

OPINION 6
THE ART OF LEADING
FROM THE FRONT

MONEY 9
SENSEX TANKS 796 PTS, NIFTY
CLOSES BELOW 20,000

WORLD 10
US NOT SEEKING CONFLICT WITH
CHINA: BIDEN

LUCKNOW, THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 21, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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11 SPORT

Canada isolated as India roars

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Amid a huge diplomatic conflagration following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, India on Wednesday issued an advisory urging its nationals in Canada and those contemplating to travel there to exercise utmost caution in view of anti-India activities in some parts of that country.

This note of caution came a day after Canada issued an advisory to its nationals to remain vigilant while travelling to India.

In another development External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reportedly briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday here about the chain of events over the last two days.

A day after Trudeau's allegation of India's involvement in the killing of Nijjar, the Canadian media reported that Ottawa's Five Eye allies were not keen on taking sides. Canada is part of a "Five Eyes" network which is an intelli-



gence alliance consisting of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. They showed little inclination to wade into an escalating row between Ottawa and New Delhi over allegations.

India on Tuesday rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

Reacting to developments, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said, "Canada is a dear friend, partner and ally and happens to be our north-

ern neighbour. We care deeply for Canada just as we care deeply for India. I think that moments like this don't define our relationship, but they certainly can slow down progress...With an active criminal investigation, I hope that we can make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice and that we can all allow the space for that information and that investigation to occur before anybody leaps to judgment."

The advisory issued by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), it said, "In view of growing anti-India activities and politically-condoned hate

crimes and criminal violence in Canada, all Indian nationals there and those contemplating travel are urged to exercise utmost caution. Recently, threats have particularly targeted Indian Diplomats and sections of the Indian community who oppose the anti-India agenda.

"Indian nationals are therefore advised to avoid travelling to regions and potential venues in Canada that have seen such incidents.

"Our High Commission/Consulates General will continue to be in contact with the Canadian authorities to ensure the safety and well being of the Indian community in Canada."

Given the deteriorating security environment in Canada, Indian students in particular are advised to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant.

Indian nationals and students from India in Canada must also register with the High Commission of India in Ottawa or Consulates General of India in Toronto and Vancouver through their respective websites, or the MADAD portal madad.gov.in.

Continued on Page 9

Women's Reservation has many miles to go

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The new Parliament building, on its second day of functioning, made history by passing the long-awaited Women's Reservation Bill, rebranded as the "Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam", with an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present during the voting on the Bill.

Setting the tone of the debate, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi made a strong pitch for bringing OBC women in the ambit of the proposed law and asserting that any delay in bringing the reservation into effect would be "gross injustice" to women.

During the course of the over eight-hour-long debate, many Opposition MPs objected to the Bill, citing a delay in implementing women's reservation until after the delimitation process. However, the Bill was passed with 454 MPs in support, and only two MPs from AIMIM in opposition.

Intervening in the debate, Home Minister Amit Shah brushed aside apprehensions of a delay in the implementation of the proposed law and asserted that the next government

Lok Sabha passes Bill



Congress MP Sonia Gandhi arrives at Parliament House complex during the special session in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

will conduct a census and delimitation exercise soon after the elections, setting in motion the process to make women's reservation a reality.

The Bill will be tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday and is likely to be passed there as well after a full day of debate, as scheduled. Following its passage in Parliament, the Bill will require consent from half of the total State Assemblies in the country.

Subsequently, the approval of President Draupadi Murmu will transform it into an Act.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday expressed delight at the passage of the Bill and wrote on X: "The Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam is a historic legislation which will further boost women empowerment and will enable even greater participation of women in our political process."

The constitutional amendment Bill "Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam", was introduced in the Lower House on Tuesday. Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal presented the Constitution (128th

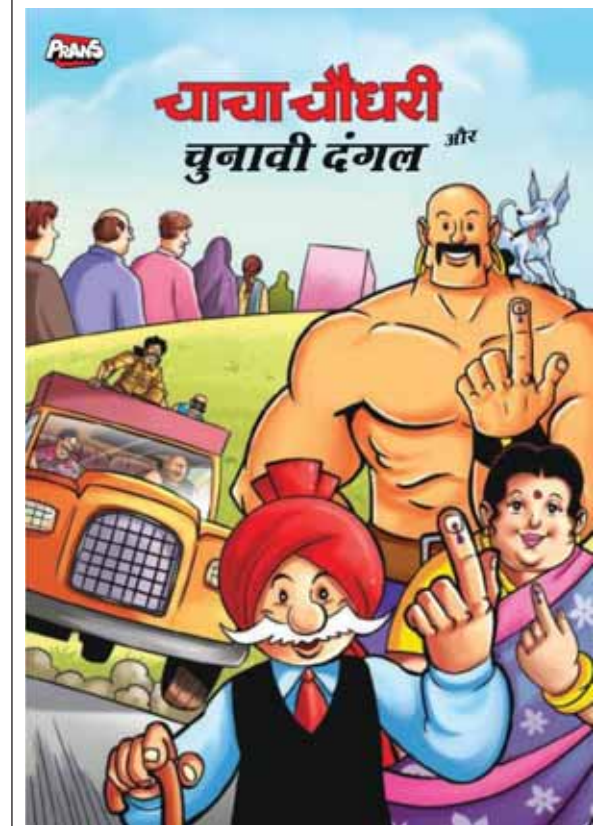
Amendment) Bill, aiming to reserve 33 per cent of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

The Bill has been proposed by various governments since 1996, but failed to garner consensus each time. This is not only a historic moment for the Bill, which ensures equal representation of women in the lower house of Parliament, but it is also the inaugural Bill to be tabled and passed in the new Parliament building.

Despite the majority agreeing on the importance of women's reservation, there was a heated debate over two clauses. Firstly, the issue of "delimitation" raised objections, as it would significantly postpone the implementation of the Bill.

Secondly, the exclusion of OBC from the reservation, which included quota for the SC and the ST, was contentious.

A total of 27 women MPs, spanning across party lines, including Union Minister Smriti Irani and Congress Parliamentary chief Sonia Gandhi, spoke during the Lok Sabha debate. BJP legislators supported it, while Opposition parties also backed it, demanding its immediate implementation. Currently, there are 82 women MPs in the Lok Sabha, out of a total strength of 543.



Chacha Chaudhary, Sabu entice voters

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

Chacha Chaudhary, the indelible comic character crafted by Pran Kumar Sharma, who resides deep within the heart of every Indian, is now being used to raise awareness among new voters.

This isn't the first instance where the Government has employed characters like Chacha Chaudhary and other iconic comic figures to promote and raise awareness, be it for projects like Namami Ganga or initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The Election Commission (EC) will use Chacha Chaudhary, Sabu, Raaka, Dhamaka Singh, Billoo and others to create awareness about elections among new voters.

In one of a kind effort, a comic book titled Chacha Chaudhary and Chunavi Danga published by Pran Comics has been launched to create awareness about elections among new voters

through popular comic characters. The book was launched by Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar along with Election Commissioners Anup Chandra Pandey and Arun Goel.

Chacha Chaudharym Sabu, Raka, Billoo and Dhamaka Singh among others will now teach voters about the importance of elections, and how to enroll as voters. The comic will comprise 10 short stories on electoral aspects.

In the comic, Chacha Chaudhary also plays a pivotal role in introducing readers to various apps developed by the Election Commission of India like cVigil and KYC, thereby empowering them to become an active and informed participant in the election process. The comic book strongly emphasises the significance of women's participation in the electoral process, aligning with ECI efforts to increase women's participation.

Continued on Page 9

Sikh diaspora slams Trudeau

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Influential Sikhs in America are upset with Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations against India

Chairman of Sikhs of America Jesse Singh on Wednesday raised questions over the timing of the Canadian PM's allegations. Singh said Trudeau is digging a hole for himself for political gain and it can backfire.

A US expert has termed Canadian Trudeau's claim of a "potential link" between Indian Government agents and the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force, a "shameless and cynical action" and urged the United States not be part of it.

Participating in a panel discussion at the Hudson Institute think-tank, Michael Rubin, Senior Fellow at American Enterprise Institute, claimed "Trudeau is playing into the hands of people who are looking at the Khalistani movement as a movement of ego and profit."

What is striking about Trudeau's "shameless action and cynical action" is that

while he is making a statement now, the killing of Karima Baluch that was carried out allegedly with Pakistani assistance is a police matter and has not been taken to the Prime Minister's office, Rubin said.

India has strongly rejected Trudeau's claims as "absurd and motivated" and dismissed a senior Canadian diplomat in a reciprocal move. "Such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The inaction of the Canadian Government on this matter has been a long-standing and continuing concern," Indian Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesperson told reporters that "work on the trade negotiations will continue as before" and that the UK was "not looking to conflate these issues". Soon after Trudeau's allegation, a UK Government spokesperson said Britain is in close touch with the Canadian authorities but declined to comment further.

Global warming: 2023 a climate alert

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Just as the world sweated it out in the record-breaking hottest July, a new study has now warned that 2023 will be no exception as it is expected to be the hottest year ever, marking another alarming milestone triggered by climate change induced El Niño.

This serves as a stark reminder of the urgent need for decisive action on the climate change front.

A study based on the China global Merged Surface Temperature dataset 2.0 (CMST 2.0), from Sun Yat-sen University which has revealed these alarming facts, comes after NASA and the European Union Climate Monitor recently also stated 2023 to be the hottest on record.

As per NASA, July was esti-

mated to have been around 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than the pre-industrial average for 1850-1900. It said July was 0.33 degree Celsius warmer than the previous warmest month, July 2019. In fact, Asia, Africa, and South America each had their warmest July on record.

South America had its highest monthly temperature anomaly of any month on record. The hottest of these was July 6, when the average daily global temperature was recorded to be 17.08 degrees Celsius, according to reports.

For the new study published in Advances in Atmospheric Sciences, the researchers analysed the CMST 2.0 dataset and discovered that 2023 has already experienced the third hottest first half-year since records began, narrowly trailing 2016 — the warmest



year — and 2020 — the second warmest. The global mean sea surface temperatures (SSTs) surged to an all-time high in April, while global mean land air temperatures followed suit by reaching their second-highest monthly level in June.

This combination resulted in May being crowned the hottest month ever recorded for

global mean surface temperatures.

Global temperatures will continue to rise into the second half of 2023, driven by factors, including El Niño and widespread wildfires.

Both global mean SSTs and global mean land temperatures reached unprecedented highs for July, shattering previ-

ous records.

"Given the current trajectory and short-term forecast results of El Niño, along with the extremely positive phase of the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation that strongly influences global surface temperatures, 2023 is expected to be the hottest year on record," said Professor LI Qingxiang from Sun Yat-sen.

"Moreover, 2024 may witness even higher global surface temperatures," added LI, also a research fellow at the Xinjiang Institute of Ecology and Geography of the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The CMST 2.0 dataset is one of the most comprehensive global surface temperature benchmark datasets to date. It takes into account the accuracy of both global and regional climate change, raising the level of global temperature

monitoring to a new level.

The dataset integrates over a century's worth of global land air temperature data and state-of-the-art research results from across the globe, resulting in an invaluable resource for climate scientists and policy-makers.

Based on this dataset, the team was the first to point out that the much-talked-about "global warming hiatus" during the last decade was just a statistical artefact, and in 2022, the dataset was expanded to include Arctic temperature data, further enhancing its global coverage.

As global warming accelerates, the likelihood of extreme weather events and disasters increases. Therefore, immediate and sustained efforts are needed to mitigate the devastating impacts of climate change.

PTI

Ensure pothole-free roads in district: DM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In keeping with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's directions to ensure pothole-free and smooth traffic on the roads of Lucknow district, an important meeting was called by District Magistrate Surya Pal Gangwar in the APJ Abdul Kalam auditorium of Collectorate on Wednesday.

On the occasion, the District Magistrate said that all roads of the district should be pothole free and all officers concerned must promptly ensure the same. He directed officials to inspect roads and hold meetings with related departments and submit their inspection reports in the next three days.

The District Magistrate directed officers that if potholed roads are noticed anywhere during inspection, then immediate repairs and patch work should be done.

In the meeting, the District Magistrate instructed the PWD department officials that all the roads having potholes in the district should be made pothole free immediately. He said that this work should be carried out as a campaign in the district and no pothole of any kind should be visible on any road. The responsibility of PWD department will be fixed for this, he added.

The PWD department was nominated by the District Magistrate as the nodal department for pothole repairs, and was instructed to coordinate with the Municipal Corporation, LDA, NHA and



THE DISTRICT MAGISTRATE DIRECTED OFFICERS THAT IF POTHOLED ROADS ARE NOTICED ANYWHERE DURING INSPECTION, THEN IMMEDIATE REPAIRS AND PATCH WORK SHOULD BE DONE

related departments and ensure repair work and patch work on the roads.

In the meeting, the District Magistrate directed the Additional District Magistrate (Finance and Revenue) that a control room should be established for which a WhatsApp number should be issued on which the general public can share the Google location of the damaged roads, which should be forwarded to the department concerned for necessary action.

He gave directions that after repairs and patch work is

done, feedback should be given to the complainant concerned. In this regard, the District Magistrate directed all the departments to nominate a nodal officer from their respective departments, who would coordinate and ensure action to make the campaign successful.

The District Magistrate asserted that all the executing agencies will be responsible for the work done in their respective areas and if any deficiency is found in the construction and quality of roads, then strict action would be taken against the concerned.

Class 9 student dies of heart attack

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a tragic incident a Class 9 student of CMS school died of heart attack on Wednesday. Giving the details the spokesperson of the CMS school said that Atif Siddiqui suddenly fainted during his chemistry period.

In a tragic incident, a Class 9 student of City Montessori School, Atif Siddiqui, died of a heart attack on Wednesday. The spokesperson of CMS said that Atif Siddiqui suddenly fainted during his chemistry period.

“He was rushed to Arushi Medical Centre by a school teacher and his father was informed. When the child did not regain consciousness he was referred to Lari Cardiology Hospital where doctors declared him dead on arrival,” he said.



A cultural programme being organised at on the occasion of Ganesha Utsav at Jhulelal Park in Lucknow on Wednesday

Pioneer

LDA's 'First Come-First Serve' scheme a success

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Development Authority has created a new record of success with its 'First Come-First Serve' scheme. The authority sold a record 166 flats under this scheme in the last 30 days. Never before had such a large number of flats been sold in such a short period. This will generate an income of approximately Rs 61.50 crore for the authority.

Additional Secretary Gyanendra Verma said that the system of online booking for allotment of vacant flats under the 'First Come-First Serve' scheme had been started by Dr.

Indramani Tripathi, Vice Chairman of the Authority, from August 8, 2022.

“The implementation of the single window system in allotment of property by the Vice Chairman has significantly increased the interest among buyers, resulting in better results. A review of the first-come-first-served scheme found that 166 flats have been sold in the last 30 days, which will generate an income of about Rs 61.50 crore for the authority. This is the biggest record of allotment of such a large number of flats in such a short period under this scheme,” he said.

Additional Secretary said that a total of 816 flats have been sold so far through online booking under the first-come-first-served scheme, which was started from the month of August last year, due to which the authority will earn approximately Rs 383 crores

Vice Chairman Dr. Indramani Tripathi said that under the 'First Come-First Serve' scheme, the maximum number of 190 in Janeshwar Enclave, 94 in CG City, 90 in Devpur Para Yojana, 70 in Sargam Apartment, 65 in Sopan Enclave, 55 in Deepshikha Apartment and

Aishbagh and 48 flats have been sold in Heights.

He said that out of these, only 6 flats are left in Janeshwar Enclave

Vice Chairman Dr. Indramani Tripathi said that for the people who are dreaming of buying their own flat in Lucknow, there is also an option to get a flat on the basis of hire-purchase contract system under the first come-first serve scheme.

“By paying 35 per cent cost in advance, you will be able to get possession of the flat immediately on the basis of contract and the remaining amount will have to be paid in

easy installments. At the same time, employees working in government, semi-government institutions will get this facility on advance payment of only 25 percent,” he added.

Flats available here on first come-first serve scheme are in Parijat Apartment and Panchsheel Apartment, Rashmi Lok, Ratan Lok, Adra, Ashlesha, Bharani, Deepshikha, Falguni, Mrigashira, Madya, Purva, Shravan, Sunrise Apartment, Janeshwar Enclave, Sargam, Srishti, Srijan, Panchsheel Ashray-3, Sopan-I and II, Anubhuti Apartment, Aishbagh Heights, CG City and Samajwadi Lohia Enclave.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Waseem Ahmad Ansari to Mohd Waseem S/o Gulam Nabi R/o 88/224 Chamanganj Kanpur.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Adil Ahsan Siddiqui to Adil Ahsan Siddiqui S/o Tahir Husain Siddiqui R/o 89/209 Tukaniya Purwa Kanpur.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Saurabh Agnihotri to Saurabh Agnihotri S/o Durga Prasad R/o 74, Satyam Vihar Awass Vikas No -1, Kalyanpur Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Sabiha Afroze to Sabia Lari for all future purpose, Sabia Lari W/o Khalid Lari R/o 92/137 Heerman Ka Purva, Kanpur Nagar

आवश्यकता है

आवश्यकता है B.ED हेतु प्राचार्य एवं प्रवक्ताओं की। योग्यता विश्वविद्यालय / यूजीसीओ मानकानुसार जेबीओएसओ इंस्टीट्यूट, बन्दी का पुरवा, तिन्धवानी, बाराबंकी

NOTICE

I have changed my name from SAZIA BANO to SHAZIA MAJID ANSARI. In future I Shall be known as SHAZIA MAJID ANSARI. SHAZIA MAJID ANSARI W/o Mohammad Majid Asim Ansari, 48K/5K/1K, Gausnagar, Kareli, Allahabad

सूचना

दस्तावेज खोने की सूचना
सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि संजय कुमार सिंह पुत्र श्री. पारसनाथ सिंह निवासी बघोडा परगना-हवेली जनपद-मिर्जापुर का निवासी है, प्राप्ति द्वारा. आराजी नंबर 253 मौजा-बननीली, परगना-बड़हर, तहसील-रावर्टसगंज जयपद सोनमढ़ में मोहम्मद मुस्तफा पुत्र मोहम्मद अली से दिनांक 28.01.2013 को जमीन खरीदी थी के मूल दस्तावेज यही नंबर 1 जिल्द संख्या 3724 वास्तव में कहीं खो गया है खोजबीन करने के उपरान्त भी प्राप्ति को कहीं नहीं मिला। उक्त सम्पत्ति को उर्मिला देवी पत्नी श्री राज कुमार सिंह, हाल मुकाम मानपुर, परगना बड़हर, तहसील रावर्टसगंज, जयपद सोनमढ़ बही संख्या-1 रजिस्ट्रेशन नम्बर-1981 दिनांक-24 फरवरी 2022 को बिक्री किया गया है।

संजय कुमार सिंह पुत्र पारसनाथ सिंह निवासी बघोडा, परगना हवेली, जनपद-मिर्जापुर

Rejuvenation of Kukrail river on the cards

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A drone survey to help in rejuvenation of Kukrail river has been completed and efforts will soon be made to restore the river.

Dr Venkatesh Dutta, of the Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, who is providing technical support to the state government, as part of a committee, said a meeting was scheduled on Wednesday to be presided over Jal Nigam MD on the issue.

Dutta said detailed documentation was being prepared to be submitted to the State Government in a few days. Dutta said that the drone survey gave a complete picture of the upstream and down stream of the river, its connectivity, banks and corridors, encroachments and catchment areas

“The flow of the river is due to the rains and the drains. Some part of it has been lost at the confluence of the river with Gomti,” he added.

He said that Kukrail nullah is actually a river but people started calling it nullah because it was connected to municipal drains and there are around 51 drains which are falling into it.

“Lucknow has expanded in the last 40 years and there was no



embankment on both sides of the Kukrail river initially. It came up only in late sixties, that too on one side of the river, and a road was made on one of the embankments and we kept on increasing the width of the embankment and the flow of the river reduced considerably and its course also changed after the construction of the embankment,” he said.

“We are restoring the smaller rivers so that the flow ultimately improves in the bigger rivers such as Ganga, Gomti, Ghagra and Rapti. Out of the 75 rivers which have to be restored, 17 have been assigned to the BBAU and we were working on each of them which included the tribu-

taries of Gomti, Ghagra and Rapti. We are using only natural solutions and no artificial structures for revitalising the river” he said.

Talking of Kukrail river, he said that its water was known for its cure against dog bites. “There was a story that if you take a dip in the river you would be cured of rabies. Still people go to the well at the origin of the river and they bath from the well's water. This is how the river got its name,” he said.

He said that the river has its origin in Assi village at Bakshi Ka Talab which is 6-km upstream of Kukrail Reserve Forest and has a chain of ponds and wetlands. “From Assi village it flowed towards Kukrail

Reserve Forest and then it came eight kilometres in the urban stretch and has a total length of about 26 kms and flows into the Gomti river,” he said.

He said that there are illegal encroachments over Kukrail which has been found in a joint survey which was carried out by the Lucknow Development Authority and the Nagar Nigam.

