use of chemicals in refrigeration and air conditioning, as well as other ozone-depleting substances (ODS). This represents one of the greatest victories for the human race.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

TRAITS OF A  
SUCCESSFUL LEADER

A successful leader must be highly motivated and a team worker



RAVI VALLURI

Once perched on a hilltop was a consummate tea maker. His virtuosity in the craft was unparalleled. Serpentine queues of curious onlookers, expectant youngsters seeking to become apprentices and tea lovers desirous of savouring the elixir of life called tea were a commonplace sight outside his dwelling.

One day a querulous Samurai happened to singe his tongue while sipping the Master's tea. Piqued and incensed, he challenged the master to a duel.

"I am an ignoramus in strategy and warfare. My entire life has been spent perfecting the art of making tea," exclaimed the tea maker. He took a momentous decision to pass on his legacy and the reins of the establishment to his favourite student. Giving him his sword, he asked the greenhorn to face the challenger by raising the weapon in the same manner that he raised the teapot.

Accepting the advice, the mentee raised the sword without a glitch, undeviating. The combatant was awe-struck seeing the acolyte wield the sword with remarkable countenance.


The story reveals how mastery of one craft is of greater significance than attempting to master multiple skills just to appear more formidable. Certainly, an individual can multitask but only after becoming proficient in one's craft.

**CORE COMPETENCY MATTERS**

As a marketing strategy, corporations like the Tatas and the Reliance group have cannonaded the electronic and print media with their products. The focus on their core competency never wavers, even as they diversify into different product lines.

Phenomenal all-rounder cricketers like Imran Khan, Kapil Dev, Garry Sobers, the talismanic Chappell brothers, and Shaun Pollock among others have embellished the game of cricket with their splendid stellar performances.

Albert Einstein, one of the two pillars of modern physics is better known for his scientific contributions rather than his ability to play the piano, even though he was more than an amateur in the latter craft.



**UPGRADING AND ENRICHING SKILLS**

The unrevealed secret of any triumphant leadership is to burnish particular expertise and then make forays into uncharted territories. Psychologists have zeroed in on certain compelling traits that separate celebratory individuals and organizations from the pedestrian.

These are intellectual and personal skills and enhancing creativity to deliver in such a manner as to be the cynosure on the world stage.

**INTELLECTUAL AND PERSONAL SKILLS**

Primary among these skills is the ability to establish a connection, to empathize. The finesse and aptness to lionize interest in other cultures, experiences, values, points of view, goals and desires provide the cutting edge.

Exceptional leaders have the uncanny skill of disentangling and decoding the most complex and vexed problems. This is often the defining moment in their lives and careers. The momentous decision of Dhoni to tweak the batting order against the Lions of the Emerald Island piloted India to victory in the 2014 World Cup final. The iconoclastic Steve Jobs was expelled from Apple, the company he co-founded, yet he went on to establish Pixar which dramatically altered the contours of the animation industry.


**COMMUNICATION: A TWO-WAY PROCESS**

Personality attributes defined by an attitude of glasnost and perestroika are centrifugal characteristics of achievers. They waded through the swathes of covenants, conventions and doctrines to discover perceptible solutions. Intrepid and mettlesome individuals or organizations have the quintessential ability to communicate ideas, feelings and emotions both formally and informally. This ability makes them successful leaders.

*(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd and East-West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living)*

# Meghalaya can reap rich dividends from export of pineapple

Pineapple can be a great money spinner for the state but its processing industry is in its infancy due to expensive canning and the high cost of inputs



SK MALHOTRA

*(The writer is former Agriculture and Horticulture Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt of India. Views expressed are personal)*

A conjoint analysis of local consumers' preferences for pineapple, funded by the Indonesian government in Labuhan Batu district, North Sumatra, in 2021, revealed that consumers like the yellowish-green fruit, which has a sweet taste, great size, pungent flavour, soft and smooth texture. Though consumer preferences for the fruit that sports a crown have yet to be studied in India, the Meghalaya variety ticks all the boxes, standing tall among numerous varieties available worldwide.

Mother Nature has a special place for Meghalaya. Apart from the natural beauty and the lush rolling hills, the north-eastern state offers perfect climatic conditions for cultivating the perennial herbaceous plant. The fruit grows well in

# An idea whose time has come

The idea of "One Nation, One Election" is a reverberation from the past. Though there are hurdles on the way, it is the way to go

While this proposition may appear to be a recent entrant in the annals of public discourse, the concept was, in fact, the status quo in the early formative years of the Indian democratic landscape. From 1952 to 1967, simultaneous elections were the norm, ensuring a rhythm and consistency in the political and governance cycles. However, this period of synchronisation began to disintegrate between 1968 and 1969, when a spate of premature dissolutions of several state assemblies led to a ripple effect that skewed the election timelines irrevocably.

While the merits and demerits of reviving the simultaneous elections are vigorously debated, it's important to recognize the judicial perspectives that have, in an indirect way, endorsed the need for political stability—a cornerstone argument for "One Nation, One Election." Specifically, seminal judgments like Kihoto Hollohan vs. Zachillhu And Others (1992) and SR Bommai v. Union of India (1994) serve as critical touchpoints in this context. Although these cases did not directly tackle the subject of simultaneous elections, their implications are far-reaching.


The Supreme Court, in Kihoto Hollohan, upheld the constitutionality of anti-defection laws, thereby affirming the need for legislative stability. Similarly, in SR Bommai, the apex court circumscribed the discretionary use of Article 356 by the President on the advice of the Cabinet, emphasising the sanctity of democratically elected state governments. In essence, these landmark judgments underline the judiciary's stance on the necessity for political stability and offer an implicit nod to ideas like "One Nation, One Election," which aim to create a more stable and predictable political environment.

The financial repercussions of separate elections are monumental. The figures are staggering, both for the Lok Sabha and the state elections. Let's talk numbers. The 2014 General Elections cost the exchequer INR 3,870 crores, a sum that could have easily funded several crucial social welfare programs whilst the estimated figures on the total expenditure rose to almost INR 30,000 crores. The 2019 elections escalated the costs even further, reportedly costing INR 60,000 crores when considering the total expenditure, including that by political parties and candidates. This is significant in the notion of the concept of "One Nation One Election" because of the exponential rise in the estimated total expenditure during elections rising from INR 10,000 crores in the year 1998 to almost 60,000 crores in 2019. However, let's look beyond mere financials.

A lurking concern that doesn't catch the public eye as much as it should is the Model Code of Conduct (MCC). The MCC comes into effect as soon as elections are announced, freezing all new development activities and policy announcements. Considering that India virtually remains in an election mode year-round, the MCC has a long-term chilling effect on governance. Infrastructure projects face constant delays, policy implementation gets mired in uncertainties, and long-term planning takes a backseat. The MCC, in its current ubiquitous presence, essentially acts as a straitjacket on governance.

To pivot the country towards a "One Nation, One Election" model, a multi-tiered strategy will have to be envisioned. The





THE FINANCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF SEPARATE ELECTIONS ARE MONUMENTAL. THE FIGURES ARE STAGGERING, BOTH FOR THE LOK SABHA AND THE STATE ELECTIONS

*(Writer is a legal expert; studied law at King's College, London)*

challenge, constitutionally speaking, is colossal. A slew of amendments will have to be enacted. Article 83(2), which stipulates the term of the Lok Sabha, and Article 172, concerning the term of the state legislative assemblies, will need to be revised. While the constitutional changes form the bedrock of this transformation, the practical aspects cannot be overlooked. Logistically speaking, the transition would necessitate a massive upgrade in electoral infrastructure. The Election Commission would require more Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and Voter-Verified Paper Audit Trails (VVPATs).

So, what's the likely timeline for this tectonic shift? The drafting and passing of constitutional amendments alone could take up to two years, considering the political negotiations involved. A pilot phase, involving a few states, could take another two years. If successful, a phased rollout might consume an additional four to six years. Thus, we're looking at a timeline that stretches across nearly a decade, crossing multiple electoral cycles. The "One Nation, One Election" idea, although ambitious, reflects the aspirations of a nation that aims to balance its democratic ethos with administrative efficiency. It's a complex task, steeped in legal intricacies and logistical challenges. Yet, the potential advantages it offers—fiscal responsibility, governance stability, and administrative focus—make it a concept that demands serious attention. In a country as diverse and complex as India, the change will be anything but straightforward.

The prospective advantages of "One Nation, One Election" are multifold and transcend beyond fiscal


savings. The idea also promises to bring a certain degree of predictability into the Indian political landscape. This stability, in turn, could make governance more accountable and transparent. But what about the international perspective? One compelling example is the United Kingdom, which had for decades operated under a system of 'snap elections' triggered by various factors including the loss of a no-confidence motion or the decision of the ruling party. This changed with the Fixed-term Parliaments Act of 2011, championed by then Prime Minister David Cameron. The Act stipulated that general elections would be held every five years on the first Thursday in May. This reform brought a semblance of predictability into the British electoral process and has since been a point of reference for other democracies looking to streamline their electoral systems.

Implementing the "One Nation, One Election" idea would necessitate the realignment of several constitutional provisions. Article 356, which allows for President's Rule, and Article 365, concerning failure to comply with or to give effect to directions given by the Union, could both serve as disruptors to a fixed-term electoral cycle. Thus, modifications to these Articles, likely via constitutional amendments, would be necessary to create a legally sound foundation for simultaneous elections.

Moreover, the Election Commission of India would need to undergo massive infrastructural and logistical changes to implement this mammoth task. Advanced planning, down to the last detail, would be required. An exhaustive

database would have to be created and maintained to ensure that electoral rolls are accurate, reflecting the dynamic demographic changes of a nation with a population of over 1.3 billion. Technological improvements, including the potential deployment of blockchain technology for secure and transparent elections, could also be explored. Given the grand scale of this change, one could argue that a decade might be an optimistic estimate for its full implementation. The first two to three years could be devoted solely to building a bipartisan consensus, followed by meticulous legal drafting. The pilot projects, reviews, and nationwide implementation could then be staggered over the remaining years.

The reality is that "One Nation, One Election" is a vision that demands serious contemplation. It requires us to juggle constitutional amendments, tackle logistical nightmares, address political concerns, and yet keep the democratic spirit intact. It's a high-stakes gamble, with the potential for monumental gains. The dividends it promises in terms of governance, fiscal responsibility, and administrative convenience, are too significant to overlook. It cannot just reform but transform the way India administers itself. In a country where every policy and every reform is intensely scrutinised, critiqued, and debated, the road to "One Nation, One Election" will undoubtedly be fraught with hurdles. Yet, it is an idea whose time has come, and it is up to the collective wisdom of the Indian polity to navigate the intricacies and lay down a roadmap for one of the most significant electoral reforms in Indian history.



SK MALHOTRA

*(The writer is former Agriculture and Horticulture Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Govt of India. Views expressed are personal)*

areas such as Ri Bhoi, East Khasi, Garo Hills, in Meghalaya, as long as the temperatures are not extreme. The optimum temperature required for successful cultivation is 22-32 degrees C. Sandy loam soils with a pH of 5.0-6.0, precisely the kind of soil pineapple cultivation requires, have plenty in Meghalaya. These help the Meghalaya pineapple to become more delicious and nutrient-rich than its peers and find a special place in the hearts of both within and outside the state. These have won the hearts and tastes in the international markets as well.

