

OPINION 6
AIR POLLUTION RENDERS
ANTIBIOTICS INEFFECTIVE

MONEY 9
NET CLAIMS OF NON-RESIDENTS ON INDIA RISE
TO \$379.7 BILLION IN JUNE QUARTER: RBI

WORLD 10
SOLDIER WHO CROSSED INTO
N KOREA RETURNS TO US

LUCKNOW, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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PAK TEAM
WEAKER THAN
INDIA: WAQAR
12 SPORT

SHOOTERS ADD TO GOLD HAUL

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The men's 10m air pistol team continued India's success story at the Asian Games here, winning gold but two of the marksmen, who made it to the individual finals on Thursday, missed a medal.

The team of Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Singh Cheema and Shiva Narwal narrowly beat the Chinese team to take the top podium and earn India its fourth gold medal from the shooting ranges.

With Thursday's success, Indian shooters have so far won four gold, four silver and five bronze medals.

The Indian trio's aggregate score of 1734 was just one better than the Chinese team, which settled for the silver medal, while Vietnam, with a score of 1730, bagged the bronze.

Sarabjot and Arjun also made it to the eight-shooter individual finals but finished fourth and eighth, respectively. Vietnam's Pham Quang Huy won gold with a score of 240.5, while South Korea's Lee Wonho (239.4) and Uzbekistan's Vladimir Svechnikov (219.9) took the silver and bronze, respectively.

Sarabjot, 21, finished fourth, scoring 199, while Arjun ended up eighth and last, exiting on the second elimination shot.

It was another fruitful day for Indian shooters, with Sarabjot, who will be celebrating his 22nd birthday on Saturday, giving himself an



Gold medal winning Indian team shooters Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Singh Cheema and Shiva Narwal during the presentation ceremony of the men's 10m air pistol event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou in China on Thursday

PTI

early birthday gift as he led the air pistol trio to team gold, scoring 580 in the qualification round, while Cheema shot 578 and Narwal amassed 576 to aggregate 1734.

In the qualification round, whose aggregate score decides the team medallists, Sarabjot shot cards of 95, 95, 97, 98, 97 and 98 to aggregate 580 and entered the finals at fifth place.

Team-mate Arjun Cheema shot series of 97, 96, 97, 97, 96 and 95 for his 578 to also make the eight-shooter finals, placed eighth.

Shiva Narwal, the younger

brother of 2020 Tokyo Paralympic gold medallist in mixed 50m pistol Manish, came out of his elder sibling's shadow as the third member of the gold-winning team here, but he could not make it to the individual finals, finishing 14th.

Narwal shot series of 92, 96, 97, 99, 97 and 95 for his 576. This was the third team gold at the shooting ranges here after the 10m air rifle top-podium finish and women's 25-metre pistol gold.

Sarabjot had won his first individual senior gold medal at the ISSF World Cup in Bhopal

earlier this year, and was gunning for more success today in the individual category after being placed fifth among the eight finalists at the end of the qualification round.

But a string of below-par scores in the finals, undid his efforts in the qualification round. He managed just 9.8 and 9.4 on the third and fourth shots in the finals and another rank bad shot of 8.9 on the seventh shot pegged him further back from where he could not recover.

Sarabjot, whose success story started in 2021 when he



won the junior air pistol team and mixed team gold at the ISSF World Championships in Lima, Peru in 2021, has been performing consistently ever since, bagging the mixed team gold at the recently-concluded World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan.

He would now be aiming to seal a 2024 Paris Olympics quota place at the Asian Championships in Changwon (South Korea) later this year.

Meanwhile, Indian men's and women's teams assured themselves of medals at the Asian Games after progressing to the semifinals of the squash events here on Thursday.

While the men's team blanked Nepal 3-0 in its final pool tie, the women were handed a 0-3 loss by Malaysia in their last pool B fixture. Both teams sealed top two spots in their respective pools to make the semifinals which guarantees them at least a bronze.

The Indian women's team began the day with veteran Joshna Chinappa enduring a 6-11, 2-11, 8-11 defeat to Subramaniam Sivasangari in 21 minutes.

In the second match, Tanvi Khanna squandered a 2-1 lead before going down to Commonwealth Games gold medallist Aifa Binti Azman 9-11, 11-1, 7-11, 13-11, 11-5.

MP Bidhuri faces Privileges Committee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has referred the complaints lodged by several MPs on the issue involving BJP member Ramesh Bidhuri's use of objectionable words against BSP's Danish Ali to the Privileges Committee, sources said on Thursday.

While Ali and several other Opposition MPs, including Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and DMK's Kanimozhi, wrote to the Speaker seeking action against Bidhuri, some BJP parliamentarians like Nishikant Dubey said the BSP member "incited" the South Delhi MP when he was speaking in the House and urged the Chair to look into this as well.

Sources said Birla has sent all these complaints to the Privileges Committee headed by BJP MP Sunil Kumar Singh.

Bidhuri had made certain derogatory remarks, later expunged from records, targeted at BSP member Danish Ali on September 22 when he was speaking in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who was present in the House, expressed his regret at the ruling party MPs' conduct.

As opposition parties rallied around Ali after a video of Bidhuri's remarks went viral triggering an outrage, the Lok

Sabha Speaker took "serious note" and warned him of "strict action" if such behaviour is repeated in the future.

The BJP also issued him a show-cause notice.

Ali wrote to the Speaker, seeking an enquiry by the Privileges Committee, describing Bidhuri's comments as "hate speech".

Almost all Opposition parties also wrote to Birla, seeking action against him.

However, a few BJP MPs, including Dubey, asserted that Ali incited Bidhuri with highly objectionable remarks against the Prime Minister.

While Dubey condemned Bidhuri's conduct, he urged the Speaker to look into Ali's behaviour as well. Other BJP MPs echoed the view.

In a post on X on Thursday, Dubey thanked the Speaker for referring the matter to the committee.

"It was possible because the BJP has a majority in Lok Sabha," he said, as he cited several previous incidents to assert that no committee was formed to probe these issues and nor was anyone punished.

In this context, Dubey alleged that the RJD-JD(U)-Congress members were engaged in a fight involving shoes and microphones in 2006, Sonia Gandhi was involved in an incident in 2012 besides the commotion and injuries to parliamentarians in

2014 during the creation of Telangana as a separate state.

Opposition leaders have slammed the BJP over Bidhuri being given poll responsibility by the party in Rajasthan's Tonk district.

In a post on X, Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said the BJP has "rewarded" Bidhuri for attacking Ali with the "unspeakable words" in Parliament.

"BJP rewards 'hate'. Bidhuri rewarded for attacking Danish Ali (BSP) for the unspeakable words he used in the Special Session of Parliament. Made BJP in-charge of Tonk District in Rajasthan."

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X last night, said, "Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas" yeh sab hai inka bakwaas."

TMC MP Mahua Moitra also slammed the BJP and said Bidhuri had been "rewarded" for his remarks against a Muslim MP. "How does a showcaused person be given a new role by BJP? Narendra Modi ji, is this your Sneha Yatra for minorities, your love outreach?" she said on X.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said, "So much for the #BhajaParty's show cause notice! The foul-mouthed MP is now in charge of Tonk, where no doubt he will have plenty of opportunities to polarise the electorate even further with his divisive rhetoric!"

Khalistanis at it again

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Operatives of Khalistani terrorist outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) painted pro-Khalistan graffiti in North Delhi on Wednesday, a month after defacing several Delhi Metro stations with similar slogans.

According to the police, "Delhi banega Khalistan" and "Khalistan Zindabad SFJ" slogans were found painted on both sides of the Kashmiri Gate flyover connecting North Delhi and North East Delhi and at some other places. The Delhi Police removed the graffiti soon after they spotted it.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the US-based Khalistani terrorist and chief of the SFJ, claimed responsibility for the illegal act and threatened to storm the "Modi Stadium" in Ahmedabad on October 5.

"Khalistanis from Canada are in Delhi to avenge assassination of Nijjar," Pannun said in a statement.

"A case has been lodged under Section 153 of the IPC (Indian Penal Code) and the Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Public Property Act against unidentified miscreants and an investigation has been launched in this connection," an official said on the condition of anonymity.

In a statement, the Delhi Police said, "A video came to notice on September 27, where in certain visuals showed defacement through graffiti. According to the signage boards visible in the video, an extensive search was conducted in the North District area, and graffiti was discovered on Yudhister Setu flyover, heading from Seelampur towards Kashmere Gate.

"An FIR has been filed under the relevant sections of the IPC and Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Public Property Act, and it is currently under investigation."

It is being said the defacement of walls in the national Capital was in response to the raids conducted by the National Investigation Agency on Wednesday across Punjab, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in three separate cases linked to the terror-gangster-smuggler nexus.

The incident comes a month after similar pro-Khalistan slogans were sprayed on the walls of more than five Metro stations in the national Capital. "Delhi Banega Khalistan and Khalistan Zindabad" slogans were written on the walls.

Similar slogans were also

found on the walls of a Government school in Nangloi.

The crackdown on Khalistan elements came amid diplomatic tensions between India and Canada over the killing of Khalistan terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Tensions escalated between India and Canada after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a serious allegation regarding the potential involvement of Indian agents in the murder of Nijjar, a Khalistani extremist, in British Columbia on June 18.

India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020. India has, however, strongly rejected Trudeau's allegations terming it 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.



Devotees celebrate during the procession of Lalbaugcha Raja idol of Lord Ganesha before its immersion in Mumbai on Thursday

PTI

Green Revolution Icon passes away

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

The new generation may not be aware of it but India had a recent past when the then Prime Minister of the country himself had asked the people to skip a meal daily so that the country's hunger could be satisfied to a certain extent.

The Prime Minister was none other than Lal Bahadur Shastri and the country was undergoing severe drought caused by deficient Monsoon and low productivity of the seeds and soil.

"We were leading a ship to mouth existence. Every day ships laden with wheat given by the USA under its PL-480 programme would arrive in Indian ports to feed the crores. Those were the days when India was dependent on the wheat offered by the USA," Professor MS Swaminathan, who breathed his last on Thursday morning, used to recall.

Kumbakonam-born Swaminathan was 98 and is survived by three daughters, Soumya, Mathura and Nitya. His wife Mina predeceased him.

It was the time when

Swaminathan, a plant geneticist by training, returned to India to work for the Indian Agricultural Research Institute and he had a dream of developing high yield varieties of rice and wheat, the staple food of the sub-continent's population.

Along with Dr Norman Borlaug, the Nobel Laureate and with the political patronage extended by C Subramaniam, the then food and Agricultural Minister of India, Professor Swaminathan launched the Green Revolution, which was the foundation stone of India's self-reliance in food production.

Within a decade, India became a food surplus State from a food deficient country. Having resolved the issue of food shortage, Professor Swaminathan turned his attention to other areas about which the then political leadership was ignorant. He drew the attention of the policy makers towards the poor mortality rate of women and children because of the shortage of nutritious food.

Professor Swaminathan also alerted the Government of the day about LBW, the low



August 7, 1925 – September 28, 2023

birth weight, of the newborn.

"Every third child born in India and several South Asian countries is characterised by low birth weight. The LBW children, resulting from maternal and foetal undernutrition, suffer setbacks in brain development and several serious health problems in adult life. Such enforced handicaps at birth represent the cruelest form of inequity in the emerging knowledge age," he had warned in 1999.

Had the Governments of the day listened to his words, India would have experienced the Amrit Kaal long back. For Professor Swaminathan, agricultural research was not something to be confined to the laboratory. He was at home interacting with farmers, fishermen and agricultural workers to get first hand information about their grievances and problems.

He travelled to Orissa and Wayand in Kerala to study the traditional style of farming operations. The credit for informing the world about the vast collection of conventional rice seeds under the possession of tribals in Orissa should

go to him only.

It was his vision to set up pulse and cereal villages across the country to address the malnutrition faced by the rural and urban folks. Professor Swaminathan stands out because of his strong views on sustained development. He was of the view that development and urbanisation were unavoidable, it could be done with minimum damage to the environment and ecology.

"The coming decades will prove that whoever controls the genes and seeds would control the world. The days of nuclear warheads and conventional wars are over," he had said in his speeches.

The MS Swaminathan Research Foundation at Taramani in Chennai is a standing monument to the Father of India's Green Revolution. When he was awarded the first ever World Food Prize in 1987, he used the prize money of \$250,000 for setting up the MSSRF, a world class research institute and think tank on agricultural research.

Though he was for inter-linking of Indian rivers and

genetically modified seeds, Professor Swaminathan stayed away from all controversies.

He held the view that "if there are reservations against the GM foods and inter linking of rivers, we should try to address the apprehension in the minds of the people".

Since 2000, he has been asking the authorities to include millets as a staple food in the food basket. The National Farmers Commission recommendations (which he headed) had asked the Government of India in 2005 itself that procurement price of farm products produced by them should be given twice the amount they spent on cultivation.

The recommendations are yet to be implemented in full. "Anything can wait but not agriculture," was his catchword till the end.

Professor Swaminathan had been honoured with Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Sri in addition to nearly 90 honorary doctorates.

Condolences poured in with President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister

Narendra Modi hailing Swaminathan's yeoman service to the nation.

Murmu said Swaminathan left behind a rich legacy which would serve as a "guiding light to steer the world towards a safer and hunger-free future for humanity".

Modi said his groundbreaking work transformed the lives of millions, ensured India's food security.

Modi said on X: "Deeply saddened by the demise of Dr MS Swaminathan ji. At a very critical period in our nation's history, his groundbreaking work in agriculture transformed the lives of millions and ensured food security for our nation."

"I will always cherish my conversations with Dr Swaminathan. His passion to see India progress was exemplary. His life and work will inspire generations to come. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

The Congress party described him as the key scientific architect of the Green Revolution and hailed his contribution to the agriculture sector.

Police ‘lies’ on crackdown against criminals exposed

Two cops sent to RPL, probe ordered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The footage of a CCTV camera exposed how the men in khaki were patting their backs, citing action against “criminals”. The alleged disclosure came to fore in Meerut after which two policemen were sent to Reserve Police Lines and a probe was ordered in the matter.

According to reports from Meerut, two police constables posted in Kharkhoda police station faced action after they were accused of arresting a youth by keeping a pistol in a bike and later showing its recovery.

The youth, identified as Ankit Tyagi, was arrested on Tuesday. His family members alleged that constables Santosh Kumar and Dinesh posted at Kharkhoda police station reached their residence in Khandavalli village on Tuesday night to search it and claimed that they had received information about illegal weapons in the house.

According to family members, during the so-called search, a country-made pistol was recovered from the bike, but later after examining the CCTV footage, it was found that the two policemen themselves had kept it in the bike.

TWO POLICE CONSTABLES POSTED IN KHARKHODA POLICE STATION FACED ACTION AFTER THEY WERE ACCUSED OF ARRESTING A YOUTH BY KEEPING A PISTOL IN A BIKE AND LATER SHOWING ITS RECOVERY

The family members of the arrested youth reached the office of Inspector General of Police Nachiket Jha on the same night and kept pleading to intervene in the matter. In the meantime, the Kharkhoda police booked Ankit Tyagi under the Arms Act.

On Wednesday morning, the family met Jha and showed him the entire CCTV footage. Shocked with the development, Jha ordered Senior Superintendent of Police Meerut Rohit Singh Sajwan to investigate the matter.

Sajwan said that on the basis of the CCTV footage, both the accused policemen were removed from Kharkhoda police station and transferred to Reserve Police Lines. He said that the investigation into the case had been handed over to Additional Superintendent of

Police (Rural Area) Kamlesh Bahadur.

He said appropriate action would be taken on the basis of the outcome of the probe.

Meanwhile, Samajwadi Party (SP) president and former chief minister of Uttar Pradesh Akhilesh Yadav took a dig at the functioning of the police, citing this incident.

Taking to social media platform X (formerly Twitter), Akhilesh said: “First they keep it (weapon) themselves and then recover it, their raid is false and their detention is false.”

Uttar Pradesh Congress spokesman Anshu Awasthi also attacked the government over the issue, claiming that the policemen in UP were having a nexus with criminals and arms dealers, hence they were carrying illegal country-made weapons which they use to book people under Arms Act and later pat their backs in the name of crackdown on criminals. Awasthi demanded that on the basis of the recording of CCTV footage in Meerut, it was clear that the illegal weapon was in possession of the two constables, so the innocent youth must be released immediately and both the policemen should be arrested and booked under the Arms Act.

Youth threatens to defame ex-girlfriend, arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A former boyfriend of a girl and his current girlfriend were accused of threatening to defame the former, using her old photos, in Krishna Nagar. A case was registered in this regard on Wednesday. He was arrested on Thursday.

The victim fell in love with a youth named Atal Porwal of Bahraich district after they came in contact through a wrong phone call. Atal is studying in New Delhi.

In due course of time, they considered getting married. “He made physical relations after promising to marry me but later deserted me,” the victim alleged. She said Atal later moved on and befriended another girl.

“Both of them harassed me and I was asked to forget Atal. Atal has my photos and videos which he is threatening to share on social media. His current girlfriend is also helping him. He abused me and threatened to reach my home and defame me,” she alleged.

Police registered a case under relevant sections of the IPC. A spokesman said the accused was arrested on Thursday.

Meanwhile, an FIR was registered on Thursday against a lawyer and his group for allegedly manhandling cops and insulting a traffic police officer during a drive in Hazratganj on Wednesday. The arrest was made after a

video of the incident went viral on social media on Thursday.

“An FIR was registered under sections 506 (criminal intimidation) and 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty),” the Hazratganj police said.

The police said that the accused was identified on the basis of the vehicle number which was seized. Along with the vehicle owner, several others were also booked.

According to the traffic police, the group of men came dressed as advocates and manhandled and misbehaved with a traffic cop who had towed a vehicle parked in the ‘no parking’ zone.

“They took back the vehicle parked in the towing yard at Hazratganj without paying the challan. The owner was booked on the basis of the vehicle’s registration number. Others who are unidentified will be arrested soon,” the traffic police said.

In the viral video, a group of men dressed as lawyers was seen misbehaving with a traffic cop. One of the men intimidated the cop when he was shooting a video with his phone and was heard threatening and using offensive languages.

In order to control the traffic and dissuade people from parking their vehicles on roads, a towing drive has been underway since July 24.



An idol of Lord Ganesha being immersed in Gomti river on the last day of Ganesha festival in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

Teacher orders Muslim student to slap Hindu classmate, held

Sambhal (PTI): A school teacher was arrested on Thursday for inciting communal hatred after she allegedly ordered a Muslim student to slap a Hindu classmate for not answering a question, police said. The incident took place at a private school on Tuesday in Dugawar village under the Asmoli police station limits in Sambhal district, they said.

On the basis of a complaint filed by the Hindu boy’s father, the teacher, Shaista, was booked under IPC sections 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, etc) and 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), Additional SP Shrish Chandra said. The accused teacher has been arrested, the official added. The boy’s

father alleged that his son is a student of class 5 in the school where his class teacher got him slapped by a Muslim student after he could not answer a question asked by her. In his complaint, the father said that this hurt his son’s religious feelings. A probe is on in the matter, Additional SP Chandra said.

In a similar incident at Khubbapur village in Muzaffarnagar last month, a teacher of a private school had got a Muslim child slapped in a class by his classmates for not doing homework. A case was registered against the accused teacher, Tripta Tyagi, under IPC sections 323 (voluntary causing hurt) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace).

Girl dragged by crocodile in canal

Lakhimpur Kheri (PTI): An 18-year-old girl was dragged by a crocodile into a canal here when she was washing her feet in it, police said on Thursday. According to police, one Kamini Vishwakarma, a resident of Dulhipur village, was attacked by a crocodile Tuesday evening. Dulhipur village is located along the Sharda canal in which crocodiles often take shelter during monsoon.

