



OPINION 6
INDIAN NATIONHOOD
THRIVES AMID DIVERSITY

WORLD 10
TRUMP TRIUMPHS OVER HALEY
IN SOUTH CAROLINA

MONEY 11
MARKETS MAY FACE VOLATILITY AMID
DERIVATIVES EXPIRY: ANALYSTS

Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol.160 Issue 55
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

LUCKNOW, MONDAY FEBRUARY 26, 2024; PAGES 12 ₹3

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MYTH BECOMES REALITY

Modi Bridges Ancient and Modern India



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated 'Sudarshan Setu', the country's longest cable-stayed bridge of 2.32 km, on the Arabian sea connecting Beyt Dwarka island to mainland Okha in Gujarat's Devbhumi Dwarka district. Modi began his day by offering prayers at Lord Sri Krishna temple at Beyt Dwarka. He later inaugurated the four-lane cable-stayed bridge called the 'Sudarshan Setu', which boasts a unique design, featuring a footpath adorned with verses from Srimad Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna on both sides. The 2.32 km bridge, including 900 metres of central double span cable-stayed portion and a 2.45 km long approach road, has been constructed at a cost of ₹979 crore, as per an official release.

PTI



Delhi BJP organises a programme in Old Delhi to listen to PM's Mann Ki Baat

Ranjan Dimri/Pioneer

Modi urges first time voters to cast ballots in large numbers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

As the country prepares for general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged first-time voters on Sunday to cast their ballots in record numbers, emphasising that their maiden vote should be for the country.

In the 111th episode of Mann Ki Baat, Modi announced that the monthly broadcast would not air for the next three months, adhering to political ethics ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

With the general elections expected in April-May, the PM said the possibility of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) being enforced in March, similar to 2019, hinting at the upcoming announcement of the



election schedule next month.

The MCC guidelines mandate that Governments refrain from using official events or public-funded platforms for activities that may favor the ruling party.

Modi highlighted the success of the programme in maintaining independence from Government influence over its 110 episodes, emphasising its dedication to the collective strength and

achievements of the country. "Mann Ki Baat is a programme "of the people, for the people, and by the people," Modi said.

"However, in line with political ethics, 'Mann Ki Baat' will not be broadcast for the next three months during the Lok Sabha elections," he said.

"When we reconvene, it will be the 111th episode," Modi added, noting the significance of the number.

He encouraged first-time voters to participate in large numbers, declaring that the 18th Lok Sabha would symbolise their aspirations. As citizens become eligible to vote at 18, Modi urged youth not only to engage in political activities but also to stay informed about debates and discussions during this period.

Continued on Page 9

Farmers stir pause brings respite to commuters

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

As the farmers halted their proposed march towards the national Capital, the Delhi Police on Sunday arranged a pathway for the commuters by removing a portion of blocks at the Singhu and Tikri borders, and authorities in Haryana also restored mobile internet services in seven districts on Sunday.

The services were suspended in Ambala, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Jind, Hisar, Fatehabad, and Sirsa on February 11, and the suspension was extended on February 13, 15, 17, 19, 20, 21, 23, and 24. Officials said no fresh order has been issued to extend the suspension of mobile services in the seven districts.

A senior Delhi Police officer said they are removing a portion of the barrier from Point A to Point B for the commuters. "The deployment of police and paramilitary forces will ensure strict vigil round the clock. Force deployment will stay in place. Vehicle movement will not be allowed for now," he said.

On Sunday, the city police removed two huge cement barriers for those commuters who walk towards Delhi using a small passage at the Singhu and Tikri borders.

Continued on Page 9

Sandeshkhali continues to simmer

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
KOLKATA

Continuing his attack on the Mamata Banerjee Government for "perpetrating atrocities on the poor people, including women" of the State of Bengal, Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said on Sunday that Sandeshkhali was just a trailer and that many more regions would rise up in revolt in the times to come.

"Sandeshkhali has just started showing the way like Nandigram did in 2009 and 2011... you will see that in days to come areas like

Jeliakhali, Nyajat, Tushkhali, Hingalganj, and neighboring regions, and then the villages of entire Bengal will rise up in revolt... against the oppression of Mamata and her army of goons led by the likes of Sheikh Shahjahan, who have not only grabbed the lands of the people but also sexually assaulted their women and thrown their men behind bars when they protested," Adhikari said on Sunday, reminding how year after year villagers were not allowed to vote by the TMC goons.

"I can show you how the people of Gosaba, Sandeshkhali, Basanti,

Canning Hingalganj, Diamond Harbour have not been allowed to vote... mostly the Hindus of these areas have been prevented from voting by the goons of Mamata ... the people of Sandeshkhali have openly complained how they have not voted after 2011... now the time of reckoning has come... the people will take revenge for all the sins that have been committed against them... they have united and risen up in revolt," he said.

Meanwhile, in a related development, a Central fact-finding team of former bureaucrats and judges was prevented from entering



Sandeshkhali on Sunday, even as the island continued to simmer with women coming out of their houses in

large numbers, demanding the arrest of local TMC leader and district board member Shahjahan.

AI ensures zero human animal conflict

ARCHANA JYOTI ■
NEW DELHI

Amid a disturbing surge in human-animal conflicts nationwide, the Udanti Sitanadi Tiger Reserve in Chhattisgarh offers a glimmer of hope with no reported loss of human life due to wild animal attacks in the past year. Udanti and Sitanadi are two wildlife sanctuaries combined, covering a total area of 1842.54 square kilometres. It was declared a tiger reserve back in 2009.

Officials from the tiger reserve have attributed zero human-animal conflict to proactive measures implemented to mitigate such incidents and ensure the safety of both humans and wildlife. They also credited this positive scenario to leveraging cutting-edge AI



technology, an AI-based app, 'Chhattisgarh Elephant Tracking and Alert', which, they said, has played a crucial role in preventing

human-elephant conflicts by promptly alerting people about elephant movements. They explained that this

groundbreaking app has revolutionised the management of human-elephant conflicts by leveraging real-time data and analytics to promptly alert local communities about elephant movements, thereby reducing the risk of potential encounters and minimising conflict situations.

"The successful implementation of this technology has not only enhanced public safety but has also contributed significantly to fostering coexistence between humans and elephants within the reserve's vicinity."

In addition to technological interventions, the tireless efforts of the anti-poaching team have played a pivotal role in safeguarding the integrity of the reserve, resulting in the arrest of 120 poachers in the past year.

These efforts have not only helped protect vulnerable species but have also contributed to maintaining the ecological balance within the reserve.

Through concerted efforts, encroachments on approximately 650 hectares within the reserve have been effectively removed, creating a safer environment for both wildlife and local communities. By preserving vital habitats and preventing wildlife from encroaching into nearby villages, these initiatives have been instrumental in minimising conflicts and promoting harmonious coexistence, said the officials. Despite these commendable achievements, challenges persist, and human-wildlife conflicts continue to pose significant threats nationwide.

Continued on Page 9

Banned SIMI member held after 22 years manhunt

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police has arrested a 47-year-old member of Students' Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) who also allegedly edited a magazine of the banned organisation besides indoctrinating many gullible youths.

According to the police, Hanif Sheikh was declared a proclaimed offender in 2002 and has been absconding for the last 22 years. He was nabbed on February 22 from Bhusawal in Jalgaon district in Maharashtra where he was a teacher in an Urdu school under a different identity, they said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) Alok Kumar claimed that Hanif was the most notorious and wanted SIMI terrorist who had played pivotal roles in various activities of the proscribed organisation across the country. Police said the SIMI magazine that Hanif Sheikh edited had his name printed as Haneef Hudai. This was the only lead available with the police, making it difficult to trace him, they said.

A case of sedition and under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) was registered against him in 2001 at New Friends Colony police station in the national Capital.

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Keeping alive the legacy of Sanskrit

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■
CHENNAI

As one enters the premises of an old but elegant building in Mylapore in Chennai, one is greeted with the hymns, slokas and chanting of songs worshipping Gods, Goddesses and wisdom. Hundreds of students undergo a gurukul style education spread across many classrooms. Their common identity is the customary tuft, veshti, angavastram and the cotton shirt.



Modernity, as practiced in the high profile colleges, is yet to make its presence in this institution which has an aura and halo of a place of worship. A group of ancient Hindu temples surround the college providing it a divine outlook.

The visitor is likely to feel that he is in Sage Vasishtha's Gurukula, the alma mater of Lord Ram. A steaming pot of filter coffee, the chanting from the dozens of temples nearby and the ambience of Madras Sanskrit College is what gives life to Mylapore.

It is Madras Sanskrit College, established in 1906 by philanthropists and puritans of Indian tradition whose only passion was to preserve the age old Indian culture in its true form without getting polluted by alien forces. It is a wonder that the institution built from the scratch by V Krishnaswami Iyer, leading lawyer of Madras Bar Association, who went up to become the Member of the Governor's Executive Council, stood the challenges of time and survives till this day as the Sun of

Knowledge despite efforts by the all powerful Dravidian forces to destroy and demolish the college.

What started as a Gurukula Patasala, today stands majestically and imparts courses in Mimamsa, Advaita Vedanta, Vyakarana, Sahitya, Jyotishsha and Nyaya as well as in all the special branches of study selected by the students.

The teaching is in the age old style and resembles intellectual bouts between students and teachers.

Continued on Page 9

2 die in mishap involving car securing CM cavalcade route

Yogi meets injured, announces compensation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Two of the 15 people, including police personnel who were injured when a police jeep met with an accident while securing the route for Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's cavalcade in Arjunganj on Saturday evening, succumbed late in the night.

According to the spokesman of media cell, commissioner of police (Lucknow), the deceased were identified as Neelam Devi (35) and her neighbour's daughter Priya (14) of Arjunganj. Both had gone to the market to purchase vegetables when the mishap occurred. Priya was a Class VII student of a private school. The spokesman said others were undergoing treatment.

Neelam succumbed to injuries at the trauma centre late Saturday night. She is survived by husband Vinay Kumar, and two children — Aniket & Ayush. Aniket is a Class V student and Ayush is a Class III student.

Santosh, father of Priya who succumbed to head injuries, demanded compensation of Rs 50 lakh, a job for a family member and accommodation from the government.



Neelam's brother Rahul has also demanded an ex gratia from the government.

Thirteen others are undergoing treatment at the two hospitals. Doctors said the condition of Vijay Kushwaha and Khalid Azam was critical.

Battling blood clots in the brain, both have been put on life support.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited KGMU on Sunday to meet the victims

and extend support to them. He also went to Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences to inquire about the condition of those admitted there. He visited each patient in both hospitals and interacted with them.

Asked by the chief minister about any concerns related to the treatment, the injured patients told him that doctors were providing appropriate treatment and continuously

monitoring their condition.

Yogi directed the doctors at KGMU to ensure no negligence in the treatment of patients and take special care of their diet.

The chief minister also interacted with their relatives, and assured them that the best possible treatment was being provided to patients. He told them to inform the hospital administration immediately in case of any problem so that it could be resolved promptly.

He also announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the deceased and expressed grief. He also announced a financial aid of Rs 50,000 each to the families of the injured.

According to police sources, the accident occurred when the speeding jeep hit a vehicle parked on the roadside while trying to avoid an animal that suddenly came before it.

They said the local police jeep was at least a kilometre ahead of the cavalcade.

"A police jeep travelling ahead of the convoy of the Chief Minister met with an accident in Arjunganj market area on Saturday evening. 13 persons were injured," Lucknow Police Commissioner SB Shiradkar said.

Missing woman killed by employer, aides

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman, who went missing from her office in Ghazipur police station area on February 21, was murdered the same day and her body was dumped into the Gomti river after being tied to a sack filled with maurang in Hardoi district, police said on Sunday.

The police claimed to have unravelled the mystery after recovering the body of the woman, Geeta Singh, on the disclosure of prime suspect Abhinav Verma and his aides, who were arrested from Hardoi on Sunday.

DCP, North, Abhijeet R Shanker said the woman was reported missing on February 22 by her husband.

"The woman worked with a private company owned by Abhinav Verma. The woman had an affair with Abhinav," he claimed. He said the body had been sent for autopsy, reports of which were awaited.