“This is a major challenge of how to get rid of the encroachments,” he said. He said that some measures have been suggested by them. “These suggestions include treating the water and improving the flow and developing walkways and butterfly parks as well as bio-diversity parks,” he said.

Talking about improving the flow of the water, he said that the same water will be treated and used to improve the flow in the river and the entire ponds at the Bakshi Ka Talab and upstream will also be rejuvenated.” Once the ponds are rejuvenated, the ground water will improve and if the ground water improves, the flow in the river also improves because these rivers are groundwater-fed like Gomti which is a plain-fed river and it does not get its water from the mountains,” he added.

Thieves decamp with cash, jewellery

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Thieves reportedly entered a house in the Lucknow Nagam area, locked the owner inside, and made off with cash and jewelry on Tuesday night.

“Police have registered a case under the relevant sections and a three-member team is being formed to nab the thieves,” Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Vineet Jaiswal said.

The victim, Kedaernath, said in his police complaint that on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, three unidentified thieves entered his house by jumping over the boundary wall and began inspecting a box in the room.

“I woke up to the noise and screamed for help, but they locked me in one room and decamped with jewellery and Rs 60,000 in cash,” he said.

Meanwhile, thieves made off with Rs 12,000 in cash and ornaments worth several lakh from two houses in PGI police station area on Tuesday night.

Woman accuses relative of abduction, rape

Lucknow (PNS): A 21-year-old woman of Krishna Nagar accused a distant relative of abducting and raping her in a house in Bengaluru on March 28. A case was registered on Tuesday after the girl overcame the mental trauma.

In her complaint, the woman stated that while she was returning home from Guru Nanak Girl's Degree College in Charbagh, her distant relative, Salman, offered her a soft drink laced with seda-

tives. Salman then threatened her with a knife and transported her to Bengaluru, where she was sexually assaulted multiple times. She further alleged that she was then brought to Bahraich, Salman's native place, where she was forced to sign a blank paper. Subsequently, she was taken back to Bengaluru where she was rescued by some neighbours and washed over to the family in Lucknow. The police have registered a case in this connection.

ROAD MISHAP

A woman was killed in a road mishap in Bakshi Ka Talab police station area on Wednesday. The police said the deceased, identified as Meera Srivastava of Sitapur, was crossing the road when some speeding vehicle knocked her down and she died on the spot. A case was registered on the complaint of her husband, Umakant Srivastava.

SUICIDE

A BCom girl student ended her life at her house in Thakurganj area on Tuesday night. Reports said, the deceased, identified as Shubhi Pandey aka Tannu of Raj Vihar Colony, was found from the ceiling of her room with a dupatta tied around her neck. Police sent the body for post-mortem and initiated the investigation.

Double murder rocks Azamgarh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Criminals openly challenged law enforcement agencies in the state when they committed a double murder in broad daylight in Azamgarh while killing an old man for resisting a sexual assault attempt in Ambedkarnagar.

According to the police, Rashid Ahmed had a ready-made garment shop in his house in Sardaha market in Maharajganj. At around 8 am on Wednesday he was cleaning his shop with his younger son, Shoaib.

Suddenly, motorcycle-borne miscreants barged into the shop and opened fire on Rashid. When Shoaib attempted to run inside the house, the miscreants also shot him and fled from the spot. Both the father and son died on the spot.

After receiving the information, Superintendent of Police Anurag Arya reached the spot with a forensic team. Preliminary investigations indicate that an old enmity was the cause of the double murder.

In Ambedkarnagar, one Asif forcibly entered the home of Hilal Ahmed in Hajhwa village of on Tuesday night and attempted to molest his daughter. Meanwhile, Hilal's father, Zaheer Hussain, woke up and attempted to rescue his grand daughter. The accused then pulled out a knife and attacked him. Upon hearing the screams, Hilal's wife, Tehzeeb Fatima and daughter, Ayesha,

raised the alarm and tried to apprehend the accused but also sustained injuries.

Some neighbors managed to nab Asif and brutally assaulted him with sticks and rods, causing his death on the spot before the local police could arrive. The injured were rushed to Baskhari Community Health Centre where Zaheer Hussain was declared dead on arrival while Tehzeeb Fatima, Ayesha and Hilal Ahmed were referred to the district hospital.

Superintendent of Police Ajit Kumar Sinha inspected the scene while the forensic team collected evidence and recovered the knife used in the crime.

In Mathura, a youth was fatally assaulted by the girl's family after he attempted to forcibly meet her on Tuesday night. The deceased's brother has filed a murder report against three people, including the girl. Reports said that villagers in Son village of Magorra police station area saw a dead body of a youth lying in a cotton field on Wednesday morning.

On information, police reached the spot and identified deceased as Govind (22) of Nagla Mattu, Khandauli in Agra. Govind's brother, Sunny, alleged that he was called by the family members of a girl, with whom he was in love on Tuesday night and later brutally battered to death. A case was registered and further investigations are on.

FORM NO. 05
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
600/1, University Road,
Hanuman Setu Mandir, Lucknow-
226007
(Area of Jurisdiction, Part of
Uttar Pradesh)
Summons for Filing &
Appearance by Publication
O.A. No. 423/2023
Date : 04/08/2023
(Summons to defendant under
section 19(3) of the Recovery of
Debts due to Banks and Financial
Institutions Act, 1993 read with
Rules 12 and 13 of the Debts
Recovery Tribunal (Procedure
Rules, 1993)
ICICI BANK LTD. ...Applicant
Versus
SHEIKH MOHD. SHEERAZ &
OTHERS ...Defendants
To,
Defendants :-
1. Sheikh Mohd. Sheeraz
S/o. Mohammad Ishaque
R/o. M-1403, Plumeria Garden
Estate, Sector-Omicron-3, Wipro
Circle, Greater Noida, Noida-
201301, U.P.
Also At - Flat No. 3A 609, 9th
Floor, Tower-6, Golf View
Apartment, Sector-1, Pocket D,
Sushant Golf City, Sultanpur
Road Village-Pargana, Bijnore,
Lucknow- 226010, U.P.
2. Insha Khan
W/o. Sheikh Mohd. Sheeraz
R/o. M-1403, Plumeria Garden
Estate, Sector-Omicron-3, Wipro
Circle, Greater Noida, Noida-
201301, U.P.
In the above noted application, you
are required to file in Paper Book
form in two sets along with
documents and affidavits (if any),
personally or through your duly
authorized agent or legal
practitioner in this Tribunal, after
serving copy of the same on the
applicant or his counsel/duly
authorized agent after publication
of the summons, and thereafter to
appear before the Tribunal on
19/02/2024 at 10:30 A.M. failing
which the application shall be
heard and decide in your absence.
Registrar
Debts Recovery Tribunal
Lucknow

Murmu to inaugurate UP Int’l Trade Show today

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The stage is set for the inaugural UP International Trade Show (UPITS), which will be inaugurated by President Draupadi Murmu at India Expo Mart in Greater Noida on Thursday. The show will give a glimpse of Uttar Pradesh's prosperity to the global audience.

Through this event, more than 2000 exhibitors will showcase their products to entrepreneurs and exporters from the country and around the world.

The products will cover diverse sectors, including ODO, healthcare, food processing, pharma, dairy, electronics and e-commerce.

Moreover, various departments of Uttar Pradesh will exhibit the state's potential and development roadmap through their stalls.

In addition, state government departments and institutions, including the Mumbai Dabbawala, will conduct informative sessions on various business activities.

Entry for the general public in the International Trade Show is free of charge.

This event underscores the Yogi government's commitment to achieving the goal of transforming the state into a one-trillion-dollar economy.

At the UPITS, there will be 44 exhibitor categories. These include ODO, Agriculture and Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Dairy Department, Association-Forum, Automobile-EV-Auto Components, Beverage Industry, e-Commerce, FMCG,



Food Processing, Furniture, Handloom, Handicrafts and Textiles, Healthcare, Printing and Packaging, and Renewable Energy, among others.

Among the major brands that have confirmed their participation in the event are industry giants such as Shree Cement, Tata Motors, Acme, UltraTech, Torrent Gas, Honda, Patanjali, Vivo, LG, JK Cement, DLF, Red Tape, Galgotias, SRMS, Sharda University, PNB, Kapila, Namaste India, Servotech and Hyundai.

On the second day, sessions of Invest UP, UPSIDA, GNIDA, YEIDA, and Noida Authority will be organized from 11.30 a.m. to 12.30 pm. Afterwards, there will be a session of Federation of Indian Exporters

Organisation, while another session of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) will be held from 3 pm to 4 pm.

On the third day, on September 23, there will be a session of AKTU from 11.30 am to 12.30 pm whereas a series of sessions of various academies will take place from 12.30 pm to 1.30 pm.

On the fourth day, there will be session of UP Electronics Corporation Ltd and followed by a fashion show, jointly organised by NIFT, Rae Bareilly and Khadi department. Awards and valedictory session will be organised on the concluding day, i.e September 25.

A cultural evening will also be organised during the event, in which renowned artists will perform.

WOMEN RESERVATION BILL

Maya questions NDA govt’s intentions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati on Wednesday has raised questions on the National Democratic Front (NDA) government's intentions regarding the Women Reservation Bill.

She said that there were many provisions in the Bill which would take 15-16 years for women to get the benefits. She said that the bill had been said to be implemented after completing the census and delimitation. The government should remove this provision.

“It appears that the Bill has been brought in just for electoral gains. I appeal to the government to either remove the clauses of census and delimitation or take steps to ensure its speedy implementation,” she said.

However, Mayawati reiterated that her party would continue to support the Bill.

She said that both BJP and Congress did not want to give reservation to women or the other deprived section of the society including the dalits, OBCs and others. This bill was going to tempt women and throw dust in their eyes.

Mayawati said that the census had not been done yet and it would take many years for the delimitation to be done.

Stressing her demand for a quota within the quota, the politician said, “I again appeal for a separate quota for women from SC/ST category in the 33 per cent reservation. And similarly the quota of the OBC women should also be decided as they are still backward as compared to the general category women.”

She, however, repeated that



“IT APPEARS THAT THE BILL HAS BEEN BROUGHT IN JUST FOR ELECTORAL GAINS. I APPEAL TO THE GOVERNMENT TO EITHER REMOVE THE CLAUSES OF CENSUS AND DELIMITATION OR TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE ITS SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION”

her party will support the Bill even if its conditions are not met, considering women of the 'sarv samaj' are still backward as compared to men.

All rights given to women have come through the Hindu Code Bill because of the efforts of BR Ambedkar and, even at that time, the Congress government had not allowed it to be passed fully and passed it in phases, she said.

Attacking the Congress, Mayawati said the Bill brought by the Congress government at the centre in the past could not be passed because it lacked the clause for a separate quota for these sections.

She alleged that the Congress is now advocating separate quotas for women of these sections for its own political benefit. The women of the country need to remain alert from such parties as they will not get anything from them, she said. The government on Tuesday introduced the Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam, reserving 33 per cent seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

However, provisions in the Bill state that the reservation will come into effect only after a delimitation exercise, or the redrawing of constituencies, and census.

SP raps BJP for tokenism

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Samajwadi Party, pursuing the PDA (Pichda, Dalit, Alpasankhyak) approach to consolidate its vote bank ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, termed the women's reservation bill as mere 'tokenism' and no substantial gain for women.

The SP alleged that the BJP was aiming to kill two birds with one stone, while opposition parties were looking to unify under the demand of its implementation before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

Moreover, the Samajwadi Party has also questioned the linking the implementation of women's reservation law with delimitation, the exercise of redrawing of a constituency's boundaries. The SP suspect that the government aims to divide the opposition INDIA camp on both women's reservation and population-based delimitation, and lift the Constitutional embargo on population-based delimitation riding over the sympathy for women's reservation Bill, should they return to power in 2024.

Soon after the women's bill was tabled in the Lok Sabha, Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, whose party has been a fierce critic of the bill in its present form since its inception 27 years ago, said, "the quota should be a balance of gender justice and social justice. Referring to PDA — Pichda, Dalit, Alpasankhyak (Backward Classes, Dalits, Minorities), his formula to

defeat the BJP in 2024 Lok Sabha polls". Yadav said the reservation for PDA should be clear in definite percentage form.

Samajwadi Party spokesman Rajendra Chowdhary said no provision of linking it with delimitation existed in the Women's Reservation Bill passed by Rajya Sabha in 2010. The bill lapsed before it could be passed by the Lok Sabha and could not become an Act.

The BJP sources, however, maintain that the aim of linking the implementation with delimitation is to give women a greater number of seats.

A Samajwadi Party leader argued that the implementation would not be possible even in the 2029 election because the whole delimitation exercise takes a few years from the publication of the census data. The bill says that the provision "shall come into effect after an exercise of delimitation is undertaken for this purpose after the relevant figures for the first census taken after the commencement of the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-eighth Amendment) Act, 2023, have been published".

"The Women's Reservation Bill is in limbo, tied to the next census, and the critical delimitation process hinges on the next census. The Modi government has not yet conducted the 2021 Decadal Census. When will this vital census finally happen?" asked a SP leader.

BJP-RSS join heads to formulate startegies ahead of LS polls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Ahead of next year's Lok Sabha elections, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has intensified its activities in Uttar Pradesh with a particular emphasis on expanding its presence in rural areas.

In a significant development, a marathon eight-hour meeting was held in Lucknow between RSS and the Bharatiya Janata Party, along with various affiliated organisations. The primary agenda of the meeting was to strategise ways to increase the participation of Dalits and women at the grassroots level.

Led by RSS leader Arun Kumar, the meeting brought together key representatives from the RSS, BJP and other associated organiations, includ-

ing the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Hindu Jagran Manch, Kisan Sangh, Vidya Bharti and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad.

One of the noteworthy outcomes of the meeting was the decision to conduct women's conferences in every district. This initiative marks a departure from the past, where women had limited direct involvement within the RSS organization, apart from the Rashtra Sevika Samiti.

"It is now anticipated that women will be entrusted with key responsibilities in affiliated organizations as well," a senior RSS functionary told this reporter on Wednesday.

"The RSS, often criticised for its perceived anti-women stance, appears to be taking steps to reshape its image. In a country where women's reser-

vation is a subject of widespread discussion, the Modi government has even introduced a Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha to address this issue. Consequently, the Sangh is now actively working to shed its old image and become more inclusive," he said.

Opposition parties, notably the Congress, have consistently alleged that the RSS predominantly consists of men, with women playing a marginal role. The recent developments suggest that women will soon have a more visible presence in RSS branches and affiliated organisations. This shift is expected to extend to key positions in bodies such as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Kisan Sangh, Teachers Union, Hindu Jagran Manch, Vidya Bharti

and Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad.

The RSS has also set in motion plans to host women's conferences in every district of Uttar Pradesh, with the active participation of all allied organisations, including the BJP.

During the meeting, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, along with Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, represented the government.

The RSS received feedback from allied organisations, expressing concerns that their problems were not adequately addressed by MLAs and MPs, and their messages did not reach the relevant ministers.

The issue of stray animals in rural areas was also discussed, with Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offering gov-

ernment assurance to address these problems.

RSS leader Arun Kumar stressed on the importance of coordination among government officials and various organisations. It was decided that regular meetings would be held every two months to maintain this coordination.

Furthermore, it was agreed upon that all organisations would work together to create an environment in every village for the potential consecration program of the Ram temple scheduled for January. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad plans to foster a Hindu-like atmosphere in villages by conducting Shaurya Yatras across the state from September 30 to October 1, and BJP along with its allied organisations, has been urged to contribute to this effort.

Govt to launch Desk Officer System to reduce files pile-up

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to launch Desk Officer System soon to accelerate secretariat works and to ensure prompt and transparent disposal of files.

This system is geared towards expeditious file management and curbing corrupt practices.

Simultaneously, government schemes can be executed promptly, benefiting the people of the state directly.

It's noteworthy that 623 desk units have been established across 40 ministries of the Modi government.

Within the Desk Officer system, either an under secretary or senior section officer acts as desk officer depending on the nature of responsibilities attached to the desk.

The Yogi government is introducing the 'Desk Officer System' within the secretariat with the primary aim of ensuring quick and timely disposal of regulatory tasks within the various

secretariat departments. This system is an officer-oriented system. It aims at eradicating unnecessary delays that may occur when presenting files to higher officials through the departmental sections within the secretariat.

To facilitate the prompt and timely disposal of regulatory work at the secretariat level, one desk unit will be formed in each of the departments located at the secretariat. To achieve this, suggestions are sought from the departments, resulting in 20 secretariat depart-

ments agreeing to adopt the desk officer system, which will soon be put into effect.

To effectively establish the Desk Officer System, an initial step involves categorising departmental responsibilities into routine and regulatory functions.

Numerous secretariat departments have shown their support for this. In the first phase, the system will be implemented by forming desk units in 20 departments of the secretariat.

Over 66 lakh ‘gharaunis’ generated since April ’20

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The implementation of the PM Svamitva Yojana in Uttar Pradesh has witnessed remarkable progress as the state has already prepared more than 66 lakh 'gharaunis' (property ownership cards), surpassing set targets with over 47,000 villages completed out of the planned 90,000 by December this year.

One of the standout achievements of the Yogi government is the creation of more than 4,31,794 'gharaunis' in just 45 days, exceeding the monthly goal of two lakh 'gharaunis' by an impressive 144 per cent.

The extensive work of issuing 'gharaunis' is currently underway in 90,908 villages across Uttar Pradesh, with property ownership cards already prepared in 47,893 villages.

Between April 24 and September 15, a total of 11,44,936 'gharaunis' were generated. Since the inception of the plan on April 24, 2020,

until September 15, 2023, a grand total of 66,59,905 'gharaunis' have been generated across the state.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has issued strict directives to district magistrates in poorly performing districts to accelerate the plans execution.

Among the top five districts excelling in the Svamitva Yojana, Lalitpur leads the pack, followed by Kasganj, Moradabad, Jalaun and Sambhal.

In these districts, over 99 per cent of the work has been completed. On the other hand, districts that require expedited implementation include Hardoi, Prayagraj, Lucknow, Kushinagar and Gonda.

The PM Svamitva Yojana aims to confer land ownership rights upon individuals in villages who are not documented in any government records. Rural areas of the state often have individuals whose land holdings lack official documentation, leaving them vul-

nerable to potential encroachments and rendering them ineligible for loans against their properties.

In response to this predicament, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the PM Svamitva Yojana on April 24, 2020.

The initiative strives to simplify property monetisation, enhance accessibility to bank loans, reduce property disputes and integrate comprehensive village-level plans. Additionally, it seeks to boost the socio-economic profiles of panchayats, fostering self-reliance.

The scheme encompasses all segments of society, including Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, persons with disabilities, minorities, women, and other vulnerable groups.

The progressive strides made in Uttar Pradesh under this programme underscore the state government's commitment to empowering its citizens and advancing rural development.

Murder accused killed in encounter

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The 40-year-old murder accused, Shahbaz, was killed in an encounter by Shahjahanpur police while trying to flee from custody.

Shahbaz, who had been arrested for the murder of a professor, Alok Gupta, on the intervening night of September 18 and 19, was being taken to court by the police.

On way to court, the driver of the police vehicle lost control, causing it to overturn. Amidst the chaos, Shahbaz managed to grab a revolver of sub-inspector Hitesh Tomar and began shooting. In response, the policemen retaliated, resulting in his death.

According to reports, tension grew in the vicinity following the murder and Alok Gupta's relatives and neighbours blocked the road in protest.

The police registered a case in this regard and announced a reward of Rs 75,000 for the absconding perpetrators. Shahbaz was also wanted in connection with the death of another drug dealer.

MotoGP India to establish ‘Brand UP’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In its relentless pursuit of becoming India's growth engine, Uttar Pradesh is gearing up to enhance its global presence by hosting the 2023 Moto GP India event.

The Yogi government will mark its presence at this renowned event, which will take place at the Buddha International Circuit in Greater Noida from September 22 to 24.

This event presents a unique opportunity for Uttar Pradesh to establish the 'Brand UP' image in over 200 countries worldwide.

"This event will not only position India, particularly Uttar Pradesh, as a preferred destination for sporting events, including motorsports, but also enhance the state's reputation as a prominent brand among global corporations. This achievement aligns with the Yogi government's vision of achieving a one-trillion-dollar economy," a government spokesman said.

He said that the comprehensive plan for the Yogi government's participation in this event had been prepared by



Invest UP, the nodal agency dedicated to attracting investments to Uttar Pradesh.

At least 275 top companies, such as Red Bull, Shell, B-Win, BMW, Oakley, Monster, Motul, Tissot, Repsol, Polini, Go Pro, Honda, Michelin, Amazon, DHL and Petronas are participating in this event.

The spokesperson further said that as the CEOs of these companies would also be in attendance, the Yogi government was prioritising meetings with them to pave the way for increased investments in the state. Such efforts hold the

potential to significantly enhance the global recognition of 'Brand UP'.

MotoGP India is of great significance on multiple fronts. It is expected to draw around 150,000 attendees per day, including 10,000 international visitors, to the Buddha International Circuit for this global racing spectacle.