Villagers said Kamini along with her friends had gone to a field to graze her goats Tuesday evening. When she went to Sharda canal to wash her feet, a crocodile pounced upon her and dragged her inside the water, said one of the villagers. Her friends raised an alarm but the reptile vanished into the water with the girl.



NOTICE

I Deepak Arora S/O Raj Gopal Arora R/O H.No.60, Block No.9 Krishna Nagar Kanpur Have Changed My Name To Deepak Kumar Arora for all future purposes

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Fariya Mohammed Tariq Siddiqui to Fariya Iqbal. In future, I should be known as Fariya Iqbal. R/o Flat no. 406 RatanEsquare, Chunniganj, Kanpur- 208001.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Mohammed Tariq Murtaza Hasan Siddiqui to Mohammad Tariq Siddiqui. In future, I should be known as Mohammad Tariq Siddiqui. R/o Flat no. 406 RatanEsquare, Chunniganj, Kanpur- 208001.

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Ammar Mohammad Tariq Siddiqui to Ammar Tariq. In future, I should be known as Ammar Tariq S/o Mohammad Tariq Siddiqui R/o Flat no. 406 RatanEsquare, Chunniganj, Kanpur - 208001.

NOTICE

My name has wrongly been mentioned as Sarita in my Aadhaar No.278461947661. My correct name is Kaneez Fatima and I should now be known and identified by the name of Kaneez Fatima W/o Mohd Rais, 84/64, Gate No.3, Anwarganj, Sakera Estate, Kanpur.

NOTICE

I, Aditya Singh S/o Rajesh Singh R/o A-29/114, Baluabir, Piliikothi, Varanasi. Declare on Oath that my High School Roll No. - 5205044 Marksheet & Certificate of passing issued by the Central Board of Secondary Education in the year 2019 from ST. Mary's Convent School Sona Talab, Varanasi has been actually lost.

सूचना

मेरे सेकेन्डरी स्कूल परीक्षा वर्ष 2019 के अंकपत्र व कॉलेज अभिलेखों में मेरे पिता का नाम लूका सुरिन Lukas Surin लिख गया है, जो कि गलत है जबकि मेरे पिता का सही नाम लूका सुरिन Luka Surin अंकित किया जाये। विकास अममोल सुरिन पुत्र लूका सुरिन, निवासी-साहबगंज, रेलवे कालोनी, बड़ागांव, गोण्डा।

UP RERA chairman urges buyers to adopt model agreement for sale

Lucknow (PNS): The objective of UP RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Authority) is to create an environment where all buyers in the state’s real estate sector can have financial security when purchasing houses, shops, or flats. Chairman of UP RERA Sanjay Bhoosreddy said on Thursday that one of the primary goals of consumer protection is to ensure that at the time of booking, consumers can transfer their funds to the promoter according to specific rules and a standardised documentation system that provides them with maximum financial security.

He mentioned that the draft Real Estate (Regulation and Development) (Agreement for Sale/Lease) Rules of 2018

were officially announced by the Government of Uttar Pradesh on October 17, 2018, taking into account all the necessary aspects for stakeholders.

“Under Section 13 of the RERA Act, a draft agreement for sale is available, accessible through the official website (www.up-rera.in). Click on the ‘Agreement for SALE/LEASE’ option in the legal section. This is a standard agreement for sale arrangement, commonly known as the model agreement, recognised by the Uttar Pradesh government.”

“Buyers should familiarise themselves with this model agreement when purchasing houses, shops, or flats, as there is a dedicated section for it

under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act of 2016,” he said.

He also said that Section 13(1) of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, which states, “No deposit or advance payment shall be accepted by the promoter without first entering into a written agreement for sale. A promoter shall not accept an amount exceeding ten percent of the cost of the apartment, plot, or building, as the case may be, as an advanced payment or application fee from a person without first entering into a written agreement for sale with that person and registering the side agreement for sale under any applicable law.

Books on history attracting readers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Books on history are attracting the attention of bibliophiles at the National Book Fair underway at the Balrampur Gardens. Manoj Sharma from Prakashan Sansthan, New Delhi, said that their stall caters to history and literature and the visitors are picking up many titles.

“Prachin Bharat Sabhyata Ka Itihas” by Sir Ramesh Chandra Dutta is selling well. This book was written originally in English, but we got it translated into Hindi. The author was from the administrative services and also a litterateur. He gives the history of India from 2000 BC to 1000 AD in a very simple manner. He has taken the help of books by Indian as well as foreign writers and has also consulted Sanskrit literature and historical evidence to enrich his book. This could be called the first example of writing history in a scientific manner,” he said.

Another book titled ‘Manav Jati Ka Itihas’ by Hendrick Willem is also selling well. The writer, a journalist, had written this book keeping in mind his children, and



hence this book makes for a very interesting read. The writer always poses a question to make history more interesting for the children. For example, Hendrick said what would have happened if there was no such incident in history. Conversely, he asked what makes history? Thousands of people cross the Rubicon river but when Julius Caesar crossed

it, it made history. There is no doubt that the book became immensely popular from amongst the four books written by the author” Manoj said.

Yet another book selling well is ‘Plassey- The Gateway of India’.

“This is written by HN Ram, who was not only an administrator but also a sensitive writer. Nawab

Sirajuddaulah from Bengal got defeated in the battle of Plassey against the Britishers, and that was when the period of Indian slavery started. People are familiar with the betrayal of Mir Qasim in the battle but do not understand the reason why the power of such people prospered during this time and why they could not be uncovered at the right time for which it is important to read the book,” he said.

There is also a book on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel written by Himmat Bhai Mehta. ‘Mahayanak Subhash Chandra Bose’ is yet another book written by Rahul Saran Sharma giving a bird’s eye view of his life. Others which are selling well are Vivekanand Vichar Kosh, which gives the quotes of Vivekanand and similar to it is ‘Ambedkar Vichar Kosh’ which gives the quotes of BR Ambedkar.

Manoj Chandel, key organiser of the book fair, said the crowd is good also because the weather is pleasant.

“A large number of students are visiting the fair, which is a positive sign, and all of them are buying something,” he added.

Girl locked in school; probe ordered

Lucknow (PNS): In view of a Class 1 student of a primary school getting locked in her classroom at a primary school of Sisendi in Mohanlalganj on Wednesday, the basic shiksha adhikari of Lucknow said that an inquiry has been instituted and an advisory will be issued for all the basic shiksha schools.

BSA Arun Kumar, while providing details of the incident, said that the young girl fell asleep on the back bench and went unnoticed when the classroom was locked after the school gave over for the day.

“After she woke up and started crying, villagers reported the matter to a shiksha mitra, who unlocked the classroom and set the girl free,” he said. He added that the principal has been suspended and an inquiry instituted. “The report will be submitted in fifteen days” he added. In a viral video, the girl was seen crying in the classroom, highlighting the laxity of the authorities. “We will issue an advisory for all the basic shiksha schools in Lucknow to prevent a repeat of this incident,” the BSA said.

Medical Education Department. Furthermore, UNICEF, PATH, WHO NPSR, Tata Trust, Plan India and Godrej CSR are not only associated with this campaign as partners but are also monitoring it regularly.

The campaign is operating within a microplan that involves collaborative efforts between various departments. This plan entails ongoing surveillance of mosquito breeding and population density in the districts, identifying high-risk areas based on last year’s data and an increase in communicable disease cases.

CITYBRIEFS

TRIBUTES PAID TO BHAGAT SINGH

A large number of teachers, staff and students of all the departments, faculties and registrar office of Lucknow university paid floral tributes to the Shaheed Bhagat Singh’s statue located near Maitreya Bhawan. They were led by acting Vice-Chancellor Prof Arvind Kumar Awasthi. Homage was also paid to martyrs Raj Guru and Sukhdave. Vice-Chancellor Prof Alok Kumar Rai also sent his tribute to the sacrifices of the three martyrs. Director of Sanskritiki Prof Madhurima Lal said that not only Lucknow University, but every citizen of the country bows down to the sacrifice of the three martyrs.

PARTNERSHIP

redBus, the world’s leading online bus ticketing platform, has announced a partnership with the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) to offer online ticket booking on its platforms (app and website). Now, passengers of UPSRTC also have access to more convenient, reliable, round-the-clock bus ticket booking options on routes within UP as well as those from UP to other states,

including Rajasthan, Delhi, Uttarakhand and Bihar. redBus began accepting bookings for UPSRTC on its platform from September and is poised to make a huge impact on travellers ahead of the festive seasons of Dussehra and Diwali.

BIG BANG EDGE TEST

FIITJEE will conduct the Big Bang Edge Test in offline mode on October 22 and 29. Students presently in classes V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X & XI are eligible to take the test and they can pick the date that suits them. The test for eSchool programmes will be conducted online. Nitin Krishna Dubey, managing partner and head of FIITJEE Lucknow centre, said: “FIITJEE has undoubtedly set a gold standard in the field of competitive exam preparation. The institute’s unparalleled dedication to shaping young minds for success is commendable. The exceptional faculty, rigorous curriculum, and constant motivation provided by FIITJEE have been instrumental in countless students achieving their dreams. FIITJEE’s legacy of excellence continues to inspire and guide aspiring students towards a brighter future.”

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Date : 28.09.2023

Assistant General Manager (Regional Manager)
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UP leaders to lead election campaigns in MP, Rajasthan

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

With assembly elections in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh round the corner, the Bharatiya Janata Party is entrusting senior ministers and party officials from Uttar Pradesh with electoral responsibilities.

The campaign in these crucial states will see Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak leading the charge, while other ministers and party officials will oversee election management.

In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP's formidable team, including Yogi, Keshav Prasad, Brajesh Pathak and Babyrani

Maurya will take out the Jan Ashirwad Yatra.

The election management responsibilities in MP are entrusted to the Minister of State for Cooperation (Independent Charge), JPS Rathore, who also takes charge of 25 assembly constituencies in the Bhopal division.

Laxmikant Bajpai, the party's national vice president, has been appointed as the in-charge for ten assembly and three Lok Sabha constituencies.

Meanwhile, in Rajasthan, the BJP has assigned national general secretary Arun Singh to take charge of election coordination. State general secretary Govind Shukla will be stationed at the state headquarters in Jaipur to manage election

arrangements. The task of overseeing 29 assembly constituencies in the Ajmer, Bhilwara, Tonk and Nagaur divisions has been entrusted to former minister Mahendra Singh.

Furthermore, to bolster the party's presence in Rajasthan, 66 MLAs from Uttar Pradesh have been dispatched to the various assembly constituencies in the state for the second phase of campaigning, following the return of the MLAs sent during the first phase.

"The BJP's strategic allocation of responsibilities to seasoned leaders and officials highlights the party's commitment to securing victory in these crucial assembly elections. As the political landscape

in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh heats up, all eyes will be on the campaign efforts and election management led by these experienced BJP stalwarts," Rajesh Narain, a political analyst said.

Meanwhile, the BJP leadership has given the responsibility of media management in electoral states to three BJP spokespersons in Uttar Pradesh. "Rakesh Tripathi for Madhya Pradesh, Manish Shukla for Chhattisgarh and Alok Awasthi for Rajasthan have been entrusted with the responsibility," a government spokesman said.

These spokespersons previously had a similar role during the last state legislative elections in Uttar Pradesh.

No let-up in turmoil over comments against Sanatan dharma

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The political turmoil over the comments made by opposition leaders on Sanatan dharma is showing no signs of let-up with the Bahujan Samaj Party MP now opening a front and attacking those speaking against it.

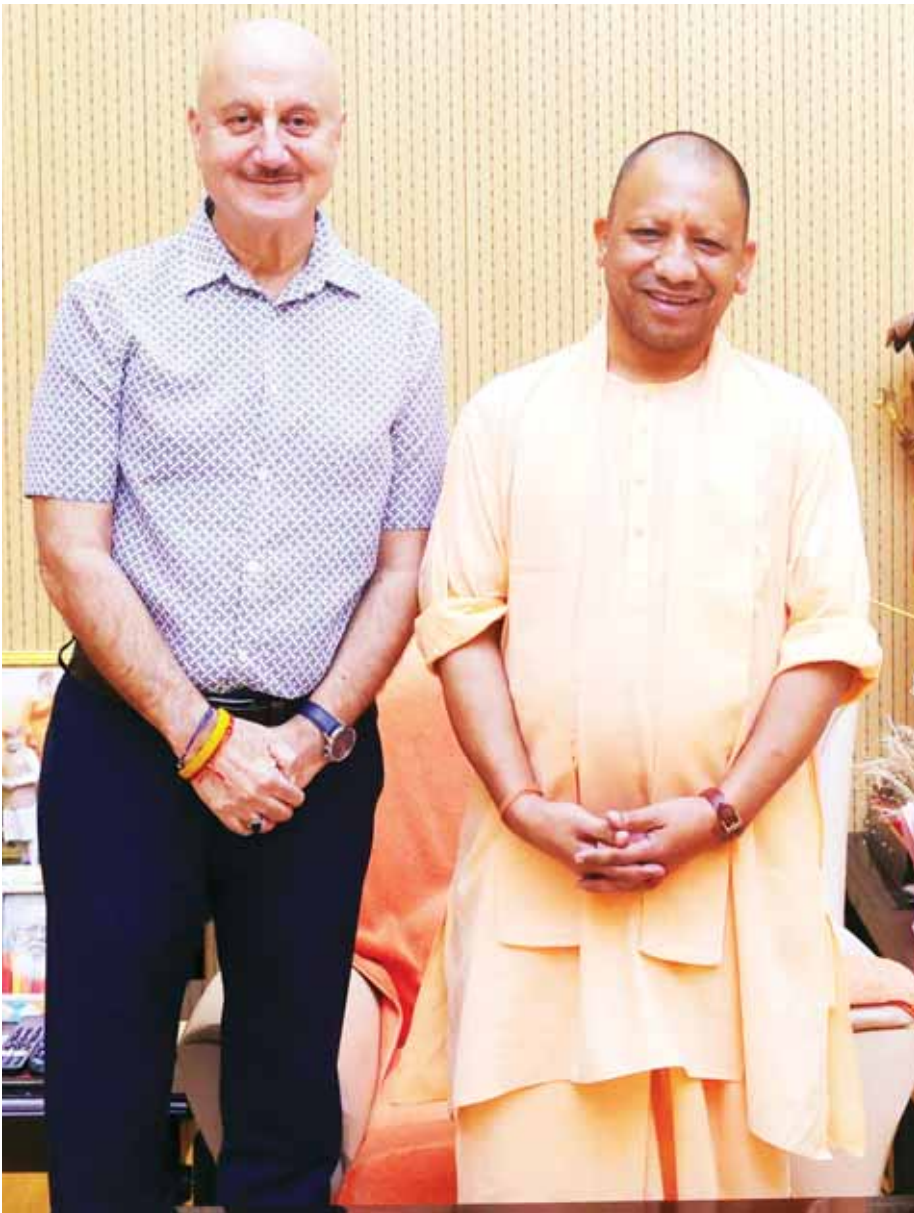
Tamil Nadu minister and DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin and leader of Uttar Pradesh's major opposition party Samajwadi Party Swami Prasad Maurya were seen spewing venom against Sanatan dharma. Due to this, anger was seen amongst the public while the politics of the country as well as the state became heated over the issue.

BSP MP Malook Nagar, while opening a front against those making objectionable comments on Sanatan dharma, said: "Whosoever is speaking against Sanatan dharma is wrong; it is the responsibility of Congress that none of its constituents should speak against it. No one has the right to speak against anyone else's caste and religion."

It is clear from these statements of Malook Nagar that by taking the name of the Congress, included in the INDIA bloc, he was directly targeting Samajwadi Party leader Swami Prasad Maurya and Tamil Nadu minister and DMK leader Udhayanidhi Stalin.

Nagar said that people should work within the ambit of law. "Whosoever works for the country is right," he said, adding that backward people should get reservation.

The BSP leader also attacked the Congress which is running shoulder to shoulder with the Samajwadi Party and DMK in the INDIA bloc. Both DMK and SP leaders have so far spoken against Sanatan dharma.



Actor Anupam Kher pays a courtesy call on Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow on Thursday

Pioneer

Father-son duo held for hoisting Pak flag

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A man and his son were arrested and charged with treason for hoisting the Pakistani flag on the roof of their house in Moradabad. The action was taken after a video went viral on social media on Thursday morning.

Reports said that a video in Bhagatpur police station area went viral on social media and

the Pakistani flag was seen placed on the roof of a house and hoisted by two persons on Thursday morning.

As soon as the Bhagatpur police received information about the viral video. They reached the spot and took photographs. They also made a video of the flag installed on the roof of the house, owned by one Raees. The cops subsequently took Raees and his son

Salman, seen hoisting the flag, in custody.

The police have registered a case of treason against Raees, a textile businessman, along with his son Salman. The Pakistani flag was removed from the roof of Raees's house by the police. Both the accused were later produced before a magistrate from where they were sent to jail while further investigations were on.

Change of guard certain in MP, says Akhilesh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

National president of Samajwadi Party and former UP Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav said on Thursday that the change of guard is certain in Madhya Pradesh in view of the "utter failure" of the ruling dispensation in the state.

"The Samajwadi Party aims to defeat BJP in Madhya Pradesh. A large number of socialist leaders have emerged here. There is a huge scope for socialists in MP and the future of socialist ideology has a big canvass to expand itself. From time to time, the Samajwadi Party MLAs have been winning in Madhya Pradesh and fighting for the rights of the people," Yadav pointed out.

On the second day of his two-day visit to MP, Yadav, while addressing a press conference in Khajuraho, Akhilesh said that the Samajwadi Party would contest elections in the areas where its organisation is strong and where its candidates are in a position to win.

"In the last assembly elections,



the Samajwadi Party won one seat and contested very strongly at many places, but the BJP defeated them through conspiracies," he said.

"The Samajwadi Party is a part of the INDIA bloc. We (PDA) are working on a strategy to defeat BJP by uniting the backwards, Dalits and minorities. The

Samajwadi Party India is working to further strengthen the alliance. It is certain that the INDIA bloc-led government will be formed at the Centre in 2024. In Madhya Pradesh, the SP will play an important role in defeating the BJP and changing the power scepter," he said.

The SP supremo said that if

they get a chance to come to power, they will give Rs 6,000 every month to women as stipend. "Tribal people will be given their rights and respect and lakhs of rupees will be given to build houses. The Samajwadi Party will give all the castes their rights and respect by conducting caste census in Madhya Pradesh," Akhilesh

said while speaking about his poll promises. He said that the BJP has been in power in Madhya Pradesh for the last 20 years, but has not given full reservation to the backward classes.

"Despite the BJP having been in power for a long time both at the Centre and in the state, it neglected the tribals, backward classes, Dalits and farmers. The BJP government neither gave rights nor respect to the deprived classes in Madhya Pradesh. There are a lot of injustice and atrocities being committed against women in Madhya Pradesh, but the BJP government has not been able to provide them security. It is clear from the NCRB data that the BJP-ruled states, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, are on top in the country in terms of crimes against women," he alleged.

Akhilesh questioned why the BJP was not giving tickets to women on 33 per cent seats in the assembly elections of Madhya Pradesh and other states. "Farmers, youth, poor, all sections of society are unhappy in Madhya Pradesh," he claimed.

2nd phase of Sita temple begins with Vedic rituals

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Besides the majestic Ram Lalla temple in Ayodhya, construction of a magnificent temple dedicated to Goddess Sita is underway.

This endeavor is spearheaded by the Shri Sita Nivas Seva Trust, and so far 40 per cent of the construction work has been completed.