The DCP also claimed that the love affair between Abhinav and Gita went awry after which Abhinav and his employees — Arjun, Shivam and Kamal Kishore — killed her.

"While working on the missing report, the police zeroed in on Abhinav as a prime suspect. Rounded up and grilled, he spilled the

beans," the DCP said.

Earlier, upon finding Geeta's mobile number switched off on February 22, her son called her Yogita, who lived in the office itself along with Geeta, told him that she would be reaching Hardoi, her native home.

When she did not reach there, Neeraj visited Om Plaza which houses the office of the company, but found it locked. He tried calling Abhinav, but in vain. Later, Neeraj requested the Om Plaza manager for the CCTV footage.

When he checked the footage, he spotted Geeta entering the office there on February 21 night. However, she was not seen coming out. In another footage, Abhinav and others, including Yogita, were seen coming out of the office along with some goods.

Neeraj somehow managed to talk to Abhinav, who told him that he had shifted the company's office. About Geeta, he told Neeraj that she had taken some money in advance from him and left for Hardoi.

Neeraj alleged that the incharge of the local police outpost did not help him even though he showed him the CCTV footage and asked him to round up and interrogate Abhinav.

In his confession, Abhinav confessed to have strangled

Geeta to death over a monetary dispute on February 21 night. He disclosed that he, along with his aides, took the body to Pratap Nagar crossing at Beniganj-Neemsar border in Hardoi and dumped the body into the Gomti river after tying it to a sack filled with maurang.

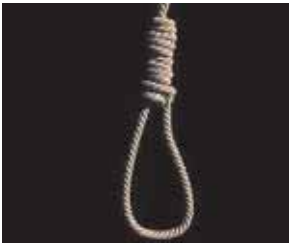
The accused said he hid the body inside the box of a sofa which he took out from the office in a bid to pull wool over the police's eyes.

He said he had shifted his office from Hardoi to Indira Nagar under Ghazipur police station last year. Abhinav said he lived in Gomti Nagar while Geeta and Yogita stayed in the office itself in Om Plaza.

Meanwhile, a youth was killed in a road mishap while his brother-in-law was injured in Gosainganj on Sunday morning.

As per reports, Jitendra Kumar (25) of Jahangirpur, along with his brother-in-law, was returning home from Katra locality in the area on a motorcycle when a speeding roadways bus knocked the bike from behind near a dhaba. Jitendra fell down and was run over by the bus. He died on the spot. His brother-in-law was admitted to a hospital. The errant driver sped off the scene. Police registered a case on the complaint given by the deceased's father.

Loader driver hangs self



Lucknow (PNS): A 25-year-old loader driver was found hanging from a tree in an orchard in Mohanlalganj on Sunday. Police said he hanged himself to death using a dhoti.

As per reports, Saroj Rawat returned home on Saturday night and went to his room after having dinner with his family members. When he did not wake up till 8 am on Sunday, his father Amarnath went to the room but he was not present there. Amarnath tried calling Saroj, but the calls went unanswered. He was later informed by villagers that his son's body was hanging from a tree in the orchard. He was a bachelor. Police sent the body for autopsy and started further investigations. The police said it was not clear why Saroj took the extreme step.

In another incident, a 30-year-old man ended his life at his house in Kakori. He was identified as Arvind Kumar. His family found him hanging from the ceiling in a room with a saree tied around his neck around 9:40 pm on Sunday. The family said that Arvind was mentally unstable.

LMC developing master plan for drainage system

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Every year during the monsoon, the city faces the problem of waterlogging in several areas. In a bid to overcome this issue, Lucknow Nagar Nigam is developing a master plan for the city's drainage system for the first time. The municipal corporation has already issued a tender for the selection of a consultant, aiming for a comprehensive, exhaustive, and problem-oriented master plan.

Providing details, chief engineer Mahesh Verma said,

"We are considering the entire municipal limit area for the drainage master plan. We will execute the plan based on available funds." He emphasised the importance of having a detailed drainage plan to determine the flow direction of drains within the municipal limits.

"The detailed project report (DPR) will provide all drain details, including those sloping towards other drains. We have initiated the consultant selection process for DPR preparation. After the DPR is ready, we will execute it based on fund avail-

ability and inundation urgency," he explained.

Verma highlighted the problem of waterlogging in low-lying areas like Patel Nagar and Faizullahganj, sensitive to flooding. "Our goal is to make the city flood-resilient through the drainage master plan," he stated. He mentioned that once the DPR is completed, areas will be selected based on waterlogging severity. "If inundation persists for more than one day in certain areas, they will be prioritised for intervention," he added. Asked about the absence

of a master plan for drainage in the past, he explained, "Urbanisation and ongoing constructions on private lands necessitate plan modifications. Hence, a comprehensive master plan was not developed until now." Verma said that the new plan would be exhaustive, incorporating stakeholders' opinions, including the public and relevant departments.

"This will transform the city's infrastructure," he said, noting that the state government has allocated budget provisions for the next financial year.

Verma pointed that waterlogging affects both static and floating populations, estimating around 60 lakh people are impacted in the municipal and surrounding areas. The drainage plan will also encompass the renovation of pumping stations in the city. "Without this, we cannot proceed. Due to the city's topography, natural drainage is inadequate, necessitating pumping stations. After the plan is finalised, we will likely need to increase the number and capacity of pumping stations," he added.

Sitapur's 'Drone Didi' impresses PM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh dominated yet another 'Mann Ki Baat' session of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday, with the prime minister having an interaction with the 'Drone Didi' from Sitapur and sharing memories of the unique features of the photography exhibition in Varanasi.

While interacting with Sunita Devi, known as 'Drone Didi' from Sitapur, the prime minister enquired about her family and experiences. Sunita told the prime minister that she has studied up to BA and has a family consisting of her mother, husband and two children and farming is the source of their livelihood.

Sunita disclosed that she received training for operating drones at the Phulpur IFFCO company in Allahabad and saw a drone for the first time at the Sitapur Agriculture Science Centre.

On being asked by Prime Minister Modi whether she went through theoretical training first followed by practical, the 'Drone Didi'

answered in the affirmative, adding that her training started from the second day.

"First, we were taught about different parts of the drone and how to operate it. On the third day, an exam was conducted. We solved the question paper on the computer. After theory classes, tests were taken, and then practical sessions were conducted. We were taught how to fly the drone and how to control it," she stated.

Mentioning difficulties faced during the rainy season when the crops are growing with increased risk of pests, Sunita stated that a drone can immensely help in such a situation in spraying pesticides while standing on the ridge. Emphasising the need for exercising caution, she added that so far she had sprayed pesticides on 35 acres of land.

In response to the prime minister's question, Sunita shared that farmers are very happy with this innovation, as it is effective and saves time. "They only need to come and show us their fields. The spraying can be completed in just half an hour. Many people also come to see the

drone," she remarked.

Prime Minister Modi said, "My mission is to make 'Lakshpati Didi'. Sisters from all over the country are listening, and today, Drone Didi is talking to me for the first time. What would you like to say?"

In response, Sunita said, "Thousands of my fellow sisters need to come forward and become Drone Didis. If thousands of women join me, I will feel that I am not alone in this endeavour."

Prime Minister Modi congratulated Sunita, stating that 'NAMO Drone Didi' is becoming a significant means to modernise agriculture in the country.

In the programme, Prime Minister Modi further mentioned that two days ago, he was in Varanasi, where he witnessed a spectacular photo exhibition. "The moments captured by the youth of Kashi and surrounding areas were amazing. Many of the photographs were taken with mobile cameras, showing that anyone with a mobile phone could become a content creator today," he stated.

The prime minister fur-

ther remarked that social media has greatly helped people in showcasing their talents and abilities. "Youth in India are excelling in the field of content creation on social media. They are seen sharing different content on different subjects. Whether it is tourism, public participation, or inspiring life journeys, various types of content are present on social media connected with these aspects," Prime Minister Modi added.

He further informed that the voice of the youth creating content in the country has become very impactful today, pointing out that to honour their talent, National Creators Awards have been instituted in the country.

"Under this, preparations are underway to recognise change-makers in different categories who are effectively using technology to become voices for social change. This contest is ongoing on MyGov. I would urge content creators to participate in it. If you know such interesting content creators, nominate them for the National Creators Awards," he stated.



Muslims offering 'fatiha' at the graves of their deceased kin on the occasion of Shab-e-Bara'at, in Ashbagh's Karbala Malka Jahan on Sunday

Pioneer

LDA set to expand jurisdiction

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow Development Authority is set to expand its jurisdiction to address the current issue of a depleted land bank and to facilitate the overall development of the outskirts, according to an official press release issued on Sunday. The expansion is expected to take effect possibly from July 1 this year.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, during a press conference at his official residence on Saturday, had proposed the establishment of a State Capital Regional Development Authority, mod-

elled after the National Capital Region (NCR), to ensure comprehensive development.

This initiative draws inspiration from the significant development observed in and around the national capital.

According to government sources, Divisional Commissioner Roshan Jacob, who is also the ex-officio chairperson of LDA, and Vice-Chairman Indramani Tripathi have been informed about the expansion and asked to provide their suggestions for its effective implementation.

The announcement also stated that two prominent tehsils of the district, Bakshi-

ka-Talab and Sarojininaragar, along with Gosainganj, would be included in the new setup.

Currently, the land bank is diminishing rapidly due to encroachment.

In response to the issue of land grabbing, Tripathi acknowledged that public land had been illegally occupied or obtained through fraudulent means. However, he assured that LDA was actively working with police to reclaim its land.

In the past year and a half, the LDA enforcement squad has reclaimed public land worth Rs 1,000 crore, with plans to recover more in the near future.

Mayawati asks party members to introspect

Lucknow (PNS): Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Sunday, asked the parliamentarians of her party to introspect whether they followed the guidelines given to them in the interest of the party.

Mayawati's remarks came after BSP Lok Sabha MP from Ambedkar Nagar Ritesh Pandey resigned from the party's primary membership ahead of the Lok Sabha elections and joined the BJP in New Delhi. "Along with the BSP political party, there is also a movement dedicated to the mission of self-respect and self-respect of the most revered Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar due to which the policy and working style of this party is different from that of the capitalist parties of the country. Keeping this in mind also, the party fields its candidates in elections," Mayawati said in a series of posts on 'X'

in Hindi. "After meeting this criterion, the BSP MPs must introspect whether they took proper care of the people in their area? Did they devote full time in their area? Also, did they properly follow the guidelines given from time to time in the interest of the party and the movement?" she said.

The BSP chief further said, "In such a situation, it is possible to give tickets to most of the Lok Sabha MPs, especially when they are seen wandering here and there in their own interests and are in the news for negative reasons. It is unfair for the media to publicise this as a weakness of the party despite knowing all this. The interest of the BSP is above all," she said.

Many other MPs of the party are also in touch with other parties and may soon leave BSP to contest parliamentary elections on the symbols of other parties.



CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Bibbo To Bibbo Khan for all future purpose, Bibbo Khan W/O Shafeeq Khan R/O 89/255, Bansmandi, Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I have changed my name from Shafeeq To Shafeeq Khan for all future purpose, Shafeeq Khan S/O MOHD Jama R/O 89/255, Bansmandi, Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

I, NARGIS KHATOON spouse of SUB. MALIK MOHD BILAL KHAN resident of Qr. no. 636/035(B), Astha Vihar Colony, Takrohi, Indira Nagar, Lucknow, UP-226016 have changed my name from NARGIS KHATOON to NARAGIS KHATOON vide affidavit 19/02/2024 before R.C.Adv.& Notary, Lucknow, U.P. India, Regd.No.31/64/2000.