The event will be broadcast in 200 countries, and tickets are available in the price range of Rs 800 to Rs 1.80 lakh. According to an estimate, the broadcast of this event may reach more than 45 crore view-

ers all over the world.

A total of 20 different racing events will be organised over these three days, with the final race being the main sporting event on September 24.

Uttar Pradesh's tourism sector has been experiencing a significant upswing, with international visitors not just limited to the Taj Mahal but also eager to explore the rich heritage and culture of the entire state. In light of this, focus is also being laid on exploring and accelerating all the possibilities in the state through Moto GP.

CSAUA&T, WSU sign MoU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Chandra Shekhar Azad University of Agriculture and Technology (CSAUA&T) joined hands with Western Sydney University (WSU) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at New Delhi at a grand function. The MoU entitles Indian students to pursue dual degree in Agriculture Honours for first three years in CSA while in the fourth year the students will study at Western Sydney University. The MoU was signed by the Vice-Chancellor of CSAUA&T, Dr Anand Kumar Singh and Prof Barney Glower of the WSU. He said under this understanding the students can simultaneously pursue MSc and PhD in a unified manner. Dr Singh informed on Wednesday that faculty of both the universities will provide teaching and guidance to the students and there shall also be meeting and workshops for faculty from time to time. He said under this MoU the students will avail themselves of world class practical teaching in agriculture and academics. Director (Research) Dr PK Singh informed that with the UGC also allowing dual degree programmes, students may be able to pursue two



V-C CSAUA&T Dr Anand Kumar Singh and Prof Barney Glower of the WSU sign an MoU in New Delhi.

programmes of which one will be from WSU and said this will certainly bring in an element of competition and increase standard and quality of Indian institutions. He said many Indian institutions had overseas partners for short-term and long-term collaborative programmes. He said with foreign institutions opening their doors it will benefit both partners in terms of student and faculty mobility, research options and cross-cultural experiences. He said that Australian farm universities are highly regarded worldwide for their qual-

ity of education, research output and innovation in the agricultural sector. He said studying towards a degree in agriculture in Australia opens the opportunity to pursue different areas of interest. He said many universities offer a BSc in agricultural science but also a variety of dual degrees and highly focused qualifications and at the Western Sydney University one can pursue a professional degree in agribusiness and even a dual degree combining commerce and agricultural science.

ARRESTED: Another

accused Rahul Yadav named in the case of attack on a constable has been arrested by the Bilhaur police in an encounter near Chandali level crossing, three km away from Nanamau trisection, on Wednesday morning. During exchange of fire, he sustained bullet injury on his limb and has been admitted to LLR (Hallet) hospital. Reports said late on Monday night when constable Mohd Murtaza posted in Kakwan police station was returning after having dinner in Bilhaur, Vishal Yadav and his accomplice Rahul Yadav had allegedly attacked him near Kamsan village and looted his mobile phone and cash.

On the victim's complaint, police had lodged FIR against both the assailants under relevant sections of attempt to murder and loot and arrested Vishal Yadav late on Tuesday night. Early on Wednesday morning, when Bilhaur police tried to arrest another accused Rahul Yadav, he opened fire on the police party.

During the exchange of fire, he also sustained bullet injury on his limb. Later, the police arrested him. From the Bilhaur CHC, SHO S Singh and ACP Indra Prakash Singh took the injured Rahul Yadav to the LLR Hospital and admitted him there.

Future Kanpur should be as per Master Plan 2031: DC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Divisional Commissioner Amit Gupta while reviewing the presentation of the consultation team on the topic 'Kanpur in Centennial Year of Independence' presented by Vision Kanpur@2047 said the prime objective of holding this review meeting was to take every section into confidence and to accommodate all views and suggestions of various departments which contributed collectively in the growth and development of Kanpur. He said the future Kanpur should be exactly as per the Master Plan 2031. He said different sections of the society who contribute in the uplift of the city like medical, education, tourism, art and culture, entrepreneurship, social, agriculture and a few more will be contributing to the brainstorming session to work out the future vision for Kanpur which was once considered to be the "Manchester of the East." He said top experts are busy in preparing a draft plan and after a detailed and thorough study it will be given the final approval. He directed the authorities to ensure they keep



Divisional Commissioner Amit Gupta addressing the VisionKanpur@2047 meeting at the Commissionerate.

2031 on their mind for Vision Kanpur@2047. He said special emphasis should be laid on improving the transportation of the city, smooth traffic and every effort be made to remove or end traffic congestion. He said this should be the main focus of the vision. He said there was a possibility to widen all roads and for this a master plan needs to be prepared. He said this should also include parking and vending zones which must be included in the master plan. Gupta said all suggestions which were put up need to be carefully studied and then only the master plan needs

to be worked out. He said there was a need to develop green area keeping in view environment as its focal point. He said all existing parks need to be beautified and further developed. He said every effort needs to be made to reduce traffic congestion and for this a study needs to be carried out as to find out the kind of activity which can be shifted out of Kanpur and this study needs to be included in the master plan. The DC directed the officials to ensure that once the vision draft was ready its detailed review should be carried out and said that nothing should be

left out and said it depended on concerted efforts made collectively for the uplift of Kanpur. A large number of officials of various departments were present in the meeting.

ALZHEIMER'S DAY: The World Alzheimer's Day is observed on September 21 each year to raise awareness and challenge especially the stigma surrounding this disease. It serves as a reminder that this debilitating disease affects millions of people worldwide and calls for global cooperation in finding a cure and supporting those affected by it. The estimated dementia prevalence for adults ages 60+ in India is 7.4 per cent. About 8.8 million Indians older than 60 years live with dementia and it was more prevalent among females than males and in rural than urban areas. This was stated by noted geriatric psychiatrist, Dr Zubair Sarkar while addressing presspersons. He said women had a greater risk of developing dementia during their lifetime and in fact, around twice as many women have Alzheimer's disease which is the most common type of dementia when compared to men.

Breakthrough research regarding mgmt of cryptococcal meningitis

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of BHU scientists has carried out a breakthrough research with regard to management of cryptococcal meningitis among persons living with HIV/AIDS. The study by Prof Jaya Chakravarty and Prof Shyam Sundar, Department of Medicine and Prof Ragini Tilak and Dr Munesh Kumar Gupta, Department of Microbiology, Institute of Medical Sciences (IMS) and their residents has suggested an effective way to bring down the mortality due to cryptococcal meningitis in this vulnerable population. The study shows high prevalence of cryptococcal antigen among immune-suppressed people living with HIV in eastern India.



Prof Jaya Chakravarty

It notes that the prevalence (15 per cent) of cryptococcal antigen among PWHAs of this region is higher than other parts of the country. Cryptococcal meningitis is a CNS (central nervous system) infection caused by fungi and is a major cause of mortality among people with HIV/AIDS.

Its treatment is long and even with treatment there is an increased mortality rate. However, the study suggests that by screening the blood of severely immuno-suppressed PWHAs for cryptococcal antigen even before there are symptoms and initiating appropriate therapy the mortality can be brought down significantly. Prof Jaya Chakravarty said, "The screening of PWHAs should be adopted at the Antiretroviral treatment Centers (ART centre) of this region. At present this test is available in the Microbiology Department of IMS, BHU at a charge of ₹500 per test. However, we would request the Uttar Pradesh State AIDS Society to provide the test kit free of cost so that all PWHAs can be screened at the ART

Centre." This research could potentially change the way cryptococcal infection is diagnosed and treated in the future. This research comes at an important time as we celebrate Fungal Awareness Week to encourage health care workers to think about fungal infection, Prof Chakravarty added. The work was also presented by Prof Jaya Chakravarty at the 12th International AIDS Society (IAS) Conference on HIV science in Brisbane, Australia. The conference is the biggest event of the organisation working in the area of AIDS awareness and prevention. The findings of the study have been published in the globally renowned AIDS journal by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

RK Shukla elected patron of IPF

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Patron of UP Powerlifting Association and senior trade union leader Rajesh Kumar Shukla has unanimously been elected the patron of Indian Powerlifting Federation (IPF) in a meeting of the IPF held in Tatanagar, Jamshedpur (Jharkhand) recently. In a press statement issued on Wednesday, UPPA secretary

Rahul Shukla said it is for the first time when a state body office-bearer had been elected the patron of the IPF. Rajesh Kumar Dixit, Rajdhar Mishra, Runit Sagri, KS Chauhan, Poonam Tewari of UPPA, Manish Mishra, Saurabh Gaur, Shobhit Verma, Dharendra Singh, Neeraj Kumar and Sudhanshu Arya of Kanpur Powerlifting Association have hailed the appointment of

Rajesh Kumar Shukla and congratulated him.

BADMINTON TOURNA-MENT: Aural Dwivedi, a student of class VIII of Chintels School, got the second place in the three-day Yonex Sunrise 2nd UP State U-13 Major Badminton Tournament held in Moradabad. Her father Anoop Dwivedi and mother Rachana Kaushal are employed in IIT Kanpur. Aural had also

won the second place in U-15 tournament held in Noida. Presently, she has All India Rank 24. The office-bearers of the Kanpur District Badminton Association, including Dr AK Agarwal, Manoj Pandey, Sushil Gupta, DP Singh, Mahip Saxena and Saurabh Srivastva, while wishing her a bright future, assured to extend all possible assistance in her training by the association.

One killed in road accident

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A driver was killed when his car after colliding with an uncontrolled vehicle fell into a nullah on the highway ahead of an overbridge in Akbarpur town of Kanpur Dehat on Wednesday morning. The police rushed to the spot which after getting the car out of the nullah, sent the injured driver to the district hospital where he was declared dead by the doctors. Chaman of Mewati Mohal, Akbarpur, had gone to drop a Roadways bus driver Parvez ahead of Akbarpur overbridge on car. After dropping Parvez, immediately after he moved ahead, a speeding vehicle knocked down his car from behind. As a result the car fell into the nullah. On hearing about the incident, kin of the driver and police rushed to spot. After getting the car out of the nullah, the police sent the seriously injured Chaman to the district hospital where Dr Nishant Pathak in Emergency declared him as brought dead.

Sadar outpost incharge Gajendra Singh sent the body for autopsy. He said raids were on to nail the absconding vehicle driver. On receipt of autopsy report and complaint further action will be initiated in the matter, he said.

FIRE: The OPD on the second floor of the Rama Hospital in Mandhana under Bithoor police area caught fire around 11.30 am on Wednesday. An electric short circuit was stated to be the cause of incident. OPDs of eye, skin and ENT departments are operating on the second floor. The fire broke out in the dark room of the Ophthalmology department which soon started spreading to other parts of the hospital. On seeing the fire, there was panic among the patients. Hundreds of patients admitted to the hospital were taken out in the open and shifted to the Rama Dental College in Lakhanpur. The condition of several patients was stated to be very critical, last reports received here said. Around a

dozen fire tenders were pressed into service were busy making efforts to control the fire till late afternoon.

2 HELD FOR THEFT: The Kakadeo police arrested two NEET students on Tuesday night who confessed their involvement in stealing 23 mobile phones and two loot cases. During quizzing the accused said they joined the crime world to meet the expenses of their girlfriend. They had regularly been stealing mobile phones from a shop. In order to hide the crime, they had also removed a diary from the shop which contained the account of the stocks and sale etc from there. Addressing mediapersons, SHO Vinay Sharma said two days ago, a mobile phone shopowner in A-One Market, Kakadeo, had lodged a report about the missing of 23 cell-phones. During investigations, it was observed that two NEET students were active in selling some mobile phones in the market. The police raided the

indicated spot and arrested both the students. They were identified as Rishabh of Kamalganj, Farrukhabad, and Pankaj Singh of Jalalabad, Shahjahanpur. Both the students had arrived in the city two years ago to attend NEET coaching. The police recovered 17 stolen mobile phones worth around ₹2.25 lakh and ₹4,400 cash from them. After developing friendship with the shopowner, they had stolen as many as 23 mobile phones one-by-one from there. In order to hide their act, they had stolen the diary of the shopowner which contained the account of the goods and stocks. Rishabh's father Divesh Kumar is a contractor while Pankaj runs a cosmetic shop. SHO said the accused had also committed two loots which were nowhere recorded in CCTV cameras. They informed that they were living in a rented room in Kakadeo for the past two years and were well aware of each and every lane of the locality. Both the accused have been sent to jail, SHO said.

Lamp lighting ceremony held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Director of the Regency Institute of Nursing, Dr Soni Kapoor while addressing the 14th lamp lighting ceremony for the new batch for BSc Nursing, GNM and ANM courses said the day was celebrated in the fond memory of Florence Nightingale. He said nursing is one of the noblest profession which still retained its pristine purity in which it was initiated by Angel of Compassion Florence Nightingale. He said it is universal and secular in its outlook. She appealed to every entrant to ensure they dedicate themselves to the service of the suffering humanity. She said nursing encompassed



autonomous and collaborative care of individuals of all ages, families, groups and communities, sick or well and in all settings. She said nursing included the promotion of health, prevention of illness, and the care of ill, disabled and dying people. She said the institute was set up with a mission and for the past 13 years it had continued to train nurses

es to meet the current day demands in the field of paramedics. She said the girls and boys who join this institute, should understand that like a doctor the nurses were equally and highly important. She wished the new batch all success in their future endeavours. Principal of the Institute Javed Shaikh while addressing the ori-

entation programme said nurses advocate health promotion, educate patients and public on the prevention of illness and injury, provide care and assist in cure, participate in rehabilitation and provide support. He said no other health care professional had such a broad and far-reaching role. He said gone are the days when the nurses were confined to recording temperature or changing bed linen and giving medicines to patients and said the times have changed and today the nurses were certainly on par with the doctors. He said today the role of nurses was assessment, diagnosis, expected outcomes, interventions, rationale and evaluation which made the work highly essential. Director Arun Kapoor was also present.

Orientation programme conducted at SMS

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A two-day orientation programme for M Com, B Com, B Com (Hons) and BA (Hons) Mass Communication courses conducted at the School of Management Sciences (SMS) here on Wednesday. Addressing the newly-admitted students in the inaugural session of the programme, Director Prof PN Jha said education is not just about what one learns in the classroom, but it is also about the values and skills one develops. Encouraging the students, he said by active participation in all the programmes organised in the institute, the students can prepare themselves completely for the future. Referring to the discipline and modern and advanced resources established in SMS, Prof Jha said the library and computer labs here are as per high standards and their regular and efficient use will undoubtedly benefit the students a lot. He said in future the students are the ones who will build a new and technological-



ly rich India. Geographical Identification (GI) expert Padma Shri Rajnikant, who was present as the chief guest, underlined the importance of industry-academia collaboration. He said the bridge between education and industry is important for the overall development of students. Discussing the contribution of SMS in the field of higher education, he said the educational institution is taking proactive steps to ensure that students are well prepared for the challenges of the professional world. Advising the budding students, he said while textbooks and lectures provide the foundation, it is equally important to understand the practical implications of what the students learn. Special guest CA

Sudeshna Basu said commerce is the backbone of any prosperous society and it is very pleasant to see the enthusiasm for it among the students. The choice of ambition is a testament to one's desire to be a part of shaping the financial landscape of tomorrow. Interacting directly with students, the CA said the academic activities of this institute, including internships, workshops and practical exercises are designed to expose the students to real-world scenarios. Embrace these opportunities with enthusiasm, as they will be important in preparing the students for the professional challenges ahead, Sudeshna Badu added. Prof Anurag Dave of the Department of Mass Communication, BHU, who was present as a special guest,

said mass communication is a field which is at the forefront of social change. It plays an important role in forming opinions, disseminating information and influencing culture. Prof Dave said this is a field that requires not only technical proficiency but also a deep understanding of the socio-cultural scenario, which includes both theory and practical applications. Another special guest, Prof KS Jaiswal, Department of Commerce, MGKV, said commerce and management are subjects which hold utmost importance in today's rapidly developing world. Kartikeya Singh threw light on SMS achievements while Prof RK Singh, Head of Commerce department introduced M Com, B Com, B Com (Hons) and BA (Hons) Mass Communication courses. The session was conducted by Dr Anju Singh and vote of thanks was given by Vir Pratap. SMS Executive Secretary Dr MP Singh, Registrar Sanjay Gupta, Dr Chandrashekhar Singh and Dr Ishan Tripathi were also present.

IN THE COURT OF MS. RUCHIKA SINGLA, LD ADJ-3, N/W ROOM NO. 311, 3RD FLOOR, ROHINI COURTS, DELHI

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT

(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

Case No.	Title
379/2020	Novateur Electrical & Digital Systems Pvt. Ltd. Vs. M/s Aircon India Incorporated

To

1. M/S. AIRCON INDIA INCORPORATED THROUGH ITS PARTNERS FLAT E, 2/3, LANDMARK TOWER PHASE I, VDA COLONY BARA LALPUR, CHANDMARI VARANASI (UP)-221007

Defendant No. 1

2. Pradeep Mehta, Partner M/S. Aircon India Incorporated Flat E, 2/3, Landmark Tower Phase I, VDA Colony Bara Lalpur, Chandmari Varanasi (Up)-221007

Defendant No. 2

3. Varun Mehta, Partner M/S. Aircon India Incorporated Flat E, 2/3, Landmark Tower Phase I, VDA Colony Bara Lalpur, Chandmari Varanasi (Up)-221007

Defendant No. 3

4. Amitabha Sur, Partner M/S. Aircon India Incorporated Flat E, 2/3, Landmark Tower Phase I, VDA Colony Bara Lalpur, Chandmari Varanasi (Up)-221007

Defendant No. 4

5. Tata Project Limited Construction of Trade Facilitation Center Cum Craft Museum Kendranchal Colony, Bada Lalpur, Varanasi-221007

Defendant No. 5

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on dt 30-10-2023 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined Ex-Parte.

Given under my hand & seal of the court on this 17-07-2023

Seal

Addl. Dist. Judge-03 (NW) Rohini Court, Delhi

Chief secy, DGP take stock of preparations for PM’s visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Secretary (CS) Durga Shankar Mishra, along with Director General of Police (DGP) Vijay Kumar, took stock of the preparations for the proposed visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the city on September 23. He instructed the officers that all security arrangements should be made carefully so that there is no negligence at any level. Addressing a meeting of officers, he directed all departments concerned to complete all preparations on time. In the meeting, Commissioner of Police (CP) Ashok Mutha Jain gave a presentation to the CS and DGP about the preparations of the Police department during the PM’s visit in which he mentioned the proposed route chart, parking arrangements, preparations made at the public meeting venue and the helpads. Then Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma presented the proposed programmes of the PM, including the foundation stone laying ceremony of the International Cricket Stadium in Ganjari where the PM will also address a public meeting and the inauguration of the Atal Residential School by



CS DS Mishra reviewing preparations in Varanasi on Wednesday for PM’s visit.

pressing the button at the Rudraksh Convention Centre, Sagra. He said the PM will also address the Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav (KSSM) closing function in which the district level participants will be seen and then the victorious participants will also be rewarded. He informed that the web portal regarding Kashi MP Khel (Sports) competition will also be inaugurated by the PM. The CS directed the Chief Engineer of the Public Works Department (PWD) to make proper preparations in view of the possibility of rain in and around the meeting place. He also directed the municipal commissioner to ensure complete cleanliness on all pro-

posed routes up to the airport and no garbage heaps should be seen anywhere. He directed the Health, Power and other departments to make proper arrangements at the meeting venue. Before the meeting, Mishra, along with the DGP, inspected the proposed places for laying the foundation stone of the cricket stadium at Ganjari and the meeting place, during which information related to the stadium was given by District Magistrate S Rajalingam. He also inspected the Atal Residential School built in Karsada, where they took information about the facilities being provided to the students, including classroom, hostel, library, mess and appro-

priate questions and answers were also given to the children of the class. Saplings were also planted in the school premises by the CS and DGP.

Earlier, both the top state officials reached Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) on Wednesday afternoon. After reaching the temple, both the officers offered prayers. Later, the CS inquired about the arrangements of the temple. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sunil Kumar Verma said for the convenience of visitors coming to the temple, a health centre has been established two days ago, which was also inaugurated by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and so far, about 100 people have taken medical consultation within two days. Apart from this, arrangements for first aid have been made in this health centre. After knowing the arrangements of the temple, the chief secretary left for his destination. A large number of officers, including District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Commissioner of Police (CP) Mutha Ashok Jain, SDM Shambhu Sharan and Special Duty Officer Umesh Kumar Singh were also present.

BJP gears up to make Modi’s public meeting a success

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its activities to make the proposed public meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ganjari in Rajatalab area on September 23 a grand success. Meanwhile, the district administration has also made hectic efforts to complete all pending preparations and the team of Special Protection Group (SPG) visited the venue sites to see the security arrangements. At Ganjari, the PM will lay the foundation stone of an international cricket stadium.