On Wednesday, the second phase of construction commenced with Vedic rituals and the offering of traditional attire by head trustee Uday Prakash Singh. The upcoming phase will focus on the construction of the sanctum sanctorum, hall and circumambulation path within the temple premises.

The temple is expected to be completed alongside the grand Ram temple by December.

Trust chairman Mahant Avanish Das Maharaj said that it was a unanimous view of the trustees, that in addition to Lord Ram's temple, a magnificent temple for Goddess Sita should also be built. "That temple will be dedicated to Ram Lalla and this will be to Ma Sita," he said.

Uday Prakash Singh elaborated that

the commencement of this phase included an auspicious ceremony where a Brahmin priest was honoured with traditional attire, followed by a bhaj (communal meal). He further said that the temple complex would comprise 14 AC and 4 non-AC rooms, which would be offered free of charge to pilgrims. The temple would also provide continuous service to students and run various charitable activities alongside the ongoing temple construction.

In attendance at this auspicious event were other prominent officials of the Trust, including treasurer Rakesh Singh Paliwal, vice-chairman Murli Dhar Pandey, secretary Aniruddh Pandey and several others.

The construction of the Sita temple stands as a testament to the spiritual significance and devotion to Lord Ram and Goddess Sita in the hearts of the people of Ayodhya.

"As the city continues to witness the transformation of its spiritual landscape, the Sita Temple's completion will further enrich the cultural and religious heritage of Ayodhya, welcoming devotees and travelers alike," Uday Prakash Singh added.

Headless body of woman recovered in Banda

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The headless body of an unidentified woman was discovered in the bushes near Chamraha Mod village in the Mataundh locality of Banda district on Thursday morning.

After receiving the information, the police rushed to the spot along with sniffer dogs to locate the missing head, but they did not succeed. The victim was found in a semi-naked condition with her fingers and thumb of the left hand also having been cut.

Police said that the killing had taken place, probably after rape, somewhere else and later the body was dumped here to conceal the crime.

The body was sent for post-mortem and efforts were on to ascertain the identity of the victim, police said.

Reports said that Ramprakash, a Chowkidar at Chamraha village, saw the body of an unknown woman lying inside the bushes on Thursday morning. The victim's head was chopped-off with a sharp-edged weapon and missing from the spot.

Ramprakash immediately informed Mataundh police station. Soon after getting information, Additional SP, Lakshmi Niwas Mishra and police station incharge, Ram Dinesh Tiwari rushed to the spot. They also summoned the forensic team at the spot to collect evidence.

The cops said that due to absence of clothes on the body, there was a possibility of a rape as well.

ASP said that the spot was barely five hundred metres away from Chhatarpur border in Madhya Pradesh so they also passed on the information to the police officials of neighbouring Gaurihar police station and sought their help in ascertain the identity of the victim and to nab the accused involved in the sensational incident.

Bihar minister takes swipe at BJP, RSS

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Shrawan Kumar, Bihar's cabinet minister and incharge of the Uttar Pradesh unit of Janta Dal United, in an acerbic attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), said that its guide and mentor Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has been against the country since the beginning and has even glorified the murderer of Mahatma Gandhi.

Kumar was speaking at a programme organised at Baberu in Banda district on Thursday. He claimed that the first Deputy Prime Minister of India and Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, had banned the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, saying "it does not train patriots but murderers."

"On July 17, 1948, the founder of Jan Sangh, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, wrote a letter to the then home minister of the country, seeking favour for the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and requested him to release the arrested RSS men," the minister said.

Citing a write-up from



Gowalkar's book, he alleged that RSS's idol Golwalkar was opposed to giving equal status to Dalits, backward classes and minorities. The Bihar minister said that the BJP follows the footsteps of the RSS and its policy is the same as it has been tutored by the RSS over the years.

A spokesman of the party said that a campaign was being organised to mobilise the workers and leaders and prepare a ground for the party in UP.

The minister said that the campaign is being organised on the theme, 'Save Constitution, Save Democracy - Eradicate Hatred and Bring Brotherhood.'

He said that the JD(U) is fast gaining popularity in UP and also getting a foothold in the state.

Suspending hospital licence against public interest: CPI (ML)

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) said on Thursday that the decision of the Yogi Adityanath government to suspend the licence of Sanjay Gandhi Hospital in Amethi was against public interest. He asked the government to reconsider its decision as it would deprive thousands of people of Amethi and surrounding areas from getting health facilities.

CPI (ML) state secretary Sudhakar Yadav said that those responsible for the death of the woman during treatment at the hospital should be punished and if the hospital did not have a licence for surgery, appropriate action should also be taken against it too. "However, suspending the licence of the hospital does not seem convincing," he said.

Meanwhile, the CPI (ML) state secretary expressed condolences on the demise of agricultural scientist Dr Swaminathan.

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2. Ram Naresh Singh S/o Ram Suhavan Singh R/o: Durga Nagar, Hariharganj, Fatehpur U.P. 212601	Demand Notice dt: 21.06.2022 Possession Dt: 21.09.2023 Outstanding Amount: Rs. 6,17,736+ Interest, etc.	Boundaries: North: Plot of Mevalal In Time Mevala's House. South: Plot of Smt. Ram Rati In Time Ram Rati's House. East: 20 Feett Kaccha Road.West: Baundri Uday Bhan Singh In Time House of Uday Bhan Singh's
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IIT-K introduces 3 eMasters degree programmes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K) has introduced three one-of-its-kind eMasters degree programmes in Data Science and Business Analytics, Financial Technology and Management and Power Sector Regulation, Economics and Management through the Department of Management Sciences. These executive-friendly e-Masters programmes are tailored to the growth occurring in the emerging fields of Data Science, FinTech, and Power.

Globally it is projected that data science will experience a 25 per cent growth by 2030 with a corresponding 36 per

cent increase in job opportunities. The FinTech sector is undergoing a transformative phase and is poised to capture 25 per cent of global banking valuations by 2040, marking a significant leap from the current two per cent in 2023. Equally compelling are India's ambitions in green energy, with the nation's plan to achieve 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, potentially attracting over US\$20 billion in investments in 2023. The new cohorts of eMasters programmes are designed to cater to the industry's surge, which demands skilled professionals to drive these transformations.

The executive-friendly eMasters degree programmes

do not require a GATE score for applying and can be pursued without pausing professional careers. Flexibility in completion time, ranging from one to three years, is provided as a part of these unique programmes. These industry-relevant programmes are delivered in a high-impact format, featuring live interactive classes on weekends and self-paced learning. The 60-credit, industry-focused, real-world curricula are taught by world-class faculty and researchers from IIT-K. Additionally they offer a credit transfer facility, allowing for the transfer of up to 60 credits for higher education (MTech/PhD) at IIT-K. In addition eMasters participants

will gain access to the IIT-K placement cell, incubation cell, and alumni network, providing a rich career advancement and networking experience. As part of the immersive learning experience, participants will have the opportunity to visit the IIT-K campus to meet eminent faculty and network with experienced professionals. Upon completion, participants will be granted alumni status at this prestigious institute. Professionals who opt for these programmes will acquire multidimensional expertise to tackle the challenges needed to shape the future of the country.

Following the successful completion of two enrollment cycles the eMasters programme

is witnessing a surge in applications for batch 3. Applications are open until October 31 for fresh cohorts scheduled to commence in January 2024.

Over 100 professionals have already completed eMasters degrees in diverse domains, successfully advancing their careers in new-age sectors. In contrast to most diploma or professional courses, the eMasters degree programme at IIT-K also confers formal Senate-approved degrees during convocation.

SCUFFLE ISSUE: BJP MP Satyadeo Pachauri, while holding the corporator's husband a 'criminal', said he would recommend her expulsion from the

party by writing a letter to the state president. The issue of scuffle between a BJP corporator's husband and a medicine trader had assumed a political colour. When the supporters of Assembly Speaker Satish Mahana were seen in support of corporator Saumya Shukla, MP Satyadeo Pachauri has held her husband a 'criminal'. Talking to a delegation which met him in support of the medicine trader on Thursday, Pachauri said the person involved in the incident was a 'criminal' and police had announced a cash reward of ₹25,000 on him. He would ask the state BJP president to expel his corporator wife from the party. The victim medicine

trader had seemingly lost his eye which was not less than a murder, he added. Late on Saturday night in a bid to overtake his car, BJP corporator Saumya Shukla and her husband Ankit Shukla allegedly had a debate with Amol Deep Singh Bhatia, owner of Perfect Surgical in front of LLR (Hallet) Hospital. Both the parties had a pitched battle and exchanged punches and bouts in the middle of the street. Amol sustained serious injury and is undergoing treatment at the Sir Gangaram Hospital, Delhi. Both the parties have put up their own pleas and allegations regarding the incident. Besides, police lodged FIR against the corporator's husband.

6-yr-old boy falls from auto, dies

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A six-year old student, returning to home from his school, was killed after falling from the auto in Kampli police area on Wednesday afternoon. Kamalkant (6) of Hotapur, Kampli, was a student of LKG in Kampli. He used to go to school daily on auto. On returning home with other children from the school, the auto broke down. The driver made all the children board another auto. Kamalkant suddenly fell from the auto near Naga Syed village, and sustained serious injury. He was admitted to CHC where doctors declared him dead. The body was sent for an autopsy.

‘Swachhta Abhiyan’ at railway station

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Hundreds of students, including faculty of National Sugar Institute (NSI), took part in the 'Swachhta Abhiyan' carried out at the Kalyanpur railway station. The staff and students, including the 'safai karamcharis' cleaned the entire platform and the surrounding areas of the station. The drive is the part of the ongoing fortnight-long drive launched by the NSI which will continue till October 2. Nodal Officer Ashok Garg said the drive was being carried out on the directive of PM Narendra Modi and CM Yogi Adityanath. He said the the NSI teams were divided into two groups and each group was assigned two different tasks. He said the NSI students appealed to the people at the platform that it was their platform and thus it needs to be kept clean. He said they were informed that instead of throwing garbage around it



was essential to put it in the dustbins kept on the platform. He said they were advised to drop dry garbage and wet garbage separately.

TWO KILLED: A driver and a cleaner were killed when their speeding vehicle going towards Lucknow suddenly fell into a 25 ft deep pit after dismantling the divider and overturned there on Agra-Lucknow Expressway under Aaral police area of Bilhaur early on Thursday morning. The police took both the injured to the

community health centre where they were declared dead by the doctors. SHO Prem Chand Kanaujia said around 6.30 am, a vehicle laden with iron ladders was going to Lucknow from Agra. After its driver dozed off, it suddenly became uncontrolled and overturned after falling into a pit. Vimlesh Kashyap (25) of Kesarnau Kalan, Itaunja, Lucknow, and Om Prakash (41) of Rajaram Patti, Mathura, were crushed under the vehicle. With the help of a hydra,

the police rescued them and took them to the CHC where they were declared dead by the doctors. The kin of the deceased had been informed and further action will be initiated on their arrival, SHO said.

Meanwhile panic prevailed in Chamanganj police area when the basement of a building caught fire on Wednesday. At the time of incident, the electric wiring work was on in the basement. Immediately, police and fire brigade rushed to the spot. The basement of a building in Ghosiya Gali near Mohd Ali Park caught fire around 1.30 pm. During construction of a gym, electric wiring work was on in the basement and a fire broke out. CFO Deepak Sharma said he had received the information through mini control room. Fire tenders were rushed deputed to the spot. No casualty was reported in the incident, he said.

Stress on motivating people for ‘shramdaan’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer while addressing a meeting to review development work at the Collectorate took a feedback on the progress of Ayushman card for three projects — Har Ghar Nal Se Jal, Swachhta Hi Seva Abhiyan and Ayushman Bharat. He directed the officials of the Jal Jeevan Mission to settle all land disputes and with the help of Jal Nigam and agencies issues should be settled on top priority. He said by all means all disputes need to be settled and the work should take off by October 15.

He also issued necessary directives to the executive engineer Jal Nigam (Rural). He said wherever the road cutting and road digging work had been carried out the road at all such places needs to be repaired and brought back to their original



District Magistrate Visakh G Iyer addressing a review meeting at the Collectorate

shape. He said the work needs to be carried out exactly as per the norms with no compromise on quality. He said in places where the work was complete information should be sent to the zila panchayat raj adhikari, EE and other officials.

He directed the working agencies where the pipeline was being laid that earth filling should be carried out. He reiterated that in the state

Swachhta Abhiyan had been launched and will continue till October 2. He said at least 207 hours of cleanliness drive needs to be carried out mandatorily. He directed the KNN and other officials, including the NGOs, to ensure they cooperated in the project. He said the cleanliness drive was being launched in 110 wards. Thus an awareness programme needs to be launched and people need to

be motivated for 'shramdaan'. He said wall paintings and slogans and paintings need to be put up for mass awakening. He warned that there should not be garbage piles or littering in Kanpur. He also directed the CDO to ensure that Ayushman card be prepared on a war footing and directed the CMO to ensure Ayushman Golden Card was also prepared at the earliest.

‘Clean Reservoir, Park Day’ observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Along with the entire Indian Railways, under the ongoing 'Cleanliness Fortnight' being run on the theme of 'Swachhta Hi Seva' from September 16 to October 2, the 12th day was observed as 'Clean Reservoir and Park Day' on Wednesday. During the day, under the guidance of the officers nominated by the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava, a campaign was launched to make the parks and pond areas located in the circulating areas of many stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) including Banaras, Varanasi City, Prayagraj Rambagh, Ghazipur City, Mau, Azamgarh, Ballia, Belthara Road, Bhatni, Deoria Sadar, Chhapra, Siwan etc clean and trees were planted in vacant places to make the passengers and general public aware about cleanliness. An intensive cleaning campaign was conducted in the parks and reservoir and its surroundings located in the circulating area of Banaras station and passengers were made aware about cleanliness by taking out a cleanliness rally. Pamphlets were distributed at



Reservoir at Banaras station premises being cleaned in Varanasi on Wednesday.

Banaras station to make passengers aware about cleanliness. At Deoria Sadar station, people were made aware about the environment by planting trees on unused vacant land while cotton bags were distributed among the passengers and employees at Mau railway station. Special cleaning drive was also launched at the park areas at Azamgarh station while pamphlets were distributed at Prayagraj Rambagh station, cleanliness campaign done at Ghazipur City station and street play staged at Chhapra

station premises.

Earlier, 'Clean Water Day' was observed and during the day, various offices located at Banaras and Varanasi City railway stations, Jalvihar Railway Colony of Lahartara and others at different stations of the Varanasi Division including Chhapra, Mau, Siwan, Ballia, Azamgarh, Bhatni, Deoria Sadar etc the purity, cleanliness and uninterrupted water supply of drinking water available through water coolers, water vending machines and water purifiers installed on the plat-

forms and other places were properly checked.

During the drive, the purity of water was checked through TDS monitors by the teams of senior divisional medical officers and health inspectors under the leadership of Chief Medical Superintendent Dr RJ Chaudhuri and others. They also made improvements as per the need. On this occasion, the team of senior supervisors under the leadership of Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar ensured the availability of drinking water in trains and stations, cleanliness of water tanks, water taps, filter plants and water booths. Chlorine in water coolers and RO plants was checked and the expiry date and quality of packed water bottles available for sale at food stalls was thoroughly checked and rectifications were made as per requirement. Besides, water samples were collected from the water booths of Banaras and Varanasi City railway stations. Chlorine content was checked and water samples were taken for bacteria testing and packaged drinking water bottles from the food stall/refreshment room were tested and the sample was collected and sent to the lab.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In a groundbreaking innovation that has the potential to transform the energy storage landscape, a team of researchers from the Department of Physics, Institute of Science, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has successfully synthesised cutting-edge cathode materials designed to charge sodium ion batteries. These materials promise enhanced capacity and prolonged battery life, leading to more powerful and longer-lasting sodium ion batteries. A prototype battery pack featuring these innovative cathode materials has already been put to the test in an e-bicycle. Traditional lithium-ion batteries have long been the go-to choice for energy storage, but sodium ion batteries offer a compelling alternative. Unlike lithium, sodium is abundant and inexpensive, making it an eco-friendly choice. Moreover, sodium ion batteries possess chemistry similar to lithium, adding to their appeal. However, challenges like safety, stability, and energy density have held back their widespread adoption. A team of dedicated scientists from



Physics department, BHU led by Prof Rajendra Kumar Singh has addressed these challenges. Other members of the team included Raghvendra Mishra, Rupesh Kumar Tiwari, Anupam Patel, Anurag Tiwari, Vikash, Shitanshu and Samridhi. The team not only developed sodium nickel manganese cobalt oxide (Na-NMC) and sodium nickel manganese iron oxide (NFM) cathode materials but has also designed novel sodium super ionic conducting solid-state electrolytes tailored specifically for sodium ion batteries. This achievement was made possible through support from the Ministry of Education and the SERB-supported IMPRINT II project. These findings have been featured in reputed, high-

impact international journals like the Journal of Power Sources, ACS Applied Materials and Interfaces, Energy & Fuels, Journal of Energy Storage, and Chemical Engineering Journal, etc. The newly created cathode materials offer both high capacity and extended battery life, revolutionizing sodium ion batteries. The breakthrough lies in the innovative sodium super ionic conducting solid-state electrolytes, which efficiently transport sodium ions within the battery. This development significantly enhances the battery's safety, stability, and energy density. To complement this achievement, an industry collaborator has developed a compatible battery management system (BMS) and a suitable charger. According

to Prof Rajendra Kumar Singh, "Sodium ion batteries hold the key to providing a cost-effective and sustainable energy storage solution. This breakthrough has the potential to accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, and overall energy sustainability."

The research journey involved synthesising solid electrolytes, optimising the composition of NaNMC and NFM cathode materials, and fabricating cylindrical cells. A prototype battery pack, consisting of sodium ion cylindrical cells (42 V, 6Ah pack), was tested in an e-bicycle, achieving an impressive 54 km distance on a single charge with a maximum speed of 30 km/hr. As the world places an increasingly urgent emphasis on sustainability and cost-effectiveness, these advancements by the research team could serve as a significant boost to the 'Make in India' initiative and facilitate the commercialisation of sodium ion batteries. With readily available raw materials, the potential for cost reduction, and increased energy density, sodium ion batteries have the potential to reshape our energy storage landscape, propelling us toward a cleaner and more sustainable world.

 **ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ**
ਨੋਟਿਸ
ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕੈਂਪਸ ਵਿਖੇ ਵਰਕਿੰਗ ਸਟੇਡ (ਮੈਨ ਗੇਟ ਅਤੇ ਬੈਕ ਸਟੇਡ ਗੇਟ) ਦੀ ਆਲਟਰੇਟਿਵ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਬਿਨੈ-ਪੱਤਰ ਮਿਤੀ 16-10-2023 ਤੱਕ ਮੰਗੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਆਲਟਰੇਟਿਵ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਵੇਰਵਾ, Term & Conditions ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵੈਬਸਾਈਟ www.gndu.ac.in-(Tenders) ਤੋਂ ਦਾਯੋਗਤਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਬਿਨੈ-ਪੱਤਰ ਜਨਰਲ ਸ਼ਾਖਾ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ।
ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ

Conduct survey: DEO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate/ District Electoral Officer (DM/DEO) S Rajalingam directed the ADEO, ERO and other concerned officers to conduct house survey where the Electoral Population (EP) ratio is more and the BLO should play an important role in this work. Chairing a meeting at the auditorium in the office of the DC here, he directed the ERO to conduct random inquiry of polling centres/booths.

Retirement age of SIDA employees increased

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The employees of State Industrial Development Authority (SIDA) will now retire at the age of 60 instead of 58 as the Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma gave his nod to the proposal regarding this.