NOTICE

In my daughter's Vaishnavi Shree class-12 CBSE board Roll No. 23691855 Year 2023-24 record and Admit Card my name wrongly printed as Sangeeta Shree, While my correct name is Sangeeta Singh, Kindly correct accordingly, Sangeeta Singh W/O Sunil Kumar R/O 117/755 P-1 Shivpuri, Kakadeo Kanpur Nagar

NOTICE

It is informed to the general public that my real name is Tara Devi wife Late Ram Lakhan, Nayantara has been mentioned in the Aadhaar card by mistake. While the correct name is Tara Devi! In future, I should be known and recognized only by the name of Tara Devi, Tara Devi wife Late Ramlakhan R/o - Village Yehiyapur, Post Nizamabad District Azamgarh UP

Modi virtually inaugurates newly-constructed AIIMS

PNS ■ RAE BARELI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Sunday, inaugurated the newly-constructed All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in different states of the country, including Rae Bareli (Uttar Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Mangalgiri (Andhra Pradesh), Bathinda (Punjab), and Kalyani (West Bengal).

Virtually joining the inauguration ceremony of Rae Bareli, Prime Minister Modi said that he had promised AIIMS to Rae Bareli and today the guarantee was being fulfilled. He also lashed out at Congress for doing dynastic politics. “They only did politics in Rae Bareli, while the work was done by Modi,” he stated.

The AIIMS facilities were inaugurated in Rae Bareli (Uttar Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Mangalgiri (Andhra Pradesh), Bathinda (Punjab) and Kalyani (West Bengal).

Addressing the event, the prime minister said, “I had laid the foundation stone for AIIMS in Rae Bareli five years ago, and today, it has been inaugurated. Your servant fulfilled the guarantee.”

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, who was present at the inaugural ceremony of AIIMS-Rae Bareli, said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country had witnessed revolutionary changes in the last 10 years, adding that today, every citizen in the ‘new India’ was guaranteed security and excellent healthcare services. Chief Minister Yogi emphasised that the new India has the capability to implement major development projects. Additionally, he highlighted the commitment of the double-engine government to provide employment to every youth and respect the aspirations of



the common citizen.

He further stated that with the inauguration of AIIMS in Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh has joined the league of leading states in the country having two AIIMS.

“The first AIIMS was started in Gorakhpur, and today Rae Bareli is witnessing its inauguration. Last year, 100 students took admission in the MBBS course at AIIMS Rae Bareli,” he remarked.

“In 2017, when the double-engine government assumed office in the state, healthcare services were a significant challenge. There was an outbreak of diseases like encephalitis, malaria, kala-azar and dengue in the state. The health services were in a poor state. From 1947 to 2017, only 12 medical colleges were operational across the state. Today, 65 government and private medical colleges are running in the state. Additionally, 15 medical colleges are under construction. Facilities like dialysis and telemedicine are now available in all 75 districts of the state,” Chief Minister Yogi added.

Union Minister Smriti Irani said that the AIIMS in Rae Bareli was the most significant example of the difference between the ‘naamdaar’ (priv-

ileged) and the ‘kaamgaar’ (worker).

She mentioned that from Independence until 2013, the country had 380 medical colleges, but today 706 medical colleges were operational in the country, with extensive work done in this regard between 2014 and 2024.

She further said that what could not be achieved in 30 years in Amethi was accomplished by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in three months. She pointed out that within three months of the Lok Sabha election results in 2019, Amethi got a medical college and this became possible because of Chief Minister Yogi.

“Today, Amethi has a dialysis centre, trauma centre, and blood bank, and people do not have to go elsewhere for treatment,” she added.

Union Minister SP Singh Baghel, Uttar Pradesh Minister of State for Health Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh, Minister of State for Horticulture and Agriculture Marketing (independent charge) Dinesh Pratap Singh, public representatives of Rae Bareli and Amethi and a large number of Bharatiya Janata Party workers and common people were present at the programme.

Eight killed in crackers factory explosion

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

At least eight people died and ten others were injured in a massive explosion in a firecracker factory in Kaushambi district on Sunday.

The blast took place around 12 noon at Mahewa village in the Kokhraj police station area and was heard several kilometres from the factory, police said.

Soon after information was received about the explosion, 10 fire-tenders and ambulances

were rushed to the spot, officials said.

Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) of Prayagraj Zone Bhanu Bhaskar said, “The cracker factory belonged to one Shahid (35). He was also killed in the blast along with seven others.”

As per information shared by the office of UP relief commissioner, four deceased were identified as Shiv Narayan, Shivkant, Ashok Kumar and Jaichandra. Efforts are being made to identify the four other

deceased, police said. According to the ADGP, around 18 people were working at the factory when the blast took place. “Prima facie it appears that the blast occurred following a fire in the chemicals kept there. Ten fire-tenders were sent to the spot to douse the fire,” the ADGP said.

As per locals, the blast was so powerful that it dismembered limbs of the deceased and the injured were thrown several metres away from the site.

K a u s h a m b i ’ s Superintendent of Police Brijesh Kumar Srivastava informed the media that the people who were affected by the accident were those who were working in the firecracker factory.

According to him, the firecracker factory operator has a licence to make firecrackers and the factory is located far away from the residential area.

On the late arrival of fire-tenders, he said that the fire brigade personnel were on

duty at another location at the time of the accident and as soon as the information was received, they were rushed to the spot.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognizance of this accident. He has expressed condolences to the bereaved families of the deceased. Also, instructions have been given to the officials to speed up the relief work. Chief Minister Yogi has said that the injured should be given proper treatment.

Two dead in road accident

Lucknow (PNS): Two people riding a bicycle died after being hit by a car in a village in Ballia on Sunday, police said. They said the accident took place in Kureji village under the Gadwar police station area. Police identified the deceased as Mantu Gupta (24) and Akhilesh Rajbhar (19).

Gadwar police station in-charge Sanjay Shukla said the bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination. Police are investigating the matter and a case has been registered against the car driver.

Meanwhile, the body of a 25-year-old construction company worker was found hanging in a village in Shamli district on Sunday, police said. SHO Rajendra Sharma said Chhotu Kumar is suspected to have died by suicide.

In another incident in Mainpuri, four people died on Sunday when their car collided with a parked truck along the Lucknow-Agra Expressway, police said. SP Vinod Kumar said the accident occurred in the Kurra police station area. He said the car was going to Aligarh from Kolkata. According to police, the accident took place near milestone 97 on the expressway and the bodies have been sent for autopsy.

‘Playing with future of youth national sin’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Sunday, said that those behind the paper leak in the police recruitment examination would be taught a fitting lesson, serving as a notable deterrent for such elements in the future.

The warning came after the announcement of the scrapping of the examination by the Uttar Pradesh government on Saturday. Speaking at Lok Bhavan during a programme to distribute appointment letters to the candidates selected for about 1,800 posts in various departments through fair and transparent means, Chief Minister Yogi described playing with the future of the youth by unscrupulous elements as a “national sin”.

Chief Minister Yogi remarked: “We have always believed that if the recruitment process is not transparent, it amounts to playing with the future of the talented youth, forcing them to migrate. Doing injustice to the youth is a national sin. Therefore, we adopted a zero tolerance policy against such elements from day one, dealing with such elements in the strictest and harshest manner whenever such a situation arose.”

Chief Minister Yogi said that these deceitful individuals were using technology to carry out their nefarious designs, and reiterated the government’s resolve to foil all such attempts.

Congratulating the youth selected in different departments for joining the services of the state, the chief minister said that Prime Minister



Narendra Modi’s vision was also the mission of the double engine government. “The government is working with full commitment to ensure that every youth gets his rights in a fair and transparent manner. As a result in the last seven years, more than six lakh youth have been provided jobs in the government departments of the state in a fair and transparent manner,” he asserted.

Mentioning investment proposals of Rs 40 lakh crore received during the UP Global Investors Summit-2023 and the launch of projects worth Rs 10.24 lakh crore during the groundbreaking ceremony, Chief Minister Yogi said that the projects launched during GBC@IV would provide employment to 34 lakh youths on completion.

“Earlier, these youth used to go to Maharashtra, Delhi, Bengaluru, Tamil Nadu in search of jobs and employment, but today they do not need to go anywhere as they are getting jobs in their own district and their own state,” he remarked.

Chief Minister Yogi appealed to the newly-selected candidates to fulfil their responsibilities honestly and focus on the development of the state and the country, contributing to the realisation of the concept of developed India while demonstrating sensitivity towards the poor and the underprivileged.

“You reach your office on time and complete the tasks on priority. Do not leave any file pending. Often due to procrastination, a pile of work accumulates, derailing the work, exposing those responsible to disciplinary action,” he pointed out. He added: “You have reached this milestone with the love and blessings of your parents, teachers, friends and well-wishers. But, this should not be considered a destination. It’s time for you to put in your best efforts. Your hard work and good performance in the first 10 years of your job will also decide the roadmap for the future of your department.”

On this occasion, Cabinet Ministers Swatantra Dev Singh,

AK Sharma, Minister of State Dr Dayashankar Mishra, Mayankeshwar Sharan Singh, Dinesh Khatik, Ramkesh Nishad, Additional Chief Secretary (Energy) Mahesh Kumar Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary (Appointment and Personnel) Devesh Chaturvedi and other officials of the state were present.

The chief minister handed over appointment letters to Shubham Verma of Lucknow and Anita Rajput of Hardoi for the post of junior engineer in Irrigation department; Amar Verma and Kamini Kamal of Mainpuri for the post of junior engineer in Housing Development Board; Dr Vijaya Lakshmi, Dr Renu Yadav for the post of Ayurveda Medical Officer in AYUSH department; Animesh Tripathi and Dr Ashutosh Srivastava for the post of dentist; Pankaj Kumar for the post of review officer in Secretariat administration; Prashant Srivastava for the post of inspector in the Administrative Reforms department; Neelam Gautam and Harshit Singh Chauhan for the post of technician (electrical) in Power Corporation and Richa Sonkar and Anuj Tiwari for the post of assistant prosecution officers in the Home department.

Meanwhile, police and the Special Task Force conducted raids in various districts of the state and arrested 391 accused who committed irregularities in recruitment examinations. Cases were registered against them and they were sent to jail. Along with this, a large number of suspects are being interrogated.

UP govt efforts for industrialisation bearing fruit

Lucknow (PNS): Owing to the ongoing efforts of the Yogi Adityanath government to accelerate industrialisation of Uttar Pradesh, the state has recorded significant growth in various crucial indicators, as per the data of the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI).

According to the latest ASI data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for the financial years 2020-21 and 2021-22, Uttar Pradesh has recorded significant growth in crucial indicators such as the number of factories, employment and output value.

Moreover, the latest report from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) also indicates positive developments.

Notably, as per the latest database from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Uttar Pradesh is leading in terms of the highest development rate among new active companies in the state. The positive development in the ASI data released by MoSPI indicates a clear rise in Uttar Pradesh’s share in India. From 2016 to 2020, the number of factories increased with a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 1.4 per cent, while India’s share remained relatively constant at around 6.6 per cent. Furthermore, post-pandemic, there has been a 6 per cent growth in factories in the financial year 2022 compared to 2021, with the share also increasing from 6.6 per cent to 7 per cent. Similarly, employment increased at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) 4.7 per cent from 2016 to 2020 in UP, compared to India’s 6.6 per cent which rose to 6.8 per cent. After the pandemic, in the financial year 2022, 14 per cent growth was witnessed in employment compared to 2021, with the share also increasing from 7.1 per cent to 7.6 per cent.

As for gross value added (GVA), there has been a 7 per cent growth from the financial year 2016 to 2020, with the share in India increasing from 5.1 per cent to 5.7 per cent. Post-pandemic, there was a remarkable 28 per cent growth in GVA in the financial year 2022 compared to 2021, with the share also rising from 5.8 per cent to 5.9 per cent.

Meanwhile, according to the latest database from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Uttar Pradesh is leading in terms of the highest development rate among new active companies.

AKY joins Rahul-led yatra ... asks people to wipe out BJP to save democracy

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav joined Congress leader Rahul Gandhi’s Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Agra on Sunday, days after the two parties reached a seat-sharing arrangement in Uttar Pradesh for the Lok Sabha polls.

Party workers of the SP and the Congress raised slogans in their support as the two leaders, accompanied by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, waved at the crowd gathered in Agra for the yatra.

Attacking the government in his address on the occasion, Akhilesh Yadav said, “Today, farmers are standing against the government. The government is scared of the power of farmers. In the coming time, the BJP will be removed and the INDIA bloc coalition government will give respect to farmers.”