Nutritionally, Meghalaya pineapple is a powerhouse. They are rich sources of vitamins A and C, potassium and essential nutritional fibre, making them an obvious choice for

aficionados seeking both flavour and nutrients simultaneously in their diet. The fruit contains vitamins A, B, and C and calcium, magnesium, potassium, and iron. It is also high in bromelain, a digesting enzyme. The fruit can be eaten fresh or in juice, jam, squash, or syrup. In India, canned slices and liquid are in high demand, accounting for over 70% of total production.

Meghalaya contributes over 8% of India's pineapple production, making it a key player in India's agriculture map. From 1,38,701 MT production in 2019-20, pineapple production in Meghalaya has grown significantly over the last few years. Apart from the unique flavour of Meghalayan pineapple, the deep flesh of this pineapple consists of a profu-

sion of juiciness, adding to the overall sensory appeal.

Of the two principal varieties -- Giant Kew and Queen Pineapple, the former is famous for its high BRIX value. Ri-Bhoi district ranks first in pineapple manufacturing in Meghalaya, accounting for 38% of the state's total pineapple production, followed by West Garo Hills district with 62% of the produce.

The Meghalaya pineapples are produced using age-old organic agricultural practices, free from artificial fertilisers and insecticides. As a result, these pineapples contain significantly less metallic and pesticide residue. Natural and conventional cultivation practices make sure that there aren't any harmful chemical residues in the fruit. Thanks to

natural, organic and traditional farming practices, those pineapples are remarkably resistant to pests and sicknesses. However, the remote nature of the terrain adds to the aggregation of costs in the case of Meghalaya pineapples. Thus, a unique challenge remains to reach trade hubs, and markets like Delhi and Mumbai via road /rail for a perishable fruit like pineapple. The pineapple processing industry is still in its infancy due to expensive canning and the high cost of fruit, sugar, containers, and overheads. Fresh pineapple marketing is very challenging.

Beyond its emphasised focus on Pineapple, the Government of Meghalaya has taken up several initiatives to its aspiration to improve

farming livelihoods and double their income. So far, through various mission mode interventions for various products like Lakadong Turmeric, Honey, Aroma, Ginger, Spice, Pepper, Khasi Mandarin, Piggery and others. Along with these, to improve the value chain support, the Government has established about 200 CMC as one-stop shops for assisting farmers and primary farmgate infrastructure being set up to be the nodes for aggregation, processing and marketing of produce in the villages and clusters under the project. Through PRIME Agri Response Vehicle more than 110 farmer groups have been supported with a 50% subsidy and 20 Farmer Markets have been established, to improve the market linkages

and provide farmers with wholistic support.

However, despite the odds, tremendous progress has been achieved through persistent efforts by the Government of Meghalaya in the last few years. Issues related to post-harvest management losses have been addressed by installing Cold storage in pineapple clusters. New marketing channels were created to aid farmers in improving visibility and logistics beyond state borders. The government of Meghalaya is exploring options to indulge export-oriented social enterprises in setting up frozen fruit processing units within the active Pineapple clusters, which could be a way to overcome the bottlenecks plaguing the investment milieu of the state.



# Rajya Sabha pays tributes to architects of Constitution

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Monday paid tributes to architects of the Constitution saying it has stood the test of time with Leader of the House Piyush Goyal stating Parliament upholds democracy. Highlighting the contribution of Congress in laying the foundation of Constitution, the party claimed the ruling BJP combine was harassing the Opposition by using agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (CBI).

Opposition members also hit out at the Government, accusing it of indulging in majoritarianism and defying the tenets of parliamentary democracy. Various political parties including the BJP, Congress and others also called for passing the women's reservation bill while discussing the the "Parliamentary Journey of 75 Years Starting from Samvidhan Sabha -- Achievements, Experiences, Memories and Learnings" on the first day of the five-day special session. Initiating the discussion, Goyal underlined the contributions made towards strengthening parliamentary democracy by various chairmen of the Upper House, including Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Zakir Husain,

Shankar Dayal Sharma, Kocheril Raman Narayanan, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Mohammad Hamid Ansari, M Venkaiah Naidu and Dhankhar. Goyal said the Rajya Sabha is a witness to enlightening debates and the House always functioned by evolving consensus despite difference of opinion. He urged the members to maintain decorum and uphold the dignity of the house. He also said the Rajya Sabha has all along maintained the principle of agree to disagree despite difference of opinion and stressed the opposition's role of keeping the government in check. In his opening remarks in Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar said the hallowed precincts of Parliament for years have witnessed highs and lows, which need to be reflected and deliberated upon so as to take the country to its rightful place in 2047, when it celebrates the centenary of its independence. "The honourable members' use of wit, humour, sarcasm and even acerbic comments inside Parliament are an important, inalienable facet of a vigorous democracy. These days we do not get to hear such light-hearted exchanges. Hopefully, we will see the revival of wit, humour and scholarly debates," the Chairman said.

Meanwhile, Goyal said while the elected MPs have made big contributions to strengthen democracy, the nominated Rajya Sabha members have also given their best. Leader of the House also recalled the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution, the process for which started in the Upper House. The legislations concerning "triple talaq" and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) too figured prominently in his nearly 40-minute speech. While most of Goyal's speech focused on the achievements of the 75-year journey of India's parliamentary democracy and the last nine years of the Narendra Modi government, he also highlighted certain memories, such as Emergency, the 2001 Parliament terror attack, the cash-for-votes scam and the parliamentary proceedings associated with the creation of the state of Telangana. He said India showed democracy is invincible after the terror attack on Parliament. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader noted that the opposition has a key role to play in keeping the government in check and said Parliament is an institution to keep democracy alive. Goyal called upon the Members of Parliament to work towards women empowerment and making India a corruption-free, developed

country. Starting his speech, Leader of Opposition and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge requested the chairman to revoke the suspension of two Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) members -- Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha -- at a time when the House is holding the session and moving into the new Parliament building. Kharge said constitution is the bedrock of Indian democracy and highlighted the role of his party in laying the sound foundation for it. He then quipped the Congress worked to strengthen democratic institutions over 70 years and have an inclusive society. The Congress leader also said constitution provided for adult franchise. Claiming that the ruling BJP combine was targeting Opposition by using investigative agencies like the



Enforcement Directorate(ED), Kharge charged the government was trying to weaken the strong opposition through these means. He asked the government what did it achieve by shifting the parliamentary proceedings to a new building. "Badalna hai to halat badlo, aise naam badalne se kya hota hai. Dena hein to yuva ko rozgar do, sab ko berozgar karke kya hota hai. Dil ko thoda bada karke dekho, logon ko marne se kya hota hai. Kuch kar nahi saakte ho, kursi chor do, baat baat mein darane se kya hota hai. "Apni hukumrani par guroor hai, logon ko darane se dhamkane se kya hota hai. Badalna hai to halat badlo, aise naam badalne se kya hota hai. Yahan se wahan jane mein kya aur honewala hai," the Congress leader said. He took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

they constituted only 14 per cent in both houses combined, while their number in legislative assemblies is just 10 per cent. The proportion of women MPs was just five per cent in first Lok Sabha in 1952. Kharge told the House that the proportion of women members had risen to 28 per cent from two per cent in the US Parliament while in Britain, it jumped to 33 per cent from three per cent. Ram Nath Thakur of JD(U) too demanded reservation for women when the law-makers shift to the new parliament building and also demanded a special session to discuss rising inflation and remedy for it. Taking part in the discussion, Manoj Kumar Jha(RJD) quoted the chief architect of the Constitution B R Ambedkar and said democracy also meant "preventing tyranny of the majority". There is a need for a majority as governments cannot run without a majority but there is a "difference between majority and majoritarianism", he added. Jose K Mani (KC(M) said, "It is an undeniable fact (that) recent years have witnessed instances of undemocratic parliamentary methods and procedures, which threatened the very essence of democracy." Tiruchi Siva (DMK) claimed that the space for the

opposition is shrinking. "There has been a decline in the ability of Parliament to hold the government accountable... The government resorts to ordinances rather than legislation," he said. S Niranjan Reddy(YSRCP) said as Parliament is moving to a new building, there is concern among south Indian states. "South Indian states, the more developed Indian states, are feeling that will they be outnumbered because Article 82 gives protection until 2026. Would that be balanced in some manner? We will debate it," he said. Article 82 deals with the number of seats allotted to the House of People. John Brittas(CPM)said according to Ambedkar, democracy is not the law of the majority but the protection of the minority. He alleged that the current government was flouting the tenets of parliamentary democracy of the accountability of the executive to the legislator. The NCP's Praful Patel, BJP's Bhupaneswar Kalita, AGP's Birendra Prasad Baisya, TMC's Md Nadimul Haque, Congress' Shaktisinh Gohil and Rajiv Shukla, AIADMK's M Thambidurai, BRS' K Keshava Rao, AAP's Vikramjit Singh Sahney, BJD's Mamata Mohanta and GK Vasan of the TMC(M) also took part in the discussion.

## PARLIAMENT TITBITS

### DISRUPTION JUSTICE

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday asked the Opposition how long it plans to keep justifying disrupting the House citing past precedent and said the Congress was absent from the House when the time came for the party to put forward its view. Dhankhar was responding to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge saying the Opposition party was only taking its cue from BJP leaders when they sat on the other side of the aisle.

### COPYING BJP: KHARGE

Participating in a discussion on "Parliamentary Journey of 75 Years Starting from Samvidhan Sabha - Achievements, Experiences, Memories, and Learnings", Kharge, the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, said that with its disruptions, his party was only following the example of late BJP leaders Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj when they were in Opposition. Quoting a remark from Jaitley from an Upper House proceeding on January 30, 2011, Kharge said, "The job of Parliament is to discuss. Whenever issues are ignored, creating obstacles is in the interest of the public system. Therefore, Parliamentary obstruction cannot be called undemocratic." "Swaraj too had said in the Lok Sabha, 'Not allowing Parliament to function is also a form of democracy in other words.' "When we are doing the same, we are attacked," Kharge said. The chairman responded to his remarks, saying, "Think carefully and then tell me, how long will we continue to disturb the house



based on past precedent? How long will we continue to justify the disturbance."

### OFFICIALS CONTRIBUTION

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday lauded the contribution of chamber attendants and officials in ensuring the smooth functioning of Parliament and also remembered journalists who have dedicated their lives to reporting the proceedings of Parliament, even without the use of the latest technology. Modi said that bidding farewell to the old Parliament building will be an even tougher task for journalists as they have been connected with the establishment more than its members. "There is a group of people who help us, elected representatives, at every stage... Sometimes they bring us papers and documents. Their contribution is no less," Modi said in Lok Sabha initiating the discussion on "Parliamentary Journey of 75 years starting from Samvidhan Sabha — Achievements, Experiences, Memories and Learnings". Some may have served "us tea or water, some may have ensured that no one remains hungry when House proceedings stretch into

the night", he said and also remembered House Marshals who remain alert to ensure no mistake creeps in during parliamentary proceedings. "Their contribution too has improved the quality of governance. I extend my compliments to them and those who have served in the past," he said on the first day of the five-day session of Parliament. There are some who have ensured the upkeep of Parliament's surroundings while some have maintained cleanliness, Modi said. "There are countless people who have ensured that the ambience and systems are in place to help us discharge our duties in a better way," Prime Minister Modi said.