Chairing the 40th meeting of the Board of SIDA held here on Wednesday, its Chairman and DC Sharma gave his approval to the proposal to extend the retirement age of the employees of the Authority from 58 to 60 years. The meeting gave its not to the proposal to start the process at the earliest regarding the acquirement of 1000 acre land in Shahganj for the development of Authority and 100 acre land near it. The other proposals such as to adopt the operating manual-2023 of UPSIDA, install high mast light in view of the electricity problem in SIDA, hire a servicing agency on contract to install lights at the poles and also make their maintenance, construct the road, etc were also approved by the DC. Sharma gave his consent to make a visit to SIDA

and conduct its inspection and directed the officers of Authority to give special priority to the process of acquiring the land and interest of industrialists. The Chief Executive Officer of SIDA Anuj Kumar Jha proposed the vote of thanks.

PROGRAMME HELD: The Sunbeam Academy held a programme at its branch in Samne Ghat here on the occasion of World Tourism Day. Dr Ajay Singh of Incredible Tourist Guide, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Rashid Khan, Director, Buddha Holidays, Subhash Kapoor, MD, Superb Travel & Tours and Abhishek, Secretary, Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India and others were present on the occasion as guests. Secretary, Sunbeam Academy Jaideep Madhok, Director Poonam Madhok, CEO Rohan Madhok and Dy Director Dr GP Mishra welcomed the guests. The students of the branch were imparted information about the various aspects of hotel management, tourism and hospitality and also inspired about their future by the guests.

Info about Cambridge curricula given



Principal Seth Anandram Jaipuria School Shikha Banerjee informing parents about Cambridge international curriculum

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Director of Jaipuria Group of Educational Institutions Dr Neeta Bali while informing parents about the Cambridge curricula at the school's auditorium said the Cambridge international curriculum is popular for Indian students seeking a high-quality education that prepares them for a globalised world. She said there are many benefits associated with pursuing education in this field in India, including academic rigour, worldwide

recognition and flexibility. Addressing the gathering principal Shikha Banerjee said Cambridge curricula was in fact was well-known for its rigorous academic standards and emphasised on individual learning, critical thinking and problem-solving skills. The course material was intended to be challenging for students while also preparing them for further university study. She said it also encouraged children to be creative and innovative, building their independent thinking skills and

allowing them to develop a love of learning. This was a framework for children's primary education, based on the education system in the UK and it was aimed at children aged 5-11. The Cambridge primary is an international curriculum, used in over 160 countries around the world. The programme focuses on engaging children in global topics, getting them to think critically and develop a passion for learning.

The primary curriculum is designed to provide learners with a solid foundation which they can build upon as they progress through further education.

Banerjee said it can be incorporated into a bilingual curriculum and there were six stages in this primary curriculum framework, with core and optional subjects offered at each stage. English (or English as a second language)-reading, writing and speaking and listening. In addition to this mathematics and science were also brought under this. Parents of primary school students participated in the session to gain a deeper understanding of the relevance of Cambridge curricula within the contemporary landscape of career opportunities.

Make vegetable farming employable, says Mishra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister (PM) Dr Pramod Kumar Mishra called upon the agricultural scientists to make vegetable farming employable and research on important topics like climate change, artificial intelligence, higher product value and processing is the need of the hour. He was speaking as the chief guest at the 33rd Foundation Day function of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Indian Vegetable Research Institute (IIVR) here on Thursday.

Dr Mishra praised the research work of the ICAR-IIVR (Varanasi) and said that the IIVR has played an important role in the vegetable production scenario of India. "The farmers can increase and double their income by diversifying agriculture through vegetables," he said, expressing hope that planting material will be easily available to the farmers through hi-tech vegetable nurseries which will benefit lakhs of farmers of Uttar Pradesh.

Speaking as a special guest Additional Chief Secretary of Uttar Pradesh government Dr Devesh Chaturvedi said in his address that UP is a leading state in vegetable production and farmers of Purvanchal (eastern UP) are now earning more income by exporting vegetables abroad. Deputy Director General (Crop Science



PS to PM Dr PK Mishra addressing Foundation Day function at IIVR in Varanasi on Thursday.

and Horticulture Science), ICAR, New Delhi, Dr Tilak Raj Sharma said that India is setting new dimensions every day in vegetable production and last year vegetables worth more than Rs 7,000 crore were exported.

The programme started with the inauguration of hi-tech vegetable nursery and plantation of trees in the institute campus. In his welcome address, IIVR Director Dr Tushar Kanti Behera highlighted the achievements of the institute so far and gave details of the action plan to double vegetable production by 2047.

On the occasion, various publications of the institute were released and for the best work after the year, Pradeep Karmakar in the scientific category, Sudhir Kumar in the technical category and Dr Manoj Kumar Pandey in the Agricultural Science Centre were given citations. The awards were also distributed to the school students. An agricultural exhibition was also organised on this occasion. In this ceremony, PMO officials, Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma, District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam, Director General, Uttar

Pradesh Agricultural Research Council, Lucknow, Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh, officers of agriculture and horticulture departments of the state, the scientists, technical and administrative officers, support staff, research students, and senior officers of the institute apart from a large number of farmers and school students were also present.

The programme was conducted by Dr Dhananjay Pratap Singh, while the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Sudhakar Pandey, Assistant Director General (Horticulture), ICAR.

BHU tops among central varsities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has received the top position in the category of central universities in the 9th edition of 'Clarivate India Research Excellence Citation Awards-2023' for its excellent research work. This award is given to all the universities in the country. It is given for the excellent research work of one of the central universities. Dr Devendra Kumar Singh, Librarian of BHU, received the award in a function organised by Web of Science in New Delhi recently.

The Clarivate India Research Excellence Citation Awards-2023 is a unique award given to recognise excellence in education research in India. This award is organised once every two or three years and honours individuals and institutions who have made outstanding education research contributions in various categories and whose research



BHU Librarian Dr DK Singh receiving an award in New Delhi recently.

makes a significant impact in their chosen field.

In the direction of research excellence, the Central Library (BHU) is making available all

the important books and research journals of the world for the research work being done in the university, as a result of which this year the

Central Library of BHU was also given the Best Library Award by the Indian Library Association.

Varanasi first in UP in health ranking dashboard

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In the health ranking dashboard, Varanasi has once again secured the first position in the state by securing an 85 per cent score. The district has come first for the fifth time in the Health Ranking Dashboard. District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal praised the Health department for this achievement and encouraged them to provide quality services in future.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that recently the ranking of all the districts has been displayed in the state's health ranking dashboard (August). By continuously working as per the guidelines given by the DM, the district has secured the first position in the state for the fifth consecutive time. The health facilities being provided in the district are being supervised by the CDO. He said that according to the monthly dashboard, the district has achieved first place in the state in achieving 100 per cent HIV testing in relation to expected pregnancies and 100 per cent achievement in complete vaccination of children (BCG, Penta first, second and third, measles-rubella).

"Along with this, it stood second in the state in temporary means of family planning (Antara, Chhaya, Copper-T,



Arazilines CHC best in Varanasi as per UP Health Ranking Dashboard.

PPIUCD and IUCD), second in cesarean delivery in relation to delivery at Community Health Centres (CHCs) and fourth place in institutional delivery in relation to estimated delivery," he said, adding that apart from this, it has performed better on 16 indicators including complete vaccination.

According to the CMO, this time Arazilines CHC has got the first position while Harhua PHC, Pindra PHC, Chirgaon PHC, Misirpur (Kashi Vidyapeeth) CHC, Baraigon PHC, Cholaipur CHC and Sewapuri PHC secured from second to eighth places respectively and the district headquarters is at ninth position. The CMO congratulated the officers and health workers of the primary and community health centres (PHCs/CHCs) which were performing well and encouraged them to maintain the quality of services.

"Quality medical and health services of maternal-child health and family welfare programmes are being provided in all the government hospitals, CHCs/PHCs, Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) of the district," he said, informing that for this, good performance has been achieved under the collaborative supervision of Additional Chief Medical Officer (RCH) Dr HC Maurya and District Programme Manager (DPM) of National Health Mission Santosh Kumar Singh. "ASHA workers and ANMs have an important role in improving the indicators. ASHA workers mobilise beneficiaries from the community and bring them to the medical units," he said.

The CMO further said that the ranking of Varanasi is an honour to the front line workers. He directed all the health workers that the quality of

activities related to maternal health, child health, newborn health and nutrition should be maintained. The department is making continuous efforts to provide medical and health benefits to the last person of the community. This is the aim of the government and the department, he remarked.

Dr Chaudhary also said that the achievement of Varanasi should continue. "For this, all programme nodal officers, block programme managers, block community process managers, data operators, ANMs and other health workers have been directed to visit the regular blocks as well as VHSND, vaccination sessions, intervals and happy family days etc. Take people's feedback about the facilities provided there and ensure to improve it by taking appropriate action and ensuring 100 per cent data of all indicators on time," he said.

Poster hints at Priyanka contesting Lok Sabha poll from Phulpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Congress in Prayagraj is known for 'poster revolution'. Though demoralised the workers themselves, most of the times, issue posters to prove that they are still in the picture.

Now a new poster has been floated suggesting that Priyanka Gandhi will be contesting the Lok Sabha election from Phulpur in Prayagraj, the seat of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, which was later represented by several parties and politicians, including mafia don Atiq Ahmed.

The poster terms Priyanka as 'aandhi' (storm) and by the side of his picture a milestone is shown reading 'Phulpur 0

km'.

It may be mentioned here that some overenthusiastic office-bearers of the Congress had been expelled from the office for issuing posters without the knowledge of the leaders, but it has become a part of their life, so posters are released by the local Congress leaders from time to time to let the leaders recognise them.

Phulpur of Nehru is not that Phulpur now. Earlier it was a rural constituency, but after delimitation of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituencies, a huge urban area of Prayagraj city has become the part of Phulpur constituency.

Though nothing has been suggested by the party leaders, hundreds of posters of Priyanka Gandhi can be seen,

particularly in the urban areas of the Phulpur constituency, as if her name has been announced for this seat.

BEATEN TO DEATH: One person was beaten to death in a fight between two groups in a dispute over road in Jamua village of Meja. The family members took him to the hospital, where doctors declared him as brought dead. On getting information the police reached the spot and reviewed the situation.

A fight broke out between the two groups on Thursday afternoon. Lal Chandra Dubey, Bablu Dubey and a woman from one side were injured. However, Lalchandra was seriously injured. The family members took him to the hospital. But Lal Chandra (65) was

declared as brought dead there.

On information SHO Major Rajesh Upadhyay arrived with force and started investigation.

The women of the family of the deceased Lal Chandra said there was an altercation with neighbours Bunt Dubey, Bablu Dubey and Alok Dubey in connection with the dispute over road. The altercation turned into a fight and the opposite party allegedly thrashed Lal Chandra with bricks, stones and sticks killing him on the spot.

Police station in-charge Rajesh Upadhyay said the elderly man injured during the fight died. All the accused are still absconding. The body has been taken sent for the post-mortem examination.

New V-C of Dr Rajendra Prasad NLU takes charge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Newly-appointed Vice-Chancellor of Dr Rajendra Prasad National Law University (NLU) Prof Usha Tandon took charge on Thursday. On the very first day she held a meeting with subordinates and discussed how academic and administrative activities could be started as soon as possible.

She said a registrar will also be appointed in the university soon. Chief Revenue Officer Kunwar Pankaj has been given the responsibility of special officer of the university.

Prof Tandon said "our aim is to produce world class law professionals from this city of justice. Such an academic environment can be created in which students can prepare themselves for global competition. There is a need for good and knowledgeable professionals in the field of law not only in India but also abroad. One can also earn good money



Prof Usha Tandon

abroad".

The construction work of Law University campus is going on in Jhalwa here. Now it may take another 6 to 8 months. Till the completion of the construction, the university will operate from the BBS Engineering College campus. Right now

the V-C will sit there.

Prof Tandon, who is originally from Delhi, received her law education from Delhi University. She has over 30 years of academic experience in the field of law. She has written six books on various aspects of law related to environmental

protection and women's rights.

ARRESTED: A coaching operator sexually exploited a minor student for one and a half months in Dhoomanganj area and threatened to fail her if she opened her mouth. As a result the student remained silent. Seeing her daughter upset, when the mother asked her she narrated her ordeal. The police has arrested him and sent him to jail.

According to the police, the victim is a resident of Bamhrauli area and a student of class X. She had joined the class to study mathematics and science. When she returned from coaching on September 21, her mother became suspicious on seeing her condition. When the mother asked her forcefully, the daughter told her the reason.

The police have registered a case against the accused under a POCSO Act and molestation. The accused has been arrested and sent to jail.

Ramlila to focus on creating lively experience for audience

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The authorities of Pajawa Ramlila Committee have decided to set up a two-storey stage for performing Ramlila. Interestingly, entry of a 20-feet Lord Hanuman and demon queen Surpanakha will be shown flying in different parts of Ramlila. Besides, the episode of 'Sita haran' (kidnapping of Goddess Sita) will also be staged using latest technology. The committee has also planned to showcase the flying of 'Pushpak Viman' during the

Ramlila episode. The fight between Lord Ram and demon king Ravan will be showcased with the help of laser technology.

The students pursuing management, graduation and post-graduation courses are being imparted training to do justice with their assigned roles. Pajawa Ramlila will begin from October 15 and culminate on October 22.

There will be eight light and sound based episodes for the entire Ramlila from birth of Lord Ram to victory over

Lanka.

Sachin Kumar Gupta, director and finance secretary of Pajawa Ramlila committee told mediapersons, "A special ropeway is being made to help different characters to move from one end to another. However, after introduction of light and sound system, majority of Ramlila episodes are being staged more precisely and lively.

Management students here are taking on prominent roles such as Lord Ram, brother Laxman, and Goddess Sita in

the Pajawa Ramlila committee. This year's Ramlila will feature light and sound effects to enhance the storytelling, including scenes such as Sita Haran and Hanuman bringing Sanjivani.

Students from various colleges and universities will be playing the prime characters, while a team of technical experts will create visual effects. The Ramlila will run from October 15 to 22, with a focus on creating a more lively and impactful experience for the audience.

Man's body found hanging from tree

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The body of one person was found hanging from a tree in the jungle under the Rajgarh police station on Thursday. Giving details, Circle Officer (CO)/ Operation Anil Kumar Pandey said after the Rajgarh police was informed that the body was hanging in the jungle near Raikara village he and the police team reached the spot. According to the police the deceased was later identified as Mahendra alias Rannu (37) of Perh village under Ghorawal police station, Sonbhadra. After taking the body into possession the police is busy in completing the legal formalities, the CO added.

INSPECTED: District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan has decided to recover fine if anyone was found spitting in the Parikrama area of Vindhychal. Such decision was taken by her while inspecting the ongoing construction works under Vindhya Corridor project at Vindhychal along with MLA city Ratnakar Mishra on Wednesday. She has warned shopkeepers to maintain the area as no-tobacco zone and directed the police as well as other officials to follow the direction in view of the sanctity of the area.

The official concerned was taken to task for not comply-



ing with the direction of the earlier meeting in which the clear direction had been given to set up a borewell. She directed the EE Power Corporation to complete the work of underground cable within this month. The working agency concerned was warned to complete the work within stipulated time otherwise action will be taken because Navratri Mela was to start in a few days.

The working agencies were directed to complete roads, streets along with other works timely and cover drains. Later the DM inspected the repair work at Shastri Bridge and directed the working agency to complete the work till October 15. During the inspection she was accompanied by City Magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh and others.

REVIEWED: Divisional Commissioner (DC) Dr Muthukumarasamy Bhas while reviewing the progress in division's works costing more than Rs 50 lakh on Wednesday

directed the officials to complete them within the stipulated time and with quality.

Reviewing the works of Sonbhadra, especially under DMD Trust the DC became aware about the ongoing works, including roads and bridges. On the road from Babhanahva Tola to ITI school the working agency was directed to examine the quality of the entire work. Reviewing progress in other works, including roads and canals, the DC asked the working agencies to complete them within the stipulated time. The EO Nagar Palika Parishad Bhadohi was directed to maintain roads of the area along with other works maintaining the quality.

Reviewing the ongoing works under AMRUT project the DC was apprised by the working agency that most of the works, including laying of pipeline for potable water, overhead tanks, connection of water pipeline to the houses etc had been completed. About sewage

system the authority concerned stated that the work had been divided into different zones and most of the works, including laying of sewage pipeline and chambers for houses were at the verge of the completion. The DC said proper repair of roads which have become dilapidated due to the pipeline work was the responsibility of the working agency. The meeting was conducted by Joint Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mishra and was attended by Additional District Magistrate (ADM/Finance and Revenue) Shiv Pratap Shukla, Additional Commissioner Abhay Pandey, EO NPP Mirzapur Angad Gupta and other officials concerned.

ARRESTED: The Jigna police arrested an accused of illegal mining on Wednesday. During the inspection of sand mining sites the then mines officer had found illegal mining in Khairi village under Jigna police station. The officer had filed a case on April 8, 2022. During investigation the name of Dinesh Kumar Yadav of Saray Rahchanda village under Mungarabadshahpur police station, Jaunpur, had come to light but he was still at large. Station Officer of Jigna handed over the case to sub-inspector Abhay Narain Tiwari and the accused was nabbed from his residence.

FIRST COLUMN

RESPECT INDIA'S SOVEREIGNTY

Canada must not allow its soil to be used for anti-India activities



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Story of agents executing transnational operations, intelligence agencies sharing crucial information, backchannel diplomatic conversations, political instability and every chapter from a racy spy thriller is playing out for the world audience, with Canada and India in the lead for the past few weeks. In a hurried and perhaps half-baked allegation Canadian PM Justine Trudeau blamed Indian agencies for carrying out extra-territorial executions of Canadian citizens.

India was quick to retort with a terse statement, which instead pointed out the long-standing issue of concern between the two countries in the form of Canada allowing Indian separatist groups to operate out of their country. The Indian statement said unequivocally “We have seen and reject the statement of the Canadian Prime Minister in their Parliament, as also the statement by their Foreign Minister. Allegations of the Government of India's involvement in any act of violence in Canada are absurd and motivated. Similar allegations were made by the Canadian Prime Minister to our Prime Minister and were completely rejected. Such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistan terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We reject any attempts to connect the Government of India to such developments. We urge the Government of Canada to take prompt and effective legal action against all anti-India elements operating from their soil.”

What is happening in the bilateral relationship is not a recent development but has been brewing for decades. Nearly forty years back India had demanded the extradition of a terrorist from Canada, responsible for one of the worst plane bombings in history, killing everyone on board an Air India flight. The several convicts responsible for the act of terror were never convicted by Canada, despite repeated inputs from India abandoning victims' families chasing long winding court cases for decades.

The reason Canada allows or even nurtures these anti-India forces

on its soil leads through the corridors of domestic politics. Millions of Indians particularly from Punjab make a substantial chunk of the Canadian demography. While most of them earn an honest living and are peace-loving, some notorious elements have managed to sneak into Canada, working through well-oiled semi-government machinery. Over some time, these criminals and terrorists wanted by India, have managed to control important real estate through the Gurudwaras committees. These mafia-controlled gurudwaras also serve as a conduit for fulfilling the immigration dream of thousands of Punjab youth, working with their India handlers across Punjab and several other states of north India. The modus operandi for getting ground force for staging anti-India acts from Canadian soil starts with a letter issued by Indian handlers, about the youth facing discrimination, and persecution due to his religion, in India. This sets the ball rolling for the youth to get an easy Canadian citizenship, on mercy grounds and feeds into domestic political narratives. In the present case too, the trigger was PM Trudeau's falling political popularity. A few months back he accused China of meddling with domestic politics even as he was trying to warm up the India bilateral, through a trade deal.