It will be the first international standard cricket stadium to be constructed by the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI) itself in the country and for this land has been provided by the state government. The function may also be attended by senior BCCI officers including secretary Jay Shah and senior cricket stars of yesteryears like Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar and Ravi Shastri. However, the visits of all of them have yet not been confirmed. In order to make the public meeting unprecedented, regional BJP president (Kashi Region) Dilip Singh Patel launched the public rela-



Regional BJP chief DS Patel contacting people in Varanasi on Wednesday for proposed PM’s public meeting.

tions campaign on Wednesday. He himself joined the group of BJP workers and knocked door-to-door and invited the people to attend the public meeting. He was accompanied by district general secretary Sanjay Sonkar and regional party office bearers. Patel said the PM will address a huge public meeting in Ganjari on September 23 at 11 am in which BJP workers as well as people of parliamentary constituency will participate. He said the party has decided that public representatives and BJP office-bearers will conduct intensive public relations in the villages surrounding the meeting venue. Regional spokesman

Navratan Rathai said as per the plan made at the regional level, district president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, Praveen Singh Gautam, Suresh Singh, Rakesh Patel, Mahendra Patel etc apart from Mandal unit office-bearers and workers did extensive public relations in Birbhanpur. Similarly, in Kundiaria, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Moriya did public relations with the party leaders and invited people to come to the public meeting. Former MLA Surendra Narayan Singh Odhe did public relations in Belaudi and Gangapur Bazaar areas. In the same direction, the district president of Mahila

Morcha did public relations in Harpur under the leadership of Vinita Singh and Sunita Singh. Surendra Patel, Guddu Patel, Manish Patel did the same in Parmanandpur while Devendra Pratap Singh and Jagdish Jaiswal in Nagpur. Similarly, in Kanari, Dr Ashok Rai did public relations inviting people to attend the public meeting of the PM.

Besides, during his visit the PM will also formally inaugurate all Atal residential 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 by visiting local school at Karsada. As many as 80 students have been admitted in the school of the age group of six 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 has been built on 12.25 acres with a cost of ₹66.54 crore. During his visit, the prime minister will also attend a programme at the Rudraksh International Convention Centre at Sagra where he will give awards to the winners of Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav.

‘Clean Station Day’ observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the ongoing cleanliness fortnight to be continued till October 2, ‘Clean Station Day’ was observed at different stations of various categories including A1, A, B and D on the direction of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava. For making the campaign successful, senior officers were nominated for these stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER), including Banaras, Varanasi City, Prayagraj Rambagh, Mau, Ghazipur City, Mairwa and Ballia. Efforts were also made to create awareness by running a comprehensive cleanliness campaign at Bhatni, Azamgarh, Indara, Belthara Road, Siwan and Chhapra Jn stations. By running an intensive cleanliness campaign during the day, stations were made clean and passengers were educated about single use plastic. The passengers were asked to discourage the use of plastic by using plastic bottle crusher machines installed at stations so that drains or water outlets are not



Campaign under ‘Clean Station Day’ being launched at the Banaras station in Varanasi on Tuesday

clogged with discarded plastic bottles. All efforts have also been made to ensure that platforms at important stations should remain garbage-free. During the day the working of solar power plants/panels and solar energy equipment located at the stations was checked and adequate arrangement of dustbins was ensured at the stations. Besides, the railway users were made aware about different dustbins available at the stations for separate collection of waste apart for making extensive cleaning of drains and toilets of the stations. At the Banaras railway station, Senior Divisional Mechanical

Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar and team of chief health inspectors (CHIs) made the passengers aware by giving them more information about the use of dustbin. About 50 dustbins were distributed free of cost at Banaras station to spread awareness among passengers. Extensive cleaning of bottle crusher machines, drainage, toilets and drains was done at Varanasi City railway station. At Ghazipur City station, through the cartoon Motu Patlu, people were told about putting garbage in the dustbins and using different dustbins for dry and wet garbage. A plant distribution

programme was organised at Mau railway station and the passengers were made aware of cleanliness. At Ballia station, ‘shramdaan’ was done by the station superintendent and other senior officers while at Deoria station, cotton bags were distributed to the passengers. Station Superintendent Sanjay Kumar and others participated. A plantation programme was organised at Azamgarh station and thorough cleaning of the railway station’s offices and drains was done. At Mau and Belthara Road railway stations, the passengers were made aware through pamphlets to maintain cleanliness. At Indara station DMO/Mau administered the oath of Swachhta Pakhwada and conducted a cleanliness awareness campaign by making the passengers aware on a wide scale. At Mairwa railway station, a cleanliness campaign was conducted by Senior DMO Siwan and the passengers were made aware about cleanliness. Extensive cleanliness drives were also done at Bhatpar Rani, Siwan and Chhapra railway stations.

IPEV drive of IAF begins

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

As part of Air Force Day 2023 celebrations here the 11th edition of Induction Publicity Exhibition Vehicle (IPEV) drive of IAF began on Wednesday. The drive will cover five premier educational institutes in Prayagraj and will be held till September 25. The IPEV road drive is an excellent opportunity for the youth here to interact one on one with the IAF team and know about various exciting career options available in IAF. The vehicle contains a flying simulator, touch screen kiosks, virtual reality equipment, miniature aircraft model, LED displays etc are laid down to give a glimpse of the IAF to the youth. The road drive here is a part of series of events marked to celebrate the 91st anniversary of IAF. On the occasion of its anniversary, the IAF has also planned an enthralling air display over Sangam Area, OD Fort which can also be witnessed from Saraswati Ghat, Arail Ghat, Shastri Bridge and Jhushi Area. It is open for

viewing of the public on October 6 and October 8 from 2:30 pm onwards.

LIGHT AND SOUND SHOW: Pilgrims and tourists visiting Sangam on any day of the entire year will get to enjoy an open-air light and sound show on the sandy banks of the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna after sunset. In a bid to provide a fillip to tourism in Prayagraj, efforts have begun to start a unique light/laser and sound shows showcasing mega religious fairs of Kumbh and Mahakumbh organised here besides highlighting the importance of Prayag itself that for centuries has remained a must-visit site of pilgrimage for millions of Hindus. The Prayagraj Mela Authority and the Tourism department will jointly ensure starting of this proposed new attraction all throughout the year. For this the Tourism department has been instructed to prepare an action plan. Officials said for this proposed spectacle all weather-proof equipment including high-end LED screens will be used so that

even during rainy season they remain safe and functional. “This will also ensure that equipment will not suffer any damage due to rain and will not need to be removed during the monsoon unless the site of installation itself gets inundated,” said one of the official. The light and sound show here is a part of efforts to ensure that tourists coming to Sangam city spend some time here too and not move on to other cities like Varanasi or Lucknow after a brief stopover here. Night markets are being set up at different places in the city beside the riverfront like roads and proper parking as well as toilet facilities near Sangam too are part of this very effort. To ensure that the light and sound show remains interesting, the present three themes of ‘Kumbh/Maha kumbh’, ‘Prayag’ and ‘Magh’ will be expanded further once the crowd starts arriving and staying put for the show, the officials explained. Presently, the laser light and sound show are only held during special occasions and the same was dis-

played in the 2019 Kumbh. **RAM LILA:** The authorities of Kaushambi’s Dhanagar Ram Lila are busy these days selecting kids below 13 years who will be portraying the main characters of Ramayan in 13 different localities of Kadhha Dham area of the district. Interestingly, this is the only Ram Lila, which is being organised only during daytime at different localities. It is set to commence from October 15 and continue till October 27. While children will portray characters of Lord Ram, Goddess Sita characters of Hanuman, Jamvanti, Sugreev and Angad are played by adults. Another attraction of the Ram Lila will be the historical ‘Kuppi Yuddh’ between the armies of Lord Ram and demon king Ravana and the event will be organised on October 24 and 25. Interestingly, visitors from across the country will be arriving to see famous ‘Kuppi Yuddh’, which is being played on 10th (Dashmi) and 11th day (Ekadashi) of Ram Lila. The fight is arranged at a special ground.

Training of farmers held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A farmer ‘goshthi’ (seminar)/ training programme and farmer field visit was organised by the Department of Agronomy, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Chakhaniya village of Chandauli district on Tuesday. This programme was mainly focused for improving productivity/livelihood of farmers of the weaker section of the society (Scheduled Caste). In this programme, Dr UP Singh, Senior Professor and Head, Department of Agronomy explained about management practices of direct seeded rice (DSR) and conservation agriculture and its significance in lowering cost, enhancing income, climate mitigation and safer environment. He also advocated that by adopting DSR and conserva-

tion agriculture based practices, farmers can reduce 20-25 per cent (pc) cost and increase in 10-15 pc as well as conserving/enhancing the quality of the natural resource base. Prof Singh also focused on adopting a permanent No-till system (Zero Tillage) DSR-ZT Wheat-ZT Mungbean along with 40-50 pc residue retention of all the crops in view of improving resource use efficiency, soil health and biodiversity conservation.

A team of scientists led by Dr P Muthuraman, Head, TTT from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Indian Rice Research Institute Hyderabad, along with Dr P Jayakumar, Dr Brajendra, Shitanshu Kumar and Sudha Nair also participated and shared their experiences. Dr Brajendra from ICAR-IIRR Hyderabad, demonstrated the soil testing kit and trained

farmers to test the soil. Under this programme, sprayers, fertilisers and soil testing kits were distributed to the SC farmers. Farmers shared their positive response towards direct seeded rice and zero tillage wheat in terms of cost saving and higher productivity. Dr Nikhil Kumar Singh, Assistant Professor, research scholar Kajal Verma, Sitesh Jha and Santosh Kumar, Data Collector also participated in this programme and expressed their views. The scientists’ team along with farmers visited the fields and were happy to see the performance of demonstrations conducted by the BHU team. Progressive farmers Awanish Kumar, Pradeep Kumar, Prem Shankar Singh, Shashikant Rai, Ratan Singh with 100 farmers of Kandawa, Amara, Chakhaniya, Sikatha and Daina villages participated in this programme.

Blood donation camp organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A blood donation camp was organised at Central Hospital, North Central Railway (NCR) here on Tuesday in coordination with Allahabad Medical Association Blood Bank, Prayagraj. Principal Chief Medical Director (PCMD), NCR/ Prayagraj Dr JP Rawat inaugurated the function. PCMD Rawat emphasised the importance of blood donation stating that one donor benefits four needy patients. The PRBC used for anaemia patients, whole blood in case of blood loss due to trauma etc, platelet concentration in case of thrombocytopenia and FFPs for patients with clotting factor requirements. He stated the donor after donating blood feels mentally and psychologically satisfied. MD Central Hospital Dr Sanjeev Kumar Handoo, ACDS Dr Manjulata Handoo and



ACHD Dr Gautam Sen were among the first three doctor donors to donate blood. It was a unique opportunity for the donors to donate blood to save a life. In this camp total 49 donors donated blood. One of the donors said, “It gives us immense contentment to be able to contribute towards our community by way of donating blood for the needy patients”. After donating the blood, the donors were given refreshment

and an appreciation certificate by MD Central Hospital, Dr SK Handoo. Dr Usha SP Yadav ACHD/Microbiology, David Navin Tewari, Jitendra Verma, Ratan Mishra, Vasudeo Pandey and the team of Central Hospital put in lot of efforts for making this camp a success. This camp helped railway employees in getting awareness about their social responsibilities and showed enthusiastic participation for the same. “Someone

lives when someone donates. Sympathy alone cannot save people in chronic conditions, but blood can. A unit of blood donated is a life saved, and this was the stronghold that guided our employees into an impressive turnout for the cause,” said Dr Usha SP Yadav ACHD/ Microbiology, Vasudeo Pandey along with other volunteers contributed immensely in this blood donation camp. In the functions ACMS/ NCR, Dr Reena Agarwal, Sr DMO Dr SS Nayak and all doctors and staff of the Central Hospital were present.

TALK SESSION: The Allahabad Management Association organised a talk session on ‘How to organise life through spiritual journey’ at AMA office, MG Marg, Civil Lines here. The speaker was Prof Satya Narayan, a renowned teacher of Cancer Biology at Florida University,

He is also a spiritual speaker and has researched on multiple aspects of Bhagwat Geeta. Prof Narayan deliberated on how to organise life through spiritual journey by devoting some time to the Almighty by using the mind and using physical part of the body for family and materialistic needs. He cited many examples and stories from the religious scriptures wherein the rishis and saints attained salvation and even normal citizens were alleviated of their problems by leaving things to God. He also touched the karma path and the karmic theory. He talked about the paths adopted by Yudhishthir, Vidur and Valmiki. V Bajpai introduced the speaker and Ravi Prakash president AMA presented a memento. The programme was conducted by secretary Dr Navaneet Singh and PRO Dr Shanti Chaudhri proposed the vote of thanks.

Research work on vegetable crops reviewed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A meeting was organised to review the research work being done on vegetable crops under Consortia Research Project (CRP) on Agro-Biodiversity, funded by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICHR), New Delhi and National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources at ICAR-Indian Vegetable Research Institute (IIVR) here on Tuesday. This project is being conducted by six research institutes of the country including Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Indian Vegetable



Progress of agrobiodiversity project being reviewed at IIVR in Varanasi on Tuesday.

Research Institute (IVRI), Varanasi, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, Indian Horticultural Research Institute (IHEI), Bengaluru, and

National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), Thiruvir. The review programme was chaired by Dr Gyanendra Pratap Singh, Director, NBPGR, New Delhi

and co-chaired by Dr TK Behera, Director, IVRI, Varanasi. Project coordinators from six institutions presented the work done and progress. In this project special research is being done on the biodiversity and disease resistance of brinjal, cucumber and ladyfinger. This programme was conducted by Dr Shailesh Tiwari, senior scientist of the institute. Dr Sushil Pandey, Dr Chitra Devi, and Dr Pragma from National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi participated. Head of the Department of Crop Improvement Division, Dr Nagendra Roy, Dr PM Singh, etc were present in this programme.

30-year-old man run over by train

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

A man was run over by a train in an area under Padari police station on Tuesday. The Padari police received information that a body was lying on the railway track near Kathinayi village. Acting on the information the police reached the spot, recovered the body and made efforts to identify the deceased. With the help of the locals the deceased was identified as Veerendra Kumar (30), a resident of Hinauti Shivagrh under Padari police station. The police informed the family members and completed the legal formalities. The deceased worked as a mason and is sur-

vived by his wife and two daughters.

INAUGURATED: New buildings of anganwadi centre Medhara and Pajara under were inaugurated by Lalganj BDO Sanjay Srivastava on Tuesday amidst the chanting of the Vedic shlokas along with rituals. The BDO appealed to the staff of the centres to work with the dedication for the bright future of kids in the larger interest of the nation. He said that the government had provided all the facilities for fight against malnutrition. The inaugural function of the buildings concluded with the ‘godh bharai’ and ‘annaprashana’ under which health kits were provided to pregnant women

and kids.

REVENUE COLLECTION REVIEWED: District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjani ordered to withhold the salary of 10 officers for not achieving the target of revenue collection. She took such while reviewing the revenue collection through taxes and non-taxes at Collectorate on Tuesday. The officers whose salary has been withheld include assistant commissioner stamp and registration, district excise officer ARTO, EE electric distribution division-I and others.

AWARENESS CAMP: Under the plan of action of National Legal Services Authority (NLSA), an awareness camp was organised by

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) at district jail on Tuesday. In his inaugural address the ADJ and secretary DLSA Lal Babu Yadav said that plea bargaining law has been started in the country under which the undertrial prisoners could get relief. He said that under Section 436-A of the CrPc the provision was only for those cases under which the punishment was less than seven years. He appealed to the interested prisoners to avail the facility. The awareness camp was attended by Superintendent of jail incharge Arun Kumar Mishra, deputy jailer Smita Bhatia, Ashwini Upadhyay, Deepak Srivastava and others.

FIRST COLUMN

WHAT IS ‘SUKHA’ AND HOW TO ATTAIN IT?

Seek ‘sukha,’ the real one, while enjoying ‘sukha’ of the mundane type



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

The word sukha has been used extensively in the Bhagavad-Geeta but in different contexts. This word essentially means: what pleases. The English words for sukha are happiness and pleasure. Lord Krishna has spoken about sukha to describe what pleases in three different ways. The first one is what is according to dharma and its only source is God. Let us call this sukha for this article. The second one is: what is according to dharma but brings good and bad results depending upon how it was obtained. This has been called ‘vihara’ in the Geeta. There is just one verse where this word has been used. The third kind is against dharma and brings only misery as a result. The word for this sukha is ‘kama’. I will use this word for this article. There are many verses in the Geeta in this connection.

Beginning with the real sukha, I will refer to some of the verses in their order as described in the Geeta. The first one is: “In a state of having real spiritual intelligence, one transcends the feeling of material suffering.” (2.65) A classical example is that of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who carried on his spiritual activities even with throat cancer. Personally speaking, I have accepted some pains, which are inevitable due to my advanced age. They don’t bother me much and I go on with my life. The next verse clarifies where only real sukha can be obtained: “One must be linked with God, and one must have faith in God.” Then, one will be peaceful, which is essential to be sushi.” (2.66) It is quite logical, isn’t it? Peace can only come from God because we, grown-ups, can feel secure only if we have taken shelter from God. How does a small child go to sleep peacefully in the lap of his mother?



The third verse is about control over kama and anger. “Unless that is accomplished, where is any scope for sukha?” This is only possible to accomplish if we are enjoying the shelter of God. (5.23) We can either be in control of kama or of God. For example, if I am indulging in sexual thoughts, I have effectively taken their shelter. The fourth verse chosen is very encouraging. It states, “God accompanies the conqueror of self, who is blissfully peaceful.” (6.7) This means that such a person has fully surrendered to God, and God obliges by being with him or her. The fifth verse chosen tells us about unlimited bliss experienced through intelligence. (6.21) An advanced devotee realizes that God is responding to him; He is even using him as His ‘nimitta’ (instrument) to get important acts done. His sukha knows no bounds.

Now the second level of sukha is called vihar in the Geeta. Lord Krishna states, “One whose eating and recreation (vihara) are appropriate; one who strives appropriately in activities; one who sleeps and stays awake, as required suffers less.” Because: “Contact between senses and their objects are givers of cold, heat, pleasure (sukha) and misery (duhkha). They, being temporary, come and go; tolerate them.” (2.14) If one acts in goodness, it will be like poison in the beginning but in result will be like nectar, which is the result of spiritual knowledge. (18.37)

Now to the last type of sukha, which has been described as kama. Lord Krishna has given sufficient warnings about indulging in this kind of sukha. In verse # 16.21, the Lord warns sternly, “Kama is a door to hell; causes ruination of soul; should be given up.” How? “Kill this difficult to conquer enemy in the form of kama.” (3.43). So what is sensible to do? Seek sukha, the real one by linking with God earnestly. Meanwhile, sukha of the vihar type can also be enjoyed. But one must remember that it must be yukta (proper) at all times, otherwise, misery will be invited. A classic example is that of cricket fans. Not only do they spend a lot of money and time watching matches in person but suffer great disappointment when their team loses.

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

Skills gap hinders future employability



DINESH SOOD

It is crucial to bridge the skills gap by providing training in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning



The rapidly changing nature of jobs and skills requirements across the world is creating a skills gap that hinders employment opportunities. Business leaders need to quickly identify this gap and prepare their workforce for the future by providing clear direction to employees on how to build the skills they need to succeed. In the Asia-Pacific region, approximately 86 million workers need to acquire advanced digital skills through upskilling or reskilling to keep up with the fast pace of technological changes.

The UNDP’s Human Development Index ranks India at 132 out of 191 countries. This is a critical concern, as companies face a shortage of skilled workers while millions of educated individuals remain unemployed. To address this problem, India has been working to transform into a skill-based economy over the past decade. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the National Skill Development Corporation have been established to bring skill development to the forefront. The Skill India Mission, which began in July 2015, aims to address the shortage of skilled workers in the country. However, there is still a huge mismatch between the number of candidates trained, certified, and finally placed, with the International Labour Organization predicting a shortage of around 29 million skilled personnel in India by 2030.

Employees across various industries are facing pressure to upskill and reskill, but many find it challenging to take time out for learning due to long work hours. A lack of support systems that prioritize worker well-being can hinder motivation for upskilling and reskilling. Organizations can create new financial incentives through skills-based compensation to encourage employees to self-learn new skills.

A skilled workforce is critical for higher growth, but only 45% of trained



INDIA CURRENTLY LACKS AN EFFECTIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM THAT IS BOTH ASPIRATIONAL AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and a Network Member of India International Skill Centres, (an initiative of Gol)

individuals in India are employable, with only 4.69% of the workforce having vocational training. This indicates a significant skill gap in the country, which can be attributed to a lack of training infrastructure and limited private-sector participation. The lack of a monitoring body for these training institutes is also a contributing factor.

India’s demographic advantage will become a challenge if the young population is not skillfully upskilled, reskilled, and skilled. By 2025, an estimated 70% of India’s population will be of working age, and without proper employment opportunities, unemployment will remain a significant challenge. The National Education Policy (2020) needs to make sincere efforts in skill development from the school level. There is a need to create a sound National Vocational Education and Training System that provides every child with an option to go for vocational education and training after 10 years of schooling. Most developed countries have a well-defined national vocational education and training system that facilitates job readiness among youth and encourages skill-empowered entrepreneurship.