### MMS ALL EARS

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attended Rajya Sabha proceedings in a wheelchair while MPs from K Chandrashekar Rao's BRS displayed posters in bright pink colour in the Rajya Sabha. The 90-year-old frail-looking Singh sat quietly for exactly an hour, listening to Leader of the House and Union Minister Piyush Goyal and Leader of the Opposition and Congress president M Mallikarjun Kharge speak on a discussion on

75 years of parliamentary journey. Congress MPs, including former Union Finance Minister P Chidambaram, greeted Singh with folded hands as they passed by. As the session started, MPs from the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, formerly known as Telangana Rashtra Samithi, stood up holding posters demanding passage of the Women's Reservation Bill. BRS leader K Keshava Rao rose to speak holding a poster in bright pink colour. When his party colleagues too stood up displaying similar posters, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar warned of action if any MP violated the rules by displaying posters. At this, Rao and his party colleagues quickly folded up the posters, and Dhankhar said they will be given an opportunity to speak on the issue.

### SOUND EFFECT

Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien said his microphone was turned off suddenly in middle of speech during the discussion on 75 years of Parliament in Rajya Sabha, and the House was adjourned. "What happened in the Old Parliament building today was sad. I was the last speaker today

from the Opposition, my party Trinamool Congress was given 18 minutes to speak. Then I was told I would only get a chance to speak for 10 minutes. Suddenly at 10 minutes to six, in the middle of my speech, I was stopped and the House was adjourned," he told after the adjournment. "We are talking about 75 years of democracy, we should have such a day spoilt by censorship. I was not allowed to conclude my speech, so I have come here to the Gandhi statue to speak," he said. "Give me my India where I can eat what I want, where I can speak in Parliament, where I can love who I want. Give me back my India where unity and diversity is not just an empty phrase but a belief, a way of life..." he said. "They have mocked and undermined Parliament and they did it again today," he said.

### SPEAKERS LINED UP

For the Joint Session address on Tuesday, first Vice President Dhankar will speak, followed by Prime Minister Modi, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Leader of House in Rajya Sabha Piyush Goyal, Leader of Congress (largest opposition party) in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Kharge. Those invited to be the first speakers are BJP member former Union Minister Maneka Gandhi for holding record number woman representative in Lok Sabha, former PM Manmohan Singh longest serving Rajya Sabha MP and JMM leader former Union Minister Shibui Soren for holding the record of longest tenure together in both the Houses of Parliament.

## Induction into CBI

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The CBI has inducted an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Gaurav Singh as Superintendent of Police in the agency. A 2012-batch IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre, Singh has been inducted in the agency for five years, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

In another order, it said that the deputation tenure of Manoj Verma has been extended by one year in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Verma, the second-in-command in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), is currently working as an SP in the CBI. His tenure has been extended from August 28, 2023 to August 27, 2024, the order said. The Centre has also approved the "extension/regularisation" of the deputation of two Deputy Inspectors General - Keshav Ram Chaurasia and Prem Kumar Gautam - who were associated with the inquiry and investigating the coal blocks allocation cases.

Gautam is a 2005-batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh cadre and Chaurasia belongs to the 2003 batch.

Gautam's tenure has been extended/regularised from January 28, 2019 to September 30, 2023 and Chaurasia's tenure from June 7, 2016 to August 25, 2023, it said citing a direction from Supreme Court in this connection.



## TDP, YSRCP trade barbs in Lok Sabha over Naidu's arrest

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Members of the TDP and the YSRCP traded barbs in the Lok Sabha on Monday as Telugu Desam Party MP Jayadev Gala raised the issue of the arrest of his party chief and former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.

Gala accused the ruling YSRCP in the state of indulging in vendetta politics and said it was a black day for democracy when the TDP leader was arrested.

He was participating in the discussion on Parliamentary Journey of 75 years starting from Samvidhan Sabha — Achievements, Experiences, Memories and Learnings.

"Today we see an unblemished senior leader being arrested with political incarceration. It is a black day for democracy and in the history of Andhra Pradesh," Gala said, adding, "I wish to inform the prime minister and the home minister on how laws are being violated in the State".

Gala demanded that the TDP chief be released at the earliest. Responding to his comments, YSRCP member PV Midhun Reddy said that a notice has been served by the Income Tax department and the ED has found a money trail.

## US delegation meets iDEX-DIO team at IIT-D

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

As Indian defence industry is witnessing increasing participation of start-ups using latest technology, a US delegation led by Under Secretary (Research and Engineering), Department of Defence Heidi Shyu, met a team of Innovations for Defence Excellence-Defence Innovation Organisation (iDEX-DIO) under Ministry of Defence at Indira Institute of Technology(IIT), Delhi on Monday.

Giving details here, defence ministry officials said, Joint Secretary (Defence Industries Production) and Additional CEO of DIO Anurag Bajpai presented an overview on iDEX to the US delegation, explaining how the initiative is revolutionising the defence innovation ecosystem in India.

He highlighted how iDEX is fostering innovation, in critical domains like Artificial Intelligence (AI), unmanned solutions, domain awareness, communications, space, cybersecurity etc. He brought out how technologies developed by iDEX winners are acting as force multipliers for the Services and the innovators are beginning to make their mark globally with their dual-use solutions.

The Joint Secretary brought out that the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) initiative will further deepen the strategic technology partnership and defence industrial



cooperation between the two sides.

He appreciated the momentum in INDUS-X activities and informed that iDEX and Defence Innovation Unit (DIU) teams have finalised two challenges to kick start joint challenges, to be launched soon.

A showcase of select iDEX winners and defence innovation start-ups with cutting-edge dual-use technologies was organised. Deep-tech innovations including on information security and cyber security, AI/Machine Learning-based imaging, maritime technologies, wireless communication, space technologies and advanced sensors were showcased.

Heidi Shyu was highly appreciative of the start-up showcase, and the way the iDEX scheme and stakeholders have revolutionised the defence innovation ecosystem in India. She noted the rapid developments under the collaboration agenda of INDUS-X and suggested that procurement of

advanced technologies be given due consideration under INDUS-X.

iDEX, in partnership with US Department of Defence, conducted the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) event in Washington DC on June 20-21. The initiative will expand the strategic technology partnership and defence industrial cooperation between the start-up ecosystems, businesses and academic institutions.

The first-ever joint technology showcasing by the Indian and US start-ups generated great interest during the INDUS-X Event. The collaboration agenda under the Defence Innovation Bridge includes launch of Joint Challenges, Innovation Partnership Program, Academia partnership, Joint Innovation Fund, establishing of Testing and Certification facilities in India. The INDUS-X event found mention in the Joint Statement of the two leaders during the recent bilateral meetings.

## Indian Sellers Collective trashes UN backed report

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Indian Sellers Collective, an Umbrella body of trade associations and sellers across the country, has outrightly trashed the WHO backed report "The growth of ultra-processed foods in India: An analysis of trends, issues and policy recommendations", saying that it hurts the interests of the domestic traditional food manufacturers.

The Indian Sellers Collective has alleged that the report by the WHO is a proxy report on behalf of global Cola and food MNCs who are pushing their agenda to undermine Indian traditional food and facilitate the takeover of the Indian foods market by popular foreign foods and proliferate the growth of foreign companies that make such products.

The body has also made a representation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to protect their interests and initiate an investigation into

the WHO report.

In July 2023, the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Joint Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) had released a report classifying that aspartame, one of the world's most common artificial sweeteners is possibly carcinogenic or cancerous to humans.

Aspartame is used in diet soft drinks and remains a preferred choice for many who consider it as an healthy option vis-à-vis non sugar-free added soft beverages.

To decrease the cost of zero-sugar soft drinks and make them more accessible to Indian consumers, the WHO report in question proposes that zero-sugar carbonated drinks should not be classified under the same GST category as all carbonated drinks, which currently carry a 28% tax rate coupled with a 12% sin tax, totalling 40%.

"However, it's worth noting that in May 2023, WHO introduced new guidelines on non-sugar sweeteners (NSS). These guidelines advise against the use of NSS for weight control or reducing the risk of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs)," said the Indian sellers Collective.

Abhay Raj Mishra, Member & National Coordinator, Indian Sellers Collective, alleged that "This WHO report contradicts its own advisory of advocating prohibition of non-sugar sweeteners, commonly found in zero-sugar carbonated drinks.

"This contradictory stance appears to push a biased narrative by the global body, suggesting an agenda to promote products from multinational corporations in the Indian market. This positioning of carcinogenic non-sugar sweeteners by WHO is clearly geared to suit the interests of a few at the cost of the health of millions of Indians."

## India to soon launch flue, pneumococcal vaccination schedule

**ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI**

India may soon start a national immunization schedule for the elderly people offering flu and pneumococcal vaccines aiming to reduce the burden of respiratory infections and antimicrobial use in this susceptible population.

As a first step towards this direction, the top research body has invited researchers and research institutions to conduct studies to evaluate the effectiveness of these jabs vaccines for flu and pneumonia in reducing infections and subsequent antimicrobial use in the susceptible population.

Post Covid-19 pandemic, the impact of vaccinating the adults against vaccine-preventable diseases in terms of health, social and economic benefits is being increasingly recognized, said a scientist from the premier research body.

More so, given that the



# Net direct tax collection rises 23.5 per cent

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Net direct tax collection grew 23.51 per cent to over Rs 8.65 lakh crore till mid-September, on higher advance tax mop-up from corporates, the Finance Ministry said on Monday.

The net direct tax collection of Rs 8,65,117 crore (as on September 16) includes corporate income tax (CIT) at Rs 4,16,217 crore and personal income tax (PIT) including Securities Transaction Tax (STT) at Rs 4,47,291 crore.

Net direct tax collections for the current fiscal as on September 16, have grown at over 23.51 per cent, the ministry said in a statement.

Advance tax collections stood at Rs 3.55 lakh crore till mid-September, a 21 per cent growth against Rs 2.94 lakh crore collected in the corresponding period of the preceding financial year.



The advance tax collection of Rs 3.55 lakh crore as on September 16, comprises CIT at Rs 2.80 lakh crore and PIT at Rs 74,858 crore.

Refunds of about Rs 1.22 lakh crore have been issued up to September 16.

On a gross basis, direct tax collection for the financial year 2023-24 stands at Rs 9.87 lakh crore, a 18.29 per cent growth over Rs 8.34 lakh crore in the corresponding period of the preceding financial year.

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's economic growth will be above 6 per cent in the current fiscal as the country has managed to strengthen its macroeconomic stability and performance even in a period of large global shocks, RBI Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) Member Ashima Goyal said on Monday.

Goyal further said that a global slowdown reducing India's export growth, geopolitics fueling oil and food prices, and erratic weather are some of the continuing risks that the country faces. "India has managed to strengthen its macroeconomic stability and performance even in a period of large global shocks."

India's GDP growth in FY24 will be above 6 per cent," she told PTI in a telephonic interview.

While GDP growth in 2022-23 was 7.2 per cent, lower than 9.1 per cent in 2021-22, the RBI projects India's GDP to grow at 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Asked when retail inflation will decline to RBI's target of 4 per cent, the eminent

economist said inflation expectations are getting anchored at around 4 per cent.

"For a long time now, firms' inflation expectations are around 4 per cent. That means, despite cost shocks, their price increases do not exceed 4 per cent," Goyal noted.

Observing that core inflation is softening, she said inflation targeting is teaching price-setters to look through transient supply shocks.

According to Goyal, under transient even if repeated supply shocks (like the Ukraine war), monetary tightening should be adequate to anchor inflation expectations, but not so sharp as to impose a large growth sacrifice on the economy.

"But other supply-side policies will continue to reduce inflation," she opined.