He added that Bharatiya Janata Party had not given the Backward Classes, Dalits and minority communities the respect they deserve. “This Agra city is known in the world. I am happy that they have started this shop of love; not only the market in this city, the entire city is a city of love. Carry as much love as you can and keep distributing it throughout the journey,” Akhilesh asked Rahul while hailing the motive of his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

The challenge in the coming times is the challenge of saving democracy, saving the Constitution and saving the dream that Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar had seen for the poor, the backward, who should get their rights and respect. Yadav stated, adding that even after so many years, no respect is being given to these people by the BJP.

“The message that has to be sent today after this yatra is only one message: defeat 80, remove BJP, save the country and end the crisis. Defeat BJP and when they lose from here, the Constitution will also be saved,” he said.

“We hope that in the coming time, the BJP will lose in Delhi, India will form a coalition government to give respect to the farmers, not only respect but also fulfil all their demands regarding MSP (minimum support price). We all raise the slogan Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan and the people of BJP do not get tired of saying Jai Bharat Mata. Imagine a country where farm-



Congress MP Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav during the ‘Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra’, in Agra on Sunday

ers are unhappy, youths dreams are being broken, youth have no future, they do not have jobs and employment in their hands, they are worried about jobs and employment and degrees,” the SP chief said.

“We hope that the INDIA bloc and PDA (Pichhda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) will work to defeat the NDA (National Democratic Alliance). Wherever this PDA will raise its voice, the BJP will be wiped out and this is the message that is being sent through this yatra,” he added.

Rahul Gandhi, while addressing a huge gathering, thanked Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav for joining the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra.

“It’s been a year since we started the Bharat Jodo Yatra which covered 4,000 kilometres from Kanyakumari to Kashmir, spreading the message of love and harmony. My mission and that of everyone who came here is to fight against the hatred spread by Bharatiya Janata Party and now, Akhilesh ji and Priyanka ji, have joined me in our fight. Our first and most important task is to stand together against the hatred that has been spread in India due to which brother is fighting against brother. The biggest reason for this hatred is that injustice is spreading in India. Injustice to the poor, injustice to farmers, injustice to labourers, injustice to women. If you are poor, you will face injustice 24 hours a day in this country. So the reason for hatred is injustice and hence we have

added the word justice in Bharat Jodo Yatra,” the Congress leader said.

“Where are you, where are your people, I will tell you. Your people will be in the MNREGA list. Your people will be in the list of contract labourers. Your people work as labourers. This is what we have to change. This is the meaning of justice, social justice,” Rahul asserted.

While raising the issue of caste census, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that long speeches were made in India, but the poor people, backward people, Dalits, minority people, tribal people, had no participation in this country and this was the goal of the INDIA bloc.

“We are fighting for social justice, fighting for economic justice, fighting for farmers. Farmers want only one thing – legal guarantee on MSP. The government says that it will not give a legal guarantee on MSP. INDIA bloc partners, including Congress, have said that they will implement it soon after coming to power,” she said.

Earlier, Rahul also took out the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Aligarh on Sunday. Addressing the people, he alleged that indigenous, small and cottage-scale industries and artisans were suffering in the country as traders linked to large corporate groups were flooding the markets with Chinese goods.

The yatra passed through Agra and entered Dholpur in Rajasthan. The yatra will now take a break before restarting from March 2.

New recruits laud CM for transparency

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The newly-appointed youths on around 1,800 positions in different departments in Uttar Pradesh, who received appointment letters at a programme held at Lok Bhawan here on Sunday, have expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for ensuring a transparent selection process based on merit.

The new appointees have also expressed their commitment to upholding work ethics and honesty in their professional lives for the benefit of common people.

“I come from an average family. The struggles of my parents and the chief minister’s women empowerment campaign inspired me to work hard to pursue my dreams. I will perform my duties with dedication, passion and honesty while keeping the priorities of the chief minister in mind,” said Richa Sonkar, assistant prosecution officer.

“After my father’s death, my mother has been the source of my inspiration because of whose hard work I am here today. I am the first member of the family to be joining government service. I am grateful to the chief minister for this opportunity. Due to his public welfare policies, the examination was conducted with fairness and transparency,” said Dr Renu Yadav, Ayurveda medical officer. “The selection process, conducted in a timely and transparent manner, owes its success solely to the resolute efforts of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. As dental practitioners we assure that we will diligently follow our duties and perform to the best of our abilities, imbibing the values advocated by the prime minister and the chief minister,” said Dr Ashutosh Shrivastava, a dentist.

“The selection process has been conducted by the present government with complete fairness and transparency. I had

never imagined that I would be fortunate enough to be selected, but I was, with the blessings of the chief minister. I express heartfelt gratitude to the chief minister for this opportunity of a lifetime. I am committed to carrying out the responsibilities bestowed upon me with the same fairness with which my selection was conducted,” said Shubham Verma, junior engineer, Water Resources and Irrigation department.

“In the Yogi government, young people are being appointed and selected solely on the basis of merit without any discrimination. Now, it is our responsibility to provide the benefits of the government’s schemes to every deserving person without any discrimination to realise the government’s vision of a healthy society,” said Dr Pratibha Ramchandani, Ayurvedic medical officer, while hailing the government’s efforts.

“I come from a village. My

father is a farmer. Due to Chief Minister Yogi’s good governance, the recruitment process has been conducted impartially. Transparency has become the basis for selection in government service,” said Abhishek Kumar Shukla, junior engineer, Housing Development Board.

“The present government conducted a fair recruitment, resulting in the youth receiving the rewards of their hard work. I express my gratitude to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for this. I assure that I will fulfil all responsibilities given by the government with dedication,” said Pankaj Kumar, review officer (Hindi).

“This examination has been conducted with great transparency with merit being the sole criterion for selection. For this, I thank Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and assure that I will always work in the interest of the common people,” said Archit Singh Chauhan, TG2 UPPLC.

UP CSR Summit soon

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is contemplating to enlist the support of corporate to enlarge the state’s corporate social responsibility (CSR) reserves for socioeconomic development.

The state government will soon organise a ‘UP CSR Summit’ to script a new chapter in the process of collaborative socioeconomic development.

The state is counting on its large consumer market and growing heft to impress the private sector to loosen their CSR purse strings. The core idea of CSR lies in the ancient ideology of collectivism. During the pandemic, the nation witnessed a demonstration of the country’s collective strength.

Uttar Pradesh is among the top five states who corner most of the CSR funds from companies. Others on the list are Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu. Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 mandates certain companies to allocate 2 per cent of their average profits from the preceding three financial years towards CSR activities.

The state has also acknowledged the contribution of leading private sector companies Vedanta Group, HCL, NCL, Reliance Foundation, Shiv Nadar Foundation, ITC Limited and NTPC in a large scale through CSR funds.

In 2022-23, UP collected about Rs 1,500 crore in its CSR corpus, and it was used in projects pertaining to women and child development, education, vocational education and skill development, etc.

In 2014-15, UP garnered only about Rs 148 crore in its CSR corpus, that grew to Rs 435 crore in 2017-18. In 2021-22, UP saw a CSR spending of Rs 1,321 crore that surged to around Rs 1,500 crore in 2022-23.

“There is no better place than UP for effective utilisation of CSR funds. The presence of 83.9 million registered workers offers a significant opportunity for utilising the CSR kitty,” UP’s Labour Minister Anil Rajbhar said.

The cumulative CSR spent in India is estimated to be more than Rs 2 trillion. Even though UP has witnessed a sustained increase in its CSR kitty, the amount collected is small compared to its geographical size and population base.


Climate change poses challenges for water, sanitation services

Lucknow (PNS): Climate change presents significant new challenges for water and sanitation services across the region, emphasised Debashish Das Gupta from the Indian Institute of Management, Lucknow (IIML) during a technical workshop on ‘Command area development through micro irrigation’ held in the city.

Speaking on ‘Climate resilience and water management’, Das Gupta stated, “Climate resilience is about successfully coping with and managing the impacts of climate change while preventing those impacts from growing worse. A climate-resilient society will be low-carbon and equipped to deal with the realities of a warmer world.”

He emphasised the imperative of reducing heat-trapping emissions driving climate change while adapting to unavoidable changes in ways that promote equity and justice. “Increasing threats of floods, droughts, increased temperatures, wildfires, storm surges, and loss of glaciers pose risks to infrastructure and auxiliary services, disrupting access to water and sanitation and deteriorating water quality, thus endangering human health,” Das Gupta added.

Highlighting flooding and drought as the most significant climate threats to water and sanitation services, Das Gupta noted their anticipated escalation with global heating.