Inadequacies in skills are directly linked to the kind of education that is being imparted right from the school level and the ecosystem we put in place to equip every job seeker with market-driven skills. If someone wishes to be a carpenter, plumber or electrician, he or she needs to have undergone at least a globally certified course for which we need to have a skill training centre in every high school where job seek-

ers should be trained in the fields of their interest during non-school hours. Similarly, education providers must support students with knowledge and skills relevant to the world of work to make them productive and able to be employed. All skill courses at school levels must be synchronised with employment for a wholesome integration between skill providers and industries will be of paramount importance.

Today, education is not confined to what is taught in schools and colleges, but the scope of learning has become wider, owing to the evolving market and technological advancement. To secure a career in the competitive and evolving job market, upskilling and remaining industry-relevant are crucial for youths. Acquiring market-driven skills will offer great placement opportunities to the youths and help them build promising careers.

India currently lacks an effective vocational education and training system that is both aspirational and accessible to all young people. To address this issue and achieve the national goal of making India the skills capital of the world, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship should establish a National Skills University (NSU), as proposed in the National Skills Universities Bill 2015. This university would offer industry-relevant curricula and skill-based certificates, diplomas, and degree programs to enhance employability.

In addition to the NSU, state governments can establish Multi-skills Development Centres (MSDC) in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. These

centres can identify skill gaps in major industrial clusters and provide cluster-specific Skill Development Centres to upgrade the skills of existing workers. Advanced Skill Development Centres can also be set up to provide the latest know-how and courses to meet the high-end skill requirements of the industry. The World Bank has approved the \$250 million Skill India Mission Operation (SIMO) to improve the marketability of short-term skill development courses of 3-12 months.

To keep pace with the rapidly evolving technological landscape, it is essential to conduct global skill gap mapping and shift recruitment from “degree-based” to “skill-based”. According to a report by The World Economic Forum, 150 million new technology jobs will be created globally over the next five years, with 77% of all jobs requiring digital skills by 2030. Currently, only 33% of technology jobs worldwide are being filled by skilled workers, which could hinder technological advancements on a global scale.

Therefore, it is crucial to bridge the skills gap by providing training in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), blockchain, robotics, IoT, 3D printing, drones, and data analytics. A skilled workforce capable of understanding, implementing, and driving innovation is essential to the success of these technologies and the industries that rely on them. By focusing on vocational education and the latest skills training, India can create a workforce equipped to meet future demands.

Challenges to attain net zero emissions

A multipronged mitigation strategy is necessary but many techniques such as carbon dioxide removal must be approached with caution

The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived,” the UN chief recently remarked. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted in its recent report that projections based upon stated policy commitments fall short of containing the global warming levels at 1.5°C or even 2°C. So, when emissions mitigation is not happening at the pace desired and extreme climate events indicate an earlier-than-expected tipping point, carbon capture may offer a pathway to the solution.

Challenges to Net Zero

The developmental imperatives demanding equity and justice, sub-optimal



ISHOO RATAN SRIVASTAVA

(The writer is Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer, North Western Railway and UK Commonwealth Scholar; views are personal)

technology readiness levels and challenges related to lifestyle adaptations make the net zero road, a difficult terrain to tread on. Food, energy, transport and materials like cement & steel contribute significantly to emissions but are such fundamental necessities that they cannot be wished away overnight from our lives. Take the case of food, the global population has increased nearly eightfold since the early 19th century. Quite obviously, it is the fertiliser-intensive farming without which it is estimated that half of the world’s population cannot be fed. These fertilisers are synthesised using fossil fuels which contribute to emissions.

Regarding electricity, renewable sources come with

intrinsic uncertainties and only reliable storage solutions can fully replace fossil fuels. This necessitates mining significant amounts of lithium which has its commercialised mining predominantly concentrated in the South American lithium triangle and notably it has a high water footprint. Additionally, mining cobalt, a key element in Li-ion batteries, is associated with ethical issues concerning child labour. Pumped hydro, an alternative to battery storage, also has environmental concerns.

The Concept of Carbon Dioxide Removal

Carbon dioxide removal involves capturing CO₂ at various sources of generation



or directly from the atmosphere and securely storing it to prevent escape. Natural systems such as forests, rocks, and oceans act as carbon sinks, absorbing and sequestering carbon. However, a warmer climate diminishes the capacity of these systems to absorb CO₂. To augment the capacities of these natural systems, conservation efforts and engineered techniques for enhanced absorp-

tion are necessary.

These include afforestation, increased rock weathering which enables rocks to absorb more CO₂, and enhanced ocean fertilisation which is a geoengineering technique that may result in higher organic growth in ocean systems thus implying higher carbon absorption and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), which introduces circularity in the emissions balance sheet. Technology-based solutions involve capturing CO₂ emissions during production processes or electricity generation using fossil fuels predominantly using chemicals called amines which can absorb and release CO₂ upon temperature regulation. The captured CO₂ is

stored in deep geological formations, preventing its release. The pumping of CO₂ in the oil reservoirs for enhanced oil recovery is an established practice in the oil and gas industry. Another technology namely Direct Air Capture, involving CO₂ capture from air surrounding us instead of a concentrated point source is also gaining traction however it has cost concerns.

The Pros and Cons

The fact that certain techniques are already practised in the industry, builds a certain amount of confidence towards the feasibility of the proposition. However, there is scepticism over its large-scale adoption, particularly in terms of potential interfer-

ence with oceans and other natural systems. Additionally, increased afforestation and adoption of BECCS may have adverse impacts on our food supplies as well. The possibilities of CO₂ leakage from geological formations too cannot be ignored. Also, it is argued that excessive reliance on carbon removal pathways may lead to complacency in emissions mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The world needs to act swiftly on climate change and undoubtedly, a multipronged mitigation strategy is necessary. However, considering the uncertainties associated with carbon removal, its deployment should be approached with caution and a gradual scaling up as we learn more about it.

Five Eye allies divided over Trudeau's India allegations

PIONEER NEW SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A day after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged India's involvement in the killing of a prominent Sikh separatist leader, the Canadian media reported that Ottawa's Five Eye allies were not keen on taking sides though they have said that the claims should be thoroughly probed.

Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and one of India's most-wanted terrorists who carried a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh on his head, was shot dead by two unidentified gunmen outside a gurdwara in Surrey in the western Canadian province of British Columbia on June 18.

Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau told the House of Commons on Monday that he waited until he was able to raise the issue with allies and with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi earlier this month before telling the public about the possible link.

India has dismissed Trudeau's allegation as "absurd and baseless."

"We wanted to make sure that we had a solid grounding in understanding what was going on in analysis and indeed in facts. We wanted to make sure we were taking the time to talk with our allies, to share what we knew," the Canadian Press news agency quoted Trudeau on Tuesday.

Canada is part of a 'Five Eyes' network which is an intelligence alliance consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Trudeau has also said he does not want to make things



worse for relations with India. "We are not looking to provoke or escalate. We are simply laying out the facts as we understand them, and we want to work with the government of India to lay everything clear."

According to a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's other Five Eyes allies "showed little inclination Tuesday to wade into an escalating row between Ottawa and New Delhi over allegations."

Most opted to treat the allegation as a matter still to be investigated — in spite of the fact that the Trudeau government feels it has enough information to make an accusation in Parliament and expel a diplomat, it noted.

The United States, United Kingdom and Australia have all issued statements calling for the allegations to be thoroughly probed. Terming the US National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson Adm John Kirby as "perhaps the most supportive of Canada," the CBC report said that Kirby "urged India to participate and cooperate in that investi-

gation" as "it is important to find out exactly what happened."

Kirby, who is also the NSC coordinator for Strategic Communications, said in an interview with CNN: "I'm going to protect diplomatic conversations and I'll leave it at that. Certainly, the President (Trudeau) is mindful of these serious allegations, and they are very serious. And we support Canada's efforts to investigate this."

"We believe a fully transparent comprehensive investigation is the right approach so that we can all know exactly what happened and of course, we encourage India to cooperate with that," Kirby said.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese refused to comment on the matter at all even as Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong told a press conference in the UN Headquarters on Tuesday that "these are concerning reports, and I note that investigations are still underway" and that "We are monitoring these developments closely with our partners, and we'll continue to

do so."

Another of the allies, UK made no official announcement but its Foreign Secretary James Cleverly put out a tweet on platform X without any mention of India, the CBC report said.

"All countries should respect sovereignty and the rule of law. We are in regular contact with our Canadian partners about serious allegations raised in the Canadian Parliament. Important that Canada's investigation runs its course and the perpetrators brought to justice," read Cleverly's tweet.

On September 18, Trudeau alleged in the Parliament that Canada's national security apparatus has reason to believe that "agents of the Indian government" had carried out the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil.

Meanwhile, within Canada, Liberal Party members also say they hope to maintain normal ties with a country Ottawa has selected as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific, The Canadian Press reported.

Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre said Trudeau must share more information about what led him to make the statement in Parliament. He said the prime minister did not share more details with him than what he had said in the House of Commons.

"We need to see more facts. The prime minister hasn't provided any facts," he told reporters on Tuesday. New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh has written to the newly appointed head of the public inquiry on foreign interference, asking Justice Marie-Josée Hogue to include India in her probe. The Liberals have suggested her terms are wide enough to include any country as well as the Nijjar case.

"In my experience, as a Sikh-Canadian, there have always been suspicions that India was interfering in the democratic rights of Canadians," Singh wrote in the letter.



Canada PM's remark on Nijjar 'concerning', say British Sikh MPs

PTI ■ LONDON

British Sikh members of Parliament Preet Kaur Gill and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi have reacted to "concerning" reports emanating from Canada, after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged Indian involvement in the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in the country.

The Opposition Labour MPs, who represent heavily Sikh constituencies in England, took to social media on Tuesday to claim they had been contacted by their constituents about allegations by Trudeau in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force.

They said they are raising their concerns directly with the government ministers.

"PM Trudeau's statement on Hardeep Singh Nijjar's murder is deeply concerning," tweeted Gill, who is the MP for Birmingham Edgbaston in the West Midlands region of England.

"It is important that Canada's investigation runs its course, and those responsible see justice. I want to reassure my constituents that I and my colleagues are raising our concerns with ministers," she said.

Dhesi, MP for Slough in south-east England, also tweeted to claim many British Sikhs have been in contact with him over the issue.

"Concerning reports coming from Canada. Many Sikhs from Slough and beyond have contacted me; anxious, angry or fearful. Given that Canadian PM Trudeau stated they've been working with

close allies, we're in touch with the UK government to ensure justice is delivered," he said.

It follows Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's statement in the country's Parliament on Monday that the authorities are "actively pursuing credible allegations" related to Indian government involvement in the murder of Nijjar, a designated terrorist, in British Columbia in June. In an emergency statement to the House of Commons in Ottawa, Trudeau said that any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen was "an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty".

India has strongly rejected Trudeau's claims as "absurd and motivated" and dismissed a senior Canadian diplomat in a reciprocal move.

"Such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The inaction of the Canadian government on this matter has been a long-standing and continuing concern," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. Soon after, a UK government spokesperson said Britain is in close touch with the Canada over the "serious allegations" but declined to comment further.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesperson told reporters later that "work on the trade negotiations will continue as before" and that the UK was "not looking to conflate these issues".

SC refers 'immunity to MPs in bribery' matter to 7-judge Constitution bench

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday referred to a seven-judge Constitution Bench the question of whether the legal immunity enjoyed by legislators under Articles 105(2) and 194(2) of the Constitution protects them from prosecution for taking a bribe. Article 105(2) confers on MPs immunity from prosecution in respect of anything said or any vote given by them in parliament or any parliamentary committee. Article 194(2) grants similar protection to MLAs.

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in JMM bribery case involving former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao had held that Article 105(2) even protects MPs from facing bribery charges. A 3:2 majority reasoned that 105(2) applies not only to voting but anything connected to voting including taking bribes that influenced the voting. A larger bench will now be constituted to reconsider this judgment.

A Bench of Chief Justice of



India DY Chandrachud and Justices AS Bopanna, MM Sundresh, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra noted that MPs and MLAs must be free to express their views on the floor of the house without fear of consequences, but are not necessarily immune to criminal action. "While Article 19(1)(a) recognises individual right to free speech, the object of Articles 105(2) and 194(2) does not prima facie look to render immunity from launch of penal proceedings for violation of criminal law which may arise independently from the exercise of rights and duties as a member of Parliament...purpose of 105(2) and 194(2) is...not to make them separate with higher privileges than the common man

who has remedies before the criminal law," the Bench said.

The five-judge Constitution Bench was hearing a case dealing with the question of whether the legal immunity given to MPs and MLAs protects them from prosecution for taking a bribe even if the amount was not used as per the demand of the bribe-giver. The issue arose in a plea filed by Sita Soren, sister-in-law of current Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who was accused of taking a bribe to vote for a particular candidate in the 2012 Rajya Sabha Elections.

A complaint was filed in 2012 with the Chief Election Commissioner of India seeking CBI probe into the case. Soren was charged with the offences of criminal conspiracy and bribery under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and for criminal misconduct by a public servant under the Prevention of Corruption Act. In 2014, while hearing her plea seeking quashing of the case, the Jharkhand High Court noted that Soren had not cast her vote for the person who had offered her the bribe.

Sajjan acquitted in anti-Sikh riot murder case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Delhi's Rouse Avenue trial court on Wednesday acquitted former Lok Sabha MP and Congress leader Sajjan Kumar and all other accused in a murder case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in the Sultanpuri area. Initially, the case was filed against five accused individuals, including Kumar. However, two of the accused passed away during the trial proceedings. The former Congress leader is also accused of setting a gurdwara on fire during the riots. Kumar is already lodged in jail after Delhi High Court in 2018 convicted him in other cases related to anti-sikh riots of 1984.

The court acquitted Kumar in Sultanpuri case, giving him the "benefit of doubt". Special Judge also acquitted two other accused -- Ved Prakash Pial and Brahmanand Gupta.

Sonia backs Women's Reservation Bill, demands quota for SC, ST, OBC

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

While backing the Women's Reservation Bill, Congress parliamentary party chief Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday demanded that the quota be implemented immediately and SC, ST and OBC women also be given reservation following a caste census as she stressed that her husband Rajiv Gandhi was instrumental in bringing reservation to women in the local units.

Sonia initiated the debate on 'Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam' immediately after Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal moved the women's reservation bill for passage in the Lok Sabha, saying it is a very important bill and urging members to pass it with unanimity and consensus.

Meghwal said the government will consider whatever suggestions come up during the discussion on the bill. He asserted that if Parliament decides, the quota for women can be extended beyond 15 years.

The constitutional amendment bill 'Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam' - providing 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies - was introduced in the Lower House on Tuesday. It was also the first bill introduced in the new Parliament building.

Reading from a prepared text in Hindi on the bill from the opposition's side, Sonia said

that any delay in bringing the reservation into effect would be "gross injustice" to Indian women.

"Rajiv Gandhi's dream is only half fulfilled. It will be fulfilled with the passage of this bill. The Congress supports this bill. We will be happy with the passage of this bill but we also have a concern. I want to ask a question, for the last 13 years Indian women are waiting for their political responsibilities, and now they are being asked to wait for a few more years -- two years, four years, six years, eight years," the former Congress chief said. Is such behaviour with Indian women appropriate?," she asked.

"It is the demand of the Indian National Congress that the bill be immediately implemented... But along with that, provision should be made for the reservation of SC, ST, OBC women after conducting a caste census," she said.

The government, the Congress leader told the House, should take the required steps for this.

"This is the most appropriate moment to acknowledge and thank women for their contribution," she said.

"On behalf of the Indian National Congress, I demand from the government that the Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 be implemented as soon as possible while clearing all roadblocks in its way. Doing this is not only necessary but also possible," Sonia said.

NIA releases list of wanted gangsters having links with Khalistanis in Canada

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has issued a list of wanted gangsters who have been accused in the terror-gangster nexus case, including those linked to Khalistan propagandists based in Canada, registered by the agency in August last year.

The NIA also released posters of five such accused with reward ranging from Rs 5 lakh to 10 lakh on each of these suspects. Those named in the posters are known Khalistan supporters Lakhbir Singh alias Landa and Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, both with a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh each for inputs leading to their arrest, and the trio of Satnam Singh alias Satbir Singh alias Satta Naushera, Yadvinder Singh alias Yadda and Parminder Singh Khaira alias Pattu with carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on their head for information leading to their arrest.

Those in the list of 43 named by NIA include dreaded gangsters/criminals Goldy Brar and Arshdeep Singh Gill are known for supporting pro-Khalistan terrorists.

Taking to social media platform X, the NIA released the pictures of 43 accused gang leaders and criminals in the case numbers RC-38/2022/NIA/DLI and RC-39/2022/NIA/DLI registered in August last year.

These accused persons have been involved in killings, extortion, and running and promoting crime syndicates. The NIA had alleged that the accused persons were allegedly involved in conspiring to carry out terror attacks in Delhi and were obtaining funds for the same through smuggling of weapons.

In its post, the NIA included pictures of Lawrence Bishnoi, Jasdeep Singh, Kala Jatheri alias Sandeep, Virender Pratap alias Kala Rana, and Joginder Singh, as well as their full names.

The NIA emphasized that many of these gangsters are based in Canada.

The NIA also asked for information on the properties/assets/businesses they owned in their own names or in the names of associates, acquaintances, and relatives. It has also requested details regarding their business partners, workers, employees, and collection agents.

"Persons shown in the photos below are accused in the NIA Cases RC-38/2022/NIA/DLI or RC-39/2022/NIA/DLI. If you have any information about properties/assets/ business owned by them in their name or in the name of their associates,



friends & relatives, please WhatsApp DM @ +91 7290009373," the NIA posted on X.

Those named in the list of 43 are Lawrence Bishnoi, Jasdeep Singh, Kala Jatheri alias Sandeep, Virender Pratap alias Kala Rana, Joginder Singh, Rajesh Kumar alias Raju Mota, Raj Kumar alias Raju Basodi, Anil Chhipi, Mohammad Shahbaz, Goldy Brar Ansari, Sachin Thapan Bishnoi, Anmol Bishnoi, Vikramjit Singh alias Vikram Brar, Darman Singh alias Darmaniot Kahlon, Arshdeep Singh Gill, Surender Singh alias Chiku, Dalip Kumar alias Bhola, Parveen Wadhwa alias Prince, Yudhveer Singh, Vikas Singh, Lakhbir Singh alias Landa, Gaurav Patyal alias Saurav Thakur, Sukhpreet Singh alias Budda, Amit Daggar, Kaushal Choudhary, Asif Khan, Naveen Dabas alias Naveen Bali, Chhotu Ram alias Bhat, Jagseer Singh alias Jagga, Sunil Balvan alias Tilla Tajpuria, Bhupinder Singh alias Bhupi Rana, Sandeep alias Bandar, Sukhdool Singh, Gurminder Singh, Neerai alias Pandit, Daler Singh, Dinesh, Sharma, Manprit Singh Peeta, Hariom Singh Titu, Harpreet, Lakhveer Singh, Irfan alias Chhenhu Pehalwan and Sunny Dagar

The NIA's move comes after hostilities between India and Canada have escalated after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on September 18 accused India of killing the Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil.

Without buttressing his claims with any evidence, Trudeau claimed that Canada is pursuing "credible information" about Indian agents being involved in Nijjar's killing. Post the outlandish claims by Trudeau, Canada expelled one Indian diplomat over the issue leading to a reciprocal action by India with New Delhi also expelling a senior Canadian diplomat posted in their mission here.

India rejected Trudeau's charge saying allegation of India's involvement in Nijjar's killing is 'absurd and motivated'.

Shah dispels fears of delay in women's quota implementation



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Brushing aside apprehensions of a delay in the bill's implementation, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday asserted that the next government will conduct the census and the delimitation exercise immediately after the elections and set in motion the process to make reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies a reality.

Shah appealed to the opposition for the unanimous passage of the women's reservation bill and said shortcomings, if any, can be rectified at a later date.

Intervening in the debate on the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill, the home minister indicated that women's reservation will become a reality after 2029.

He said the passage of the women's reservation bill will mark the start of a new era, and recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had presented the vision of women-led development at the recent G20 Summit.

The Modi government has been pushing for empowerment of women since the day it assumed office, he said.

Women's security, respect and equal participation have been life force of the government, he said.

Shah said this was the fifth attempt to push a bill for women's reservation.

"Why did it fail to clear hurdles earlier? First it was brought by H D Deve Gowda government in 1996. It lapsed. Second time, it was brought by the government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In 2008, a bill was brought by UPA. It also lapsed after the dissolution of the then Lok Sabha.

"Women have been disappointed by this Parliament on four occasions. This time I request that it be passed with unanimity. Shortcomings, if any, can be set right at a later date," the home minister said.

The constitutional amendment bill, which provides for 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, was passed in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

Indo-Pacific nations' Army chiefs to meet on Sept 26-27

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Given the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific and China flexing its muscles in the region, the Indian Army will host a two-day conference here of Army chiefs of the Indo-Pacific nations next week with an aim to evolve a common strategy to ensure peace, prosperity and stability.