Retail inflation declined to 6.83 per cent in August after touching a 15-month high of 7.44 per cent in July, mainly due to softening prices of vegetables, but still remains above the Reserve Bank's comfort zone.

RBI has the mandate to



keep retail inflation in the range of 2 to 6 per cent.

Commenting on a recent brokerage report which stated private capex actually declined in the last two quarters, Goyal asserted that it is absurd to over-interpret quarterly changes.

While observing that since the pandemic annual gross domestic capital formation has been rising, she said it has fluctuated in quarters. "quarter on quarter growth is normally negative in Q1 and shows the highest growth in Q4," Goyal said,

adding that many other types of data, including bank credit, IPOs and capital goods imports, show a revival in private capex.

Pointing out that the government capex creates opportunities for private capex in steel, cement, logistics, green infrastructure, she noted that people mistakenly think it is not happening because they expect a 2008 type boom.

"Private capex will rise sustainably in step with GDP in a virtuous cycle, even if there are some delays because of political uncertainty in an

election year,' she said, adding that policy continuity is very important for private capex.

Responding to a question on rising crude oil prices and its impact on the government's subsidy figures and inflation, Goyal said the government and oil companies have built-up counter-cyclical buffers by not fully passing through a fall in international crude oil prices.

Emphasising that in a well-established inflation targeting regime, transient rise in cost is looked through and does not have second round effects, she noted that high crude oil prices have intensified efforts to diversify away from oil. "So overall we are seeing less pass-through of higher oil prices to Indian inflation," she said.

With international crude oil prices breaching USD 90 per barrel mark for the first time in 10 months, Indian refiners which are the key beneficiaries of cheaper Russian crude should still be able to clock refining margins of around USD 9-10 per barrel in current fiscal, CareEdge Ratings had said recently.

Asked if India losing out

on accurate data measurement as the government is yet to come up with the latest version of the Consumer Expenditure Survey and Census, she said overhauling statistical systems takes time.

"The pandemic, as well as excessive criticism, has intensified the break in many of these periodic surveys...The break is a loss to policy-making," Goyal said.

The eminent economist, however, noted that now India has all kinds of new high-frequency data to aid policy.

In 2021, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) decided not to release the Consumer Expenditure Survey results of 2017-18 due to data quality issues. According to the ministry, the reference period for the next Household Consumer Expenditure Survey is 2022-2023.

The decadal Census, postponed for an indefinite period due to the pandemic, is unlikely to be held before the next Lok Sabha elections that are due in April-May 2024.

## Sensex falls 242 points, snaps 11-day winning run

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Snapping its record 11-day winning run, Sensex declined by around 242 points on Monday as profit taking in metal, banking and telecom shares amid weak global trends dragged down the benchmark index from record high levels.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell by 241.79 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 67,596.84 in a volatile trading. During the day, it declined by 305.8 points or 0.45 per cent to a low of 67,532.83.

Retreating from its all-time high, the broader Nifty closed at 20,133.30, down by 59.05 points or 0.29 per cent, as 26 of its constituents closed in the red while 24 advanced.

BSE Sensex closed at a lifetime high of 67,838.63 after 11 straight days of gains while Nifty settled at record 20,192.35 on Friday following positive



macro data.

Among the Sensex firms, HDFC Bank fell the most by 1.98 per cent. Bharti Airtel (1.71 per cent), Infosys (1.4 per cent), Tata Steel (1.21 per cent), UltraTech Cement (1.19 per cent), Wipro (1.17 per cent), Kotak Mahindra Bank (1.02 per cent), Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra and JSW Steel were the major laggards.

Power Grid, Titan, Mahindra & Mahindra and

NTPC were among the gainers.

"Markets finally reversed the 11-session winning streak as profit-taking came into play in banking, realty, IT and telecom stocks. Along with concerns over rising global crude oil prices and uptick in dollar index and US treasury yields, investors trimmed their exposure ahead of the outcome of the US FOMC meeting on interest rates on Wednesday," Shrikant Chouhan, Head of

Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Other than global headwinds, higher domestic index valuations after the recent upsurge is making investors nervous, which may lead to some more profit-taking in the near term, Chouhan said.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, "Domestic markets relinquished their momentum as they anticipated a raft of policy rate decisions due this week."

"The investor's confidence was also impacted by the expectations of a demand resurgence in China, combined with crude supply cuts. With the Fed rate hike fears back on the cards, as reflected in the elevated US bond yields, the markets await clarification from major central banks."

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge fell 0.60

per cent and the midcap index declined 0.27 per cent.

Among the indices, telecommunication fell by 1.86 per cent, realty declined 1.27 per cent, commodities (0.96 per cent), teck (0.92 per cent), metal (0.89 per cent) and services (0.74 per cent).

Consumer Discretionary, FMCG, utilities, auto and power were among the gainers.

In Asian markets, Seoul and Hong Kong settled lower, while Shanghai ended in the green.

European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended in negative territory on Friday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.39 per cent to USD 94.30 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were buyers on Friday as they bought equities worth Rs 164.42 crore, according to exchange data.

## Rupee hits all-time low of 83.29 against US dollar

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee depreciated for the fourth straight day to settle 13 paise lower at its lifetime low of 83.29 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, mainly due to risk aversion in global markets and rising crude oil prices.

Besides, a strong American currency against key rivals overseas and a negative trend in domestic equities weighed on investor sentiments, according to forex traders.

At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 83.09 against the dollar and traded in the range of 83.09 to 83.30 against the greenback.

The rupee finally closed at the record low of 83.29 against the dollar, registering a fall of 13 paise from its previous



close.

On Friday, the rupee fell 13 paise to settle at 83.16 against the US dollar.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell marginally by 0.11 per cent to 105.20.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.42 per cent higher at USD 94.32 per barrel.

Ahead of the holiday, the rupee closed at another record low following risk-averse sentiments and a rally in crude oil

prices, said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, at HDFC Securities.

"This week will remain highly volatile following a series of central bank policy rate meetings across the developed and emerging market economies. The baseline of it is the dollar to hold onto its strength through the week," Parmar said.

In the near term, spot USD/INR is expected to cross the record high and may see a level of 83.50 to 83.70 while it could hold the support of 83, Parmar added.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex closed 241.79 points or 0.36 per cent lower at 67,596.84 points, while the broader Nifty declined 59.05 points or 0.29 per cent to end at 20,133.30 points.

FROM PAGE 1

## New India's tryst with destiny

Modi praised BR Ambedkar's vision for industrialisation, aimed at bringing social justice, which remains the cornerstone of contemporary industrial policies.

He acknowledged the somber moments when the Parliament mourned the loss of three serving Prime Ministers-Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Indira Gandhi. He also recognised the House's support for the liberation of Bangladesh under the leadership of Indira Gandhi.

The Prime Minister recalled the contributions of the 7500 MPs, including 600 women parliamentarians. He mentioned the oldest member of Lok Sabha, 93-year-old Samajwadi Party MP Shafiqur Rahman Barq, and the youngest, 30-year-old Chandrani Murmu of Biju Janata Dal (BJD), who became an MP at 25. Speaker Om Birla noted the success of the recently concluded G20 meeting organised in the national Capital and across 60 cities for over a year.

In the Upper House, Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar emphasised that Parliament's hallowed precincts have witnessed both highs and lows, and reflecting on these experiences is crucial in propelling the country to its rightful place in 2047, when it celebrates the centenary of its independence.

Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, following the Prime Minister's address in the Lok Sabha, urged the Centre to pass the Women's Reservation Bill, attribut-

ing its inception to Sonia Gandhi. He credited Sonia for her role in the enactment of the RTI Act, Right to Food Act, and Right to Education Act during the UPA's rule.

Chowdhury highlighted concerns about potential "one-party dictatorship," attempts to destabilise Opposition party-ruled States, and the "selective" use of Central agencies. He also acknowledged the achievements of previous governments, including the Indo-US nuclear deal and the IT revolution.

Initiating the discussion in the Upper House, Goyal underscored the invaluable contributions made by various chairmen towards strengthening Parliamentary democracy. Opposition members criticised the BJP-led NDA Government for allegedly favoring majoritarianism and disregarding the principles of Parliamentary democracy.

Leader of Opposition and Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge emphasised the foundational role of the Constitution in Indian democracy. He credited his party with the enduring efforts to fortify democratic institutions over seven decades, promoting an inclusive society.

Kharge contrasted the number of speeches delivered by past Prime Ministers, noting that Vajpayee gave 21 speeches and Manmohan Singh around 30, while the current Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, spoke only twice in the last nine years, excluding customary addresses.

## Foxconn commits to double employment, investments in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Phone-maker Apple's supplier Foxconn has committed to doubling employment, investments and business size in India by next year, underlining its smooth and rapid growth in the country, according to a social media post by a company executive.

Wishing Prime Minister Narendra Modi on his birthday on Sunday, Foxconn representative V Lee wrote in a LinkedIn post: "Under your leadership, Foxconn has grown smoothly and rapidly in India."

"We will work even harder to present you with a greater birthday gift next year, aiming for another doubling of employment, FDI, and business size in India," Lee said in the post.

Replying to the post on X (formerly Twitter), IT, Electronics and Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said that the Government is "fully committed" in its endeavour to support and facilitate.



Earlier this month, Young Liu, Chairman and CEO of Hon Hai Technology Group (Foxconn), said that India will be an important country in terms of manufacturing in the future, his comment adding to a growing chorus of global voices acknowledging the country's bold moves to position itself as electronics and hi-tech production powerhouse.

In an interaction with reporters in Taipei, the top honcho of the Taiwanese electronics manufacturing giant had further said the development of the entire ecosystem and industrial chain, and

opportunities for development in India are "very, very huge opportunities".

"If there is no big change, India will be a very important country in terms of manufacturing in the future," Liu had said.

In the past, it took 30 years to build the entire supply chain ecosystem in China, he noted, adding that while it will take an "appropriate amount of time in India" and the process will be shorter given the experience. The environment too is not quite the same, he had said pointing to the advent of new technologies like AI and generative AI.

## Banking issues hinder growth of exports through e-commerce: GTRI report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Banking issues like reluctance to process forex received through alternate channels and high processing fees are hindering the growth of e-commerce exports from India, and there is a need to bring mindset change to unlock the sector's potential, a report by think tank GTRI said on Monday.

Unlocking India's e-commerce export potential to USD 350 billion by 2030 requires addressing banking issues that hinder growth and increase operational costs, the Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said.

"To initiate change, both the RBI and banks must shift their mindset towards treating

small-value exports differently from larger ones. This shift is essential to prevent misuse while streamlining processes. Without this fundamental change, any reforms attempted by the RBI and banks will fall short," it said.

Small e-commerce businesses often face challenges because banks are not equipped to handle low-value transactions efficiently, it added.

The key issues include reluctance to process forex through alternate channels, high processing fees, incorrect purpose code allocation, and limitations in the RBI's EDPMS (Export Data Processing and Monitoring System).

The Reserve Bank of India tracks export payments and

reconciliation through its Export Data Processing and Monitoring System.

"Banks are happy to process forex received through bank transfers but reluctant to process forex received through foreign currency cheques, payment gateways like PayPal, credit cards, Western Union, cash receipt when a buyer selects item live in the retail shop," it said.

Banks delay crediting forex received in a firm's account when payments are received through such channels, and this affects cash flow and hampers business operations, the report noted.

Banks charge money multiple times at different stages for the same small-value shipment, it added.