Canada understands the rising importance of India in the new global order, especially with China and Russia facing flak. It understands that a powerful, resilient, democratic India is important for a prosperous Indo-Pacific region, which indirectly translates to bringing more prosperity to its citizens. However, the domestic political concerns rise above geopolitics, and retaining the chair as PM seems more important for Trudeau at the moment. It may be argued that several news reports have pointed to US intelligence aid in Canadian allegations against India, however, the US knows which way the wind is blowing.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Regulatory boost to self-sufficiency in energy



UTTAM GUPTA

Modi Government is giving considerable policy support for the exploration of hydrocarbons so that investors can earn assured return on their investments

Delivering the 75th Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the country a target to achieve self-reliance in energy production by boosting the gas-based economy (besides giving a push to electric mobility and hydrogen production). Modi wants the share of natural gas (NG) in the total energy mix to go up from the current around 6 per cent to 15 per cent.

Currently, India imports 50 per cent of its NG requirement. This is because domestic production is hovering around a low of 28.6 - 34 billion cubic metres (bcm) in 2020-21 to 2021-22 (down from a peak of 52 bcm in 2010-11). There is a dire need to give a massive push to domestic output to meet the target. India has 26 sedimentary basins (SBs) covering an area of 3.4 million sq km that could be searched for hydrocarbon resources. Only six of the SBs are under commercial exploitation; these too are sub-optimally utilized.

Hydrocarbon exploration is a highly capital-intensive and technology-intensive business involving a long-gestation period. It is risk-prone especially when it comes to drilling in deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature (D/UD/HP/HT) fields in offshore areas such as the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin. However, these areas offer maximum promise in terms of reserves.

Multinational companies (MNCs) such as ExxonMobil, Chevron Total etc. which have the technology and resources can be enthused to take long-term bets in the Indian hydrocarbon sector provided the government offers them an opportunity to earn an attractive return on their investment in a 'sustained' basis. This in turn, requires that their efforts in the discovery and development of NG fields don't face regulatory hurdles leading to the commencement of production within a reasonable time frame and that they can sell the gas 'freely' at a 'remunerative' price. In all three areas, the MNCs faced impediments in the past. In recent years, the Modi - government has made significant progress in removing these though, a lot more ground remains to be covered. Let us look at the regulatory landscape.

Nearly 50 percent of SB area or 1.73 million sq km lies offshore. Out of this, until recently 0.69 million sq km lay in the prohibited zone (fondly referred to as 'No go' area) due to security reasons. Now, the incumbent government has released a 0.67 million sq km sedimentary basin lying offshore. This should give a big boost to exploration and production (E&P) activity.

Until hitherto, E&P firms were getting lease rights for short tenure though extendable by 10 years for gas/oil & gas fields and by five years for oil fields. They had to go to the bureaucrats to seek approval for an extension of the lease which came in the way of undertaking long-term investment commitment.

Now, the government has granted E&P rights over the entire economic life of the allotted fields (this could extend up to 30 years, even beyond depending on the available reserves and the pace of their exploitation) instead of the extant system of allowing extensions. This will enthrone global firms to undertake long-term investment bets as they know for sure in



TEAM MODI HAS IDENTIFIED 22 PROCESSES FOR WHICH SELF-CERTIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS BY CONTRACTORS IS ACCEPTED

(The writer is a Policy Analyst, views are personal)

advance that they will get to operate the field for their entire economic life

The government has passed the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, which says that seismic surveys (it is done in the initial stage to determine evidence of economically viable hydrocarbon resources below the ground) won't be treated as a non-forest activity. This implies that explorers would be granted prompt access to forest areas, thereby saving time spent on seeking permits.

Under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), also known as the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) launched in 2017, E&P firms are allowed to pick up a block of their choice unlike the earlier New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) (launched in 1999) wherein they had to accept what the government offered. Besides, under OALP, an operator gets a composite license to search for hydrocarbon in whatever form; for instance, if it is 'shale gas', she won't need a separate license for extracting it.

For long, E&P efforts were hamstrung by cumbersome procedures, multiple approvals and bureaucratic red tape. Approvals were needed at every stage viz. preparation of field development plans (FDP) including its revision, and extension of the contract, drilling wells, conducting tests to determine the commercial viability of the field, annual work program (AWP), laying the pipeline, reviewing production and so on. As many as 37 processes and procedures were required to be followed by a firm-awarded block under NELP.

Team Modi has substantially liberalised and de-bureaucratized the approvals. It has identified 22 processes for which self-certification of documents by contractors is accepted. Besides, it has provided for pre-approved clearance of blocks which will substantially cut the time lost in taking approvals. The government is also keen to opt for globally recognised and accepted dispute resolution mechanisms and play-based exploration.

Moreover, the 'revenue sharing' model under the OALP (currently in vogue) allows the operator to share an agreed percentage of the revenue with the Government of India (GOI) unlike the production sharing contracts (PSC) under erstwhile NELP wherein she could fully recover the cost incurred in exploration and development of the field before sharing profits with the GOI. The former does away with an additional layer of approval which was intrinsic to the latter wherein the costs incurred at every stage were subject to official scrutiny.

Coming to the selling of NG and realisation therefrom, in respect of gas from fields given under HELP/OALP, the operators are allowed freedom of pricing and marketing. This is a big positive for E&P firms that are being allotted fields under this policy. Furthermore, supplies from the so-called marginal fields (there are a total of 149) previously with the central PSUs viz. ONGC and OIL auctioned to private entities during 2020/21 are also eligible for freedom of pricing.

However, supplies from the so-called Legacy fields which account

for the bulk of the current gas supply are subject to government control over price as well as the marketing of the produce. The Legacy staff includes fields given to ONGC/OIL on a 'nomination' basis, those given under NELP and pre-NELP blocks. There are two price ceilings.

One, call it 'normal' price. Based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee and in force from April 1, 2023, this price expressed on a per million British thermal units (Btu) basis is arrived at by taking 10 per cent of the monthly average of the Indian crude basket in the preceding month and notified every month. The price thus calculated is subject to a price band of US\$4-6.50 per Btu.

Second, there is a 'premium' price applicable to the difficult fields. These are deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields (the high-profile KG-D6 operated by Reliance Industries and neighbouring KG-DWN-98/2 operated by ONGC fall in this category). Technically though the price of NG flowing from these fields is market-determined, this is subject to a ceiling linked to the prices of alternate fuels, viz., fuel oil, naphtha and imported LNG.


Even as the committee has recommended de-regulation of difficult gas fields' price by January 1, 2026, and that of normal price by January 1, 2027, the government is silent on this. Having substantially liberalized the regulatory space, besides removing the remaining hurdles, Modi needs to take the next logical step of unshackling marketing and pricing for supplies from the Legacy fields.

Save that beating heart with positive vibes

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is one of the major causes of mortality. On this World Heart Day let us resolve to correct our lifestyle, and adopt positivity to be from heart ailments

Roughly more than 17 Million people die each year from cardiovascular diseases, an estimated 32% of all deaths worldwide. Heart Attack is rising rather steeply in our country especially among young people in their 20s & 30s. To a very large extent, heart attack is self-inflicted by our faulty lifestyle, which we adopt right from childhood. Genetics definitely play a role but it can be modified by lifestyle optimisation.

The prevalence of Coronary Artery Disease in adults in India in the urban population is 14 per cent, while in the rural population, it is 8 per cent. One should not have a heart attack, especially when he or she is in their prime years. In fact, we are the cause and we are the cure of



HK CHOPRA

(The writer is chief cardiologist, Medanta Moolchand heart Institute, New Delhi; views are personal)

this malady of a premature heart attack at a young age. A healthy heart is an expression of our own perceptions, thoughts, interpretations and choice-making. Enhancing awareness about prevention and timely prediction and treatment of heart attack is the only solution to reducing the rising menace of heart attack in our country. Women are fortunate to have a lower prevalence of coronary artery disease before the age of 45 i.e. menopause. After menopause, the prevalence of CAD is the same as in men. Over 25 million people die of Heart Attacks in our country every year. Out of these, 16 lakh die within an hour of a Heart Attack before even medical aid is available.

While the mortality rate

from cardiovascular disease (CVD) has decreased by 60% in Japan and Finland, 50% in the USA, Canada and Australia and 25% in Europe, according to WHO projections, there will be a significant rise in mortality from CVD in India. The female population is at greater risk because metabolic syndrome The risk is significantly high in India.

Prevention of coronary artery disease must begin earlier especially at a young age before being victimised by a faulty lifestyle including erratic eating habits, drinking, smoking, high levels of stressful life with lack of sleep and burning both ends of the candle at the same time, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, uncontrolled hypertension, dyslipidemia and diabetes

which harden the arteries of the heart with increase tendency for clotting all of which establish the bedrock of heart disease.

The theme of World Heart Day this year is:

- Use your Heart to Beat CVD (Cardiovascular Disease)
- Work with your Heart, Know your risk factors
- Have Coordinated Efforts to improve your own Lifestyle and Diet
- Motivate yourself and others to reduce CVD Risks
- One Heart, One Home, One World
- Use your Heart to “Make Perfect Choices for a Healthy Heart for ourselves, our family, our community, our corporate, our society, our nation and the

world

The four sutras for an optimal Healthy Heart are love, compassion, peace and harmony” to make perfect choices for a healthy heart and beat CVD. These sutras (Suture or stitch) are possible through the regular practice of yoga, meditation and perfect lifestyle optimization, they connect the heart with the consciousness through a network of nerve fibres of the autonomic nervous system (Heart Plexuses) which are chemically mediated, nurtured with human values release natural opiates: endorphins, serotonin, dopamine acetylcholine, oxytocin and nitric oxide which preserve the endothelial functions, thereby maintaining the patency of coronary arteries and the har-

monious friendly biochemical environment within the blood vessel the heart thus remains healthy.

If kindness, compassion, love, peace and harmony are missing with cynical behaviour and hostility, then the heart is undernourished and stressed and the physiology changes to pathology. Fear, jealousy, hatred, anger, greed, lurking grief, vengeance, vindictiveness, bigotry, arrogance, greed, lust, ego and other negative emotions release jittery molecules (Chemicals) which comprise epinephrine, norepinephrine and cortisol which produce coronary artery diseases, alter the endothelial functions, agitate the platelets, oxidise Low-Density Lipoproteins (LDL). They may enhance the tendency of a vulnerable

plaque in the coronary artery to rupture, erode and ulcerate, thereby enhancing aggregation of platelets and enhancing thrombus (clot) formation thus leading to angina, acute Coronary Syndrome, Heart Attack, and even sudden Cardiac Death and Brain Attack. Just one fit of anger or negative stress can produce a massive heart attack

Emotions of love, compassion, peace and harmony are the most powerful sutras to have a healthy heart and may help in the prevention, regression and reversal of coronary artery diseases. This is possible by practicing perfect choices, and regular practice of meditation and yoga. Thus, the “Health of the Heart” is a matter of your own choice, and not a matter of chance.

Tributes pour in for ‘father of Green Revolution’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The death of renowned agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan is a profound loss to the scientific community but his legacy endures and will continue to guide the world towards sustainable food security and agricultural innovation, the scientists community said in its condolence message.

Experts were united in stating that Swaminathan, who dedicated his life to revolutionising agriculture and ensuring food security for all, leaves behind a legacy of innovation and dedication to sustainable farming. They are unanimous

in their sentiment that his contribution to the field will serve as an enduring beacon, guiding the world towards sustainable food security and pioneering agricultural innovations.

Dr Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan, the ‘Father of the Green Revolution’ who dedicated his life to revolutionising agriculture and ensuring food security for all, passed away in his Chennai home on Thursday at the age of 98.

“All of us have benefited immensely, directly or indirectly, from his vast contributions over the years. Without the Green Revolution in India, which he spearheaded, we

would not have achieved food security,” agriculturist Ranjitha Puskar, country representative for India and research at the Manila-headquartered International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), told a news agency.

She said his death was a tremendous loss to the scientific community in general and the agriculture fraternity in particular.

“He was the director general of IRRI and his legacy has guided the organisation and its researchers to this day... His mental agility and intellectual curiosity were as high as ever in the last few years and still pro-



vided great guidance, even though he was physically frail. Our deepest condolences to the agricultural sector worldwide on

this loss!” Puskar said.

Food researcher Mamata Pradhan said Swaminathan was a visionary, an inspiration,

and a role model.

“I was really fortunate to have worked with him very closely from 2007 to 2014 when we formed a coalition for food and nutrition security...” Pradhan, research coordinator, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) South Asia region, told an agency.

“He truly revolutionised Indian agriculture, worked towards self-sufficiency in food production when India was grappling with the threat of food insecurity and transformed India from a net importer of food grains to being a lead exporter to the global food basket. He was always looking for

solutions for sustainable farming and improving the lives of the farmers,” Pradhan added.

Swaminathan was born in Kumbakonam on August 7, 1925.

His father’s involvement in the freedom movement and Mahatma Gandhi’s influence inspired his passion for agricultural science.

He worked closely with former Prime Ministers of India, playing a pivotal role in the success of the Green Revolution, catapulting India from being a net food importer to a leading exporter and ensuring a “Hunger-free India & World”, according to his foundation.

Describing him “the greatest agricultural scientist the world has ever seen”, J Justin Mohan, former secretary of the National Biodiversity Authority, said Swaminathan’s contribution to designing agricultural policies and schemes helped not only India but other countries as well.

“I had the opportunity to work with him during my tenure in Lanka after the end of the armed conflict to assist the farmers of Lanka and also had an opportunity to implement the Kuttanad Package, a wetland development project, in Kerala which was conceived by him,” Mohan, chief conservator of forests, Kerala, said.

Ranju one millionth US visa receiver

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a pointer to burgeoning people to people ties between the two countries, the US Mission to India on Thursday surpassed its goal to process one million non-immigrant visa applications this year with Ambassador Eric Garcetti personally handing over the one millionth visa to a couple.

They will be heading to the United States to attend their son’s graduation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Dr Ranju Singh, senior consultant, Lady Hardinge College was elated at receiving an email from the US Embassy about hers being the one millionth visa this year. Her husband Puneet Dargan, was granted the next visa. The couple will be travelling to the US in May, 2024.

Greeting the couple as “Mr and Mrs One million”, Ambassador Garcetti enquired about their travel plans to the US and made suggestions about what not to miss in the



country as a tourist.

“I couldn’t be happier today, happy for India, Indians and the United States. Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi and President (Joe) Biden had said lets do a better job in moving faster on the visas and so the Ministry of External Affairs here approved more bodies in

places like Hyderabad...More people who can work on these visas, we changed our systems, we worked harder and smarter and we hit a million visa applications processed this year,” the ambassador said.

“Our partnership with India is one of the United States’ most important bilater-

al relationships, and in fact one of the most important relationships in the world. The ties between our people are stronger than ever, and we will continue our record-setting volume of visa work in the coming months to give as many Indian applicants as possible the opportunity to travel

to the United States and experience the US-India friendship firsthand,” he added.

The Mission has already surpassed the total number of cases processed in 2022 and is processing almost 20 per cent more applications than in pre-pandemic 2019.

“We got an email after we had finished our visa interviews that we are supposed to collect our visas, we were told that we were the one millionth...The Ambassador meeting us in person was a great moment for us. We are looking forward to going to the US, we will be there at MIT to celebrate our son’s proud day and then explore the country as tourists,” Dr Singh told PTI.

Dargan informed that their son is currently pursuing his Masters in Financial Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). “This will be our first trip to the US. We are really looking forward to it,” he said. Last year over 1.2 million Indians visited the United States. Indians now represent over 10 per cent of all visa applicants worldwide, includ-

ing 20 per cent of all student visa applicants and 65 per cent of all H&L-category (employment) visa applicants.

According to a statement by the US Embassy here, recognising the continued high demand for US visas, the United States continues to invest heavily in our operations in India. “In the past year, the Mission has expanded its staffing to facilitate more visa processing than ever before. The Mission has made significant capital improvements to existing facilities, such as the US Consulate in Chennai, and has inaugurated a new Consulate building in Hyderabad.

“The Mission has also implemented strategies to increase efficiency, extending interview waiver eligibility to new visa categories and utilising remote work to allow staff around the world to contribute to Indian visa processing. Early next year, the Mission plans to implement a pilot program that would allow domestic visa renewal for qualified H&L-category employment visa applicants,” it said.

Thane fake currency case: NIA files supplementary chargesheet against four

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday said it has filed a supplementary chargesheet against four persons, including a ‘designated terrorist’, in the Thane fake currency case.

Besides the designated terrorist Uncle alias Javed Chikna, those charge-sheeted under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act have been identified as Riyaz Shikilkar, Mohammad Fayaaz Shikilkar and Nasir Chaudhari, all residents of Mumbai.

One of the accused Fayaaz Shikilkar has also been charged under the Arms Act.

Three accused were chargesheeted earlier, in April last year, by the Thane police in the case, which was originally registered following the seizure of 149 high

quality counterfeit Indian currency notes of the denomination of ₹2,000 from accused Shikilkar.

Subsequently, NIA had taken over the case and, after investigations, had arrested Fayaaz in May 2023 for possession of illegal arms.

“Investigations also revealed that Fayaaz was in contact with ‘Uncle’ alias Javed Patel alias Javed Chikna through WhatsApp, and had conspired to carry out unlawful activities in India. He had also received funds sent by ‘uncle’, a designated individual terrorist, through his associate ‘bhai’, the NIA said in a statement.

‘Uncle’, a wanted accused, had committed acts of terror through his associates by possessing and circulating high-quality fake Indian currency notes (FICNs) with the aim of damaging the monetary stability of India, according to the NIA chargesheet.

Even 5 days of exposure to air pollution linked to increased risk of stroke: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Short-term exposure i.e. just five days exposure to air pollution may be linked to an increased risk of stroke, according to a study. Previous research has established a connection between long-term exposure to air pollution and an increased risk of stroke.

However, the correlation between short-term exposure to air pollution and stroke had been less clear.

For our study, instead of looking at weeks or months of exposure, we looked at just five days and found a link between short-term exposure to air pollution and an increased risk of stroke, said Ahmad Toubasi,



MD, study author, University of Jordan in Amman.

The meta-analysis that involved a review of 110 studies that included more than 18 million cases of stroke is published in the online issue of Neurology, the medical journal

of the American Academy of Neurology.

Researchers looked at pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide.

They also looked at different sizes of particulate matter, including PM1, which is air pollution that is less than 1 micron (?m) in diameter, as well as PM2.5 and PM10. PM2.5 or smaller includes inhalable particles from motor vehicle exhaust, the burning of fuels by power plants and other industries as well as forest and grass fires. PM10 includes dust from roads and construction sites.

People who had exposure to a higher concentration of various types of air pollution had an increased risk of stroke. Higher

concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were linked to a 28 per cent increased risk of stroke; higher ozone levels were linked to a 5 per cent increase; carbon monoxide had a 26 per cent increase; and sulfur dioxide had a 15 per cent increase.

A higher concentration of PM1 was linked to a 9 per cent increased risk of stroke, with PM2.5 at 15 per cent and PM10 at 14 per cent.

Higher levels of air pollution were also linked to higher risk of death from stroke. Higher concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were linked to a 33% increased risk of death from stroke, sulfur dioxide, a 60 per cent increase and PM10, a 2 per cent increase.

Kapil Dev moves HC for stricter laws against cruelty to animals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary India cricketer L Kapil Dev and his wife Romi Dev have approached the Delhi High Court challenging certain provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act that allow destruction of stray dogs in lethal chambers and extermination or destruction of any animal under the authority of any law.

The petition came up for hearing before a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sanjeev Narula which granted time to the petitioners’ counsel to place certain judgments on record.

The High Court listed the



petition for further hearing on October 13.