Fifteen Army chiefs and delegations from 22 countries will attend the event on

September 26 and 27 and the US Army is co-hosting the conference.

The Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conclave (IPACC) will deliberate on the role of military diplomacy in mitigating various crises, ways to enhance collaboration among the armed forces of the region and boosting interoperability.

An exhibition of India's indigenously developed weapons, military systems and platforms is also being organised on the sidelines of the

event. Alongside the 13th edition of the IPACC, the Indian Army is also hosting the 47th Indo Pacific Armies Management Seminar (IPAMS) and the Senior Enlisted Leaders Forum (SELF).

Vice Chief of Army Staff Lt General M V Suchindra Kumar said here on Wednesday the event will provide a unique opportunity to build common perspectives towards a shared vision and that it will help strengthen friendships through

the formidable and indelible "soldierly bond." The IPACC, instituted as a biennial event in 1999, is attended by Army chiefs of countries of the Indo-Pacific region, to discuss issues of mutual interest.

"The current edition of this conclave is very special, as it will witness participation of full spectrum of military ranks, from Army chiefs to non-commissioned Officers from 22 nationalities, and their spouses," Lt Gen Kumar told reporters.

aircraft will be manufactured and assembled by Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) in India as part of an industrial partnership between the two companies.

The production of components of these aircraft has already started in the Main Constituent Assembly (MCA) facility in Hyderabad. These parts will be shipped to the Final Assembly Line (FAL) in Vadodra which

IAF at a ceremony in Hindon near Delhi on September 25.

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari on September 13 received the first of the 56 C-295 transport aircraft two years after India sealed a Rs 21,935-crore deal with Airbus Defence and Space to procure the jets to replace its ageing Avro-748 fleet.

"The IAF's first C-295

MW aircraft landed in Vadodra today. The aircraft would be handed over to the IAF in a formal ceremony on 25 Sep 23 at AF Stn Hindon by the Honourable Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh," the IAF tweeted.

Under the deal, Airbus will deliver the first 16 aircraft in 'fly-away' condition from its final assembly line in Seville by 2025 and the subsequent 40

First C-295 medium tactical transport aircraft from Airbus lands in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to IAF's transport aircraft fleet, the first C-295 medium tactical transport aircraft landed in Vadodra on Wednesday, days after it was handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF) in the southern Spanish city of Seville. The aircraft will be formally inducted into the

Sensex tanks 796 pts, Nifty closes below 20K

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Wednesday due to selling in index heavyweights in tandem with weak global trends ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision.

Falling for the second day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 796 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 66,800.84. During the day, it tanked 868.7 points or 1.28 per cent to 66,728.14.

The NSE Nifty declined 231.90 points or 1.15 per cent to end below the 20,000 mark at 19,901.40.

US bond yields surging to 16-year high levels and fears of high crude oil prices fueling commodity inflation also hit the investor sentiment, according to analysts.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and caution ahead of a host of interest rate decisions from global central banks also added to the overall bearish trend. Besides the US Fed meeting, the BoE (Bank of England) and the BoJ (Bank of Japan) are also scheduled to meet this week.



Among the Sensex firms, HDFC Bank emerged as the biggest loser, falling 4 per cent. JSW Steel, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement, Maruti, Tata Steel, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel and Larsen & Toubro were the other major laggards.

Power Grid, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, Axis Bank, NTPC, ITC and Infosys were among the gainers.

"The domestic markets remained under pressure due to rising US bond yields and a

stronger greenback. Concerns reigned over upcoming FED policy, interest rate trajectory and rising oil prices.

"Bank Nifty underperformed today due to rising cost of funds and reduction in deposits leading to moderation in net yield," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge fell by 0.51 per cent and midcap index declined 0.33 per cent.

Among the indices, finan-

cial services fell by 1.39 per cent, commodities dropped 1.39 per cent, metal (1.25 per cent), realty (1.20 per cent), bankex (1.05 per cent), telecommunication (0.95 per cent) and oil & gas (0.68 per cent).

Utilities and power were the gainers. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower while Seoul settled with gains.

European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude fell 1.23 per cent to USD 93.18 a barrel even as supply concerns remain due to production cuts announced by Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,236.51 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Snapping its 11-day rally, the BSE benchmark fell 241.79 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 67,596.84 on Monday. The broader Nifty declined 59.05 points or 0.29 per cent to end at 20,133.30. Equity markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi.

GSTN enables geocoding for 'additional place of business' address

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GST Network has enabled geocoding functionality for the 'additional place of business' address of GST-registered businesses across all states and union territories.

The move is aimed at curbing fraudulent registrations under Goods and Services Tax (GST) by giving bogus addresses for the purpose of claiming Input Tax Credit (ITC).

"GSTN is pleased to inform that the geocoding functionality for the 'Additional Place of Business' address is now active across all States and Union



Territories. This builds upon the geocoding functionality earlier implemented for the principal place of business, operational since February 2023," GST Network said in an advisory to taxpayers.

To date, over 2.05 crore addresses have been geocoded for both principal and addition-

al places of business by GSTN.

Since March 2022, all new business addresses are geocoded at the point of registration, ensuring consistent accuracy and standardisation from the beginning, it added.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said the integration of geocoding func-

tionality assumes a pivotal role in detecting instances of tax evasion by furnishing tax authorities with precise geographical location data.

"Using tools such as heat maps and spatial analysis, tax authorities can uncover tax irregularities clusters, enabling enforcement agencies to allocate their resources more strategically. By harnessing the power of geocoding, tax authorities can elevate the effectiveness of their audit and enforcement endeavours, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and streamlined tax collection process," Mohan added.

Sai Silks IPO subscribed 7 per cent on first day of offer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of ethnic apparel retailer Sai Silks (Kalamandir) was subscribed 7 per cent on the first day of offer on Wednesday.

The IPO received bids for 26,16,752 shares against 3,84,86,309 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE.

The category for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) was subscribed 12 per cent and that of non-institutional investors

received 3 per cent subscription.

The public issue has a fresh issue of up to Rs 600 crore and an offer for sale of up to 2.70 crore equity shares.

The price range for the offer is Rs 210-222 a share.

At the upper end of the price band, the IPO will fetch about Rs 1,201 crore.

On Monday, Sai Silks said it has raised over Rs 360 crore from anchor investors.

The Hyderabad-based company was founded by Prasad



Chalavadi, a techie turned entrepreneur in 2005.

It has four store formats — Kalamandir, VaraMahalakshmi

Silks, Mandir, and KLM Fashion Mall.

Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, HDFC Bank and Nuvama Wealth Management are the managers to the offer.

As of July 31, 2023, the company had a network of 54 stores in four major south Indian states — Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The equity shares of the company will be listed on the BSE and NSE.



EPFO records highest net member addition of 18.75 lakh in July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body EPFO has recorded the highest net member addition of 18.75 lakh in July 2023, according to the payroll data released on Wednesday.

The labour ministry in a statement said that the addition of 18.75 lakh during the month is the highest since the first publishing of EPFO payroll data from April 2018 covering the period of September 2017 onwards.

A growing trend has continued for the last three months with an increase of around 85,932 net members over the previous month of June 2023. The data indicates that around 10.27 lakh new members have enrolled during July 2023 which is the highest since July 2022.

The majority of new members joining EPFO are in the age group of 18-25 years constituting roughly 58.45 per cent of total new members additions during the month. This shows an increasing trend in youth enrollment, who are mostly first-time job seekers joining the organized sector workforce of the country, it explained.

The payroll data demonstrates that approximately 12.72 lakh members exited but rejoined EPFO, which is the highest in the last 12 months.

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

Gender-wise analysis of payroll data shows that during July 2023 around 3.86 lakh net female members have been added to the payroll.

Around 2.75 lakh female members have come under the ambit of social security coverage for the first time.

State-wise analysis of payroll data denotes that net member addition is the highest in the five states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat and Haryana. These states constitute around 58.78 per cent of net member addition, adding a total of 11.02 lakh members during the month.

Of all the states, Maharashtra is leading by adding 20.45 per cent of net members during the month.

Individual pays ₹44.20 lakh to settle insider trading case with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An individual has settled a case pertaining to alleged violation of insider trading norms in the matter of ABC Bearings Ltd with capital markets regulator Sebi after paying Rs 44.20 lakh as settlement fee.

The order came after Sahir Patel (applicant) proposed to settle the proceedings through a settlement order.

"The instant proceedings initiated against the applicant vide showcause notice (SCN) dated September 20, 2022, are disposed of," Sebi's Adjudicating Officer Amit Kapoor said in the settlement order on Monday.

The case relates to ABC Bearings Ltd (ABC), which made a corporate announcement on the BSE in July 2017,



relating to the merger of ABC with Timken India Ltd (TIL) through a scheme of amalgamation and arrangement.

Further, it was observed that the price of the scrip of ABC registered an increase of 19.99 per cent in one trading day.

Thereafter, Sebi conducted

a detailed investigation in the matter to ascertain whether trading was done in the shares of ABC by certain suspected entities on the basis of unpublished price sensitive information relating to merger of ABC with TIL.

The investigation period was January 2017 to July 2017.

After the investigation, it was alleged that Sahir Patel had violated the provisions of PIT (Prohibition of Insider Trading) regulations.

Thereafter, a show cause notice dated September 20, 2022, was issued for the alleged contravention of the norms.

Subsequently, the applicant had filed a settlement application with Sebi, which recommended to settle the matter on payment of Rs 44.20 lakh.

M&M market valuation crosses ₹2 lakh crore

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The market capitalisation of Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd crossed Rs 2 lakh crore mark, helped by a strong order book in the SUV segment and leadership position in tractor segment.

M&M shares closed at Rs 1,636.85 on the BSE, giving the firm a market value of Rs 2.03 lakh crore, according to stock exchange data.

The automaker's market cap has doubled in less than one-and-a-half years - from Rs 1 lakh crore in April 2022 to over Rs 2 lakh crore this week. M&M market cap hit Rs 2 lakh crore mark on Monday.

The incremental m-cap in the last two years is more than

the incremental market value the firm had over the last decade.

Capital allocation actions have led to an overall better financial performance with several non-accretive divestments completed, analysts said adding net cash is at all-time high levels.

Mahindra's auto and farm businesses are industry leaders and it is looking to capitalize on market leadership position. It is No. 1 revenue market share in the SUV segment and has about 50 per cent market share of LCV.

Its dominance in the domestic tractor segment has seen market share rise by about 300 bps in the last two years.

Mahindra's services segment includes industry pioneers like Tech M and Mahindra

Finance, which contributed more than 50 per cent of FY23 group earnings.

While Mahindra Finance had the highest-ever disbursements in FY23 (Rs 49,000 crore, up 80 per cent) and much-improved asset quality (4.5 per cent gross NPAs, down from 8.4 per cent), Tech-M is leveraging strength in telecom by being at the forefront of 5G.

The firm, they said, has identified 9 businesses as 'Growth Gems' that will aid a 5x growth over the next several years. The growth engines include Mahindra Lifespaces, Mahindra Holidays and Mahindra Logistics.

Monetization and partnerships with PE firms have helped value discovery, they added.

I N B R I E F

TULIP INFRA TECH TO INVEST ₹280 CRORE

New Delhi: Real estate developer Tulip Infratech will invest Rs 280 crore to develop 350,000 sq ft of residential space, part of phase 2 of its project Tulip Monsella at Gurugram's Golf Course road. Phase 2 will have about 112 unit. The overall project spans over 20 acres on Golf Course Road, sector 53 and is estimated to be valued at more than Rs 5000 crore.

TECHNO-MANAGEMENT FEST FROM SEPTEMBER 21



New Delhi: SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur is hosting Aarush 2023 — a national-level techno-management fest from 21st September to 24th September 2023 at the institute's campus. The fest will have over 100 events and will have about 250 plus national Universities/colleges and over 20 international colleges to take part. This year's edition of Aarush boasts distinguished speakers, experts, and luminaries from various fields, making it a unique and enlightening experience for all attendees.

PFC, SJVN SIGN MOU WORTH ₹1,18,826 CRORE

New Delhi: PFC and SJVN Ltd. have signed an MoU for providing financial support to various projects, including massive Renewable Energy ventures (Solar, Hydro, and Pumped Storage) totalling 12,178 MW capacity, along with a 660 MW thermal generation project for an estimated project cost of approximately Rs 1,18,826 crore. The MoU was signed by Manoj Sharma, Director (Commercial) PFC, and Akhileshwar Singh, Director (Finance) SJVN in the presence of Parminder Chopra, CMD PFC, Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN and Geeta Kapur, Director (Personnel) SJVN. Other senior officials including HK Das, ED (Projects), V. Packirisamy, ED (Entity Appraisal), and Nitin Kumar, HOU (projects-CSP) were present on this occasion.

CANADA ISOLATED AS INDIA ROARS

"Registration would enable the High Commission and the Consulates General to better connect with Indian citizens in Canada in the event of any emergency or untoward incident," it said.

Meanwhile, the latest row between India and Canada will not impact bilateral military engagement and the Canadian Army will take part in the conclave of the Indo-Pacific army chiefs in Delhi next week, a senior Indian Army official said here on Wednesday.

The Indian Army is hosting the conclave on September 26 and 27 with an aim to evolve a common strategy to ensure peace, prosperity and stability in the Indo-Pacific against the backdrop of growing global concerns over China's increasing military muscle-flexing in the region.

"It doesn't impact us. The Canadian Army (vice) Chief is coming in here, his delegation is coming here," said Major General Abhinaya Rai, the Additional Director General of Strategic Planning at the Army headquarters.

"Like when we look at our relationship with some of our neighbours...Where we may have had a standoff but we continue to engage them at all levels, be it the military level and at the diplomatic level. And I am referring directly to China here," he said. Major General Rai suggested that India's diplomatic and military engagement with Canada would not be impacted. A Canadian military official also asserted that the diplomatic row will not impact the defence engagement between India and Canada.

Fifteen Army chiefs and delegations from 22 countries will attend the event to be held in Delhi on September 26 and 27, officials said. The

US Army is co-hosting the conference. Speaking in the Canadian Parliament on Monday, Trudeau had said his Government had "credible allegations" linking the killing of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in June with the "agents of the Government of India". The Indian Government has rejected the claim as "absurd and motivated". Nijjar, 45, was an Indian terrorist and chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), and was assassinated outside a gurdwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on June 18. He was one of India's most wanted terrorists who carried a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh. Amid the rising tensions between the two countries, Trudeau on Tuesday assured that his in not looking to "provoke" India but wants the Indian Government to take Nijjar's killing with "utmost seriousness". "We are not looking to provoke or escalate. We want to work with the Government of India to lay everything clear and to ensure there are proper processes," Trudeau said. In a strongly-worded statement, the MEA on Tuesday trashed Trudeau's comments asserting that "such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity." The diplomatic row comes shortly after the issue was raised between Trudeau and the Prime Minister Modi on the sidelines of the recently concluded G20 summit in New Delhi.

CHACHA CHAUDHARY, SABU ENTICE VOTERS

"This comic is available in both print and digital formats, ensuring accessibility across all platforms. Additionally, to inspire young minds,

free copies of the comic book will be distributed to schools, educating future voters about the elections," the EC said in a statement.

The EC said 30,000 copies will be distributed for free and there will also be provision for lakhs of children to view them digitally.

Chacha Chaudhary's brain works faster than a computer — every 90's child is familiar with this famous line from the comic series of Chacha Chaudhary and Sabu.

Wearing a red turban and waistcoat with a double inside pocket, one of the biggest heroes, Chacha Chaudhary will now inspire people to use their right to vote for the candidates.

The EC on their X handle shared glimpses of the comics that have messages for children to understand the importance of voting.

In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, the ECI wrote, "Chacha Chaudhary, Sabu, Raaka, Dhamaka Singh, Billoo & other comic characters will now create awareness amongst children about elections. In an unique initiative, the comic book, "Chacha Chaudhary aur Chunavi Danga", published by Pran Comics, was released by the Commission today." Further in another post, the ECI said, "Chacha Chaudhary ka dimag computer se tez chalta hai", and his formidable intellect will now be harnessed by SVEEP division of ECI".

The SVEEP stands for Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation Programme which is the flagship programme of the Election Commission of India for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India as Assembly elections are scheduled this year in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana States.

Meanwhile, the national election will be held in 2024.

Sabu is actually an alien from Jupiter. But what makes him truly special is his unwavering loyalty to Chacha Chaudhary and his incredible physical health.

Billoo is describable as a fun-loving and charismatic teenager with a passion for cricket and TV. He is a prankster whose pranks tend to backfire on him, but manages to resolve them all at the end of the day with his wit.

Earlier, the Centre has used Chacha Chaudhary swachh Bharat Abhiyan where Chacha Chaudhary has picked up a broom to clean the streets of India and to spread the message of cleanliness.

Titled as "Chacha Chaudhary and Bye Bye Kachra", Diamond Toons, a publication house, recently launched the fourth edition of Swachh Bharat Abhiyan series. In this edition, Chacha Chaudhary creates awareness on the three R's of waste management - reduce, reuse and recycle. Children being one of the major carriers of change, most of the characters in the comic book are aged between 5 and 15. With the help of children, Chacha Chaudhary teaches parents to segregate waste and throw them in coloured bins. He then goes to explain how wet waste can be treated completely through composting techniques and dry waste can be recycled.

In the second edition, Chacha Chaudhary collaborates with Akshay Kumar, who had propagated the message of open defecation free in his movie "Toilet-Ek Prem Katha". With the help of Akshay Kumar, Chacha Chaudhary visits households in the village having no toilet and asks them to construct one for sanitation and hygiene purposes.

FROM PAGE 1

US not seeking conflict with China: Biden

Will push back on intimidation

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS/ NEW YORK

President Joe Biden has told world leaders that the US is not seeking conflict with China but it will “push back on aggression and intimidation” as his administration seeks to “responsibly manage” its tense relationship with Beijing. Addressing the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Biden said his administration is also ready to work together with China on issues where progress hinges on “our common efforts.”

“When it comes to China, I want to be clear and consistent: We seek to responsibly manage the competition between our countries so it does not tip into conflict,” Biden said in his address to the Heads of State and Government at the 193-member UN General Assembly on the opening day of the General Debate.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing escalated earlier this year following an incident involving a spy balloon over American airspace, China’s support for Russia’s conflict in Ukraine, trade disputes and human rights.

“I’ve said, “We are for de-risking, not decoupling with China,” Biden said.

“We will push back on aggression and intimidation and defend the rules of the road, from freedom of navigation to overflight to a level economic playing field that has helped safeguard security and prosperity for decades,” Biden said as his administration sought to counter China’s growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region and its military might.

Biden’s comments come as his administration has increased outreach to China, even as Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping have gone nearly a year without having a face-to-face meeting. However, the Biden administration has taken the lead in having regular channels of communication with Beijing to avoid conflict.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan recently met with China’s foreign minister Wang Yi. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo have both made recent trips to China for meetings with government and business officials.

Meanwhile, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng met on the sidelines of the General Assembly on Monday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session.

“I had a candid and constructive meeting with People’s Republic of China Vice President Han Zheng about responsibly managing our bilateral relationship and addressing global and regional issues,” Blinken posted on X.

US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry also met Vice President Zheng on the margins of the 78th UN General Assembly in New York City on Tuesday.

The two sides discussed the critical importance of bilateral and multilateral efforts to address the climate crisis, including promoting a successful COP 28. Secretary Kerry reiterat-

ed the urgency of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, which will require ambitious action by the United States and China. He also emphasised the need for China to raise ambition in efforts to, among other things, accelerate decarbonisation and reduce emissions of super pollutants like methane, the State Department said in a press release.

BIDEN AND LULA ARE MEETING IN NY

President Joe Biden will meet his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Wednesday in New York as the leaders of the Western Hemisphere’s largest democracies seek areas of common ground despite some recent differences on Russia’s war in Ukraine and other matters. The two are expected to discuss labour and the environment. And senior US administration officials who previewed the meeting said the two nations are rolling out a partnership on workers’ rights.

Initial hopes that Lula would prove a staunch ally for Biden have been tempered in recent months, with the Brazilian leader voicing opposition on some issues and at times even seeming to thumb his nose at Washington.

That has included dismissing allegations of Venezuela’s authoritarianism, calling for decreased dependence on the dollar for global trade and accusing the US of fuelling bloodshed in Ukraine by providing military aid.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Lula criticised the US embargo and sanctions targeting Cuba.

“What Lula expects is not to be lectured by the US and the White House, but treated as a partner who they will sometimes disagree with, but who they do respect,” said Thomas Traumann, a Brazilian political analyst. “Not an enemy, not an opponent, someone who is on your side, but not always on your side.”