Elaborating this, it said that essential charges include charges for submitting shipping bills (Rs 80 to Rs 2,000) at the time of forex realisation (1-to-2.5 per cent of value), intermediary bank charges during forex transfers (USD 10 to USD 55 per transaction), penalties for bills pending at

EDPMS (Rs 100 per shipping bill per month).

"Most charges are fixed for a transaction irrespective of value. Bank charges can exceed 50-60 per cent of the shipment value. This makes e-commerce exports commercially unviable," it said, adding banks allocate purpose codes for each

remittance but frequently issue incorrect codes.

For example, purpose code P0103, meant for advance payments, is often assigned even when exports have already occurred and the firm has submitted proof. Incorrect allocation of purpose codes by banks leads to reconciliation problems, EDPMS pendency issues, and issuance of notices and fines on exporters.

The RBI issues notices to exporters for EDPMS defaults but does not give them direct access to view their records, as per the report.

"Exporters must rely on banks/DGFT for critical data, leading to unnecessary delays and complications," GTRI co-founder Ajay Srivastava said. The report suggested eight

action points, such as the creation of a single window platform for e-commerce and small-value shipments, standardise bank charges, defining a time limit for banks to complete all small export-related requests by the RBI, and exempting shipment value up to USD 1,000 per shipment from monitoring till the single window is implemented.

It also pitched for an extension of the timeline for EDPMS closure from the current nine months to 24 months and redesign the courier shipping bill to reflect correct payment terms.

On the single window, Srivastava called for integrating the RBI, banks, Customs, DGFT, India Post, courier companies and exporters.

"This platform should cover all realisation methods other than bank transfers. The exporter should be able to conduct all transactions online. SW will automate the EDPMS reconciliation process," he added.

He said that high processing fees and multiple charges at different stages of exporting hurt small businesses the most, and the banks should charge a one-time fee for each shipment instead of further charges at various stages.

"The government could subsidise these fees to ease the financial burden on small exporters," the report said, adding there is a need to raise the export realisation variation limit from 25 per cent to 100 per cent.



# 5 prisoners sought by US in swap with Iran freed

AP ■ DOHA (QATAR)

Five prisoners sought by the US in a swap with Iran were freed Monday and headed home as part of a deal that saw nearly USD 6 billion in Iranian assets unfrozen. Despite the deal, tensions are almost certain to remain high between the U.S. and Iran, which are locked in various disputes, including over Tehran's nuclear programme. Iran says the programme is peaceful, but it now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels. The planned exchange has unfolded amid a major American military buildup in the Persian Gulf, with the possibility of US troops boarding and guarding commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of all oil shipments pass.

"Today, five innocent Americans who were imprisoned in Iran are finally coming home," President Joe Biden said in a statement released as the plane carrying the group from

Tehran landed in Doha, Qatar.

After the plane slowed to a stop, three of the prisoners walked down the ramp and were greeted by the U.S. ambassador to Qatar, Timmy Davis. The former prisoners hugged the ambassador and others.

The three — Siamak Namazi, Emad Sharghi and Morad Tahbaz — then wrapped their arms around their shoulders and walked off to a building in the airport.

In a statement issued on his behalf after landing, Namazi said: "I would not be free today, if it wasn't for all of you who didn't allow the world to forget me." "Thank you for being my voice when I could not speak for myself and for making sure I was heard when I mustered the strength to scream from behind the impenetrable walls of Evin Prison," Namazi said.

In addition to the five freed Americans, two U.S. family members flew out of Tehran, according to a senior Biden administration official, who

spoke on condition of anonymity when the exchange was ongoing.

Earlier, Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said that the exchange would take place Monday after nearly USD 6 billion in once-frozen Iranian assets reached Qatar.

"Fortunately Iran's frozen assets in South Korea were released and God willing today the assets will start to be fully controlled by the government and the nation," Kanaani said.

"On the subject of the prisoner swap, it will happen today and five prisoners, citizens of the Islamic Republic, will be released from the prisons in the US," he added. "Five imprisoned citizens who were in Iran will be given to the US side." He said two of the Iranian prisoners will stay in the US. Meanwhile, Nour News, a website believed to be close to Iran's security apparatus, said two of the Iranian prisoners had arrived in Doha for the swap.

# Russia urges UN's top court to toss out Ukrainian case

AP ■ THR HAGUE

Russia on Monday called a Ukrainian case alleging that Moscow abused the Genocide Convention to justify its invasion last year an "abuse of process," as lawyers for Moscow sought to have judges at the United Nations' highest court throw it out. As a series of lawyers laid out Moscow's objections to the case, the leader of Russia's legal team at the International Court of Justice, Gennady Kuzmin, told the 16-judge panel that Ukraine's case that seeks to halt the invasion "is, hopelessly flawed and at odds with the longstanding jurisprudence of this court." He said Ukraine's filing is "a manifest disregard of the proper administration of justice and constitutes an abuse of process." Kyiv's case filed shortly after Russia invaded Ukraine, argues that the attack was based on false claims of acts of genocide in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of eastern Ukraine and alleges that Moscow was planning genocidal acts in Ukraine.

Ukraine claimed that "Russia has turned the Genocide Convention on its head — making a false claim of genocide as a basis for actions on its part that consti-



Assault unit commander from the 3rd Assault Brigade who goes by the call sign 'Fedia,' passes by the body of a dead Russian soldier at the frontline in Andriivka, Donetsk region, Ukraine, Saturday, Sept. 16, 2023. The 3rd Assault Brigade announced Friday they had recaptured the war-ravaged settlement which lies 10 kilometers (6 miles) south of Russian-occupied city of Bakhmut, in the country's embattled east.

AP/PTI

tute grave violations of the human rights of millions of people across Ukraine." Lawyers for Russia insist that the court does not have jurisdiction and that the genocide convention cannot be used to regulate use of force by nations. Ukraine's legal team will respond Tuesday and urge judges to press ahead to hearings on the substance of its claims.

In his opening speech, Kuzmin echoed Russian claims about what he called "neo-Nazis" in Kyiv and drew parallels between Russia's

attack on Ukraine and the 1999 NATO airstrikes on Serbia aimed at halting Belgrade's military campaign in Kosovo. Ukraine brought the case to the Hague-based court based on the 1948 Genocide Convention, which both Moscow and Kyiv have ratified. In an interim ruling in March 2022, the court ordered Russia to halt hostilities in Ukraine, a binding legal ruling that Moscow has flouted as it presses ahead with its devastating attacks on Ukrainian towns and cities.

# Pope meets new Russian envoy

Vatican City (AP): Russia's new ambassador to the Vatican met on Monday with Pope Francis for a protocol visit, as signs emerged that the Vatican's Ukraine peace envoy could soon be undertaking a second mission to Moscow. The Vatican said Ambassador Ivan Soltanovsky was presenting his credentials to Francis, signalling the official start of his term. His motorcade was seen leaving the Russian embassy Monday morning, bound for the Vatican, and returning about two hours later.

Soltanovsky replaced Ambassador Alexander Avdeev, whom Francis met with on February 25, 2022 in a remarkable in-person papal visit to the embassy the day after Moscow's forces invaded Ukraine.

The credential presentation appointment comes after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in recent days that Moscow was ready to meet again with Francis' Ukraine peace envoy, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, a veteran of the Catholic Church's peace initiatives. "The Vatican is continuing its efforts. The papal envoy will come back (to Russia) soon," Lavrov said on September 15 at a roundtable discussion on Ukraine. Since Zuppi was appointed in May, he has visited Kyiv, Moscow, Washington and Beijing.

Initially his mandate appeared limited to measures to try to reunite Ukrainian children taken to Russia after Moscow's invasion. But during his meeting last week with Li Hui, China's special representative for Eurasian affairs, the resumption of stalled grain exports from Ukraine's Black Sea ports was also discussed.

# Pak court issues notice to FIA on bail plea of Imran

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad High Court on Monday issued a notice to Pakistan's top investigation agency seeking its response to the post-arrest bail plea of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan in a case related to the alleged disclosure of state secrets. Khan, 70, through his lawyer Salman Safdar filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court on Saturday against rejection of his post-arrest bail by a special court that is proceeding against him and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the case.

The special court on September 13 extended the judicial remand of Khan and two-time foreign minister Qureshi till September 26 in the cipher case.

Both Khan and Qureshi have been accused of violating the secret laws of the country regarding a document sent by the Pakistan embassy in March last year that has gone missing.

Islamabad High Court Chief Justice Aamer Farooq after hearing the arguments by Khan's lawyer issued notice to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and directed it to submit its response to his petition.

Later, the court adjourned the hearing until next week, Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party confirmed in a WhatsApp message. The FIA launched the case last month and Khan was arrested when he was in the Attack Jail.

Khan has been kept in the Attack Jail since August 5 after his conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case. His sentence was suspended by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on August 29, but he continues to remain in Attack prison in the cipher case.

Qureshi, 67-year-old former foreign minister, was arrested under the Official Secrets Act for violating the

secrecy of the official cable sent by the Pakistani embassy in the US to the foreign office when he was the foreign minister.

The cipher case was filed last month against Khan on the allegations of violating secret laws of the country in the matter of a cable sent by the Pakistan embassy in Washington in March last year.

In March last year, ahead of the vote of no-confidence that resulted in his ouster, Khan pulled out a piece of paper - allegedly the cipher - from his pocket and waved it at a public rally in Islamabad, claiming it was the evidence of an "international conspiracy" being hatched to topple his government. However, during the interrogation with the joint investigation team (JIT) in the jail on August 26, Khan denied that the paper he waved at a public gathering last year was the cipher. He also admitted to losing the cipher, saying he couldn't recall where he kept it.

His principal secretary Azam Khan stated before a magistrate and the FIA that the Khan used it for his 'political gains' and to avert a vote of no-confidence against him.

The purported cipher (secret diplomatic cable) contained an account of a meeting between US State Department officials, including Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs Donald Lu, and Pakistani envoy Asad Majeed Khan last year.

Of late, Khan has come under increased scrutiny following the publication of a purported copy of the secret cable by the US media outlet The Intercept, with many in the previous government led by Shehbaz Sharif pointing fingers at the PTI chief for being the source of the leak.

Khan, who served as the country's prime minister until April last year, currently faces around 180 cases.

# China's Foreign Minister heads to Moscow

AP ■ BEIJING

China's top foreign policy official is heading to Russia for security talks after two days of meetings with US President Joe Biden's national security adviser over the weekend in Malta. Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who simultaneously holds the ruling Communist Party's top foreign policy post, will be in Russia from Monday to Thursday for a round of China-Russia strategic security consultations, the Foreign Ministry said in a brief statement.

The US and China are at odds over Russia's invasion of Ukraine. China has refrained from taking sides in the war, saying that while a country's territory must be respected, the West needs to consider Russia's security concerns about NATO expansion.

# Ukraine fires 6 dy. defence ministers

AP ■ KYIV (UKRAINE)

Six Ukrainian deputy defence ministers were fired Monday following the dismissal two weeks ago of Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov in a corruption scandal, officials said, as heavy fighting continued in the east.

Russia claimed to have struck key Ukrainian facilities in air attacks overnight, hitting stores of Storm Shadow missiles and depleted uranium ammunition along with electronic intelligence centers and training facilities for Ukrainian military scouts. The deputy defence ministers fired included Hanna Maliar, Vitalii Deyneha and Denys Sharapov, as well as the state secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Kostiantyn Vashchenko, were fired, according to the Telegram account of Taras Melnychuk, permanent representative of the Cabinet of Ministers.