<div><div></div><div><div>SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CO. LTD.</div><div>Corporate Office : 425, Udyog Vihar Phase IV, Gurgaon-122015 (Haryana)</div><div>Ph : 0124- 4212530/31/32, E-Mail: customercare@shubham.co, website : www.shubham.co</div></div></div> <div><div>PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY(IES)</div><div>Sale Notice for sale of immovable properties as per proviso to Rule 8(6) and Appendix-IV-A</div><div>(Under Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002)</div><div>Whereas the undersigned being one of the Authorized Officer of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited (hereinafter called the Company) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (The Act) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 9 of the Security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (The Rules) issued demand notices calling upon the borrowers, whose names have been indicated in column (C) below on dates specified in column (D) written against each of them, calling upon them to repay the outstanding amount indicated in column (E) below within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.</div><div>The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken voluntary surrendered/possession of the property mortgaged with the company, described in column (F) herein below, to recover the said outstanding amount, in exercise of powers conferred on me under section 13(4) of the Act read with Rule 9 of the Rules on the date mentioned in column (H).</div><div>The Borrower in particular and the public in general be hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties mentioned in column (F) below and any dealings with these properties will be subject to the charge of the Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited for an amount mentioned in column (G).</div><div>Now, the borrower and the public in general is hereby also informed that the said properties would be sold by public auction on date, time and venue as specified in column (K) against each of the property by inviting bids in the sealed envelopes as per the procedure and terms and conditions stated below:</div></div>												Sr	Application No.	Name & Address of Borrower	13(2) Demand Notice Date	Demand Notice Amount	Property Address	Total Due As on 21-02-2024	Date & Type of Possession	Current RP	EMD (Rs.) (10% of RP)	Date, Time & Venue of Auction
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K												
1	OVNR17 0200000 5004181	Deepak Chandani, Rani Chandani, E 14/11 Sindhi Colony Premchand Nagar Varanasi Uttar Pradesh 221002	30-03-2019	Rs. 5,77,422/-	Flat No E 14 Ground Floor Phase 3 Pandeypur Awasiy Jyotsna Ward Samath Tehsil Distt Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh 221002	Rs. 14,73,223/-	15.10.2019 (Symbolic)	Rs. 13,27,200/-	Rs. 1,32,720/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
2	OLKW19 0500000 5020013	Vishun Kumar Singh, Gulabati Singh, Gulab Singh, H No 54 Karaundi Barabanki Gaura, Barabanki Uttar Pradesh -225305	22-05-2021	Rs. 5,65,318/-	House Constructed On Plot Over Khasra No 563/1, Situated At Gram Kamlabad Badauli (Out of Municipal Limit) Paragna Mahona, Tehsil Bakshi Ka Talab Distt Lucknow, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, 227202	Rs. 7,19,839/-	19.08.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 15,20,000/-	Rs. 1,52,000/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
3	OLKW17 0900000 5008250	Suraj Gupta, Ramanand, H No11/103 Jyoti Mau, Near Lucknow Cancer Hospital, Lucknow, UP-226001	26-12-2022	Rs. 10,08,482/-	Part Of House No 1/183 Jia Mau Near Lucknow Cancer Hospital, Ward Vikramaditya Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226001	Rs. 10,10,745/-	13.03.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 13,42,872/-	Rs. 1,34,287/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
4	OLKW17 0600000 5006618	Shyam Kumar Singh, Babita Singh, H No11/1031 Indra Nagar Ram Sagar Pandey Dwar Sec 11 Lucknow 226016	22-04-2021	Rs. 9,79,124/-	House No4, Plot No.4, Part/ Mirjumla of Khasra/Gata No. 659/38, Admeasuring Area 530 SCF Situated At Gram/Mohalla-Madiyaon, Pargana-Mahona, Tehsil-Bakshi Ka Talab, District Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 16,33,866/-	26.07.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 13,08,800/-	Rs. 1,30,880/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
5	OLKW20 0100000 5026164	Shri Karna Mallick, Tilotama Mallick, Tilotama Mallick, Sakshi Butique, Parag Road, Aashiyana, Parag Road, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226012	28-06-2022	Rs. 7,22,428/-	House No 584/066/1 Androon Abadi Gram/Mohalla-Qila Mohammadi Nagar, Ward-Raja Bijli Pasi, Pargana Tehsil & District-Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226001	Rs. 9,69,248/-	07.09.2022 (Symbolic)	Rs. 13,79,200/-	Rs. 1,37,920/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
6	LKW 15 06 040 296	Sheela Tiwari, Abhitash Tiwari, L-2/10 Ailganj Sec B Near LIC Colony Lucknow-226020	19-08-2016	Rs. 14,69,701/-	Part Of Plot No. 75 At Land Khasra No. 478 &481(Minjumla), Gaur Bheeth, Ward Faizullaganj, Lucknow-226021	Rs. 36,76,068/-	07.12.2016 (Symbolic)	Rs. 13,84,000/-	Rs. 1,38,400/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
7	OLKW17 1100000 5009420	Shamsho Jioha, Suraiya, Gram & Post Bhat Gaon, Lucknow , Uttar Pradesh -226001	22-09-2023	Rs. 22,11,808/-	House No AMC/649/1 Khasra No 699/1 Va 829 Ka Min, Situated At M I N Road Azad Nagar Gram/Mohalla Farukhabad Chhillavana, Ward Hind Nagar Tehsil Sarojini Nagar Distt. Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226001	Rs. 23,78,856/-	04.12.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 26,16,000/-	Rs. 2,61,600/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
8	OLKW16 1000000 5002315	Sanu Sanu, Taj Mohammad, 307 SA Bangarwa -2 Ram Sanehi Ghat, Barabanki, Barabanki Uttar Pradesh -226001	24-02-2022	Rs. 7,06,291/-	Part of Plot No-22 Kh. No.473 At Vill-Barraura Husan Badi, Ward-Kanhya Madhopur Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, 226003	Rs. 11,02,957/-	12.05.2022 (Symbolic)	Rs. 10,71,000/-	Rs. 1,07,100/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
9	OLKW17 0200000 5004161 & OLKW19 0800000 5022277	Sanjay Kumar, Prili Sharma, SS-335 Sector B, Azad Nagar Campwel Road Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226003	22-05-2021	Rs. 8,13,216/-	SS-335 Sector-B, Azad Ngar Campwell Road Balaganj Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226003	Rs. 8,58,823/-	19.08.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 22,88,160/-	Rs. 2,28,816/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
10	LKW 16 03 053 075	Rehan Ahmad, Saliha Khan, Abdululh Khan, 335/18 Mahmood Nagar Akbari Gate Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh- 226003	20-04-2022	Rs. 15,07,160/-	A Flat No 402 At Ivth Floor Admeasurin G 1148 Sq Fts In A Residential Apartment Constructed Over Property Plot No 7, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226003	Rs. 17,19,635/-	30.06.2022 (Symbolic)	Rs. 28,47,040/-	Rs. 2,84,704/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
11	OLKW20 0800000 5029271	Rajesh Kumar, Legal Heirs (Deceased Ekta), House No 14, Sharma City, Takrohi Bazar, Sector 11 Indira Nagar, Lucknow-226017	24-02-2022	Rs. 40,65,514/-	House No. 6 On Plot No. 6 Khasra No. 94, Sharma City, Takrohi, Ward Shaeed Bhagat Singh, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226017	Rs. 55,45,354/-	12.05.2022 (Symbolic)	Rs. 49,58,960/-	Rs. 4,95,896/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
12	OLKW18 0900000 5014808	Rajendra Kumar, Mamta, Mamta , Padam Singh, 11/323 Vikas Nagar Lucknow Near Tata Motors Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226022	22-03-2023	Rs. 8,46,237/-	House No Klp/652/42, Kanhai Lal Ka Purwa Ward Shankar Purwa Tehsil And Distt. Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226001	Rs. 10,12,889/-	05.06.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 18,37,872/-	Rs. 1,83,787/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
13	OLKO210 3000005 036370	Nekpal, Jyoti , 18 Basant Vihar Mayawati Colony Deen Dayal Nagar Takrohi Awadh Public School Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -227105	20-05-2023	Rs. 7,76,949/-	Plot No 31 Part of Khasra No 299 Ka Min Rasoolpur Sadaat Mahona Bakshi Ka Talab Deen Dayal Nagar Takrohi Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226028	Rs. 9,06,434/-	07.08.2023 (Physical)	Rs. 10,44,000/-	Rs. 1,04,400/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
14	OLKW21 0900000 5019621	Mohd Shareef, Mohd Shami, Asma Bano, 177, Sainik Vihar Colony, Telibagh, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226001	31-10-2022	Rs. 14,03,020/-	House Built On Plot Part of 1470 Ka Min, Ali Nagar Sunahara Ward Sarojni Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226016	Rs. 17,73,275/-	20.01.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 19,51,600/-	Rs. 1,95,160/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
15	OLKW19 0600000 5021042	Mohd Shameem, Shaista Shameem, M 21 Shop No 2 Basement Gol Market Mahanagar Chauraha Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 226006	28-06-2022	Rs. 7,48,230/-	Shop No.02, M 21 Basement, Gole Market, Mahanagar Lucknow Uttar Pradesh-226001	Rs. 10,43,077/-	07.09.2022 (Physical)	Rs. 25,24,500/-	Rs. 2,52,450/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
16	OLKW19 0700000 5021288	Mohd Shameem, Shaista Shameem, M 21 Shop No Basement Gol Market Mahanagar Gol Market Chauraha, Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226006	28-06-2022	Rs. 13,85,526/-	Shop No.02, M-21 Basement, Gole Market, Mahanagar Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226001	Rs. 19,13,892/-	07.09.2022 (Physical)	Rs. 25,24,500/-	Rs. 2,52,450/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
17	LKW 15 10 047 450	Geeta Gupta, Mukesh Kumar Gupta, Plot No-13 Prem Nagar Alambagh Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226005	22-05-2021	Rs. 5,60,718/-	Plot No 36a Khasra No 1199sa Gram Alina, Gar Sunhara Sarojini Nagar Tehsil And D, 1st Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh-226010	Rs. 9,65,627/-	19.08.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 16,15,000/-	Rs. 1,61,500/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
18	OLKW21 0900000 5039592	Eijaz Anwar, Sayama, 655 A/4/332 A9 Adil Nagar Bikanurpur Unity City, Vikas Nagar, Abhinav Girls Inter College, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226022	25-01-2023	Rs. 26,77,708/-	Flat No-B-2, Situated At 2nd Floor Plot No-78 &79 Khasra No-365min Universal Homes Village-Mehtab Bagh (Gend Khana) Ward Husainabad, Distt. Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226020	Rs. 31,75,247/-	18.04.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 30,88,800/-	Rs. 3,08,880/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
19	LKW 14 11 029 648	Dinesh Nishat, Indu, H- No-636/033/3, Hanumant Nagar, Takrohi, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226016	20-06-2023	Rs. 8,70,579/-	Part Of Plot On Kh. No-1972 Minjumla, Vill- Juggaur, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh -226005	Rs. 8,84,391/-	01.09.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 4,60,800/-	Rs. 46,080/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
20	OLKW18 0100000 5010524	Bibha Tripathi, Ramanu Tripathi, Ramanu Tripathi, H No-A1, Rajawat Vihar Sector-6, Gomti Nagar Extension Near Power House Malesiamau Lucknow Uttar Pradesh -226010	20-05-2023	Rs. 35,99,376/-	House No. A-1 Build On Plot, Part/Minjumla Of Khasra/Gata No.19, Admeasuring Plot Area 0000 Sq Ft, Situated At Rajawat Vihar, Sector-6, Gomti Nagar Vistar, Gram/Mohalla-Baghamau, Pargana, Tehsil & District-Lucknow-226010	Rs. 40,46,823/-	07.08.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 26,64,000/-	Rs. 2,66,400/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
21	KAN 14 05 021 583	Yusuf Khan, Jaberiya Khatoun, 133/5 New Babu Purwa Kalony Near - Chalis Dukan Market, Uttar Pradesh-226010	22-05-2021	Rs. 7,04,627/-	Pvt Plot No 39, Situated At Part Of Arazi No 217/2, Sanigwan, Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh-208021	Rs. 12,00,242/-	19.08.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 17,60,000/-	Rs. 1,76,000/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
22	OKAN19 0100000 5016996	Vinita Tripathi, Sanjay Kumar Tripathi, 36/69 Bengali Mohal Near Kamla Tower Kanpur Dehat Uttar Pradesh -208001	20-06-2023	Rs. 18,40,231/-	Fourth Floor Of House No.20/122, Chatai Mohal, Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh -208001	Rs. 20,53,487/-	01.09.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 17,61,891/-	Rs. 1,76,189/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
23	OKAN19 0200000 5017788	Sita Rani, Reena Reena, 58 Shivkatrakamalpur Harjendarnagar Kanpur Nagar-208007	22-04-2021	Rs. 7,09,560/-	Pvt Plot At Arazi No 962 , Mauja Ahiawan, Kanpur, Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh	Rs. 12,20,255/-	26.07.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 12,47,760/-	Rs. 1,24,776/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
24	OKAN17 0300000 5004889	Shubhank Prajapati, Uma Shashi Prajapati, Me 64 Hemant Vihar Barabanki, Kanpur 208021	22-04-2021	Rs. 3,54,026/-	Plot No. 3 Situated At Part Of Arazi No. 282, Bingawan, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh.	Rs. 5,70,218/-	26.07.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 7,46,640/-	Rs. 74,664/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
25	OKAN20 0100000 5026425	Sandeep Sahu, Om Prakash Sahu, Munni Devi Sahu, Plot No 19 Arazi 2039 Chachendi Sachendi Kanpur Near Svm Public School, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh- 209304	28-06-2022	Rs. 4,21,883/-	Pvt Plot No 19 Arazi No 2039 Chachendi Sachendi 01, Kanpur, Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh-208001	Rs. 6,09,746/-	07.09.2022 (Symbolic)	Rs. 16,60,800/-	Rs. 1,66,080/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
26	OKAN19 0600000 5021026	Sandeep Gupta, Mithlesh Kumari, Dinesh Kumar Gupta, 111 86 Ashok Nagar, Kanpur-208012	22-04-2021	Rs. 24,88,226/-	House No. 103/338-B (Admeasuring Area-62,774 Sq. Meter), Colonel Ganj, Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Uttar Pradesh.	Rs. 44,71,275/-	26.07.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 46,95,680/-	Rs. 4,69,568/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
27	OKAN18 1000000 5015607	Rakesh Roshan, Priyanka Kumari, Flat No 702 Timurti Apartment Awas Vikashanspuram Naubasta, Kanpur-208021	22-04-2021	Rs. 21,88,197/-	Flat No. Fo-2 On Fourth Floor In The Residential Building, Named "Gopeshwar Nikunj Apartment", Premises No. 578 Situated At Block-W, Keshav Nagar, Uttar Pradesh,	Rs. 22,75,624/-	26.07.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 27,55,520/-	Rs. 2,75,552/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
28	KAN 14 12 031 728	Prabhu Dayal, Pappu Sharma, 580, Diwedi Nagar, Galla Mandi, Near- Samadhi Chauraha, Naubasta, Kanpur-208027, U.P	15-07-2016	Rs. 8,76,578/-	Plot No.4 Situated At Part Of Arazi No.282 Mauza Bingwa, Kanpur Nagar-208001, UP	Rs. 34,84,745/-	21.02.2017 (Symbolic)	Rs. 10,09,440/-	Rs. 1,00,944/-	15-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001												
29	OKAN19 0500000 5019956	Mohd Javed, Sama Parveen, Parvel Akhtar Raza, 117/832 P Block Kakadev Naveen Nagar Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh -208025	22-05-2021	Rs. 9,11,071/-	House No. 117p/832 A., Constructed At Part Of Arazi No. 832, Situated At Vinayakpur, Kakadev, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-208020	Rs. 9,18,764/-	19.08.2021 (Symbolic)	Rs. 46,08,000/-	Rs. 4,60,800/-	15-03-2024, 10:000												

PM recalls Varanasi visit in ‘Mann Ki Baat’ episode

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled his two-day visit to his parliamentary constituency a couple of days ago. He was addressing the people in his 110th episode of the ‘Mann Ki Baat’ on Sunday which was heard by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers, along with others, at all the 30,286 booths of the party’s organisational 16 districts under Kashi region.