Petitioners Kapil Dev, his wife Romi Dev and animal rights activist Anjali Gopalan, said the petition was being filed on account of repeated instances of barbaric treatment meted out to animals showing the “most brutal and cruel face of humanity” and the “utter effete” response of law and the law enforcing agencies.

The plea challenged section 11 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, saying it was without deterrence and manifestly

arbitrary since it trivialises life and denies animals any meaningful existence by treating their mutilation and killing as petty and frivolous acts, mocking their death through imposition of punishment of less than ₹10.

Section 11 deals with treating animals cruelly and entails a fine which shall not be less than ₹10 but may extend to ₹50 in case of first offence.

For the second or subsequent offence committed within three years of the previous offence, the punishment involves fine which shall not be less than ₹25 but may extend to ₹100 or with imprisonment for a term of maximum of three months or both. “Section 11 is further

unfair and unreasonable in so far as the exception under PCA Act which permits cruelty to animals for the purposes mentioned in Section 11(3) (b) (destruction of stray dogs in lethal chambers), Section 11(3) (c) (extermination or destruction of any animal under the authority of any law for the time being in force) ...,” the plea said.

It has also challenged sections 428 (Mischief by killing or maiming animal of the value of ten rupees) and 429 (mischief by killing or maiming cattle, etc., of any value or any animal of the value of fifty rupees) of the Indian Penal Code claiming that it is an instance of speciesism suggesting lack of moral worth or value in animals.



Policemen dance with devotees carrying Lord Ganesha idol for immersion on the conclusion of Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Hyderabad, on Thursday

PTI

Govt has crushed hopes, dreams of youth: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday targeted the Narendra Modi Government over the issue of unemployment alleging that it has crushed the hopes and dreams of India’s youth, leading to rising suicides among them.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh alleged that the government, instead of dealing with the crisis of demographic dividend turning into a demographic disaster, might want to “manipulate” the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data due for 2022 to hide the alarming suicide rate among the youth.

In a statement, he said unemployment in India remains a severe problem as well as the hidden under-employment.

Ramesh cited the interactions of Rahul Gandhi with porters at the Anand Vihar Terminal here where he had noted that large numbers of

educated youth, including those with engineering degrees, were unable to find formal employment and were forced into precarious informal jobs such as porters.

The Congress general secretary said the massive failure of the Modi Government to provide sufficient formal-sector employment has led to this situation.

Ramesh cited data from the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for 2021-22 that shows that formal sector employment remains 5.3 per cent lower than it was in 2019-20. Further, the number of formal employers has declined by a massive 10.5 per cent from 2019-20 to 2021-22.

According to a report from Azim Premji University, the Congress leader said, 42 per cent of graduates under 25 were unemployed in 2021-22. Jobs in manufacturing dropped 31 per cent between 2016-17 and March 2023, according to Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data.

CSIR lab producing affordable green innovative technology

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

From converting pathogenic biomedical waste into eco-friendly soil additives to manufacturing vegan leather from agricultural waste like mango peel and banana stem, the CSIR’s lab National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST), is busy churning out affordable green innovative technology.

These among others were displayed at the foundation day of the CSIR at Pragati Maidan here recently.

NIIST Director Dr C Anandharamakrishnan said that vegan leather has the potential to replace around 30-50 per cent of synthetic chemicals from the existing leather available in the market.

“Also, the developed leather sheet costs 50 per cent less than synthetic and animal leather and has a smaller carbon footprint as various agricultural residues such as mango peel, banana stem, pineapple waste, cactus, water hyacinth, corn husk, and rice-related waste are being used.

“Vegan leather has a shelf



life of more than three years. It has also shown strong tensile strength, sleek finish, good water retention properties, temperature resistance, and stability compared to other existing synthetic and animal leather,” he emphasised.

Though still held out by the fashion industry as a luxury material, leather is a co-product of the meat industry, and it comes with many environmental downsides.

A leather jacket has a climate cost of 176 kilograms of CO2, for instance, and manufacturers also dump toxic chemical compounds like lead, arsenic, cadmium and chromium into the water as the leather is processed, on top of the millions of goats and other animals slaughtered each year in India for leather.

About the dual disinfection-solidification system for spontaneous and instantaneous disinfection of both liquid and solid biomedical waste, including urine, saliva and blood, bacterial broths, cotton, tissues, swabs, needles, and syringes, the NIIST Director said the innovative system converts degradable waste into soil additives while lab disposables are prepared for direct recycling.

Segregation, transportation and disposal of such disinfected medical waste are easier and safer with significant reduction in cost for a health-care facility and less expensive than red-bagging, a method currently in practice for containing medical waste, explained Anandharamakrishnan.

Sensex, Nifty plunge nearly 1 per cent

On weak global cues; RIL, Infosys weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell by nearly 1 per cent on Thursday due to unabated foreign capital outflows amid a largely negative trend in global markets.

Besides, heavy selling pressure in index major Reliance Industries, Infosys and ITC also dented market sentiments, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 610.37 points or 0.92 per cent to settle at 65,508.32. During the day, it plunged 695.3 points or 1.05 per cent to 65,423.39. The Nifty declined 192.90 points or 0.98 per cent to end at 19,523.55.

“The selling was broad-based, as investors are on alert given the rise of oil prices. If crude continues to stay above the USD 90 level, it will be a threat to inflation and boil the operational margins. Currently, the combination of higher interest rates and US bond yields are influencing FIIs to stay in the selling mode,” said Vinod Nair,



Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Tech Mahindra was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, slipping 4.59 per cent, followed by Asian Paints, Wipro, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, ITC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries and JSW Steel.

In contrast, Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and Axis Bank were among the gainers. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 1.19 per cent and smallcap index fell 0.34 per cent.

“The prevailing weakness in heavyweights across sectors combined with feeble global

cues is weighing on the sentiment,” Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Among the indices, IT declined 1.84 per cent, FMCG fell 1.74 per cent, teck (1.49 per cent), consumer durables (1.29 per cent), auto (1.24 per cent), commodities (1.21 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.15 per cent), metal (1.05 per cent), realty (0.98 per cent) and services (0.89 per cent).

Telecommunication and capital goods were the gainers.

“World stocks were on track for their longest losing streak in two years on Thursday as the sight of oil prices heading for USD 100 a barrel compounded concerns about persistently high



global interest rates while persistent fears of higher US interest rates and concerns over China's beleaguered property market also dented sentiments,” said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

In Asian markets, Shanghai ended in the green while Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower. Trading was closed in South Korea for a holiday.

European markets were trading in the negative territory. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.38 per cent to USD 96.18 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs

354.35 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

“The selling was broad-based, as investors are on alert given the rise of oil prices. If crude continues to stay above the USD 90 level, it will be a threat to inflation and boil the operational margins. Currently, the combination of higher interest rates and US bond yields are influencing FIIs to stay in the selling mode,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The BSE benchmark had climbed 173.22 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 66,118.69 on Wednesday. The Nifty gained 51.75 points or 0.26 per cent to end at 19,716.45.

Net claims of non-residents on India rise to \$379.7 billion in June quarter: RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Net claims of non-residents on India increased USD 12.1 billion to USD 379.7 billion in the June quarter on account of higher rise in foreign-owned financial assets, according to RBI data released on Thursday.

Increase in reserve assets, at USD 16.6 billion, was the largest contributor to the rise in Indian residents' foreign assets during the April-June period, followed by direct investment, loans and trade credit, as per the data on India's international investment position for June-end.

“The rise in net claims of non-residents during the quarter was on account of higher rise in foreign-owned financial assets in India (USD 36.2 billion) when compared with Indian residents' overseas financial assets (USD 24.1 billion),” the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said.

“Inward portfolio investment (USD 15 billion) and foreign direct investment (USD 8.9 billion) together accounted for two-thirds of the rise in foreign liabilities of Indian residents,” it added.

As per the data, reserve assets accounted for 64.2 per cent of India's international financial assets at the end of the June quarter.



Variation in the exchange rate of rupee vis-a-vis other currencies impacted the change in liabilities, when valued in the US dollar terms, the RBI data said.

The RBI further said the ratio of India's international assets to international liabilities moderated to 70.9 per cent in June from 71.1 per cent a quarter earlier and 71.5 per cent a year ago. Debt and non-debt liabilities accounted for nearly equal share in total external liabilities during the quarter.

Sebi penalises YES Securities for wrong reporting of margin and discrepancies

New Delhi, Sep 28 (PTI) Capital markets regulator Sebi has imposed a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on YES Securities (India) Ltd for wrong reporting of margin and discrepancy in the computation of client's net worth.

It has been directed to pay

the fine within 45 days, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in its order.

The order came after Sebi, jointly with the Stock exchanges — NSE, BSE and MCX — conducted inspection of documents and other records of YES Securities (India) Ltd to verify the possible violation of stock brokers' rule.

In its order, Sebi found several violations, including wrong reporting of margin and discrepancy in reporting of net worth of clients by YES Securities, during July 2021 to March 2022.

The regulator said the brokerage house sent the retention statements after the prescribed time of five days and also mailed the statements of accounts to wrong email addresses.

Further, it was found that the brokerage house had projected a wrong reporting margin of Rs 2,083. In addition, the regulator noted lapses on the part of YES Securities for not having maintained adequate margin for the client.

“There was a discrepancy in the computation of net worth submitted by the noticee (YES Securities) to the exchange... The noticee had overstated the net worth to an extent of Rs 1,89,45,070.32,” Sebi said in its order on Wednesday.



ONGC inks pact with NTPC Green for renewable energy projects

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has signed an initial agreement with NTPC Green Energy Ltd to explore setting up green hydrogen and offshore wind projects.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) “will primarily explore the feasibility and setting up of renewable energy projects in various domains,” ONGC said in a statement.

The MoU was signed by ONGC executive director Debudul Adhikari and NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL) CEO Mohit Bhargava in the presence of ONGC chairman and CEO Arun Kumar Singh and NTPC chairman and managing director Gurdeep Singh.

“The MoU envisages collaboration of the two mega entities in renewable power projects in India and overseas through offshore wind projects and exploring opportunities in the storage, e-mobility, carbon credits and green credits, nuclear, green hydrogen business and its derivatives (green ammonia and green methanol),” it said.

ONGC is India's largest crude oil and natural gas producer while NGEL is a subsidiary of the country's largest power utility NTPC.

“Exploring and setting up renewable power assets in India and overseas, ONGC inked a trailblazing MoU with NTPC Green Energy Limited on September 27, 2023.

“Over a period of three years, the MoU will primarily explore the feasibility and setting up of offshore wind projects, green hydrogen and pumped/hydrogen storage projects,” ONGC said in a separate post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

‘Show-cause notices to e-gaming firms as per legal provisions’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-gaming companies have been issued show cause notices for alleged GST evasion as per legal provisions, the head of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said on Thursday, adding that the tax demanded is based on analysis of data.

He also said that the government is fully prepared to implement from October 1 the amended provisions for levying a 28 per cent tax on online gaming, casinos and horse racing along with mandatory registration of offshore online gaming platforms.

In its meetings in July and August, the GST Council had approved amendments in law to include online gaming, casinos and horse racing as taxable actionable claims, and clarified

that such supplies would attract 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on full bet value.

Parliament last month passed amendments to the Central GST and Integrated GST laws to give effect to the Council's decision.

Since then, online gaming companies like Dream11 and casino operator Delta Corp have received show cause notices from taxmen for non-payment of GST at 28 per cent on the full face value of bets placed on their platform.

“The show cause notice which is going is as per legal provision... The department is taking a uniform stand in the interpretation of the law and accordingly show cause notices are being issued,” Agarwal told reporters here.

Asked about the quantum of taxes that are due from these e-gaming companies, Agarwal



said, “It is very difficult for me to say there are many companies. Data is being collected and wherever the data is received, the department has issued show cause notice.”

While maintaining that online gaming, casinos and horse racing was subject to 28 per cent tax since the inception of GST, the GST Council had

decided that the amended provision to classify these supplies as actionable claims and clarifying the taxation provisions would come into effect from October 1. A review of the implementation was proposed to be carried out after six months, which is April 2024.

Even though the amendments in CGST and IGST laws

have been passed by Parliament, the finance ministry is yet to notify the appointed date for implementation of these clarificatory amendments. Also, some states are yet to pass amendments in their state GST laws.

About a dozen states have passed the amendments in their assemblies, while a similar number of states are understood to have brought in an ordinance to pave the way for implementation of the changes from October 1.

“We are fully prepared to bring it (amended provision of online gaming) into effect from October 1. As per the decision taken in the last meeting of the GST council, the related notifications are under process. It is necessary for all states to pass the law or come out with an ordinance... By September 30,” the CBIC chief said.

Further, Agarwal said that the GST Council in its last

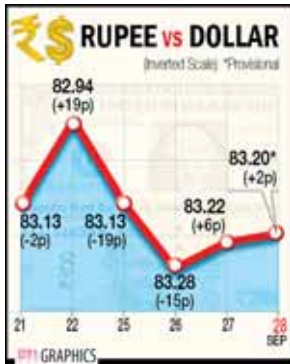
meeting had decided that the clarificatory amendments in GST laws with regard to online gaming would be implemented from October 1.

“If there is a requirement (for notification), it will be fulfilled,” Agarwal added.

The show cause notice slapped on Delta Corp last week was for alleged short payment of taxes worth Rs 16,800 crore.

In September last year, a similar show cause notice was served to online gaming company Gameskraft for recovery of Rs 21,000 crore GST. The company had approached the Karnataka High Court which had quashed the show cause notice.

Following this, the revenue department in July filed a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court on the Karnataka High Court ruling in the Gameskraft case. The next date of hearing is listed for October 10.



Rupee edges up 2 paise to 83.20 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee edged up 2 paise to settle at 83.20 (provisional) against the US currency in a restricted trade on Thursday, aided by a correction in crude oil prices and the greenback.

Foreign fund outflows and losses in local equities, however, restricted the rupee's gains, forex dealers said.

The rupee opened flat at 83.22 against the US dollar and later moved in a range of 83.25 to 83.13 in day trading.

The local unit settled at 83.20 against the US dollar, up by 2 paise over the previous close. The rupee had closed at 83.22 on Wednesday after a listless trade.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined by 0.27 per cent to 106.38 after touching a nearly 10-month high of 106.84 in overnight trade.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, also retreated 0.57 per cent to USD 96 per barrel. Analysts said the combination of higher interest rates and US bond yields are influencing FIIs to stay in the selling mode in Indian capital markets, which is weighing on the local currency.

On the domestic equity front, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 610.37 points or 0.92 per cent to settle at 65,508.32. The broader Nifty declined 192.90 points or 0.98 per cent to end at 19,523.55. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 354.35 crore, according to exchange data.

SBI to encourage corporates to implement emission reduction tech

PTI ■ KOLKATA

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender will encourage corporates to implement emission reduction technologies and get better terms for availing finance, an official of the bank said on Thursday.

Ashwini Kumar Tewari, the managing director (risk, compliance and stressed assets resolution group), SBI, said that the bank will see how it can help corporates in this regard but at the moment does not ask them of their plans for net zero.

At present SBI gives 25 basis points concession on interest rates for electric vehicles. At a later stage, corporates with a



better ESG (environment, social and corporate governance) score will get better terms for getting finance from it, he said.

“We don't ask for net zero plan from the companies now. Ultimately, we will go to it. We will start conversation with the corporates and that process will start,” he said at the sidelines of

the banking conclave organised by CII here.

‘Net zero’ emissions refer to the achieving of an overall balance between greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced and GHG emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

Earlier speaking at the conclave, Tewari said that banks still remain a major source of funding for the country though

The banking industry is facing competition with the growth of the equity market and NBFCs.

“The banking sector needs to be shepherd. Unlike the NBFCs which can reach the last mile, banks have high cost of operations,” he said.

Toyota looking to set up third manufacturing plant in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese auto major Toyota is looking to set up a third manufacturing plant in India with its two facilities in the country running at almost full capacity, according to industry sources.

Bengaluru-based Toyota Kirloskar Motor, a joint venture between Toyota Motor Company and Kirloskar Group, currently operates two plants in the country with a total production capacity of around 3.42 lakh units per annum.

With enhanced demand leading to long waiting periods on certain products, the automaker is now looking to set up a third plant in the country, sources said.

However, details about the production capacity, location and investment in the new plant

could not be immediately ascertained. When contacted, a TKM spokesperson said: “We would like to refrain from commenting on speculations and future plans.”

In May this year, the company initiated a third shift at its Bidadi-based plant near Bengaluru to enhance production capacity by about 30 per cent as it looked to cut down waiting periods on some of its models.

TKM invested over Rs 90 crore to upgrade the existing infrastructure at the facility and added about 1,500 workforce for the third shift at the plant.

The automaker has two facilities within the Bidadi compound, which roll out different sets of products.

TKM's Plant 1 commenced production in December 1999



and currently rolls out Innova Hycross, Innova Crysta, Fortuner, and Legender. It has an installed production capacity of 1.32 lakh units per annum.

The second plant at the same site, with an installed production capacity of 2.10 lakh units, rolls out products like Camry Hybrid, Urban Cruiser Hyryder and Hilux.

The facility commenced production in December 2010. The company also sells models like Glanza and Rumion which are sourced from Maruti Suzuki India as part of a global collaboration between Suzuki and Toyota. It also imports the Vellfire and LC 300 as completely built up units (CBU). TKM has seen a robust increase in

demand for its models this year.

In the January-August period, its sales grew by 34 per cent to 1,47,192 units from 1,09,669 units in the same period of last year. With an increase in bookings, the waiting period for some of the company's products has crossed the one-year mark.

On September 23, the automaker announced to temporarily halt bookings of the E-CNG option of Rumion MPV to avoid customer inconvenience due to the long waiting period.

In April this year, TKM temporarily halted bookings of top trims of its multi-purpose vehicle Innova Hycross owing to supply challenges. Last year, it stopped taking orders for the diesel variant of Innova Crysta due to high demand and an increased waiting period.

4 graft cases against Nawaz Sharif set to be reopened

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's anti-graft body is reopening at least four corruption cases against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif as he is scheduled to return to the country next month, ending four years of self-exile in the United Kingdom, an official said on Thursday.

The 73-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo is scheduled to return to Pakistan from London on October 21 to lead the party's election campaign. Nawaz left the country in November 2019 on medical grounds after the Lahore High Court granted him bail for four weeks. He was serving a seven-year imprisonment in the Al-Azzia Mills corruption case at Kot Lakhpat Jail Lahore.

On arrival in Lahore, his party says he will address a rally at Minar-i-Pakistan where he will give a road map to steer the country out of the economic crisis, governance problems and other issues the country is facing today. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the light of a Supreme Court

ruling which struck down amendments made to the accountability laws by the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government led by Nawaz's younger brother Shehbaz Sharif, is reopening the four pending probes against Nawaz. The cases are related to illegal plots and land allotment, dubious transfer of shares of his sugar mills and Toshakhana (national treasury gifts).

"Nawaz Sharif being chief minister of Punjab province in 1986 had allotted plots in Lahore to several people by misusing his authority. He is accused of illegal construction of several kilometres of road to his house in Jati Umra Raiwind, Lahore, in 1998 when he was prime minister in violation of rules. "The third case is related to the transfer of shares in 'illegal' manners in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case which is owned by Nawaz Sharif and his family members. In this case, his daughter Maryam Nawaz is also accused of being a major beneficiary," an official privy to the development told PTI on Thursday.

The fourth is related to the



Toshakhana case in which he is accused of taking luxurious vehicles from the national treasury in violation of rules, he said. Besides these cases, Nawaz will have to face the case related to his conviction.

Meanwhile, Nawaz's close aide and senior PML-N leader Mian Javed Latif said the party has stopped "demanding accountability of former army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and former ISI head Gen Faiz Hameed" for conspiring against Nawaz to topple his government in 2017.