Melnichuk provided no explanation of the firings, but the government has been investigat-

ing accusations of corruption in the military related to purchasing equipment. Rustem Umerov, a Crimean Tatar lawmaker who took over as defence minister, did not immediately issue a statement.

Reznikov was removed earlier this month after a scandal involving the defence ministry's procurement of military jackets at three times their cost. Reznikov denied the allegations but resigned.

The reshuffling of the department came a day after Ukraine's military said it captured the village of Klishchiivka from Russian troops after months of fierce battles. Fighting continued Monday as troops tried to hold the village south of the Russian-held city of Bakhmut in the eastern Donetsk region. Its recapture followed the retaking of the nearby village of Andriivka. "The enemy is trying with all his might to regain lost positions," Maliar said in a briefing Monday before she was

fired. "Therefore, our fighters hold back the enemy's attacks there and are entrenched at the achieved frontiers."

Retaking Klishchiivka is considered tactically important, allowing Ukrainian forces to further extend their gains around Bakhmut.

Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year. Ukraine launched a counteroffensive in June that so far has been marked by small victories but no major breakthroughs. Despite being bolstered by NATO-standard weapons worth billions of dollars, Ukrainian military officials have said there are no quick solutions to puncture Russian defensive lines — only slow, grinding battles that have led to heavy losses. In his efforts to draw more support, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is headed to the US where he is expected at the White House and on Capitol Hill this week as he visits during the United Nations General Assembly.

# China flies 103 military planes towards Taiwan

AP ■ TAIPEI

China's military sent 103 warplanes toward Taiwan in a 24-hour period in what the island's defense ministry called a recent new high. The planes were detected between 6 am on Sunday and 6 am on Monday, the ministry said. As is customary, they turned back before reaching Taiwan.

Chinese warplanes fly toward the self-governing island on a near-daily basis but typically in smaller numbers. The Taiwan ministry didn't explain what time period it meant by a "recent" high. China, which claims Taiwan as part of its territory, has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around Taiwan as tensions have grown between the two and with the United States.

The US is Taiwan's main supplier of arms and opposes any attempt to change Taiwan's status by force.

The Chinese government would prefer that Taiwan come under its control voluntarily and last week unveiled a plan for an integrated development demonstration zone in Fujian province, trying to entice Taiwanese even as it threatens the island militarily in what experts say is China's long-running carrot and stick approach.

The recent actions may be an attempt to sway Taiwan's presidential election in January. The governing Democratic Progressive Party, which leans toward formal independence for the island, is anathema to the Chinese leadership. China favours opposition candidates who advocate working with the mainland.

The presidential candidates had no immediate comment Monday on the latest Chinese military activity. Taiwan's Defense Ministry said 40 of the planes crossed the symbolic



median line between mainland China and the island. They included more than 30 fighter jets as well as midair refuelling tanker planes. Taiwan also reported nine Chinese naval vessels in area waters in the previous 24 hours.

The ministry called the Chinese military action "harassment" that it warned could escalate in the current tense atmosphere.

"We urge the Beijing authorities to bear responsibility and immediately stop such kind of destructive military activities," it said in a statement.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning, asked about the reported military activity, said there is no such thing as a "median line" because Taiwan is part of Chinese territory.

China last week sent a flotilla of ships including the aircraft carrier Shandong into waters near Taiwan. The drills came shortly after the US and Canada sailed warships through the Taiwan Strait, the waters that separate the island from the mainland.

Taiwan and China split in 1949 when the Communists took control of China during a civil war.

The losing Nationalists fled to Taiwan and set up their own government on the island.

Only a few foreign nations give the island official diplomatic recognition.

The US among others has formal ties with China while maintaining a representative office in Taiwan.

# Islamabad, Kabul should work for common goals: Pak PM

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Amid heightened tensions at their borders, Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has written to his Afghan counterpart Mullah Muhammad Hasan Akhund that the two countries should work together to achieve common goals, a media report said on Monday.

"Pakistan has close fraternal relations with Afghanistan as we are neighbours and brothers. Pakistan-Afghanistan relations are rooted in religion, culture and history," The News International newspaper reported on Monday. Kakar's letter to Afghanistan's interim Prime Minister comes amid the heightened tensions between Pakistan and Afghanistan due to rising cross-border attacks on Pakistani soil, it said. Islamabad blames the Afghan Taliban for supporting

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), a dreaded militant group fighting to impose the law of Sharia across Pakistan, which frequently carries out attacks in cash-strapped Pakistan. Kakar said that Islamabad was determined to further strengthen bilateral, political, security, and economic relations with Kabul.

Last week, Pakistan also accused the interim Afghanistan government of misusing the transit trade agreement. "It is important for our customs authorities to ensure that any border trade that takes place complies with the understandings and agreements that exist between Pakistan and Afghanistan and that such commercial activities do not contravene Pakistani laws," the Foreign Office cited the letter as saying. The Foreign Office said the trade between both countries was on the rise,

calling it an established fact and added that the activity has grown because Pakistan facilitated trade with Afghanistan. The comments came following the September 6 clash between the security forces of the two countries, which left a Pakistani Frontier Corps soldier injured. This led to the closure of the key Torkham border for over a week.

Kakar has said that Pakistan was playing its part in ensuring durable peace in Afghanistan and was engaged with the Afghan Taliban and the international community at all the relevant forums. Kakar said the Taliban had made a commitment under the Doha agreement that Afghan soil would not be used against any country for terrorism, adding that they were addressing Afghan transit issues including illegal trade.

# India's Mission LiFE takes centre-stage at London Fashion Week

London (PTI): India's Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) mission to promote sustainability in all aspects of life took centre-stage for "India Day" at London Fashion Week 2023, with Indian designers showcasing creations using a range of eco-friendly materials. Under the umbrella of "Sustainable Modernity", students of Inter National Institute of Fashion Design (INIFD) in partnership with the London School of Trends presented their collections at a colourful catwalk in London on Saturday.

Their creations were made using plant-based fabrics produced in India such as lotus stems, banana leaves, rose petals, cotton, bamboo and other natural fibres. "The designers were instructed to employ sustainable materials

and zero-waste practices to create a collection that was both cutting edge and wearable," the London School of Trends said in a statement.

"They were tasked to show how the artisans and their surroundings are linked and depend on each other. A profound connection to the Earth has played a significant role in the cultural practices of India, which have a long history of being influenced by the natural environment," it said.

The all-female design team was made up of Rajvi and Yatri Patel, Preksha Jain, Somya Goyal, Vidhita Raut, Sidhi Penkar and Roma Agarwal.

Their unique designs were showcased by models following an earlier interaction at the Indian High Commission in London with High

# Peace rally organised in US in solidarity with Manipur's Zomi-Kuki community

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Participants at a peace rally held by a prominent organisation representing the Zomi ethnic community in Manipur in front of the Indian embassy here have voiced solidarity with their fellow brethren in the state who have been adversely affected by the ongoing ethnic violence.

The rally organised by Zomi Innkuan USA in front of the Embassy of India in Washington DC last week expressed the participants' unwavering solidarity with the Zomi-Kuki people hit by the crisis in Manipur for more than 120 days, the organisation said in a statement.

More than 180 people have been killed and several hundred injured since ethnic violence broke out in Manipur on May 3, when a 'Tribal Solidarity March' was organised in the hill



districts to protest against the majority Meitei community's demand for Scheduled Tribe status.

The violence has inflicted untold suffering on the residents of Manipur and the state government's actions, particularly against the minority Zomi-Kuki tribes, have caused great pain and division in the region, the statement alleged.

The rally, attended by members of the Zomi community in the US and other supporters, aimed to shed light on

the urgent need for a lasting solution to the conflict in Manipur, the statement added.

Demonstrators held placards bearing messages that reflected the plight of the Zomi ethnic people and their earnest plea for a separate administration in Manipur.

Dr. Hauzachin Suante, Executive Director of Zomi Innkuan, in his address, said: "Our land, our rights, our freedom - these are not mere slogans but the very heartbeat of our struggle."



# INDIA FACE CHINA IN ASIAN GAMES OPENER

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Set to play their opening match without any training session and proper rest after the last-minute announcement of the squad, India will be the clear underdogs against formidable China in their Asian Games group game here on Tuesday.

India were able to stitch a rag-tag final squad only on Friday and the team left for China on Sunday, leaving no time for the players to even have a training session together.

Moreover, two players — defenders Konsam Chinglensana Singh and Lalchungnunga — out of the 22 players picked will join later as their visas were not ready. The Indian contingent's chef de mission Bhupinder

Singh Bajwa has, however, said that the duo will get their 'express visas' in a day or two and they will join the team.

In any case, the duo will not be available for the Group A match against China on Tuesday and that will be a blow for India. Also head coach Igor Stimac said on Sunday that senior defender Sandesh Jhingana and talismanic striker Sunil Chhetri will not play the opening match to save them for the later two matches.

Chhetri has started training just a couple of weeks ago as he needed time with his family after becoming a father recently.

Stimac's move is understandable as India have more chance to win against Bangladesh (September 21) and Myanmar (September 24) than against China, and considering that the

team will take on the hosts without proper rest and training. The head coach was forced to have strategy sessions inside the aircraft and at the airport.

It will have to be seen whether Stimac sticks to what he had said or field Jhingana as defenders Chinglensana and Lalchungnunga will not be available for Tuesday's match. Already, he is facing the problem of full backs and central midfielders as he lamented on Sunday.

Even otherwise, China are a much stronger side than India at the continental stage, and they will also have the advantage of playing at a familiar surroundings at the Huanglong Sports Center Stadium. For India, on the other hand, their first outdoor activity could be the match.

The last time the two coun-



tries met in the Asian Games was in the 2002 edition in Busan, Korea, where India lost 0-2. The then Indian team had the likes of Bhaichung Bhutia, Shanmugam Venkatesh, Jo Paul Ancheri, Renedy Singh and current assistant coach Mahesh Gawli.

Stimac was candid enough to concede that it would be a tough task for his side against China, more so due to the unprecedented controversy surrounding the picking of the team, that too after getting exemption of eligibility criteria to take part in the Games.

"They have been preparing this team for a long time. Since March this year, they've played four tough and quality games against strong opponents, losing three and winning one," the Croatian said.

"So, it will be tough because they (China) have invested a lot

in this team, especially because they are hosting the Asian Games."

Talking about the players of the opposition team, Stimac said, "Mostly they (China) prefer a 4-4-2 system, which might change to a 3-4-3 occasionally. They have three senior players

who are really important to them. "One striker looks like a tower, scoring a lot of goals in the Chinese Super League. There is also an attacking midfielder, a senior player of great experience."

On the strategy that he may be employing, Stimac said, "We have to be very clever and see whether we need to invest all our energy (against China) or skip it to keep for the next two matches and try to make it to the knock-out rounds.

"No tournament is a formality for me, neither the players. There is a possibility to qualify from the group, but to do that, some luck needs to be on our side also, and the goal is for the boys to give their best performances of their lives."

The top two teams from the six groups will make it to the round of 16, with four best-ranked third-placed sides also qualifying.

Thirteen players out of the initial 22 were not released by their respective Indian Super League clubs, including Jhingana and first-choice goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu. A 17-member team with Chhetri as the only notable face was named initially.

On Friday, the AIFF announced a revised squad of 22 after hectic parleys with Jhingana in it, besides two more senior players in Chinglensana and Lalchungnunga.