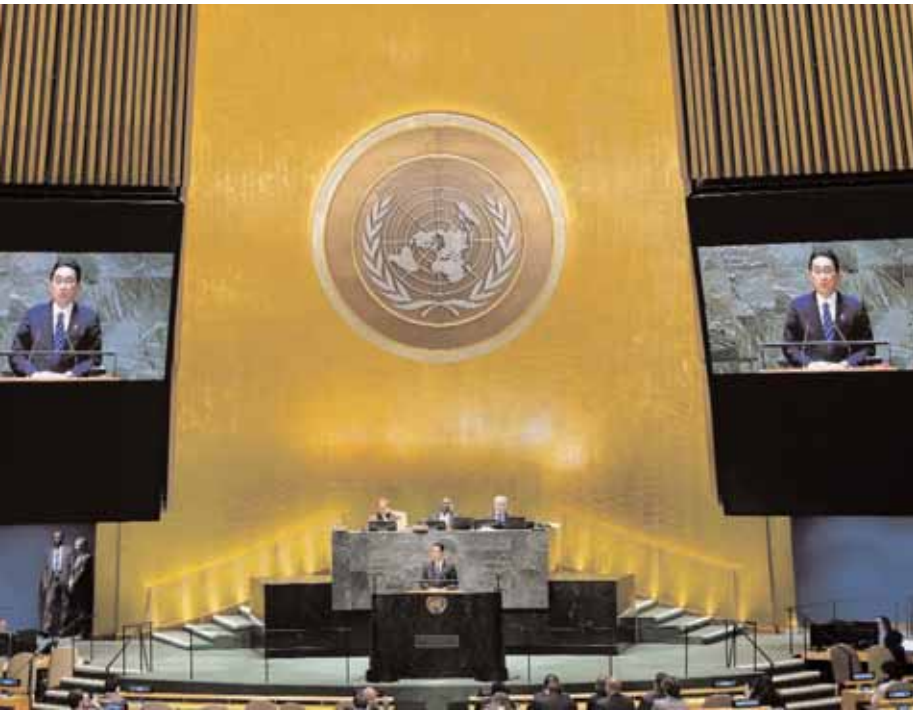
Biden had frosty relations with Lula’s predecessor. Far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro, an open admirer of Donald Trump, waited weeks before recognising Biden’s 2020 election victory.

Over a year passed before a bilateral meeting took place in the context of US concerns that Bolsonaro, who had been casting doubt on Brazil’s election system, could reject its results.

After Bolsonaro’s defeat, his supporters stormed the capital in an attempt to oust Lula from power. The circumstances bore a clear resemblance to Trump and the January 6 Capitol riot.

Lula quickly travelled to Washington, where he and Biden bonded over the challenges to democracy they had both overcome.

Despite the shared experience and apparent bonhomie, the trip disgruntled Brazilian officials, who viewed the White House’s reception of the newly sworn-in president as historically underwhelming, said Traumann, who worked in the prior administration of Dilma Rousseff, Lula’s protegee. The meeting on Wednesday will be their second. Their planned labour partnership will be a vehicle for stopping the exploitation of workers, forced labour and child labour as well as workplace discrimination, according to the US officials. They spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the announcement.



Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday at U.N. headquarters. AP/PTI

Iran’s prez urges US to demonstrate it wants to return to 2015 N-deal

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi said Tuesday that his country will never give up its right “to have peaceful nuclear energy” and urged the United States “to demonstrate in a verifiable fashion” that it wants to return to the 2015 nuclear deal.

Addressing the annual high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly, Raisi said the American withdrawal from the deal trampled on US commitments and was “an inappropriate response” to Iran’s fulfilment of its commitments. Then-President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the accord in 2018, restoring crippling sanctions. Iran began breaking the terms a year later and formal talks in Vienna to try to restart the deal collapsed in August 2022. Iran has long denied ever seeking nuclear weapons and continues to insist that its programme is entirely for peaceful purposes — points Raisi reiterated

Tuesday telling the high-level meeting that “nuclear weapons have no place in the defensive doctrine and the military doctrine” of the country.

But UN nuclear chief Rafael Grossi said in an interview Monday with The Associated Press that the Iranian government’s removal of many cameras and electronic monitoring systems installed by the International Atomic Energy Agency make it impossible to give assurances about the country’s nuclear programme. Grossi has previously warned that Tehran has enough enriched uranium for “several” nuclear bombs if it chose to build them. The IAEA director general also said Monday he asked to meet Raisi to try to reverse Tehran’s uncalled for ban on “a very sizable chunk” of the agency’s inspectors. Raisi made no mention of the IAEA inspectors but the European Union issued a statement late Tuesday saying its top diplomat, Josep

Borrell, met Iran’s Foreign Minister on Tuesday and raised the nuclear deal and the inspectors as well as Iran’s arbitrary detention of many EU citizens including dual nationals. At his meeting with Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the EU said Borrell urged Iran to reconsider its decision to ban several experienced nuclear inspectors and to improve cooperation with the IAEA. Borrell again urged the Iranian government to stop its military cooperation with Russia, the EU statement said. Western nations have said Iran has supplied military drones to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine, which Tehran denies. Raisi spoke to the General Assembly a day after Iran and the US each freed five prisoners who were in jails for years.

The US also allowed the release of nearly USD 6 billion in Iranian frozen assets in South Korea for humanitarian use.

Russia has turned even children into weapons: Zelensky

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that Russia is “weaponising” everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine — and he warned world leaders that the same could happen to them.

“When hatred is weaponised against one nation, it never stops there,” he said at the UN General Assembly’s annual top-level meeting on Tuesday. “The goal of the present war against Ukraine is to turn our land, our people, our lives, our resources into weapons against you — against the international rules-based order.”

The war in Ukraine has deepened major global supply disruptions caused by the pandemic, driving a huge spike in food and energy prices, jolting the global economy and increasing hardship in many developing countries.

Decades-old energy supply channels to Europe from Russia, a major oil and gas producer, were halted or severely disrupted by the war due to sanctions, trade disputes, pipeline shutoffs and a major push by Western countries to find alternative sources. Both Russia and Ukraine also are major grain exporters, and Russia withdrew this past summer from a deal that allowed shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy took to the food and fuel crunches, and he highlighted what Ukraine says were kidnappings of at least tens of thousands of children taken from Ukraine after Moscow’s invasion: “What will happen to them?”

“Those children in Russia are taught to hate Ukraine, and all ties with their families are broken. And this is clearly a genocide,” Zelenskyy said in remarks that ran 15 minutes — the meeting’s often-disregarded time limit. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant in March for Russian



President Vladimir Putin and another official, accusing them of abducting children from Ukraine. Russian officials have denied any forced transfers of children, saying some Ukrainian youngsters are in foster care.

Russia gets its chance to address the General Assembly on Saturday. Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyansky sat in Russia’s seat during Zelenskyy’s address.

“Did he speak,” Polyansky asked with a wry smile when an Associated Press reporter asked about his reaction to the address. “I didn’t notice he was speaking. I was on my phone.”

Zelenskyy took to the world stage at a sensitive point in his country’s campaign to maintain international support for its fight. Nearly 19 months after Moscow launched a full-scale invasion, Ukrainian forces are three months into a counteroffensive that has not gone as fast or as well as initially hoped.

Ukraine and its allies cast the country’s cause as a battle for the rule of international law, for the sovereignty of every country with a powerful and potentially expansionist neighbour, and for the stability of global food and energy supplies.

“We must stand up to this naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow,” US President Joe Biden told the assembly Tuesday in his own speech.

Azerbaijan, Armenian forces reach cease-fire deal

AP ■ YEREVAN (ARMENIA)

Azerbaijan and Armenian forces reached a cease-fire agreement on Wednesday to end two days of fighting in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region that has been a flash-point for decades, officials on both sides said. An hour after the truce was announced, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that the intensity of the hostilities in the region “has decreased drastically.” Azerbaijani authorities said they had halted the military operation launched a day earlier once separatist officials

announced laying down arms. But it wasn’t immediately clear if some fighting continued. On Tuesday, Azerbaijan unleashed heavy artillery fire on Armenian positions in Nagorno-Karabakh — a mountainous region that is part of Azerbaijan and came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces during a separatist war in the 1990s. Scores of people were reportedly killed and wounded in the latest fighting. The hostilities also exacerbated an already grim humanitarian situation for residents who have suffered food shortages for months. The escalation

raised concerns that a full-scale war in the region could resume between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which have been locked in a struggle over the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The most recent heavy fighting occurred over six weeks in 2020, when Azerbaijan retook parts of the region and areas around it that were lost in the earlier separatist war. The conflict has long drawn in powerful regional players, including Russia and Türkiye. While Türkiye threw its weight behind Azerbaijan, Russia has taken on a mediating role and brokered the

armistice that ended the 2020 fighting.

Its contingent of peacekeepers, in fact, are charged with monitoring that truce, and both sides said on Wednesday that they helped reach the current agreement. Talks between Azerbaijani officials and the region’s ethnic Armenian authorities on its “re-integration” into Azerbaijan were scheduled to take place on Thursday.

The deal envisions the withdrawal of Armenian military units and equipment from Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as disarming the local defence

forces, Azerbaijan’s Defence Ministry said. Armenia’s Pashinyan said his government didn’t take part in discussing or negotiating the deal, but “has taken note” of the decision made by the region’s separatist authorities.

Azerbaijan said it fired on Armenian positions on Tuesday as part of what it called an “anti-terrorist operation” and vowed to continue until “illegal Armenian military formations” surrendered. Azerbaijan has alleged that Armenia has smuggled weapons into the territory since the end of the separatist war.

Putin accepts invitation to visit China in October

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday he accepted an invitation from his Chinese counterpart to visit China in October during the Belt and Road Summit. Speaking after a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Moscow, Putin said Russia and China are “integrating our ideas of creating a large Eurasian space,” noting that China’s Belt and Road Initiative is a part of that.

The Initiative is a huge programme in which Beijing has been expanding its influence in developing regions through infrastructure projects.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Putin has pivoted the country toward China, selling it more energy, and increasingly carrying out joint military exercises.

China has adopted a neutral stance on the war in Ukraine and even denounced Western sanctions against Moscow. It also accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin’s military action and declared last year that it had a “no-limits” friendship with Russia. On Tuesday, senior Russian security official,



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, foreground left, talks to Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev as they arrive for their 18th round of China-Russia strategic security consultation in Moscow, Russia on Tuesday. AP/PTI

Nikolai Patrushev, called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted Wang Yi for security talks. The Kremlin has continuously expressed support for Beijing as Russia and China have grown closer as their

relations with the West deteriorate.

Wang arrived in Russia on Monday on a four-day visit following his talks with US President Joe Biden’s national security adviser in Malta over the weekend. Putin’s plan to visit China was initially announced in July.

Two Indians jailed in robocall scam

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Two Indian nationals have been sentenced to 41 months in prison for their role in a conspiracy to commit wire fraud by accepting illegally obtained USD 1.2 million in wire transfers from victims across the United States, a US attorney said. Arushobike Mitra (29) and Garbita Mitra (25) had previously pleaded guilty before US District Judge Esther Salas to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced on Tuesday. “These defendants and their conspirators preyed upon some of our most vulnerable citizens, using trickery and threats to coerce them into sending money,” Sellinger said.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court as part of an international fraud scheme, criminal India-based call centres utilised automated robocalls to contact victims across the country with the intent of defrauding US residents, particularly the elderly. After establishing contact with victims through these automated calls, other members of the conspiracy would

coerce or trick the victims into sending large sums of cash through physical shipments or wire transfers to other members of the conspiracy, including the Mitras, a media release said.

These conspirators used a variety of schemes to convince victims to send money, including impersonating government officials from agencies such as the Social Security Administration, or impersonating law enforcement officers from the FBI or DEA, and threatened victims with severe legal or financial consequences if they did not comply, federal prosecutors alleged.

Another method utilised by the callers involved convincing the victim they were speaking with someone from a tech support company and coercing the victim into granting the caller remote access to their personal computers. The caller would then access the victim’s bank accounts and make it appear to the victim that the caller had inadvertently added money to the victim’s bank account, when in fact the caller had simply transferred money from another one of the victim’s own accounts.

Rishi Sunak signals plan to backtrack on climate goals

AP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is preparing to water down some of Britain’s environmental commitments on Wednesday, saying the country must fight climate change without penalising workers and consumers. The news drew wide criticism from political opponents, environmental groups and large chunks of UK industry, but was welcomed by sections of the governing Conservative Party.

Sunak issued a late-night statement on Tuesday in response to a BBC report saying the prime minister is considering extending deadlines for bans on new gasoline and diesel cars — currently set for 2030 — and on new natural-gas home heating, due in 2035.

Sunak said he would set out a “proportionate” approach to the environment. He summoned his Cabinet to an unscheduled conference call to discuss the plans ahead of a speech hastily rescheduled for Wednesday afternoon. It had been due later in the week.

“For too many years, politicians in governments of all stripes have not been honest about costs and trade-offs,” Sunak said. “Instead, they have taken the easy way out, saying we can have it all.” Sunak did not confirm details of his announcements. He said he would keep a promise to reduce



the UK’s emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050, but “in a better, more proportionate way”.

The government has previously boasted of Britain being a leader in cutting carbon emissions. UK greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by 46 per cent from 1990 levels, mainly because of the almost complete removal of coal from electricity generation.

The government had pledged to reduce emissions by 68 per cent of 1990 levels by 2030 and to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

But with just seven years to go until the first goalpost, the government’s climate advisers said last month that the pace of action is “worryingly slow”.

Sunak’s decision in July to approve new North Sea oil and gas drilling also spurred critics to question his commitment to climate goals.

France rolls out the red carpet for King Charles III’s state visit

AP ■ PARIS

King Charles III of the United Kingdom starts a three-day state visit to France on Wednesday meant to highlight the friendship between the two nations with great pomp, after the trip was postponed in March amid widespread demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron’s pension changes. Charles and Queen Camilla were greeted by Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne at Paris-Orly airport. They were to attend a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in the presence of Macron and his wife, Brigitte.

The visit shows “the deep historical ties that unite our two countries. It is also an opportunity to showcase France’s cultural, artistic and gastronomic excellence,” the French presidency said. At the Arc de Triomphe, both national anthems will be played before a review of French troops and a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to “mark the shared sacrifices of the past and an enduring legacy of cooperation”, according to Buckingham Palace. The jet fighters of the Patrouille de France and Britain’s Red Arrows, the acrobatic teams of the two air forces, will fly above the monument. The presi-

dential and royal couples will then head by car to the presidential palace, parading on the Champs-Élysées avenue.

Macron and Charles will hold a bilateral meeting, because the visit also “symbolises the relationship of friendship and trust” since they “have in the past worked closely together to protect biodiversity and combat global warming”, the French presidency stressed.

They will also have talks on Russia’s war in Ukraine and the migration issue as Italy’s southern island of Lampedusa was in recent days overwhelmed by people setting off from Tunisia.

While the UK royal family long ago ceded political power to elected leaders, members of the royal family remain Britain’s preeminent ambassadors as presidents and prime ministers jockey to bask in the glamour and pageantry that follows them wherever they go. The visit comes amid a recent warming in the Franco-British relationship after years marked by Brexit talks and related disputes. At a bilateral summit in March, Macron and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak agreed to strengthen military ties and step up efforts to prevent migrants from crossing the English Channel.

PSG get better of Dortmund

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain got their Champions League campaign off to a winning start on Tuesday as a Kylian Mbappe penalty set them up for a 2-0 victory over Borussia Dortmund at the Parc des Princes.

The French champions had dominated the first half without overly troubling the Dortmund defence, but they went ahead four minutes after the break when Mbappe scored a spot-kick awarded for a Niklas Sule handball.

Achraf Hakimi added a memorable second, and PSG could have won the Group F encounter by a far more handsome margin in the end.

The result immediately puts them in control of the group, after AC Milan and Newcastle United drew 0-0 earlier, and coach Luis Enrique will hope they can build on this performance when they visit the English side next in a fortnight.

"It was an almost perfect evening," said Luis Enrique.

"I enjoyed practically everything about it, our intensity from the very beginning, the way we controlled the game for the first 75 minutes.

"We could have scored at least another goal but this win gives us confidence going forward. This is going to be a difficult group for everyone."

Dortmund, meanwhile, were nowhere near their best and must improve when they entertain Milan next in what is an unforgiving section.

They are still adapting to life without Jude Bellingham and coach Edin Terzic also dropped Sebastian Haller here, with the big striker enduring a difficult start to the campaign.

PSG are in the early weeks of a new era following the departures of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Marco Verratti, and Luis Enrique's arrival.

The former Spain coach, who won the Champions League with Barcelona in 2015, insisted on the eve of this game that he needs time to get his ideas across to his players,



Alvarez saves Man City blushes after CL first night scare

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City overcame an early scare to get their Champions League defence off to a solid start on Tuesday.

Pep Guardiola's City were stunned when Red Star's Osman Bukari opened the scoring in first half stoppage time.

But Julian Alvarez continued his sparkling early season form by levelling just two minutes after the break.

The Argentine then got some help from Red Star goalkeeper Omri Glazer as he flapped at Alvarez's free-kick to allow the ball to fly into the far corner.

Rodri rounded off a 3-1 win with a composed finish 17 minutes from time.

"If we scored two goals early



in the beginning it would've been completely different," said Guardiola, who was frustrated at his side's finishing.

"Having 22 (first-half) shots on goal means you are playing really good. It has to be the responsibility of the people in front to score the goals."

City are next away to RB Leipzig, who share top place in Group E after a 3-1 win at Swiss champions Young Boys.

Mohamed Simaken earned the distinction of scoring the first goal of the group stages with the 2023/24 competition only three minutes old.

many of whom also arrived over the summer.

There were five new signings in PSG's line-up here, including Ousmane Dembele and Randal Kolo Muani in attack.

HELPING HAND

Preferred to Goncalo Ramos, Kolo Muani was starting for the first time joining from Eintracht Frankfurt.

With him, PSG controlled the first half, while Dortmund and their five-man defence sat back and offered little going forward.

Vitinha hit the upright in the 19th minute and Dembele later forced a save from goalkeeper Gregor Kobel at his near post, but PSG had precious little to show for a share of possession that reached almost 80 percent going into the break.

However, they got the breakthrough just after half-time, thanks to a helping hand from Sule, and the referee.

Barely 60 seconds of the second half had been played when a shot by Mbappe struck the Dortmund defender at close range.

Sule survived a VAR check when the ball struck his arm in the area late in the first half but this time Spanish referee Jesus Gil Manzano immediately pointed to the spot, although the award seemed harsh.

Mbappe stepped up to stroke in the penalty for his eighth goal this season, and the home side had done the hard part.

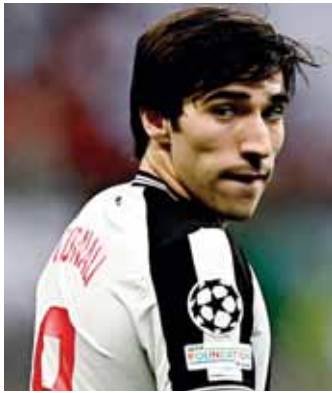
"The handball rule is not really clear," lamented Terzic.

"PSG naturally will say it was a handball and we will say it was not but in the end what annoys me the most is that we were just not aggressive enough."

The home side scored again on 58 minutes as Vitinha and Hakimi combined for the latter to run through and prod home from close range.

It was a great goal, although Hakimi was helped by Mats Hummels throwing himself to the floor rather than standing up and trying to make a block.

Howe 'proud' of Newcastle's goalless draw against Milan



AP ■ MILAN

Eddie Howe was proud of Newcastle United's dogged return to Champions League football after two decades away, holding seven-time European kings AC Milan to a goalless draw in Tuesday's opening Group F match.

Howe was the happier of the two managers with taking a point from the clash at the San Siro as his team were mostly on the back foot against last season's losing semi-finalists.

Newcastle did little in their first fixture in Europe's top club competition since 2003, the Saudi Arabia-backed club barely creating a chance and lucky to escape with a draw on the balance of play.

Milan should have won after wasting a string of chances, particularly in the first half, and dominating the play on Sandro Tonali's return to his old stomping ground after being sold to Newcastle in July.

"Definitely pride in result and the performance and the mentality shown," Howe told reporters.

"Within the squad the result wasn't underestimated. Also they

are very honest players that acknowledge the fact that we can perform better.

"I think we'll get better and better as time goes on. Hopefully can grow into the tournament."

"You have to win when you play so much better than such a good team. Unfortunately we weren't able to capitalise on the situations we created," said Pioli.

"It's a shame that we didn't win the first match because it's going to be a difficult group. We're not happy with the result... We were lacking the most important quality of all."

MARCELINO DEPARTS

Marseille have been plunged into crisis just six weeks into the new season as coach Marcelino Garcia Toral left the French giants on Wednesday while the club's president was reportedly considering walking away too after an angry encounter with supporters.

The club said in a statement that the confrontation on Monday "prevents Marcelino and his coaching staff from being able to do their job in good conditions".

"As a consequence of this deplorable situation, Marcelino and his staff will not pursue their work at Olympique de Marseille," the statement added.

The former Sevilla, Villarreal, Valencia and Athletic Bilbao coach, aged 58, was only appointed in June to succeed Igor Tudor, who had led the 1993 Champions League winners to a third-place finish in Ligue 1 last season.

Marseille are unbeaten five games into the new domestic season but supporters were furious with their insipid performance in drawing 0-0 with Toulouse at the weekend.