"The PML-N doesn't want accountability of Gen Bajwa and Gen Hameed but only those characters and facilitators involved in May 9 events and

mutiny against the head (Army Chief Gen Asim Munir) of the institution," he said.

Latif was referring to attacks on military installations following the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in May.

On September 18, Nawaz demanded "strict accountability" of Gen Bajwa, Gen Hameed and chief justices — Asif Khosa and Saqib Nisar — while addressing the party's ticket holders in Lahore via video link from London.

He had hinted at trying them under treason charges if his party returned to power in the upcoming elections, scheduled early next year.

Nawaz's demand for strict accountability left many in the party in a precarious position as the leaders became wary of a possible backlash from the military establishment if he continued with such statements. Sources told PTI that Nawaz backtracked from demanding accountability of army generals after a "strong message" was conveyed to him through his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif.

Pakistan CJ: If Faizabad verdict was implemented, serious incidents would not have happened later

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa Thursday said if his verdict against a radical Islamist group and others for involvement in the Faizabad sit-in was implemented, the serious incidents could have been prevented, as he adjourned the hearing on a set of pleas challenging the judgment in the case till November 1.

A three-member bench led by Chief Justice Isa and comprising Justices Aminuddin Khan and Athar Minallah was hearing a set of pleas challenging the Supreme Court's verdict in the Faizabad sit-in case, wherein intelligence agencies were directed not to exceed their constitutional mandates.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and others had heavily criticized the judgment and subsequently review pleas were filed against the verdict by

the PTI, the Ministry of Defence, the Intelligence Bureau, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, the Election Commission of Pakistan, the Mutta-hida Qaumi Movement party, ex-interior minister Sheikh Rashid and Ijazul Haq, son of former military dictator Zia-ul-Haq.

Isa, who was a member of the three-member bench that issued the 2019 verdict, expressed annoyance after multiple petitioners seeking a review of the apex court's 2019 verdict against the Faizabad sit-in decided to withdraw their pleas.

The chief justice observed that the challengers in their pleas had stated that the verdict was full of flaws, wondering why they were withdrawing pleas, and asked "why is everyone so afraid to speak the truth".

Attorney-General Mansoor

Usman Awan, who was representing the federal government, assured the court that the decisions of the Faizabad judgement would be implemented but the chief justice was not amused.

"If this verdict was implemented at that time, then serious incidents would not have taken place later," the chief justice said, in an apparent reference to the Jaranwala incident where a mob of radical Islamists vandalised 22 churches and set scores of Christian houses on fire over allegations of blasphemy. There were no casualties but it was one of the most destructive attacks on Christians in the Muslim-majority country.

Apparently, unable to satisfy the queries by the bench, Sheikh Rashid's counsel urged the court to adjourn the hearing, which was accepted and the case adjourned till

November 1. However, the court directed the respondents' counsels to submit a written response by October 27.

The original judgement was authored by Justice Isa, instructing the defence ministry and the tri-services chiefs to penalise personnel under their command who were found to have violated their oath. It had also directed the federal government to monitor those advocating hate, extremism and terrorism and prosecute them in accordance with the law.

The TLP sit-it went for about 20 days and had paralysed life in both Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The government and the powerful establishment were so angry due to the decision that a case of alleged corruption was launched against Justice Isa and effort were made to remove him from office.

SL to focus on IMF recommendations to secure second tranche of bailout package

Colombo (PTI): With the IMF saying that Sri Lanka's full economic recovery is not yet assured, the government on Thursday said it will focus on the recommendations of the global lender and will continue discussions with it to reach a staff-level agreement for the second tranche of the bailout package.

In March this year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a 48-month, USD 2.9 billion extended arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to support Sri Lanka's economic policies and reforms.

"We have to take note of points made on tax administration, granting of tax relief and eliminating tax evasion," said State Minister of Finance, Ranjith Siyambalapitiya.

We are working with a contracted economy and a population hit by economic hardships," Siyambalapitiya said. Sri Lanka was hit by its worst economic crisis in history when its foreign exchange reserves fell to a critical low and the public came out on the streets to protest the shortage of fuel, fertilisers and essential commodities. On Wednesday, it emerged that Lanka's second tranche of the bailout package will likely be delayed given the inconclusive nature of the cash-strapped nation's external debt restructuring.

The debt-ridden nation was banking on the release of the second tranche of around USD 330 million at the end of the review as stated by Siyambalapitiya last week.

However, the IMF in the review said more discussions were needed to reach the next staff-level agreement on the external debt restructuring. The Washington-based global lender, while noting Sri Lanka's commendable progress in implementing difficult reforms, said "the full recovery of the economy was not yet assured." It stressed the need to strengthen tax administration, remove tax exemptions, and actively eliminate tax evasion.

The IMF had originally set a September deadline for Sri Lanka to restructure its external debt. The completion of negotiations with external creditors was to culminate with the first review.

American soldier who crossed into N Korea returns to US

AP ■ SAN ANTONIO

The American soldier who sprinted into North Korea across the heavily fortified border between the Koreas more than two months ago arrived back in the US early Thursday, video appeared to show.

North Korea abruptly announced Wednesday that it would expel Pvt Travis King. His return was organised with the help of ally Sweden and rival China, according to the White House.

While officials have said King, 23, is in good health and the immediate focus will be on caring for him and reintegrating him into US society, his troubles are likely far from over. King, who had served in South Korea, ran into the North while on a civilian tour of a border village on July 18, becoming the first American confirmed to be detained in the isolated country in nearly five years. At the time, he was supposed to be heading to Fort Bliss, Texas, following his release from prison in South Korea on an assault conviction.

He has been declared AWOL from the Army. In

many cases, someone who is AWOL for more than a month can automatically be considered a deserter.

Punishment for going AWOL or desertion can vary, and it depends in part on whether the service member voluntarily returned or was apprehended. King's handover by the North Koreans makes that more complicated.

Video aired Thursday by a Texas news station appeared to show King walking off a plane in San Antonio. Dressed in a dark top and pants, he could be seen speaking briefly with people waiting on the tarmac. He shook hands with one before being led into a building.

Emails seeking comment were sent to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, the Air Force and the Army.

Officials earlier said he would be taken to Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston. He is expected to undergo psychological assessments and debriefings, and he will also get a chance to meet with family.

He will be in military custody throughout the process since his legal situation is com-

plicated.

Many questions remain about King's case, including why he fled in the first place and why the North — which has tense relations with Washington over Pyongyang's nuclear programme, support for Russia's war in Ukraine and other issues — agreed to turn him over.

The White House has not addressed North Korean state media reports that King fled because of his dismay about racial discrimination and inequality in the military and US society.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported that King made such complaints but verifying that is impossible. On Wednesday, Swedish officials took King to the Chinese border, where he was met by US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, the Swedish ambassador to China, and at least one US Defence Department official.

He was then flown to a US military base in South Korea before heading to the US. His detention was relatively short by North Korean standards.

China's defence min missing in action for a month

AP ■ BEIJING

A Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson said Thursday that he was "not aware of the situation" in the ministry's first public comments on the disappearance of the defence minister from public view about one month ago.

Senior Col Wu Qian, the director of the ministry's information office, gave only a one-sentence response when asked at a monthly news conference whether Li Shangfu is under investigation for corruption and if he is still the defence minister. "I'm not aware of the situation you mentioned," Wu said in response to a question from a foreign news outlet.

Li, who became defence minister when a new Cabinet was named in March, hasn't been seen since giving a speech on August 29. He is the second senior official to disappear this year, following former Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who was removed from office in July.

The Chinese government has given no reason for his removal, or why both he and Li suddenly stopped making public appearances. There is no indication, at least so far, that their disappearances signal a change in China's foreign or defence policies.

The disappearance of officials and other people without explanation is not uncommon in China and often followed months later by the announcement of criminal charges against the person. The disappearance of two sitting ministers in rapid succession, though, is unusual.

The American ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, tweeted earlier this month that Chinese President Xi Jinping's Cabinet lineup "is now resembling Agatha Christie's novel And Then There Were None".

Wu, the defence ministry spokesperson, played down concerns expressed by US officials that the two countries don't have clear military-to-

military communications channels. He said the problem is not a lack of communication but a need for the US to change its ways to get relations between the two militaries back on track.

"The US always wants to tie somebody's hands and feet, so they can do whatever they want," he said.

He also said that Taiwan is "heading down the path of its own destruction" with the self-governing island's launch of its first domestically made submarine on Thursday.

Wu, who opened the news conference with an announcement about a global security conference to be held in Beijing next month, ducked a question about Li from another foreign media reporter, who asked whether the defence minister would attend the conference.

"We will release information about the Beijing Xiangshan Forum in due course," he said.

N Korean leader urges greater nuclear weapons production in response to a 'new Cold War'

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for an exponential increase in production of nuclear weapons and for his country to play a larger role in a coalition of nations confronting the United States in a "new Cold War," state media said Thursday.

The Korean Central News Agency said Kim made the comments during a two-day session of the country's rubber-stamp parliament which amended the constitution to include his policy of expanding the country's nuclear weapons programme. The Supreme People's Assembly's session on Tuesday and Wednesday came after Kim travelled to Russia's Far East this month to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and visit military and technology sites.

The trip sparked Western concerns about a possible arms alliance in which North Korea

would supply Putin with badly needed munitions to fuel his war on Ukraine in exchange for economic aid and advanced Russian technologies to enhance North Korea's nuclear and missile systems.

As North Korea slowly ends its pandemic lockdown, Kim has been actively boosting his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing as he attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation and join a united front against Washington. He has described the world as entering a "new Cold War" and that North Korea should advance its nuclear capabilities in response.

KCNA's reports on Kim's comments came a day after North Korea confirmed the release of US Army Pvt Travis King, who is now being flown back to America, two months after he sprinted across the heavily fortified border into the North. King's relatively swift expulsion defied speculation that North Korea might drag

out his detention to squeeze concessions from the United States, and possibly reflected the North's disinterest in diplomacy with Washington.

KCNA said members of the assembly gave unanimous approval to a new clause in the constitution to "ensure the country's right to existence and development, deter war and protect regional and global peace by rapidly developing nuclear weapons to a higher level."

North Korea's "nuclear force-building policy has been made permanent as the basic law of the state, which no one is allowed to flout with anything," Kim said in a speech at the assembly. He stressed the need to "push ahead with the work for exponentially boosting the production of nuclear weapons and diversifying the nuclear strike means," KCNA said. Kim pointed to what he described as a growing threat posed by a hostile United States and its expanding mili-

tary cooperation with South Korea and Japan, accusing them of creating the "Asian version of NATO, the root cause of war and aggression."

"This is just the worst actual threat, not threatening rhetoric or an imaginary entity," he said. Kim urged his diplomats to "further promote solidarity with the nations standing against the US and the West's strategy for hegemony." South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, said the North Korean constitutional amendment confirms Kim's unwillingness to relinquish his nuclear weapons program and his unwavering commitment to advancing that arsenal.

It said in a statement that South Korea will continue to expand its military cooperation with the US and Japan and work closer with other international partners to increase pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions.



Living god Ganesh is carried on a chariot during Indra Jatra, a festival that marks the end of the rainy season, in Kathmandu, Nepal, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023. According to a local myth, the god of rain Indra once disguised himself as a human to collect night jasmine for his mother but was captured by locals. In exchange for his release, it was agreed that the rain would be stopped and the souls of those departed in that year ascend to heaven.

AP/PTI

Israel SC hears challenge to law that makes it harder to remove Netanyahu

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's Supreme Court on Thursday was hearing a challenge to a law that makes it harder to remove a sitting prime minister, which critics say is designed to protect Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who has been working to reshape the justice system while he is on trial for alleged corruption.

The hearing is part of several pivotal court challenges against a proposed package of legislation and government steps meant to alter the country's justice system. It comes after months of turmoil in Israel over the plan and deepens a rift between Netanyahu's government and the judiciary, which

it wants to weaken despite unprecedented opposition. Thursday's hearing on the law took place in front of an expanded 11-judge panel, underscoring the importance of the deliberations.

Netanyahu's governing coalition - Israel's most religious and nationalist ever - passed an amendment known as the "incapacitation law" in March which allows a prime minister to be deemed unfit to rule only for medical or mental health reasons. Under the amendment, only the prime minister or the government has the power to determine a leader's unfitness.

The previous version of the law was vague about both the circumstances in which a prime minister could be

deemed unfit, as well as who had the authority to declare it. But experts say the amendment expressly strips the attorney general, who historically yields the power to declare a prime minister unfit for office, of the ability to do so. Critics say the law protects Netanyahu from being deemed unfit for office over claims that he violated a contract of interest agreement by dealing with the legal overhaul while on trial for corruption charges. They also say the law is tailor-made for Netanyahu and encourages corruption.

Based on those criticisms, Thursday's hearing is focusing on whether the law should come into effect after the next national elections and

not immediately, so that it isn't interpreted as a personalised law. A ruling is expected by January.

"We are trying to repeal the undemocratic and unconstitutional statute which allowed an unfit and improper prime minister to remain in his position. Actually, they built him a kind of a golden cage (so) that he will be protected from justice," said Eliad Shraga, chairman of the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, one of the groups that is challenging the amendment.

Ahead of the hearing, dozens of protesters gathered outside Netanyahu's private residence in Jerusalem, chanting "democracy," while his allies defended the law.

Simcha Rothman, a main driver of the overhaul, told Israeli Army Radio that the court's decision to hear the case was harmful to Israeli democracy and challenging the law was akin to throwing out the results of a legitimate election.

"The moment the court determines the laws, then it is also the legislative branch, the judiciary and the executive branch," he said. "This is an undemocratic reality."

The government wants to weaken the Supreme Court and limit judicial oversight on its decisions, saying it wants to return power to elected lawmakers and away from what it sees as a liberal-leaning, interventionist justice system. The first major piece

of the overhaul was passed in July and an unprecedented 15-judge panel began hearing arguments against it earlier this month.

The drive to reshape Israel's justice system comes as Netanyahu's trial for alleged corruption is ongoing. He is charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases involving influential media moguls and wealthy associates. He denies wrongdoing, seeing the charges as part of a "witch-hunt" against him orchestrated by a hostile media and a biased justice system.

Experts and legal officials say a conflict of interest arrangement struck after Netanyahu was indicted is

meant to limit his involvement in judicial changes. After the incapacitation law was passed, Netanyahu said his hands were no longer tied and that he was taking a more active role in the legal changes underway.

That sparked a rebuke from Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, who said Netanyahu's remarks and any further actions were "completely illegal and in conflict of interest."

Critics say Netanyahu and his government are working to upend the country's delicate system of checks and balances and setting Israel on a path toward autocracy.

The overhaul has plunged Israel into one of its worst domestic crises, deepening

longstanding societal divisions between those who want Israel to be a Western-facing liberal democracy and those who want to emphasize the country's more conservative Jewish character.

Netanyahu has moved forward with the overhaul despite a wave of opposition from a broad swath of Israeli society. Top legal officials, leading economists and the country's booming tech sector have all spoken out against the judicial changes, which have sparked opposition from hundreds of military reservists, who have said they will not serve so long as the overhaul remains on the table. Tens of thousands of people have protested every Saturday for the last nine months.

MAN CITY OUT OF LEAGUE CUP

AP ■ NEWCASTLE

Manchester City crashed out of the League Cup with a 1-0 defeat at Newcastle on Wednesday as Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool booked their places in the last 16.

Alexander Isak scored the only goal at St. James' Park in a clash between two much-changed sides.

City won the treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season, but any dream of surpassing that feat with an unprecedented quadruple was swiftly brought to an end.

Erling Haaland was left on the bench by City coach Pep Guardiola for the full 90 minutes and his presence was missed in a toothless display.

Eddie Howe also rang the changes from an 8-0 thrashing of Sheffield United at the weekend.

But it was not until the Newcastle boss introduced Anthony Gordon and Bruno Guimaraes at half-time that the hosts took control.

Isak had the simple task of slotting home at the far post after a burst from Joelinton opened up the City defence.

"A win like this can elevate us," said Howe.

"First-half we tried to rotate the squad and keep our players fresh. Second-half we were better for sure, but when you bring

on players like Anthony Gordon and Bruno, they're high level players."

Newcastle's reward is a fourth-round trip to Manchester United in a repeat of last season's final.

CHelsea BOUNCE BACK

Chelsea prevented the crisis at Stamford Bridge deepening as Nicolas Jackson's goal beat Brighton 1-0.

The Senegalese's wastefulness in front of goal has been partly to blame for the Blues' return of one win in their opening six Premier League games under Mauricio Pochettino.

But Jackson coolly slotted home from the impressive Cole Palmer's pass on 50 minutes.

Chelsea will face Blackburn in the last 16.

Arsenal were also 1-0 winners at Brentford as Aaron Ramsdale responded to being controversially dropped by Mikel Arteta.

Reiss Nelson's eighth-minute goal separated the sides despite a Brentford onslaught after the break.

Arteta has preferred David Raya to Ramsdale in goal for the past three games.

But the England international was needed for the Gunners to progress as he produced a brilliant stop to deny Yoane Wissa an equaliser.

Arsenal will travel to West Ham in the next round after the



Hammers were 1-0 winners at third-tier Lincoln.

Liverpool trailed to Championship leaders Leicester after just three minutes before fighting back to win 3-1.

Kasey McAteer rounded off a rapid counter-attack to give the Foxes a flying start.

Jürgen Klopp's men laid siege to the visitors' goal but were made to wait until after the break to draw level.

The equaliser was made in the Netherlands as Ryan Gravenberch set up Cody Gakpo to find the far corner.

Klopp then turned to his bench to find a winner and found it through a stunning strike from Dominik Szoboszlai.

The Hungarian captain took aim from outside the box and smashed the ball into the top corner 20 minutes from time.

"Dom was a surprise with how fast he has fitted in, it was pretty much from the first minute," said Klopp on Szoboszlai's fast start to his Liverpool career.

"Top-class player with a lot of quality. He never stops."

Diogo Jota's backheel in off the far post then made the tie safe.

Klopp's men will travel to Bournemouth in round four.

Everton built on their first Premier League win of the season at Brentford on Saturday with an impressive 2-1 victory at Aston Villa.

Inter crash to first defeat

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan crashed to their first defeat of the Serie A season on Wednesday, going down 2-1 at home to Sassuolo as controversial striker Victor Osimhen starred for Napoli despite an apparent rift with the champions.

Inter went into the game with a perfect record of five wins in five and looked in control at 1-0 ahead thanks to a Denzel Dumfries goal on the stroke of half-time at the San Siro.

Sassuolo levelled in the 54th minute when Nedim Bajrami scored with a long-range effort which caught out goalkeeper Yann Sommer.

Domenico Berardi hit the winner 10 minutes later as Sassuolo claimed all three points to follow up last week's win over Juventus.

Inter remain top of the table on goal difference ahead of AC Milan who earlier defeated Cagliari 3-1.

"After a good first period where we should have scored more than one goal, but we lost our focus especially after the equaliser," said Inter coach Simone Inzaghi.

"Losing in front of our home crowd hurts us, we have to understand what happened, even if the schedule, with our next match on Saturday, doesn't really give us time to take a step back."

After a defeat and two draws, champions Napoli returned to winning ways with Osimhen playing a starring role in a 4-1 win over Udinese.

The Nigerian striker scored his fourth goal of the season after 39 minutes with



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia ending a long goal drought by finding the net in the second half.

Osimhen, top scorer in Serie A last season, had cut a controversial figure at the weekend when he showed his displeasure at being taken off by coach Rudy Garcia in the 0-0 draw with Bologna.

On Tuesday, his agent threatened Napoli with legal action for having published a video on the club's TikTok account, since deleted, mocking the striker for missing a penalty in that game.