## Real maintain 100% win record

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid came from behind to beat Real Sociedad 2-1 and climb back to the top of La Liga on Sunday, maintaining their perfect start to the season.

After Barcelona put five past Real Betis in a flashy display on Saturday the onus was on Carlo Ancelotti's Madrid side to maintain their 100-per cent record and they did, against the tricky Basque visitors.

Propelled by the electric Takefusa Kubo, Real Sociedad took an early lead through Ander Barrenetxea, but Madrid hit back with goals from Fede Valverde and Joselu to earn their fifth win from five games.

England international Jude Bellingham was unable to continue his excellent goalscoring form, after netting five goals in his first four Madrid matches, but remains the division's top goalscorer.

Madrid start their Champions League campaign on Wednesday at home against Union Berlin, and despite losing Ballon d'Or winner Karim Benzema in the summer and star player Vinicius Junior to injury, remain a force to be reckoned with.

"We kept believing, we know that here at home the support we've received is incredible," said left-back Fran Garcia, who set up both goals.

"I'm happy to help the team, now we have to think



about the next game which is coming up very soon."

Garcia came through the Real Madrid youth system, moving to another capital club in Rayo Vallecano before Los Blancos brought him back this summer.

The Basque visitors went ahead at the new-look Santiago Bernabeu after only five minutes, when Kubo stroked a fine pass into Barrenetxea's path.

Kepa Arrizabalaga kept out the first effort with a fine

save but could not claw out the second.

Valverde slammed Real Madrid level less than a minute into the second half, lashing Fran Garcia's cut-back in off the post from outside the area.

The left-back created the second goal too, crossing for target man Joselu to nod the hosts ahead at the back post.

The Spain international, on loan from Espanyol, was immediately taken off for Eduardo Camavinga, as Ancelotti sought more control of the game.

## Guardiola says single Champions League trophy 'nothing special'

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Pep Guardiola said Manchester City have not done "anything special" by winning just one Champions League as the holders prepare to launch the defence of their crown.

City won the top prize in European club football for the first time in June, beating Inter Milan 1-0 in the final in Istanbul to complete a historic treble.

Guardiola's men, who have won all five of their Premier League matches this season, face former champions Red Star Belgrade at the Etihad on Tuesday.

"For our club to win the Champions League is something incredible," the City boss told reporters on Monday. "But how many teams have won just one Champions League? A lot.

"But there are a lot to win

two, three, four, five. In perspective, we didn't do anything special, just one. For us the club didn't have it, to be part of that (makes me) proud."

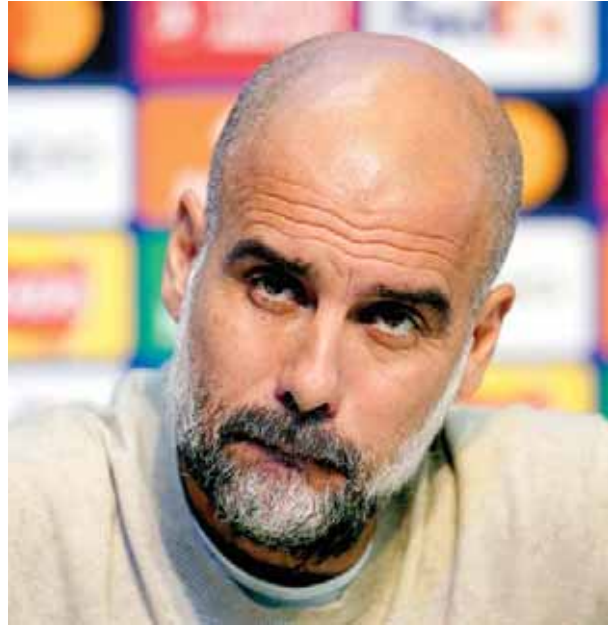
Real Madrid lead the way with 14 Champions League titles, followed by AC Milan on seven. Liverpool and Bayern Munich have six each.

Guardiola said his team might find it easier to defend their trophy than win it for the first time — their recent triumph came after years of agonising near-misses.

"The hardest thing is to win the first one," he said.

The Champions League final this season will be held at Wembley, but Guardiola said that was not in his thoughts.

"We didn't think about that," he said. "Win the first one. You have to think of the final when you are in the quarters and



semis. The first game in these months, it's a long time. Still a long, long, long time.

"Let's try to win tomorrow (against) a team who is so aggressive and fast upfront."

Defender Kyle Walker, who signed a contract extension last week, said the City players were hungry for more success despite winning multiple trophies in recent years.

"It comes from within to keep going," he said. "The hunger is still definitely in the dressing room from the players and the manager. He (Guardiola) still wants to win more, won't settle for second and we need to follow his footsteps."

City will again be without John Stones, Jack Grealish and Mateo Kovacic for the match against Red Star, who were European champions in 1991.

## New-look PSG in relaxed mood ahead of latest CL bid

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain have undergone sweeping changes over the summer ahead of their latest bid for Champions League glory, but new coach Luis Enrique insists the Qatar-owned club will not make winning European football's biggest prize an obsession this season.

PSG host Borussia Dortmund on Tuesday in their first match in a heavyweight Champions League group which also features AC Milan and Newcastle United.

The French title-holders have endured one frustration after another in the competition in recent years, with a defeat by Bayern Munich last season seeing them go out of the Champions League in the last 16 for the fifth time in seven years.

Beaten finalists in 2020, PSG went backwards after that, the decision to sign Lionel Messi ultimately backfiring.

Messi and Neymar have now left the Parc des Princes after a close-season clear-out which continued up to last week, when Marco Verratti was sold to Qatari side Al-Arabi for



a reported 50 million euros (\$53.3m). Verratti spent 11 years in Paris and was, at his peak, one of the finest midfielders in the world.

But PSG president Nasser al-Khelaifi decided it was time

to move on and the club accelerated the reconstruction of their squad in recent months, while keeping hold of Kylian Mbappe following a contract dispute that threatened to end his time in the French capital.

They spent an estimated 350 million euros on new players, with the biggest outlay coming to sign France forward Randal Kolo Muani from Eintracht Frankfurt for a reported 75 million euros plus bonuses.

Barcelona winger Ousmane Dembele, Uruguay midfielder Manuel Ugarte, defensive duo Milan Skriniar and Lucas Hernandez, Real Madrid's Marco Asensio, Benfica striker Goncalo Ramos and promising Lyon winger Bradley Barcola are just some of the other new faces brought in. But Luis Enrique and his captain Marquinhos on Monday both sought to play down expectations about the new-look team's prospects in Europe this season.

"There is no added pressure when it comes to the Champions League. It is not an obsession," Brazil defender Marquinhos told reporters at the club's new training ground in the distant Paris suburbs.

"We are competitors and that is the mentality of the club too. They want to win every trophy possible, but those of us in the dressing room, the coach, and the management above him, are not obsessed with the Champions League.

"We want to get to the very top but we know the path that we have to take. It is long, so we have to work hard and go one step at a time."

## Derby nightmare set aside for Newcastle clash: Pioli

AP ■ MILAN

Stefano Pioli insisted on Monday that AC Milan have turned their attentions to the Champions League opener with Newcastle United after local derby humiliation at the weekend.

The seven-time European champions were hammered 5-1 by Serie A leaders Inter Milan on Saturday, a brutal defeat which swept away all the positive vibes created by a new-look team claiming three straight wins before the international break.

It was a fifth defeat in as many Milan derbies in 2023, Inter racking up an aggregate score of 12-1 over those matches which include last season's Champions League semi-final.

"We had a lot of faith and positivity for the derby but it didn't go well, there's no point hiding it," Pioli told reporters.

"It was a big disappointment. I know I have a good team, this group of players will be able to get over a really difficult derby," said Pioli.



switch.

"These defeats in the derby hurt... I'd give everything to change them but unfortunately they went how they went."

Milan have been drawn in a tough Group F which also features Borussia Dortmund and French champions Paris Saint-Germain, and a good start at home to Saudi Arabia-backed Newcastle would be the perfect response to Saturday's disappointment.

"I know I have a good team, this group of players will be able to get over a really difficult derby," said Pioli.

## Barca under brutal pressure after our golden era: Xavi

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said Monday his time in the team as a player helped set a high bar which the club are now struggling to reach in the Champions League.

The Catalan giants won four editions of the competition between 2006 and 2015, and have endured some humiliating eliminations since.

Barcelona let leads slip against Roma and Liverpool and were thrashed by Bayern Munich in recent years, while they have failed to make it out of the group stage in the past two seasons.



"There is huge demand on us, the bar is so high — this is Barca," Xavi told a news conference.

"This is a consequence of the Barca of the past few years, of our era, as a player. In 10 years, from 2006 to 2015, four Champions Leagues were won."

The coach said the club's objective was to make it through the group phase, ahead of their opener in the competition against Belgian champions Royal Antwerp on Tuesday.

"We like challenges, but the level of demand is so high, it's brutal," he continued.

"It's a consequence of inheriting a brilliant era, the best in the history of this club."

However Xavi said his players were coping well and excited to start their new European campaign.

"Looking in the faces of the players, the joy, I see hope," added Xavi. "A lot of hope and desire."

PTI ■ LAUSANNE

The Indian men's hockey team has climbed to the third spot in the latest world rankings issued by the International Hockey Federation (FIH) on Monday.

India (2771) are back into the top-3, after more than year since dropping out in May 2022. The elevation happened due to their undefeated run in the Asian Champions Trophy 2023 in Chennai last month.

The Indians have won six and drew one of their seven matches. England (2745), who fell just short of winning the EuroHockey title with a 1-2 loss to the Netherlands in the final, are out of top three.

Despite their strong run to the finals, an earlier loss in the tournament against Belgium and the loss in the final, coupled with India's run of wins, saw

## India men climb to third spot, women placed 7th in latest FIH list

England slip to fourth.

Netherlands (3113) continue to lead the way with a strong defence of their title at the EuroHockey Championships, to add to their FIH Hockey Pro League title and the bronze medal at the FIH Hockey World Cup in 2023.

Netherlands' dominance has seen them pull off a comfortable lead over Belgium (2989) in second place.

Germany (2689) and Australia (2544) hold on to the fifth and sixth positions respectively, while Argentina (2350) climbed up one spot to seventh ahead of Spain (2347).

In the women's rankings,



Netherlands (3422) are perched at the top spot, remain well clear of the chasing pack, continuing their dominance with a record-extending 12th EuroHockey

Championship title. Australia (2818) and Argentina (2767) stay put in the second and third places respectively.

However, Belgium (2609)

had a great campaign at the EuroHockey Championships, winning the silver medal that propels them ahead of Germany (2574) as the two teams occupy the fourth and fifth spots in the world rankings.

Indian women (2325) have climbed one spot to the seventh position, at the expense of Spain (2173), who finished sixth in the EuroHockey Championships dropping over 150 world ranking points in losses against Belgium and Scotland.

New Zealand (2001) and Japan (1900) continue to hold their ninth and 10th spots, with China (1894) marginally behind Japan in the 11th spot.



# INDIA READY TO WIN ODI WORLD CUP: KAPIL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former captain Kapil Dev believes India are ready to win the ODI World Cup at home but he doesn't want to put the favourite tag on the hosts as a lot would depend on luck.