Modi said that two days ago he was in Varanasi and there he saw a wonderful photo exhibition. “The scenes that the youth of Kashi and surrounding areas have captured on camera are amazing. There are many photographs in it which were taken with a mobile camera. Indeed, today anyone who has a mobile has become a content creator,” He said adding that social media has also helped a lot in showing people their skills and talents. “Our



MLC and district BJP chief Hansraj Vishwakarma, along with party workers, listening to PM’s ‘Mann Ki Baat’ in Varanasi on Sunday.

young friends of India are doing wonders in the field of content creation. Be it any social media platform, one will definitely find our young friends sharing different content on different topics,” the PM stated. The episode was heard by regional (Kashi) president Dilip Singh Patel, city chief

Vidyasagar Rai, regional general secretary Ashok Chaurasia, spokesman Navratan Rathi and many others along with the workers of their respective booths. District president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma heard the broadcast of PM’s programme on booth No 185 at his residence in Shakti

Kendra Kanchanpur of Kardameshwar Mandal under Rohania assembly constituency. “It is possible that the election code of conduct will be implemented in the country in March. During the last general elections also, the telecast of similar ‘Mann Ki Baat’ programme was stopped for a few months,” the PM said, adding when we meet next time, it will be the 111th episode and this is an auspicious number and what could be better than starting with this number next time. The prime minister said just a few days ago, the Election Commission has started another campaign ‘My first vote - for the country’. “Through this, first time voters will be especially requested to vote in maximum numbers. India is proud of its youth power full of enthusiasm and energy. The more our youth participate in the electoral process, the more beneficial its results will be for the country,” he said.

PM likely to visit Sangam city on March 2

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit the Sangam city on March 2. A programme of about four hours is proposed here. In view of Mahakumbh-2025, he will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of projects worth Rs 17 thousand crore. The major projects in this are of Railways. He will also address a public meeting at the Parade Ground. In view of his arrival, top officials of the district have also started preparations. The programme of setting up tents in the Parade Ground has started. Arrangements are being made to seat about 10,000 people here. In view of the Lok Sabha elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s arrival in Prayagraj is considered important. The prime minister can also go to Sangam and take a bath. The PM will lay the

foundation stone of several projects, including Akshayavat, Bade Hanumanji Temple and Maharishi Bhardwaj Ashram Corridor, Prayagraj-Jaunpur-Gorakhpur National Highway widening, Prayagraj-Rae Bareilly National Highway widening, ropeway near Sangam, river-front-type roads, pucca bathing ghats and other projects as well. According to Mela Adhikari (Mahakumbh-2025) Vijay Kiran Anand, preparations have started in view of prime minister’s arrival here.

RESHUFFLE: A large-scale reshuffle has been made in the Prayagraj Commissionerate Police. Commissioner Ramit Sharma has changed the ACP and police station in charges with the intention of improving law and order. Satyendra Prasad Tiwari, Assistant Police Commissioner, Kotwali, was relieved after his transfer from Prayagraj Commissionerate to

Kaushambi. Manoj Kumar Singh has been made Assistant Police Commissioner Kotwali. Similarly, the new Assistant Police Commissioner Uday Pratap Singh was made Assistant Police Commissioner Phulpur. Besides inspector Vaibhav Singh was transferred as inspector in charge Dhoomanganj. Inspector Shailendra Singh was made in charge inspector Manda. Inspector Om Prakash was transferred from Investigation Cell crime branch as in charge inspector Shankargarh. Inspector Ishwar Dayal Singh was transferred from Kaundhiyara police station to High Court security. Ajay Pal was transferred to Police Lines from in charge post Lalgopalganj under Nawabganj police station. Sanjay Kumar Maurya was allotted Ganganagar zone from Police Lines.

MEMORIAL SERVICE:

A solemn remembrance and memorial service was conducted at Prayagraj military station to honour the legacy of Maj Gen Syed Mahdi Hasnain here on Sunday. The service paid tribute to his distinguished military career and unwavering commitment to duty. Maj Gen S M Hasnain’s contribution to the Indian Army, including his leadership of the 4 GARH RIF, were remembered with reverence. The attendees reflected on his valour during WWII and his role in safeguarding refugees during the partition. In his sterling military career Maj Gen S M Hasnain commanded a Mountain and an Infantry Brigade and was the first Inspector of Infantry at Army HQs. The service served as a poignant reminder of Maj Gen S M Hasnain’s enduring impact on the nation, the Indian Army and Prayagraj town where he lived his post service life.

Farmer axed to death

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A farmer sleeping in a hut in his field was axed to death in Saura village under Mahobkanth police station area of Mahoba district late on Saturday night.

On getting information Additional SP Satyam and Circle Officer (CO) Shashi Kant rushed to the spot on Sunday morning and carried out a probe along with the forensic team. Reports said Hakim Singh (40) of Saura village, apart from driving ‘ghora-baggi’ (a horse-drawn carriage), was also engaged in agricultural work on sharing basis. On Saturday night when he was sleeping in the hut in the field as usual he was axed to death by some unidentified persons. Due to repeated attack on his head and mouth, Hakim Singh died on the spot. On Sunday morning when his brother Sahab Singh reached the field, he came to know about the incident and informed the police. ASP Satyam assured his kin that the assailants will be arrested soon. The police have taken two suspects into custody and have started quizzing them.

‘BJP trying to increase vote percentage to 51’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

State president of BJP Kisan Morcha Kameshwar Singh said that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is trying to increase its vote percentage to 51 per cent in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections and to achieve this target, the party will go from village to village.

While addressing the review meeting of the ‘Gram Parikrama Yatra’ of Varanasi city unit of Kisan Morcha as the chief guest at the party office in Gulab Bagh here on Saturday, Singh said this entire wing of the party will camp in the villages as part of the ‘Gram Parikrama Yatra’ He said under this campaign Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to all ministers and senior office-

MLA lays foundation stone of PHC building

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Former minister and MLA of City South assembly constituency Dr Neelkanth Tiwari on Sunday laid the foundation stone of its own building of Rajghat Primary Health Centre (PHC) to be built at a cost of ₹40 lakh. He directed the officers of the executing organisation present on the spot to complete the construction work at the earliest by running a campaign on a war footing.

Dr Tiwari said all medical facilities will be available in this new primary health centre building the benefit of which will be available to the people as per their need. He informed that there are a total of seven PHCs in his assembly constituency, which were running in rented buildings. He had decided that these PHCs running in rented buildings should be shifted to their own buildings. “With the inspiration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, till now a total of three PHCs have already been



MLA Dr Neelkanth Tiwari addressing a meeting after laying the foundation stone of the Rajghat PHC building in Varanasi on Sunday.

shifted to their own buildings and operations have also started in them,” he said, adding that now the foundation stone of the fourth PHC’s own building was also laid. The MLA said that there is also a plan to instal modern technology medical equipment in the building which will be constructed at a cost of about Rs 40 lakh, which will further improve health related services. He said that soon the foundation stone of the buildings of the remaining

three PHCs will also be laid, and added that the Yogi government is taking special care of public facilities. On the occasion Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Mandal president Nalin Nayan Mishra, Sandeep Chaurasia, corporator Abhijeet Bhardwaj, Bablu Shah, Sanjay Vishambhari, Manoj, Ankit Yadav, Nirmala Pandey, Neetu Kapoor, Health and Rural Engineering Service (RES) department officials were also present.

Progress of works reviewed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam reviewed the progress of development works and government schemes in Prime Minister’s Sansad Adarsh Grams (villages). He was holding a meeting of officers at the Collectorate auditorium here on Saturday.

The DM directed the officials concerned to ensure completion of drinking water, roads, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojana, pension schemes, ration cards, toilets, formation of self-help groups (SHGs), Ujjwala Yojana, electricity connection, land allotment/lease, 100 per cent fulfillment of other departmental schemes of Agriculture and Education departments etc in all Adharsh villages without any delay. He also directed the officers to

conduct a door to door survey of each Adarsh Gram and verify the completion of all works and if other eligible beneficiaries are found on the spot, they should also be satisfied with the related schemes without any delay.

Rajalingam said Panchayat buildings, government schools, Anganwadi centres, polling booths etc in these villages should also be completed or repaired as per the standards. The DM said under the Jal Jeevan Mission, certain complaints have been received. He said quality work should be ensured, otherwise, if any further complaint is received, strict action will be taken against the officers/ employees concerned. While directing the District Panchayat Raj Officer, he said wherever hand pumps are damaged, they should be repaired immediately.

Lawyers stage massive agitation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Dozens of lawyers staged a massive agitation at the Govind Nagar police station on Sunday afternoon after the police allegedly beat up the office-bearers of the Lawyers Association, who had reached there in support of one of their colleagues in police custody, and lodged them in the lockup. Lawyer Anirudh Jaiswal said the Govind Nagar police had taken one of his colleagues Rahul Sachan into custody suspecting his involvement in the network of UP Police solvers’ gang. On Sunday morning, the newly-elected vice- president of the Lawyers’ Association Harsh Kumar Verma along with other office-bearers had visited the police station for ‘pairvi’ of Sachan. He alleged that during the talk SHO Vikram Singh misbe-

haved with them and lodged the 11 lawyers in the lockup. Thereafter, dozens of lawyers rushed to the Govind Nagar police station and staged a massive agitation. They sat on dharna demanding action against the SHO after lodging an FIR against him and other cops involved in the incident. They also demanded the immediate suspension of the ‘guilty’ cops. ADCP South Ankita Sharma reached the spot and accepted the demand for an FIR against the ‘guilty’ cops. As for initiating penal action against them, she assured the lawyers of doing so after investigation. But the agitating lawyers refused to withdraw agitation until action was announced against the ‘guilty’ cops. They also demanded to examine the CCTV footages of cameras installed at the Govind Nagar police station to ascer-

tain the facts of the incident.

Meanwhile, in a press statement issued by ADCP Ankita Sharma, it was informed that in view of the alleged misbehaviour of Govind Nagar SHO with the lawyers, she has ordered to sent him to the Police Lines with immediate effect. She said that other formalities related to the issue will be carried out in due course after proper investigation.

MEETING: National Adviser of All India EPS-95 National Agitation Committee (NAC) Rajesh Kumar Shukla, while addressing the hundreds of pensioners at the Rawatpur bus stand here on Sunday, said positive results are likely to be announced on their long-pending demands before the Lok Sabha elections. He said on February 15 and 16, committee’s national leaders led by its president Commander Ashok

Rawat and general secretary Virendra Singh Rajawat had held detailed discussions with the union labour and finance ministers and apprised them of their demands. The meeting was chaired by the acting divisional president Ashok Kumar Yadav. Others who also addressed the gathering were Sunderlal Pandey, Jairup Singh Parihar, Kripa Shanker Shukla, Sudha Nigam, Jai Singh Sachan, Udaivir Singh Yadav, Basant Lal Lalman, Sudhir Kumar Mishra, Puttu Singh Kushwaha, Ramdayal Sharma, Brijendra Babu Sachan, Arun Kumar Chaturvedi and Ramhari Kushwaha. Divisional Secretary and state coordinator JS Singh Parihar conducted the proceedings.

STOLEN: Unidentified miscreants stole a bike parked before a house in Sarsaul under Maharajpur police station area on Saturday night.