Felix hits double as 'best' Barca thrash Antwerp



AP ■ BARCELONA

Joao Felix struck twice as Barcelona flexed their muscles with a crushing 5-0 win over Royal Antwerp in the Champions League on Tuesday, showing their determination to be considered among Europe's elite once again.

After consecutive humiliating group stage eliminations Barcelona are desperate to go deep in this season's competition, last winning it eight years ago.

The victory followed a 5-0 thrashing of Real Betis on Saturday, leading coach Xavi Hernandez to describe these two performances as the best since he joined the club in November 2021.

"I think these last two games are the best level we have shown with me as coach -- it's the path to follow," he told Movistar.

Felix shone for the Spanish champions on a stroll on a warm night in the Catalan capital, helped on their way by an own goal, with Robert Lewandowski and Gavi also scoring.

After a troubled spell at Atletico Madrid and an even

Felix shone for the Spanish champions on a stroll on a warm night in the Catalan capital, helped on their way by an own goal, with Robert Lewandowski and Gavi also scoring

worse loan at Chelsea, the Portuguese forward finally seems ready to flourish.

"We all played really well, I am happy with the win and enjoying myself," said Felix.

"The most difficult thing now is to maintain this level. I have started well, the team is playing well.

"Getting to this level it's not the most difficult thing, it's maintaining it. We all have to work hard to do that."

Barcelona's 2015 triumph was the last in a run of four victories over a golden decade in the club's history, during which current coach Xavi

Hernandez was a key figure in midfield.

Xavi said those feats weighed heavy on the club now, that the current team were under "brutal" pressure to succeed in Europe.

It did not show against Antwerp, with Barcelona brushing aside Marc van Bommel's Belgian title-winners with ease in their first Champions League appearance at the Olympic Stadium.

With Felix and Joao Cancelo joining on loan at the end of the summer transfer window, Barcelona immediately appear a more dynamic side, with supreme creative quality in the final third reflected in successive five-goal wins.

"Joao Felix has a lot of quality, a lot of talent and he's showing it," De Jong told Movistar.

"I hope he can keep going like this. If he keeps working like now, he will give a lot to us."

Xavi brought on 16-year-old starlet Lamine Yamal to become the second youngest player of all time in the competition's history.

Tougher challenges lie ahead, including a visit to Porto in their next European game at the start of October, but Barcelona's self-esteem is higher than at any point since Lionel Messi left in 2021.

Xavi said Barcelona's aim was to make it through the group first before worrying about bigger challenges, and this was a confident first step.

"It's an honour to watch the team play at the moment but we have to remain consistent now," warned the Catalan coach.

"We have to maintain these performances, the hunger, the focus... the players are enjoying themselves, we're creating a lot in attack."

Xavi's opposite number, a former team-mate of his at Barcelona, praised the hosts' display.

"For me, Barca, with how they have developed and evolved, of course they have a chance of winning the Champions League," said Antwerp coach Van Bommel.

"But they need some luck ... there are a lot of factors."



Murray vows to make strong finish

AP ■ ZHUHAI

Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray on Wednesday said he is "still going in the right direction" and is determined to make a strong finish to an "up and down" year.

The 36-year-old former world number one reflecting on his year so far, said: "Look, I would like the year to have gone better, for sure.

"There have been some good moments, but also some tough losses as well," said Murray, who had career-saving surgery in 2019 and now plays with a metal hip.

His five-set defeat in the second round at Wimbledon to fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas,

having been ahead when the match was forced into the next day because of a tournament curfew, still ranks.

Murray suffered an abdominal injury at the Canadian Open last month and went out in the second round at the US Open, where he is a former champion, in straight sets to Grigor Dimitrov.

Murray, who felt he started 2023 especially well and reached the final in Qatar, said: "It's been up and down."

"I got up to my highest ranking a few weeks ago since I had the hip operation so that's positive and shows that although it's not as fast a trajectory as I would have liked, I'm still going in the right direction.

AP ■ TEHRAN

Cristiano Ronaldo enjoyed a winning debut in the Asian Champions League as he helped Al Nassr to a 2-0 victory against 10-man Persepolis in Iran on Tuesday night.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who has five UEFA Champions League titles to his name, captained the Saudi Arabian side to an opening three points in Group E.

The match at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran was played without fans after the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) upheld a one-game ban for Persepolis supporters dating back to 2021.

That clearly helped Nassr, who grabbed both goals in the second half against the two-time runners-up, through a Danial Esmaeilifar own goal and a fine strike by defender Mohammed Qassem.

It marked the first time a Saudi club played in Iran since 2016, after the AFC announced a "ground-breaking agreement" earlier this



month between the two countries' federations.

Iran and Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties seven

Nine-man Celtic lose 2-0 to ruthless Feyenoord

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

A ruthless Feyenoord beat an undisciplined Celtic 2-0 in a scrappy Champions League Group E encounter Tuesday with the Scottish champions hit by two red cards in the space of five minutes.

Celtic started brightly but never recovered from losing Swedish defender Gustaf Lagerbieleke and Norway's Odin Thiago Holm to a straight red card for a late challenge mid-way through the second half.

Feyenoord's Iranian striker Alireza Jahanbakhsh sealed the win for the Dutch champions in the 76th minute, finishing off a well-worked move by smashing the ball past Hoops keeper Joe Hart.

The hosts had taken the lead with only one minute left in first-half injury time, Dutch international Calvin Stengs drilling a long-range free kick through a poorly constructed Celtic wall and beating Hart, who was only able to palm the ball into the side netting.

It was a bitter pill for Celtic, who enjoyed the best of the first half in which the Dutch cham-



pions lacked penetration, clearly missing prolific goalscorer Santiago Gimenez, who was suspended.

Lashing rain and wind did not dampen the spirits, with a capacity 51,000 crowd at the Feyenoord stadium in Rotterdam, better known as "De Kuip" or "The Tub", giving the Celtic players a hostile reception throughout.

Feyenoord came into the match on a superb run of form, unbeaten in the Dutch top flight and scoring at least five goals in their last three games.

"Unfortunately for us, we got the two players sent off and it's

a difficult level 11 v 11, but 11 v nine is really difficult," he said.

"I think it's inexperience by the two guys, you've just got to let the ball run through, you don't have to be in the fight," said the manager.

But Rodgers was heartened by the "spirit and mentality" of the nine men left on the pitch, who managed to keep the score respectable, with Feyenoord having two late goals disallowed.

"Overall, I'm frustrated for the players because they gave so much, but the point for me was that their spirit was never broken," said the Hoops boss.

Ronaldo helps Al Nassr to historic Asia Cup win in Iran

INCHEON WIN

In the group's other match, Iran's Istiklol were held to a goalless draw in Dushanbe by Qatari heavyweights Al Duhail.

In Group A, 2003 winners Al Ain secured an impressive 3-0 victory at Pakhtakor in Tashkent, while Turkmenistan side Ahal defeated Saudi opponents Al Fayha 1-0 at home to record only a second win in the competition.

In the East Asian side of the draw, South Korea's Incheon United opened their Group G account with a 4-2 win over J.League champions Yokohama F Marinos in Japan.

As a result, Incheon sit on three points alongside Chinese Super League side

Shandong Taishan, who were made to work for their 3-1 victory in Manila over Kaya-FC Iloilo of the Philippines.

In Group I, South Korean champions, and 2020 Asian Champions League winners, Ulsan Hyundai won at home over Thailand's BG Pathum United 3-1, while Japan's Kawasaki Frontale saw off hosts Johor Darul Ta'zim 1-0 in Malaysia.

The group stage, which this year returned to a home-and-away format for the first time since early 2020, runs until mid-December, with the 10 pool winners and the six best second-placed teams advancing to the knockout rounds.

That begins in February with the final taking place across two legs in May.

ASHWIN VS SUNDAR: STORY BEHIND UNEXPECTED WC TRIAL

PTI ■ MOHALI

A month and half back, Ravichandran Ashwin was eloquently explaining on his Tamil YouTube channel, why a talent like Tilak Varma should be seriously considered for the ODI World Cup.

One of India's greatest match-winners in Test cricket wouldn't possibly have envisaged that in six weeks time he would be summoned for a two-match trial against Washington Sundar — nearly a decade and half junior to him.

Close selection calls are par for course when it comes to World Cup squads.

But just two weeks before the mega event, the Indian team management has called the two off-spinners for the three-match series against Australia to keep a ready back-up option in case Axar Patel's quadriceps tear doesn't heal on time.

It will be a virtual shoot-out and their performances on flat decks of Mohali and Rajkot will be monitored by Ajit Agarkar's selection committee.

"I think Ashwin will be slightly ahead now that a bowler of his stature has been called into the mix. I have always felt that Ashwin should have been in the mix from the time the team got into the ODI World Cup mode," said former chairman of selectors MSK Prasad, who was at helm when the 2019 squad was selected.

So, who will be his pick if Axar can't make it to the World Cup?

"Look, let us hope that Axar is fit for the final ODI in Rajkot. Because if he is fit, however well Ashwin or Washy bowl, it will be Axar who will retain his place. If he has been your pick ahead of these two, then you have to have him if he is good to go," Prasad set the record straight.

"But this is one of the most fascinating World Cup trials



that you will get (to see). Question is: if they are looking at a 50-50 batting-bowling option then it is Washy. But if they are looking at a purely spin bowling option, then Ash holds an edge as far as I am concerned," Prasad said.

Harbhajan Singh, however, has a contrarian viewpoint.

The 'Turbantor' believes that if the team management and selectors took an informed decision to summon Washington in Colombo for the Asia Cup final and even fielded him in the playing XI, then he should be the first-choice replacement.

"Washington bowls well in Powerplays. He is a brilliant fielder and last but not the least is a left-hander in that lower middle order. So, he does come as a package," said Harbhajan.

Another national selector, who refused to be named, had an interesting take on the Washington vs Ashwin debate.

"No offence meant but Axar's supposed hamstring

injury could just be a blessing in disguise. The decision to have a right-arm finger spinner should have been taken long back and now, perhaps, at eleventh hour, they have got that opportunity," the selector, who has seen some pitched battles between previous captains and selection commit-

tees, said. He then decoded the whole issue that the Indian team is facing.

"Not denying that Axar played two crucial knocks in the Asia Cup and one was in a winning cause against Sri Lanka. But just look at his bowling on a track that offered considerable

turn. If Charith Asalanka is picking up four wickets and you (Axar) are not even getting most of your deliveries to turn, it is a problem," added the former selector.

"Mind it, Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) is lethal when there is help off the surface and doubly

so, if Ashwin is operating at the other end. Also, why did they call two off-spinners and not a like-for-like replacement. The next in line are Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma (left-arm spin and left-handed bat). These two are okay for Asian Games level but certainly not for the World Cup," he added.

"Also at the moment, they asked Ashwin to report for his fitness update at NCA (after the Super 4 against Pakistan, if one goes by his Instagram handle), you would know that he is in line and there is a clear dilemma in Rohit (Sharma), Rahul (Dravid) and Ajit (Agarkar)'s mind as to who is the best option. "Is it a bits and pieces cricketer like Washy or someone like Ashwin, who can turn a game or two on Indian tracks? Hence they called both," the selector said.

Prasad agreed to the point.

"I believe some of the tracks will offer help for spinners. In Chennai, think about Ashwin's possible match-up against Steve Smith or a left-hander like David Warner. Yes, his successes came in the red ball (cricket) but just think about the possibilities," the former India stumper added.



Siraj back to No. 1 in ODI rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj has regained his number one spot in the men's ICC ODI bowling rankings after his six-wicket haul in the final of the recently-concluded Asia Cup. Siraj, who first grabbed the top position in January before being displaced by Josh Hazlewood in March, has surged eight spots after his memorable performance that helped dismiss Sri Lanka for just 50 runs and enabled India to complete a 10-wicket victo-

ry in the summit clash.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav has moved down three places to ninth.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah climbed up two places to 27th while Hardik Pandya rose eight spots to 50th.

Among batters, openers Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma have retained their second and 10th spots respectively while star batter Virat Kohli moved up a rung to eighth.

Pandya is the only all-rounder in the top 20, climbing up a spot to the sixth place.

ICC confirms New York, Dallas, Florida as US venues for T20 WC 2024

PTI ■ DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday confirmed New York, Dallas and Florida as the three venues for the USA-leg of the ICC Men's World Cup 2024.

Broward County (Florida), Grand Prairie (Dallas) and Eisenhower Park (New York) will be the three stadiums hosting the matches in the US.

This is the first time the tournament will be played in the USA, and they will co-host it with the West Indies.

The ICC had awarded the event to the USA in 2021. Geoff Allardice, the Chief Executive of the governing body, said, these venues have been zeroed in after an extensive evaluation process.

"We're delighted to announce the three USA venues that will host part of the biggest ICC Men's T20 World Cup ever staged, with 20 teams competing for the trophy.

"We explored a number of potential venue options in the country, and we were hugely encouraged by the enthusiasm



the event generated amongst prospective hosts," said Allardice in an ICC release.

Allardice said the existing

ular stadium solutions.

He said the same technology will be used to build a 34,000-seat modular stadium at Nassau County, New York, and he hoped to acquire the required permit from local officials by next month. "We are very excited about the opportunity to use modular stadium technology. This technology has been used at previous ICC events to increase venue capacity and it's routinely used in other major sports around the world.

"In the USA, it will give us the opportunity to increase the

size of the venues in both Dallas and Florida and create what is going to be a stunning venue in New York," said Allardice.

A number of other venues around the USA, including George Mason University in Washington, the new home of MLC team Washington Freedom, have also been identified as potential venues for pre-event matches and training. The ICC's announcement has also allayed all concerns over USA hosting the T20 WC 2024 because of the doubts surrounding the readiness of the stadiums.

B'desh hungry to gain pre-WC boost in ODI series vs NZ

AP ■ MIRPUR

After failing to reach this month's Asia Cup final, Bangladesh is hungry to gain a much-needed boost ahead of the 50-over World Cup by beating New Zealand in the three-match ODI series that starts on Thursday.

Bangladesh rested a host of key players for the Asia Cup, captain Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Najmul Hossain and Towhid Hridoy among them, in order to keep them fresh and injury-free, although it has still not named its squad for next month's World Cup.

New Zealand has sent only five World Cup-bound players to Bangladesh, stand-in skipper Lockie Ferguson, Trent Boult, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi and Will Young.

Tamim Iqbal, who stepped down as ODI captain last month, is back for Bangladesh after recovering from a back problem. Mahmudullah, axed after the England series



in March following poor form, also returns. Liton Das, who leads the side in Shakib's absence, said: "There are many things to achieve from the series. The first thing is to win, that will be a big achievement ahead of the World Cup.

"We won't play to show just individual brilliance. A five-wicket haul or a century doesn't matter if the team doesn't win."

Ferguson, yet to play on Bangladesh soil, believes conditions will test his New Zealand team to the limit.

"Bangladesh is very good in home conditions and is a huge challenge here," he said. "It's important for us just to focus on what's coming up tomorrow and try to adapt as quickly as possible to the conditions. Some of us haven't played here so we'll have to adapt quicker."

New Zealand hasn't won an ODI match in the country since 2008 and Ferguson said the input of former Bangladesh bowling coach Shane Jurgensen would be invaluable.



Southee to undergo surgery on thumb

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand veteran fast bowler Tim Southee is set to undergo a surgery on his injured right thumb on Thursday and a call on his availability for the World Cup in India will be taken next week. Southee broke and dislocated his right thumb while attempting to take a catch in the fourth ODI against England last week.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead is hopeful the 34-year-old seamer will recover in time for the side's opening game in the mega event on October 5.

"We've got our fingers crossed the surgery goes well for Tim," Stead said.

"He'll have some pins or screws inserted in his right thumb and, providing the procedure is a success, it will be a matter of ensuring Tim can tolerate the pain and manage the actual wound when returning to train and play."

Ahead of their opener against defending champions England, New Zealand are

scheduled to take on Pakistan and South Africa in the World Cup warm up matches on September 29 and October 2.

"Our opening game of the World Cup against England is not until Thursday October 5 in Ahmedabad, so that would be our logical target in terms of his availability.

"Tim's obviously a hugely experienced and important figure in our team and we want to give him every chance to be part of this World Cup campaign."

Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson is also recovering from a ruptured ACL he suffered during the IPL earlier this year and may not be available for New Zealand's opening game.

Teams can make changes to the 15-player World Cup squad until September 28, post which any changes would need approval from the ICC. Five members of the Black Caps' World Cup-bound squad are in Bangladesh for a three-match ODI series, starting Thursday. The others are scheduled to fly out to India on Tuesday.

Ronaldinho to visit Kolkata during Durga Puja

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Retired Brazilian legend Ronaldinho is set to visit Kolkata during the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja next month.

An official privy to the development said that Ronaldinho is likely to visit the city between October 15-19 but the final date will be ascertained following the confirmation date of Barca Legends match at Congo.

According to the official, Ronaldinho, who will be visiting Kolkata for the first time, is expected to feature in a short charity match, besides visiting a football clinic and a Durga Puja pandal. He will also inaugurate a statue of Argentine FIFA World Cup winner Lionel Messi.

A two-time Ballon d'Or winner, Ronaldinho is also expected to attend some sponsor meet and greet events and visit the nearby town of Rishra.

The official involved has played a key role in bringing football legends to the city in the past, including Maradona, Pele and Cafu.

He also played a role in bringing current Argentinian World Cup-winning goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez this July to the city.

Notably, Ronaldinho also has his football academy in the city, the R10 Academy, in Rajarhat.

Sreejesh eyes direct berth to Olympics through Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At 35, PR Sreejesh is standing at the twilight of his career and the Hangzhou Asian Games is most likely his last appearance at the continental showpiece.

But the veteran Indian hockey goalkeeper is determined to win the gold at Hangzhou to give himself a chance to earn a direct entry to the Paris Olympics next year, and do better there winning a yellow-coated medal.

Eight-time champions India had won a historic bronze at the Tokyo Olympics after 41 years beating Germany 5-4 in the

play-off match.

"Obviously, next year's Olympics is my main target and I want to change the colour of my medal there. But having said that, we need to qualify through the Asian Games (to Olympics) so that we get ample time to prepare ourselves," Sreejesh told PTI.

Sreejesh reiterated that age is just a number for a sports person and gave the example of tennis great Novak Djokovic in this regard.

"I am right now taking one game, one tournament at a time. As (Novak) Djokovic said, 35 is the new 25. So, I'm definite-



ly there," he said.

Having handled the duties under the goal post of the Indian hockey team for more than 17 years, Sreejesh wants to groom the next generation of goalkeepers in India.

"Krishan (Bahadur Pathak) and me have been donning the goalkeeping responsibilities for a long time. We share a good rapport. There are upcoming goalkeepers like Suraj Karkera and Pawan Malik who are good and will only get better with time.

"I just want to ensure that there is enough back-up," he said.

The Indian men's hockey team goalkeepers, including Sreejesh, underwent some sessions under Dutchman Dennis van de Pol in the lead up to the Asian Games, which has been very helpful according to the veteran custodian.

"Dennis van de Pol is a good coach. It has really been beneficial to work with him. His experience and vast knowledge about goalkeeping has been very useful for us.

"He has deep knowledge about his skills and expertise and it has definitely helped us in all aspects of goalkeeping qualities," he signed off.

India face Bangladesh in must-win Asian Games football match

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Battered by hosts China in their opening match after playing without any training session, India will be up against a tricky Bangladesh side in their must-win group match in the Asian Games football competition here on Thursday. A rag-tag Indian team reached here late Monday evening and played its first match without proper rest and sleep and was hammered 1-5 by China on Tuesday. Igor Stimac's team needs to beat

Bangladesh in its second Group A game to remain in the fray for the knock-outs.

A loss on Thursday may not straightaway knock India out of reckoning as the best third-placed teams from the six groups can also advance to the Round of 16, but that will leave the team with a lot of uncertainties in the final game. Qualifying as one of the best four third-place teams could also set India up against tougher sides in the pre-quarterfinals. Bangladesh have never been an easy side for India in any level and they

will also be desperate for a win after losing their opening match 0-1 to Myanmar.

India will, however, be strengthened after the arrival of defender Konsum Chinglensana Singh, who could not travel with the team before due to a visa delay. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) arranged 'express visa' — which could be procured in two-three days — for him and he has arrived here separately.

It will not be easy for the Sunil Chhetri-led side to beat Bangladesh and log its first



win of the competition as the team was assembled at the last minute with very few known faces after the Indian Super League clubs refused to release their players. The Indians played on an even keel in the first 45 minutes but they caved in the second half, exposing the gulf in quality between the two teams. Stimac himself admitted after the China match that he has brought a third-rung team with him. "This is our third or fourth-choice team here. I would love to play against China with my best team. Then it

would be totally opposite, but the players that are here are heroes," the Croatian coach said. "What they went through, with travelling problems, arriving here very late, not having time to recover and handling the first 45 minutes in a brilliant way. I was realistic and knew that it wouldn't happen (to get a drawn match). With no-one on the bench, apart from three players which we had, we couldn't make any tactical changes. We couldn't influence the game in the second half."