"I think if we can come in top four, that is more important and then it will be about stroke of luck and everything," Kapil said on the sidelines of the launch of the third edition of J&K Open to be held at Jammu Tawi Golf Course from October 4 to 7. "We can't say right now that we are favourites, of course our team is very good. Heart says something else, mind says no we have to work very hard. I know our team, I don't know about other teams, so I would say it is unfair for me to give a blank answer.

"...As far as India team is concerned, it is ready to play and win the championships...They should play passionately, enjoy themselves.

India geared up for the World Cup with the Asia Cup triumph on Sunday. The 10-wicket victory against hosts Sri Lanka was set up by the pacers, who claimed all 10 wickets with Mohammed Siraj returning with magical figures of 6 for 21.

"It is wonderful (to see Siraj bowl). I feel so happy that nowadays in all continents our fast bowlers are taking all 10 wickets, that's the cherry on the cake,"



said India's 1983 world cup winning captain.

"There was a time when we used to depend on spinners, it is not anymore, that's why the strength of the team becomes so good. Kapil, however, said as a fan he would have wanted to see

a close match rather than a lop-sided final in Colombo.

"...What a fantastic cricket played! As a cricketer I would like to see much close games but as a player, I feel bowl them out for 30 and win. As a spectator, probably a little close matches

would have been better."

India have a few fitness concerns ahead of the World Cup as some key players, including Axar Patel and Shreyas Iyer, suffered injuries during the Asia Cup. While Axar is nursing both a wrist injury and a minor

tear in his left quadricep, Iyer had a back spasms and played only two matches during the continental event.

"In any team, if any two main players get injured then it hurts the team's fortunes. That's why stroke of luck is required,

because if your main player gets injured, the team's balance gets disturbed," Kapil said.

Kapil also lauded India opener Shubman Gill.

"This is a youngster who we can look up to. He is the future of Indian cricket. Very very proud to have a player of that ability in India," he said.

There has been a debate on the team selection with some senior players such as Shikhar Dhawan, Ravichandran Ashwin, Yuzvendra Chahal missing the world cup bus.

Kapil, however, backed the selectors, led by Ajit Agarkar, for the picking the best Indian team for the World Cup.

"Those who are not there in the team, what's the point talking about them. Everybody has their opinion. The selectors are better people than us, because they put their heads together and pick the best team.

"Selectors are doing there job. Just leave them alone. It is easy to point figures."

Kapil, who is also the Vice President of Professional Golf Tour of India (PGTI), was here to attend the launch of the J&K Open golf tournament.

The Rs. 50 lakh event, presented by J&K Tourism, will see top Indian professionals including Udayan Mane, Rashid Khan, defending champion Yuvraj Singh Sandhu and former champion Honey Baisoya, participating in the event.



## We're determined to win WC for fans: Kohli

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Celebrated Virat Kohli says he and his teammates are ready to give their best in the upcoming ODI World Cup at home to make the dreams of Indian fans come true once again.

The Men in Blue won the World Cup twice, with their last success coming in 2011 when the competition was jointly hosted by India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

India defeated Sri Lanka by six wickets at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai, under the leadership of Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

But Kohli is now eager to end their 12-year-long wait for the title, having missed out on winning the 2015 and 2019 editions in Australia-New Zealand and England, respectively.

"The passion and unwavering support of our fans is what fuels our determination to win the World Cup," Kohli told Star Sports.

"The memories of past World Cup victories, especially the iconic 2011 win, are etched in our hearts, and we want to create new memories for our fans.

"I am thrilled to be a part of this incredible campaign, which perfectly captures the emotions of our fans, and we're ready to give it our all to make their dreams come true," he added.

Kohli's thoughts were echoed by all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja.

"As a cricketer, there's nothing more motivating than knowing that millions of fans are standing behind you, cheering for your success," he said.

"This campaign reflects the deep passion and obsession of our fans to see Team India win.

"It's a journey we're embarking on together with the entire nation, and we're determined to make our fans proud with our performances on the field."

## Fascinating how Pant's impact has changed Indian keeper-batters' mindset: Gilchrist

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Rishabh Pant isn't fit to play the upcoming World Cup but former Australian ace Adam Gilchrist is still fascinated by the kind of impact that the burly keeper-batter has had in his six years with the Indian team.

Pant, who met with a horrific car accident last December, is currently doing his rehabilitation programme at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru and is expected to make a comeback sometime next year.

In his absence, KL Rahul will keep wickets for India and Ishan Kishan has a good chance of playing as a specialist middle-order batter.

"I think Rishabh has inspired a lot of wicket-keeper batters around the world to play that way (he does). It is fascinating for such a young man to have such an impact that Rishabh has had and others are responding and playing in that positive manner," Gilchrist said.

Gilchrist was impressed how Kishan has shaped up despite knowing that Rahul will be the first keeper.

"They (India) are well stocked. They have got a couple of options there, obviously when KL was out with his injury, Ishan Kishan took his opportunity



and played really well and now they find themselves in the team together so that's a wonderful case of taking an opportunity," said the man who won three World Cups for Australia.

What Gilchrist found laudable was Kishan's ability to force the selectors to keep him in the mix with consistent performances.

"Being positive and then and forcing the selectors into keeping you in the team so it seems like KL is gonna be the one who is going to continue with the gloves but it does not

seem to hinder Ishan Kishan's batting, he seems to be playing really well, carefree, attacking and dangerous," he explained.

The man, who played nearly 400 international games across three formats, with 15,000 plus runs and over 900 dismissals (catches and stumpings), however had straight forward choices as far as four potential semi-finalists were concerned.

"I think India and Pakistan could feature in the semi-finals, Australia and England are another two teams," opined Gilchrist.

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Hours of net sessions perfecting the art of getting the ball to dart in the air and then deviate away after pitching paid dividends while bamboozling Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka, India's man of the moment Mohammed Siraj, said after his magical spell of 6/21 in the Asia Cup final.

Siraj dismissed Pathum Nissanka, Sadeera Samarawickrama, Charith Asalanka and Dhananjaya De Silva in his second over before returning to clean up Lankan skipper Dasun Shanaka with a peach of a delivery.

"I had practised a lot on generating out-swing deliveries from wide of the crease in West Indies. My outswingers were going well. So I tried from the wide of the crease to push for inswing (which will move away after pitching)," Siraj told bcci.Tv.

"So what I planned, what I had in mind, it turned out to be absolutely perfect and it was my best wicket of the game," Siraj said in an interaction with Indian teammate Kuldeep Yadav. With less than a month to go for the World Cup, Siraj said his spell in the Asia Cup Final would give him a lot of confidence heading into the mega event.

"It's a great achievement for me, especially since it's the final. It will help me gain a lot of confidence before the (ODI) World Cup," he said. "To be honest, it was a magical spell, as I had

## Practised a lot to generate outswingers from wide of the crease: Siraj



never dreamt about it. I had to struggle hard to gain the fifth wicket in the last ODI against Lanka in Trivandrum, which never came. But, it all worked out today (Sunday).

"In my first spell, the moment I saw I was able to swing the ball, I realised that I didn't need to hit the wicket. I

just intended on bowling at a particular spot and make the ball talk."

While Siraj grabbed the Man of the Match award on Sunday, left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep took home the Man of the Tournament prize.

Kuldeep finished the event as India's second-highest wick-

et-taker, with nine scalps in four innings at an average of 11.44 and an economy of 3.61. His best figures were 5 for 25 against Pakistan.

"I don't think a lot; I just read the wicket. It's very important for me to get the length right, and keep bowling at the good length," he said.

"I also read the batter, as to what shot is he trying to play. I have been efficiently using my wrong one and flipper, and I'm gaining a lot of confidence from it. "I have worked a lot (on the wrong'un) in the last one and a half years. The rhythm is something that breaks off quite often and takes time to get it back."

## Tim Southee will be given every chance to prove his fitness: Stead



PTI ■ LONDON

New Zealand pace ace Tim Southee will be given every chance to prove his fitness ahead of the World Cup in India next month, head coach Gary Stead has said.

Southee broke a bone in his right thumb while attempting to take a catch in the fourth ODI against England last week.

Stead said a call on the the 34-year-old will be taken after the seamer consults specialists at home. "Until then, we can't make a call around the World Cup. We'll just need to understand the time frames and what that looks like and once we have that information, we will then be able to move forward and make a decision."

"We'll want to give Tim

every chance of proving his fitness. There will be an element of the unknown being that it's a bone fracture, and at some stage he will have to start catching balls and bowling again.

"The healing process in the next 10 to 12 days will be pretty important for him as well," Stead told reporters.

The Black Caps, who went down 1-3 in the ODIs against England, have flown to Bangladesh for a three-match ODI series, starting Thursday.

They will take on Pakistan and South Africa in the World Cup warm up matches on September 29 and October 2 respectively before playing the tournament opener against England on October 5.

Southee, who featured the last time the tournament was held in India in 2011, will be playing in his fourth ODI World Cup.

## Nortje, Magala uncertain for WC

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South African fast bowlers Sanrich Nortje and Sisanda Magala's availability for the upcoming ODI World Cup in India will be determined this week following a fitness test.

The duo was named in South Africa's initial 15-member squad for the World Cup, but played only one game each in the just-concluded five-match ODI series against Australia.

While Nortje has sustained a lower-back injury, Magala is nursing a left-knee problem. South Africa is set to leave for India on September 23 and final call on the duo's availability will be taken before the journey. But going by early indication, both quicks are likely to miss the bus.

"We are continually taking stock as to where both of those players are," South Africa's white-ball coach Rob Walter was quoted as saying by 'ESPNcricinfo' after the 3-2

series win over Australia.

"The fact that they weren't playing today with a week to go before we board the plane for the World Cup is obviously a cause for concern. We would have wanted them out there. There are complications around taking players that are injured into a World Cup because then you have to provide a medical reason to be swapped out."

In case both Nortje and Magala are ruled out, South Africa is likely to call up Andile Phelulukwayo in the World Cup-bound squad.

"Andile is one of a couple of guys who are part of a broader squad and today he showed us, especially with the bat, what we have seen in terms of his capability," Walter said. "That knock, you can look at it, and say it was match influencing. A total of 270 looks different to a total of 315 and he was a massive role-player in that.

## Head to miss first half of World Cup



PTI ■ JOHANESBURG

A fracture in the left hand has ruled out Australia batter Travis Head from the first half of the World Cup in India with his participation in the rest of the tournament also uncertain, leaving the door open for the inclusion of in-form Marnus Labuschagne.

The opener was struck on the left glove by a short delivery from Proteas seamer Gerald

Coetzee in the fourth ODI against South Africa last week.

Head coach Andrew McDonald revealed that Head, who will miss the three-match ODI series against India beginning on Friday, doesn't require surgery but the Australian selectors need to deliberate on the risk of "carrying" him in the World Cup squad.

"The timeframe is still a bit loose at the moment but the good news is he doesn't require

surgery as it sits at the moment. There will be an extended period of time out and we've just got to weigh up whether that time (out) falls with an option to carry him through the front half of the World Cup," McDonald said.

"There's no doubt he won't be available for the front half, so that's a decision we'll have to make for the final 15. But I can't give you an exact time frame."

The World Cup starts on October 5 with the final scheduled for November 19.

Head's injury leaves the door ajar for Labuschagne, who did not make Australia's 15-member provisional squad. However, the Test star put up tremendous display in the ODIs against South Africa, finishing as the leading run-scorer.

"I can't talk on behalf of the selection panel and lock him away in the World Cup 15 but it's no doubt looking likely," McDonald said.