‘Divya Kala Samagam’ from today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The ‘Divya Kala Samagam’ will be organised at Swatantrata Bhawan in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) from February 26 to 28 under the auspices of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Uttar Pradesh. For making proper security and other arrangements, CDO Himanshu Nagpal gave necessary guidelines to the district level officers for successful completion of the programme. He was presiding over an online meeting here on

Saturday.

The CDO said an exhibition of excellent hand-made products and book stalls by the disabled people will be organised. There will also be a presentation of cultural dance by the disabled people and distribution of assistive devices to the identified disabled people. Interested disabled beneficiaries can come with their educational certificates and register themselves for employment and get maximum benefits. The meeting was conducted by the District Disabled Empowerment Officer.

Many injured as bus overturns

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

More than 20 people sustained critical injuries when a private bus carrying bathers overturned in front of Veer Abdul Hameed Gate in the Cantonment area near Naya Purwa located under Shivkuti police station area late on Saturday night. According to a report received here, about 30 residents of Pure Bahori village of Gonda, were there in the bus. They had gone to Chitrakoot from Gonda on February 21 and reached Sangam for the bathing from there on

February 23. On Saturday after the Sangam snan, all of them boarded a bus and left for Gonda. When the bus reached the Cantonment area in front of Nayapurwa, it hit a divider and overturned. About 30 people were sitting in this bus, out of which 20 were injured while conductor Nanka (36) had a fracture in leg. In view of the noise of the devotees and the incident, the army personnel on duty nearby came running. As soon as the news was received, the personnel of Shivkuti police station along with the force reached the spot.

Woman killed, 5 hurt in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A woman died and five others were seriously injured when their car, after being hit by an unidentified vehicle, rammed into a tree on Jawant Nagar-Saifai road in Etawah late on Saturday night. All the injured were admitted to the Saifai Medical College. According to a report, Azruddin Khan (26) of Larkhaur, Saifai, was going to drop his brother-in-law Munish Khan (24) of Divannapur Sadini under Kisri police station, Mainpuri, sister Yasmin Begaum (23), niece Inayat Bano (4) and nephew Ahil Khan (2) at Saifai chauraha on car on Saturday night. His wife Noor Hashmi Begum (22) was also with him. The speeding vehicle coming from Saifai collided head on with the car due to which it rammed into a tree near Pathwa village culvert on Saifai-Jaswant Nagar road. In the incident Noor Hashmi was killed while five others were seriously injured. On getting information SHO Balram Mishra rushed to the spot and got all the injured admitted to the trauma centre.

BUDGET APPROVED: The Executive Committee of Kanpur Nagar Nigam (KNN) has approved a budget of ₹1,866 crore for the next financial year at its meeting held on Saturday. The budget envisaged an increase in expenditure by ₹308 crore in developmental works. Likewise, ₹341 crore were allocated for the Jalkal Vibhag (Waterworks department). The other proposals approved by the committee included 10 per cent rebate in house tax till July in the next financial year, construction of grand Anandeshwar temple gate at the Green Park chauraha, waiving house tax of one house of the kin of freedom fighters and directives to Jan Suvidha Kendra staff to redress the grievances of people on time.

TOURNAMENT: Defending champion Gopinath Manna and Uttam Gupta of Maharashtra and Karnataka won the Sir Padampat Singhania Memorial Trophy after the hectic 25 rounds of the All India Sir Padampat Singhania Memorial Bridge Tournament which concluded at the Kamla Club on Sunday.

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Sr No.	Application No.	Name & Address of Borrower	13(2) Demand Notice Date	Demand Notice Amount	Property Address	Total Due As on 21-02-2024	Date & Type of Possession	Current RP	EMD (Rs.) (10% of RP)	Date, Time & Venue of Auction	
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
53	OKAN20 0900000 5029409	Rahul Kanaujia, Sanjay Kanaujia, Munni Devi, 63-A Chandra Nagar Charari Lal Bangla Near Raj Ratan Saree, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-208007	19-07-2023	Rs. 7,26,676/-	Part Of House No 141(1) New & Old- 14 Safipur 1st, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh -208007	Rs. 7,89,389/-	09.10.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 10,07,760/-	Rs. 1,00,776/-	28-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001	
54	KAN 15 08 043 370	Javed Alam Khan, Shama Parveen, 105/444 Plot No 2 Chaman Ganj Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh - 208001	19-07-2023	Rs. 5,96,303/-	Flat Situated At Ground Floor At Perm No 88/473 Humayun Bagh Chaman Ganj Kanpur Nagar Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh -208001	Rs. 6,75,534/-	09.10.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 21,23,658/-	Rs. 2,12,365/-	28-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001	
55	OKAN21 1100000 5041234	Dheeraj Kumar, Sakshi Gupta, Neeraj Kumar, Araji No. 1157 Vakeel Nagar Barasirohi, lit Srivastava General Store Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh -208016	22-09-2023	Rs. 4,71,382/-	Part Of Arazi No 1157, Mauja Barasirohi, Dist Kanpur Nagar Uttar Pradesh -208017	Rs. 5,06,409/-	04.12.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 9,89,600/-	Rs. 98,960/-	28-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001	
56	OKAN19 1000000 5023782	Devendra Singh Chauhan, Rani Singh, Raghvendra Kumar Singh Chauhan, 117/158 BK Block Ambekar Nagar, Geeta Nagar Rawatpur Hari Girls Hostel Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh -208025	20-05-2023	Rs. 24,11,824/-	House No. 117/K/158b, Ambekar Nagar, Kanpur Nagar, Uttar Pradesh -208025	Rs. 27,17,650/-	07.08.2023 (Symbolic)	Rs. 83,52,000/-	Rs. 8,35,200/-	28-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM Office No. 108 First Floor, Vaishali Archade, 6 Park Road, Lucknow-226001	
57	OALB210 2000005 035033	Manish Kumar Jaiswal, Sadhna Jaiswal, Karma Bazaar Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh -212301	24-02-2022	Rs. 29,38,414/-	Gata No.493ng, Mauza- Karmna, Pargana- Arai, Tehsil Karchana, Distt- Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh-212301	Rs. 42,91,824/-	12.05.2022 (Physical)	Rs. 35,23,200/-	Rs. 3,52,320/-	28-03-2024, 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM D62/44 B, 2nd Floor, Soniya Road, Sriga, Varanasi-221010	
Note: To the knowledge of the company, there is no encumbrance on the above properties. Terms and conditions of auction sale notice											
TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION:- PROCEDURE AND TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION BY INVITING BIDS:											
1. The Properties at Serial No. 1 to 30 can be inspected on 08-03-2024, and Properties at Serial No. 31 to 57 can be inspected on 22-03-2024 from 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM. respectively.											
2. Sale is subject to the conditions prescribed in SARFAESI Act/Rules 2002 and the terms and conditions mentioned hereunder as also subject to conditions in the offer/bid documents to be submitted by the intending/participating bidders.											
3. The bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the office of undersigned along with a Demand Draft/Pay Order towards the Earnest Money Deposit favouring Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited, payable locally. The Earnest Money deposit shall not carry any interest. Along with Bid form the proposed bidder shall also attach his/her identity proof/ KYC norms and proof of residence such as copy of the passport, Aadhar Card, election commission card, ration card, driving license etc, and a copy of the PAN card issued by the Income tax department.											
4. Last date to submit the bid along with Earnest Money Deposit on or Before 14-03-2024 for Properties at Serial No.1 to 30 and 27-03-2024 for Properties at Serial No. 31 to 57 from 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM respectively											
5. In no eventually the property would be sold below the reserve price indicated against each of the property.											
6. On the date of sale all the, bids so received would be opened and the bid of the highest bidder, provided it is above the reserve price, may be accepted by the company. However the bidders personally present at the auction site shall have the right to further enhance their bid price, subject to a minimum of Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five Thousand Only) and in the event of higher bid price being offered the company shall have the right to accept the same. Thereafter, the Purchaser will be required to pay deposit of 25% (Twenty-Five percent) of the sale price, after adjusting the earnest money deposit, immediately at the fall of hammer with the undersigned upon receipt of said amount the company will confirm the acceptance of the bid. The request for extension of time may be allowed by the Authorised officer at his sole discretion subject to such terms and conditions as may be deemed at and proper by him. In the event the highest bidder fails to tender 25% of the bid amount immediately at the fall of hammer then the earnest money deposited by the highest bidder will be for forfeited and the property would be offered to the second highest bidder. The balance amount of the purchase price shall be paid by the Purchaser to the undersigned on or before the fifteenth day of confirmation of the sale of the said property or such extended period as maybe agreed upon in writing by the parties. In default of payment & within the time as mentioned above, the company shall be at liberty to forfeit the Earnest Money Deposit and/or any other deposit made by the purchaser and proceed with re-auction of the Property. That defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the property or to any part of the sum for which may be subsequently sold.											
7. All the payments shall be made by the purchaser by means of the Demand Draft/Pay Order favouring Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited.											
8. On receipt of the sale in full, the company shall be issuing a Sale Certificate in favour of the Purchaser and would hand-over the possession of the property to the Purchaser.											
9. The said Immovable Property described in the Schedule shall remain and be at the sole risk of the Purchaser in all respects including loss or damage by fire or theft or other accidents, and other risk from the date of the Confirmation of the sale by the undersigned authorised officer. The Purchaser shall not be entitled to annul the sale on any ground whatsoever.											
10. The Demand Draft/Pay Order deposited towards the earnest money shall be returned to the unsuccessful bidders.											
11. For all the purposes sale of these Properties is strictly on ‘AS IS WHERE IS BASIS’ and ‘AS IS WHAT IS BASIS AND WITHOUT ANY RECOURSE BASIS’. The company is not aware of any encumbrances of any nature whatsoever on the aforesaid properties.											
12. All expenses relating to Stamp Duty, Registration Charges, Transfer Charges and any other charges in respect of the above referred property shall be borne by the Purchaser.											
13. The Authorised officer is not bound to accept the highest offer or any or all offers/bid(s) and the company reserves its right to reject any or all bid(s) without assignment any reasons thereof.											
14. No person other than the bidders themselves or their duly authorised representative shall be allowed to participate in the sale proceedings.											
15. In case all the dues together with all cost charges and expenses incurred by the company are tendered or settled by the above name borrower at any time before the date fixed for sale for the property, under Sec13(8) of the Act, then the property will not be sold and all the bids received from the prospective bidders shall be returned to them without any liability/claim against the company.											
16. This notice is also a notice to above said Borrowers under Rule 8(6)and Appendix IVA of the security Interest Enforcement Rules 2002 to the Customer at their respective address as mentioned in Column # “C” & “F”.											
17. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the Secured Creditor’s website i.e. www.shubham.co .											
18. For further information, clarity or any assistance, same can be approached to Mr. Umakant, (Authorised Officer) at Mobile No. 7007998835 & Prabhat Singh (Authorised Officer) at Mobile No. 6394267268.											
PLACE: GURGAON						AUTHORIZED OFFICER					
DATE: 24.02.2024						SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED					

Shades of grey

Do political parties really mean to fulfil poll promises, or is it mere rhetoric to befool voters?