Osimhen removed photos of himself in Napoli colours from his own social media, fuelling speculation that he will demand a move in the

next transfer window. "I have a very good relationship with Victor," insisted Garcia.

"I am happy for him because he scored tonight. After the match in Bologna, we were all frustrated, angry, Victor in particular, because he missed the penalty."

"On the sporting aspect and on other levels, especially on TikTok, there have been a lot of things to manage in recent days," smiled Garcia.

"But I can assure you that Victor loves this jersey and that he is invested in 100% in our project."

Napoli are now fifth in the table with 11 points, four points behind the two Milan clubs.

Real beat Las Palmas but Girona move top of La Liga

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid eased to a 2-0 win over Las Palmas on Wednesday to overtake Barcelona and move second, but Catalan minnows Girona are the surprise La Liga leaders after a 2-1 win at Villarreal.

Barcelona started the week top of the league but a 2-2 draw at Real Mallorca on Tuesday left the door open for their rivals to overtake them.

Madrid produced a comfortable victory with goals from Brahim Diaz and Joselu, while Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior also made his return from injury as a second half substitute, following a month out.

Real coach Carlo Ancelotti rested Jude Bellingham, who has been Madrid's

best player so far, starting Diaz in attacking midfield in the England international's stead.

The Italian coach also swapped out both full-backs after the painful derby defeat by Atletico Madrid on Sunday, with Ferland Mendy and Nacho starting in place of Fran Garcia and Lucas Vazquez.

Real Madrid were on the front foot from the start against their promoted visitors from the Canary Islands, but lacked the killer finishing touch that Karim Benzema brought in recent years, and Bellingham has in recent weeks.

Vazquez replaced the injured David Alaba and the substitute played a part in the opening goal.

Valles stopped another Joselu drive before Diaz broke the deadlock, taking



a touch to control Vazquez's cross and then firing into the top corner with the aid of a slight deflection.

Joselu made amends for his first half profligacy to pounce early in the second with a well-placed header from Rodrygo's cross that this time left Valles no chance.

Vinicius made his return with over half an hour remaining as Ancelotti reverted to a 4-3-3 system, having begun with the midfield diamond he has favoured this season.

Aurelien Tchouameni came close with a long-range effort and Madrid saw out the game without incident to move one point ahead of Barcelona.

Michel's Girona came from behind to beat Villarreal, with on-loan Barcelona defender Eric Garcia netting the winner.

Ramkumar-Myneni pair one win away from gold

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The Indian tennis camp had something to cheer on Thursday with Ramkumar Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni reaching the men's doubles gold medal round and the mixed doubles pair of Rohan Bopanna and Rutuja Bhosale assuring itself of a medal.

The second-seeded team of Ramkumar and Myneni downed the gutsy Korean pair of Seongchan Hong and Soonwoo Kwon 6-1, 6-7(8), 10-0 to move to the title clash.

Myneni will now gun for his second Asian Games gold, having won a mixed doubles yellow metal with Sania Mirza in the 2014 edition.

It will be a maiden Games medal for Ramkumar.

The Koreans fought back after losing the opening set in a rather sedate manner but Myneni and Ramkumar held their nerves to outplay their rivals in the Super Tie break.



The Indian team will now take on Chinese Taipei, that ousted Thailand, in the gold medal match on Friday.

India had won the men's doubles title in the last edition in Indonesia with Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan emerging victorious in the final.

The second-seeded Bopanna-Bhosale pair moved to the mixed doubles semifinals with a fluent 7-5, 6-3 win over Kazakhstan's Zhibek Kulambayeva and Grigoriy Lomakin.

The first set seemed going into a tie-break as Kulambayeva was serving at 40-0 in the 12th game but she lost her serve from that strong position.

There was hardly any fight in the second set.

Bopanna, who is playing his last Asian Games at 43, will not go without a medal.

He has already been ousted from the men's doubles with partner Yuki Bhambri.

Miami fall short without Messi

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE

The Houston Dynamo defeated Inter Miami 2-1 to win the US Open Cup on Wednesday with an injured Lionel Messi watching from the stands at DRV PNK Stadium.

Without Messi and his former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba, Miami struggled to compete with an enterprising Houston and could have little to complain about the outcome.

Miami co-owner David Beckham, who watched the game with his former Real Madrid team-mate Zinedine Zidane, had hoped for another night of celebration after the team's Leagues Cup triumph last month.

But Miami lacked intensity and ideas as they were given the runaround by Ben Olsen's impressive Houston team.

No clear explanation has been given for Messi's injury



with references to "muscle fatigue" followed by talk from coach Gerardo Martino of "scars" from an old injury.

With no Messi to worry about, Houston were on top from the outset, moving the ball around with confidence and purpose while Miami struggled to get a foothold.

Houston grabbed the lead in the 24th minute with a perfect counter-attack ending with Brazilian Artur feeding the overlapping Griffin Dorsey who blasted in at the near post.

Houston were utterly dominant, passing the ball with a swiftness that left Miami chasing shadows and it wasn't long before they had doubled their advantage.

Colombian winger Quinones cut into the box from the left flank and Miami right-back DeAndre Yedlin's desperate lunge brought him crashing to the ground. French forward Amine Bassi made no mistake from the spot to make it 2-0.

Men's & women's squash teams assure India of medals

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian men's and women's teams assured themselves of medals at the Asian Games after progressing to the semifinals of the squash events here on Thursday.

While the men's team blanked Nepal 3-0 in its final pool tie, the women were handed a 0-3 loss by Malaysia in their last pool B fixture.

Both teams sealed top two spots in their respective pools to make the semifinals which guarantees them at least a bronze. The Indian women's team began the day with veteran Joshna Chinappa enduring a 6-11, 2-11, 8-11 defeat to Subramaniam Sivasangari in 21 minutes.

In the second match, Tanvi Khanna squandered a 2-1 lead before going down to Commonwealth Games gold medalist Aifa Binti Azman 9-11, 11-1, 7-11, 13-11, 11-5.

Manika, Sharath, Sathiyam storm into last 16

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Star Indian paddlers Manika Batra, Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyam dominated their opponents en route their pre-quarterfinals entry in the table tennis competition at the Asian Games here on Thursday.

Sharath, a team bronze winner in 2018 Asian Games, never gave a chance to Mohammed Shaffan Ismail, his opponent from Maldives before winning 11-9, 11-2, 11-7, 11-7.

Sathiyam, who had won a bronze medal in the team event in Jakarta Games 2018, too was equally overwhelming against Turki Lafi Almutairi of Saudi Arabia while registering a 11-5, 11-6, 11-9, 11-2 victory.

Manika, a 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medalist and a bronze winner in mixed doubles at the Jakarta Asian Games, blanked Nabita Shrestha of Nepal 4-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-3, 11-2) in just 20 minutes to set up a clash with Thailand's



Suthasini Sawettabut.

However, Sreeja Akula faced a humiliating defeat to North Korea's Songgyong Pyon 0-4 (6-11, 4-11, 13-15, 9-11) to bow out of the competition.

India fared better in the women's doubles. Sreeja and Diya Chitale defeated Vietnam's Ngoc Tran Mai and Nga Nguyen Thi 3-0 (11-8, 15-13, 11-6).

Sutirtha Mukherjee teamed up with Ayhika Mukherjee to seal their place in the pre-quarters after defeating Kazakhstan 3-0. Sutirtha and Ayhika moved past Anastassiya Lavrova and

Zauresh Akasheva 11-7, 11-4, 11-7.

In the men's doubles, Indian duo of Manav Vikash Thakkar and Manush Utpalbhair Shah defeated Mohamed Shaffan Ismail and Moosa Munsif Ahmed of the Maldives 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-6, 11-2) to enter the round of 16.

Another Indian pair Sathiyam and Sharath outplayed Mangolian combination of Ser-Od Gankhuyag and Manlaijargal Munkh-Ochir 3-0 (11-5, 11-3, 11-3) in just 13 minutes.

PLEASED PLAYERS RETURNING FROM INJURIES GOT ‘GAME-TIME’

PTI ■ RAJKOT

India coach Rahul Dravid is relieved that key players such as Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, who are all coming back from injuries, could get enough miles in their legs ahead of the ODI World Cup, starting in a week's time.

Bumrah, who was troubled by a back issue that kept him out for long, bowled his full quota of overs in Mohali and Rajkot — the two matches he played against Australia — but was a bit expensive in the series-concluding third ODI.

The fast bowler had made a comeback during the T20 series against Ireland last month and also competed in Asia Cup in Sri Lanka.

Iyer, who is expected to bat at number four, struck a hundred in Indore and also contributed 48 in Rajkot.

Rahul not only batted in an impressive fashion, scoring two half centuries, he also kept the wickets, allaying concerns around his fitness. "For all those guys game-time was important. The fact that they have been able to get that is I think something that we are much better off for it," Dravid said after the third ODI that India lost by 66 runs.

"Jassi has been able to play a couple of games and bowl his quota of 10 overs, Siraj (was) suffering from a little bit of bug but he got back and was able to bowl," he said.

"(For) Ashwin, it was really nice to see the way he bowled in the first two games. KL as well, the keeping right through the 50 overs, he is coming off after almost 6-7 months. "Shreyas has played a couple of really good knocks in the last couple of games. We know we have to keep improving but also hope that we carry this momentum into the World



Cup," the India coach added.

Off-spinner R Ashwin's inclusion in the squad for the Australia series had triggered speculation that he might be included in the final World Cup squad. However, David was non-committal.

All the teams are required to finalise their World Cup squads by Thursday.

"We have to wait for an official confirmation or a decision on that. The NCA is in touch with the selectors and Ajit

(Agarkar) so I will not make any comments on that. If there is any change you will get to hear about it officially, as of now there are no changes," Dravid said, hinting that Axar Patel will be retained in the 15-man squad.

The india coach expects India's full strength squad to assemble in Guwahati ahead of the first warm-up match against England on September 30.

India had only 13 players to pick their

final eleven against Australia here on Wednesday as some members Shardul Thakur, Hardik Pandya and Mohammed Shami returned home while Ishan Kishan missed the contest due to a bug going around in the group

"The two practice or warm-up games, generally people play 15 versus 15, it is tough to sometimes get the intensity in those games but as we have seen in these three games, in hot conditions there has been a lot of intensity as well," Dravid added.

"There was a bit of juggling we had to manage in this game but I am hoping that we have got about a week, we have got a few days. We should have the full strength squad, hopefully the bug around the group has cleared out as well. It will be nice if that happens," the coach said.

Talking about the big loss in the Rajkot ODI, Dravid blamed it on giving away too many runs in the first half of the Australian innings.

"In the overall scheme of things probably 350 was 30 (runs) too many. We should have been chasing 320 if we had bowled better in the first half," he said.

Rohit Sharma (81) and Virat Kohli (56) added 70 runs but the team lost the plot after their partnership was broken. Dravid, however, was pleased to see the two senior batters were among runs right after a break.

"We were on par when Virat and Rohit were batting. We needed one of the top three to get 130 or 140. In these chases you need these kinds of scores," he said.

"Unfortunately it did not happen, but a good thing from our perspective is that both of them batted really well — that is a positive. They are coming off not playing cricket for a week so it was nice to get straight into it and get runs for us," he said.



Pakistan is a weaker team than India at this moment: Waqar

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Legendary pacer Waqar Younis rated India a better side over Pakistan going into the World Cup while basing his observation on the better preparation of the Rohit Sharma-led team ahead of the quadrennial big bash.

India had recently won the Asia Cup and handed a massive 228-run defeat to their arch-rivals in a Super 4 match at Colombo.

In the World Cup, India will face Pakistan on October 14 in Ahmedabad, and Younis said pressure will be there on both the outfits but said Men in Blue just could have an edge.

"As we all know, it (India vs Pakistan) will be the biggest game, mother of all the games.

So, when you play in Ahmedabad, you will have to control your nerves, and not only Pakistan will be under pressure since it is a weaker team as compared to India. "But India will also be under pressure because the crowd in the stadium will create pressure on both the teams," Younis told Star Sports. "However, if we judge purely based on the team's performance, India definitely will be a better team," he added. Younis was also mindful of the Pakistani's unstable form, and said the injury-enforced absence of pacer Naseem Shah could put them in a significant disadvantage.

"If I talk about Pakistan, they are a miss and hit this time. The absence of Naseem Shah will be a big disadvantage because

Naseem and Shaheen (Afridi) used to complement each other with new ball."

"Though Hasan Ali has been declared as his replacement; he has got a lot of experience and gave brilliant performances in the past, but I feel, to suddenly come and perform on this kind of big stage will not be an easy task for him," said Younis.

Analysing the Indian squad, Younis said the team has great spinners, while its bench strength is equally potent.

"If we only talk about ticking the boxes then we will see no other team can match India right now because they have good spinners, who are playing right now in the starting XI such as Kuldeep, Jadeja. But they also have strong bench strength."



We deserved to win gold in Asian Games: Harman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Thursday said they deserved to win the Asian Games gold medal, considering their domination over neighbouring teams, though she admitted that the expectations put a bit of pressure on the side.

Playing in their maiden Asian Games in Hangzhou, India fulfilled the expectations on them and clinched the yellow metal, beating Sri Lanka by 19 runs in the final.

"It was a great experience, we played really well. When we left for the Asian Games, we knew our team is pretty strong and we had in mind that we need to prepare like this for future tournaments. We deserved to win the gold," Harmanpreet said on the sidelines of a felicitation function organised by the Sports Ministry here.

"The team performed very well in Hangzhou and we managed to return with the gold. Before leaving we mentally knew that our team is very strong and

we can win the gold.

"We will approach future tournaments with the same mindset and prepare ourselves the same way we did before the Games," added the star cricketer.

Harmanpreet refused to compare the Commonwealth Games silver with the gold in Hangzhou, saying both the feelings were different.

"That moment was different because we could have won that match. Despite playing good cricket we got the silver. Here it was completely different because there was different sort of pressure on us as we have done well against the Asian teams.

"There was extra pressure on us because we have been dominating Asian cricket," she said.

Harmanpreet said the support provided by the government to the cricket teams in preparation for the Asian Games was very helpful.

"There are a lot of changes. As a sportsperson when you get so much support from all sides, it feels really motivating. This

year we witnessed a new thing and that is the government has given us money for preparation.

"These are the new things which never happened in cricket. As a sportsperson when you know there is not so much financial burden on you, you can play freely and that matters a lot," she said.

The skipper refused to compare rising pacer Titas Sadhu with legendary Jhulan Goswami but said the young Bengal bowler has a lot of promise.

"She (Titas) performed very well in Under-19 World Cup. She bowled really great there and whenever she gets a chance she is always ready to bowl for the team," Harmanpreet said.

"I can't compare her (Jhulan) with anyone but they are from the same state and I think Jhulan is working a lot on her, they keep on talking to each other."

During the ceremony, Sports Minister Anurag Thakur gave away cash awards to the shooting, rowing contingents besides the women cricketers, including Shafali Verma.

PTI ■ RAJKOT

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell will have a big role to play in the ODI World Cup for Australia as he brings a lot of balance to the side as the third spinner, said Mitchell Marsh.

Returning to top flight cricket after six months due to soreness to his ankle and birth of his son, Maxwell came up with career-best 4 for 40 to bowl Australia to a convincing 66-run win over India in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday night.

"It was a great spell. He came back after having not played much cricket for the last (few) months," Marsh said during the press-conference.

"It was great to see him back. It is the energy that Maxi brings to the team, his presence and the balance that he gives us.

"We obviously know that his batting is absolutely class but what he can do with the ball,

Mitchell Marsh backs Maxwell to play big role in World Cup campaign

and the options that he will give us with our all-rounders is vital for us going into the World Cup."

Talking about Maxwell's role in the World Cup, Marsh said, "There may be wickets where he's the third spinner through this World Cup.

"But just the ability for us to play the three quicks, a spinner and have Maxi who has the ability on the right wicket to bowl ten overs, think you see a lot of teams around the world have guys like Maxi; it gives you a lot of flexibility with the teams you can pick or the way you can structure your batting line-up."

Marsh, who struck a match-winning 96 in the first half, could not field in the second



innings as he was cramping up after batting in extreme heat and humidity.

"It was as tough as (anywhere) I have batted in. When I came off, I was absolutely exhausted, (had) full body cramp but obviously (it was) nice to contribute to a win like that. I thought we played outstanding (cricket)," he said.

"I wanted to (bowl), basically bowled a couple of balls (during warm up) but basically had cramps all the way up in my legs.

"It has been a big couple of weeks, I have played 10 out of a possible 11 games in the last three weeks so with what is to come, the staff said to cool my jets for the fielding innings," he said.

Shakib hints at retirement after 2025 Champions Trophy

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan wants to call time on his illustrious international career after the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

He has also asserted that while he plans to retire from Tests following the forthcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in India starting next month, he is also likely to quit T20s after the ICC T20 World Cup next year in West Indies and the United States of America.

Talking to T-Sports, as reported by ESPNcricinfo, Shakib said, "The 2025 Champions Trophy for ODIs and the 2024 T20 World Cup for T20s. Tests may be sooner. Maybe (after the World Cup)."

"I will retire all at once, but I will stop playing each format one by one. I will announce my retirement after the 2025 Cham-



pions Trophy." Shakib will be leading Bangladesh during the World Cup, having also captained the side during the Asia

Cup earlier this month in Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

It was his second stint as the unit's leader. Under him, the

Tigers did make it to the Super 4 of the Asia Cup, but failed to make it to the final.

In the meantime, Shakib has

confirmed that his outing in the upcoming World Cup will be his last as the skipper and will be quitting captaincy as a whole.

"Given the current reality, I am captain only till the World Cup. Not a day more."

"I resigned from the captaincy on the 17th [of September]. The reasons were the same when I didn't want to captain ahead of the Asia Cup."

"I don't think my captaincy is adding value at this stage of my career. I wanted to just bowl my 10 overs, give my best in fielding, and do my batting." "The easiest thing to do for me would have been not to take the captaincy. At this age, I didn't want to take this pressure. I want to smile, enjoy my game, perform for Bangladesh," he added.

Bangladesh take on Afghanistan in its opening fixture of the World Cup on October 7 in Dharamsala.

We believe we can win ODI World Cup: Rabada

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada believes the Proteas have what it takes to shed the chokers tag and win their maiden world title in the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup in India. Despite having some star players, South Africa have never progressed behind the semi-final stage of any of the World Cups till date but Rabada said this time they have the arsenal at their disposal to create history.

"One thing we have never lacked as South Africans is belief, so going into the tournament we do believe we can win it," Rabada was he was quoted as saying by



ICC. "We've got the players to do so, so hopefully we can make our first final and win this competition. It's going to be hard, but it's going to be really enjoyable.

"It's exciting to have the best players in the world playing against each other, competing for one prize, and we are up for the challenge."

The Proteas failed to advance beyond the group stage four years ago but are yet to taste a series defeat in ODIs this year.

The four-time semi-finalists struggled in 2019 but have since risen to fourth in the men's ODI team rankings, and are full of confidence after a 3-2 series victory over Australia.

Bavuma returns home due to personal reasons

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

South Africa suffered a setback on Thursday with their ODI skipper Temba Bavuma returning home from India due to personal reasons ahead of the side's two warm-up games of the ICC Cricket World Cup.

The Proteas are scheduled to take on Afghanistan and New Zealand in their first and second warm-up games on



here September 29 and October 2 respectively.

As per an update on South Africa cricket's social media handles, Bavuma has returned to South Africa due to personal reasons.

T20I captain Aiden Markram will be leading the side in the two warm-up clashes in absence of Bavuma, who is likely to rejoin the team ahead of their opening game. South Africa opens their World Cup campaign against Sri Lanka in New Delhi on October 7.