Every election season, political parties can be seen letting loose a long litany of promises — some really genuine, but mostly mere pleasing-to-the-ears rhetoric. These campaign pledges, called poll manifestos or electoral promises or even ‘jumlas’, are tailored to meet local voters’ aspirations that season. However, a critical question looms: Is it really feasible for the parties to fulfil these promises? This discourse has gained fresh attention following the Chief Election Commissioner’s (CEC) statement emphasising the voters’ right to know if these promises can be delivered. The CEC’s stance underscores the need for transparency and accountability in the electoral process, with the hope that it will prompt political actors to make promises more responsibly. At the heart of this debate lies a complex interplay of political dynamics, economic constraints, administrative capabilities and societal expectations. While political parties often design their agenda with the intention of securing electoral victory, the practicality of implementing poll promises after getting elected is subject to numerous challenges; mainly the inherent uncertainty and volatility of governance. The political discourse is ever-evolving and parties have to adjust to it, often going back on what they themselves might have vociferously advocated. Besides unforeseen events, economic fluctuations and global dynamics also make it difficult to fulfil poll promises. What may seem feasible during an election campaign could swiftly become untenable in the face of emerging challenges. The way out? At best, the parties can just declare: “It is our intention; conditions apply.” Such an honest declaration does not at least sound as if it



were a done deal. Interestingly, even voters know that certain promises are undeliverable but then they do not have much choice, especially since the rival party is also tomming schemes that cannot be fulfilled. Of course there are unforeseen, serious challenges to genuinely-made pledges but the problem arises when misleading or false promises are deliberately made to capture votes. Worse, the parties know they can get away with it as there are no punitive damages yet for this practice. It is imperative for political parties to adopt a more responsible approach. Instead of succumbing to populist rhetoric, they should prioritise honesty, realism and evidence-based policymaking. Transparency also plays a crucial role in fostering accountability. Voters have the right to be informed not only about the promises made but also about the rationale behind them and the strategy for implementation. Also, robust mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation should be established to track progress and hold Governments accountable for their party’s commitments. Then there is a need for greater public awareness to ensure that electoral promises are scrutinised rigorously. Citizens must actively participate in the democratic process, holding elected representatives accountable for their actions. Those deliberately making false promises must be punished through the ballot box.

PICTALK



Women devotees offer prayers during the Attukal Pongala festival, in Thiruvananthapuram

PTI

Revamping India’s intelligence network

There is a pressing need for reforms within India’s intelligence framework, addressing coordination deficits and accountability lapses

The imperative for a comprehensive overhaul of India’s intelligence framework becomes apparent when considering the existence of 14 intelligence agencies, each with varying and occasionally overlapping responsibilities. These agencies have come into being in response to strategic shifts and past shortcomings. In the aftermath of the 1962 conflict with China, the Directorate General of Security (DGS) was established within the Intelligence Bureau (IB). Subsequently, following the 1965 war with Pakistan, external intelligence was segregated into a distinct entity, the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), which also birthed the Special Bureau aimed at enhancing organisational effectiveness. After the 1999 Kargil conflict, the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) were instituted. However, persistent issues stem from the lack of coordination among these agencies. The absence of a Director of National Intelligence or a Coordinating Minister exacerbates this problem.



Accountability remains a concern.

The intelligence apparatus, entrenched in the colonial-era police structure, grapples with adapting to contemporary challenges. The Intelligence Bureau (IB), primarily oriented towards domestic and political affairs, encounters limitations in counterintelligence endeavours. Despite initiatives like the Multi-Agency Centre (MAC), cooperation deficiencies persist. In 2001, a Group of Ministers proposed elevating the IB to the status of the premier Counter-Terrorism agency, culminating in the establishment of MAC and Subsidiary MACs for intelligence amalgamation. Externally, the R&AW, responsible for external intelligence gathering, confronts challenges such as excessive reliance on TECHINT and insufficient development of human intelligence (HUMINT).

While the establishment of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) aimed to address technological aspects, issues like overlapping mandates and coordination gaps have arisen. Reform is imperative, commencing with the delineation of contemporary challenges, specialisations, and oversight mechanisms. Concerning oversight, India lacks effective mechanisms for its intelligence agencies. Suggestions include appointing individuals well-versed in operational modalities at a macro level or establishing a National Intelligence Board for monitoring. Apex-level management necessitates enhancement, possibly through the appointment of a full-time intelligence adviser or a Director of National Intelligence under the NSA or MHA. Coordination and tasking, particularly between the Centre and states, remain deficient, necessitating legislative attention. The Intelligence Cycle requires refinement, with a clear demarcation between collection and analy-

sis. Personnel issues. Human intelligence (HUMINT) and technical intelligence (TECHINT) pose distinct challenges. While big data analysis is nascent, considerations regarding privacy and legislative authorization for extensive data scrutiny are paramount. The dearth of skilled manpower for HUMINT is a significant concern, and bolstering military expertise within intelligence agencies is imperative. Although inspired by the ideology of the 5 Eyes, I4C, under the Ministry of Home Affairs, has not been effectively operationalized in the realm of digital warfare. Effectiveness in counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency remains a pressing concern. Failures to establish the National Counter-terrorism Centre (NCTC) and inter-agency conflicts underscore the need for a robust system. Ensuring successful prosecutions following counter-terrorism arrests is pivotal. (The writer is an eminent expert-Counter Terrorism (in West Asia & Middle Eastern countries, views are personal)



NISHAKANT OJHA

Pakistan has not given a fractured mandate, on paper, it may seem fractured however the call people have taken is clear. It goes without saying that if 100 independent candidates win, it’s no mean achievement for a party that is backing them. The story of what happened in 1968 in Pakistan is often forgotten, in that year, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto brought down the military presidency of Gen Ayub Khan. Pakistan has seen big upheavals in the past and as things stand today another one is brewing for sure. This time against a China-Pak Army selected candidate who will be nominated at the top post, against the will of the people. Most analysts believed Nawaz Sharif was sure to become the PM however why he did not make it to the top slot has to do with how he reacted to situations post-Kargil. Sharif was thrown out in 1999 by General Musharraf, who then led Pakistan’s army because he publicly ridiculed the army for apparently keeping him in the dark concerning the Kargil War. Now as they say once bitten twice shy, the Pakistani army always wanted a third person apart from Nawaz Sharif and Imran Khan to be the notional head of Pakistan, and they are gunning for one. The Pakistani army used the clout of

Nawaz Sharif (whatever he had) to try and get to power someone they wanted and somehow get rid of Imran Khan. China has had a friendly relationship with the Sharif family so they are fine with someone coming up with Sharif’s backing. Now the question is, will the people of Pakistan accept the humiliation of subversion of their mandate? Has the Pakistani army become so weak that it does not hold any sway over the people of Pakistan? Does the US still have control over the Pakistani Army and what they do to influence elections in Pakistan? Would a coalition Government that lacks popular support be able to sustain itself? Will there be even more civil unrest in Pakistan in the months to come? Answers to these questions hold the key to what is going to unfold in Pakistan shortly. Things in Pakistan have never been quiet from within, and this election has exposed the hollow belly of the Pakistani electoral system. In most of the constituencies, the election was rigged. Some of the election commission officers have since resigned after admitting to mass-scale rigging. It’s almost incomprehensible how



THE US STILL HAS A LOT OF INTEREST IN PAKISTAN, MAYBE BECAUSE OF OLD TIES OR BECAUSE IT’S AN ISLAMIC NATION WITH A DECLARED NUCLEAR WEAPON SYSTEM. WHATEVER IT MAY BE, BUT IT DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE ANY OVERRIDING CONTROL OVER THINGS IN PAKISTAN ANYMORE

a US official spokesperson then has called the election reliable. The so-called results that have been thrown up show that PMLN has 79 seats, and PPP has 54 seats in a 264-seat parliament giving both of them combined a comfortable majority. I’ll look like a coalition Government would come up in Pakistan would be devoid of a popular mandate which is likely to fuel unrest in the public even more in the days to come. The mandate of the people seems to be with PTI and with Imran Khan. In this coalition too the two parties joining hands have a little in common and would provide a weak Government ridden by internal friction and lobbying. Under these circumstances, the people of Pakistan are going to feel cheated. In a country that has not a single respected institution in place and has a supreme court that is by and large influenced by vested interests, civil unrest looks around the corner. If this kind of circumstance persists, the balkanisation of Pakistan is not far away, no matter how hard China tries to keep it together. The US still has a lot of interest in Pakistan, maybe because of old ties or because it’s an Islamic nation with a

declared nuclear weapon system, whatever it may be but it does not seem to have any overriding control over things in Pakistan anymore. The US does have some control over the Pakistani Army however Pakistani Army seems to have lost all respect in the eyes of the general public in Pakistan. It looks like people are not fearful of the Pakistani Army anymore. It looks like the people of Pakistan would find it hard to digest that their mandate has been subverted. It’s a writing on the wall that this new coalition that has taken a good fortnight to form may just fall under its pressure in due course of time. How this new coalition Government would tackle the rising debt crisis would also be interesting to see. In the past Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has made low-brow and irresponsible comments against India, hopefully, he will have matured now and will refrain from jingoism. Sharif brothers are mature politicians, however, they would be under tremendous pressure from China, the US, the Pakistani Army and the people of Pakistan. (The writer is an expert on geopolitics and international Affairs. The views expressed are personal)



UMANG KOHLI

The aftermath of a controversial election

Amid concerns over rising debt and geopolitical tensions, the resilience of Pakistan’s political fabric faces its sternest test yet



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHO REPORT ON AIR POLLUTION

Sir — The World Health Organisation’s report on air pollution has been released recently. According to this year 2020, 32 lakh people will have died due to air pollution. What is even more alarming is that five lakh deaths are of children under the age of five. This news was recently read that there are many causes of pollution in the world. Many people cook on kerosene and charcoal. The number of such is about 2.3 billion. Apart from this, leaves are burnt in many fields, which also causes pollution. The huge number of vehicles and the pollution caused by it is a matter known to all. Even today, many countries in South Asia depend on wood and coal. It is necessary to increase the use of clean fuel to reduce air pollution in the country. It is necessary to increase the use of solar, stove, biogas, LPG natural gas and alcohol fuel. Apart from this, it is necessary to reduce the use of petrol and diesel vehicles and replace them with electric vehicles. The central government is alert about electric vehicles and is thinking and taking action on how their use will increase in the country. Domestic gas is also being used on a large scale in the country, so it seems that all these measures can save you from air pollution. Shantaram Wagh | Pune

PAROLE REGULATIONS

Sir — Handing and controlling parole to convicts in Indian jails is very contentious, and often misused. Parole is a "promise" or "word of honour" given by the convicts that they will return after a specific period. In special circumstances, it can be a "corrective rehabilitation". In India, the Prison Acts of 1894 and 1900 govern parole rules though they differ slightly across states. The parole, which can be custodial lasting six hours to regular, lasting one month, is monitored by prison officers and applies after the prisoner completes at least one year in prison unless specified by the court. A CAG report had said that parole was

Karnataka temple tax move draws ire



The Karnataka Government’s contentious proposal to impose taxes on Hindu temples has ignited a firestorm of debate, drawing sharp criticism from opposition parties and various religious groups. The bill stipulates that temples with annual incomes exceeding Rs 1 crore must contribute 10% to a Common Pool Fund, while those generating between Rs 10 lakh and

Rs 1 crore should chip in five per cent. Proponents argue that the fund’s proceeds will be directed towards the welfare of temple priests and the development of lesser-known C-grade temples. Despite passing through the assembly, the bill faced a decisive rejection in the council, where the opposition commands a majority. Meanwhile, a recent survey sheds light on public sentiment regarding the tax measure. It reveals that 52% of Hindus in Karnataka perceive the tax as discriminatory, while 48% deem it necessary. Furthermore, a significant majority of 62% believe that small temples should be exempt from this taxation. Although the Karnataka Government has refrained from disclosing anticipated revenue figures, experts speculate that the tax could generate up to Rs 1,000 crore annually, underscoring the financial implications and societal divisions surrounding this contentious issue.

Amarjeet Kumar | Hazaribagh

a "convenient" route of escape for convicts. Following a Delhi High Court verdict that had severely castigated the police for its inability to regulate the whole parole process adequately, serious offenders involved in rape-cum-murder, and those posing a threat to the country’s security and those who are not Indian citizens are "strictly" barred from being granted parole by the Government. But a lot more needs to be done and there is a need to impose a foolproof method to prevent prisoners from taking advantage of certain lax provisions still existing in law.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

SPORTS CONNECT PEOPLE

Sir — In this rapidly changing time, only a few things keep people close and give them a medium to be connected. One such medium is sports. Sports give the fans a feeling of attachment and affinity. It builds communities that feel the adrenaline rush every time their team moves up on the leaderboard and that shed tears when they are on the losing side. Be it the

nations, franchises, or clubs, they all have a legacy—a legacy that has triumphant victories and tragic defeats that keep the fans close and make them support the team even through the tough times. The Tifosi, for instance, have an undying love for Ferrari, given the glorious legacy the red machine has from the early days of Formula One. Even if the team is struggling on the leaderboard, the passion is still the same as it was during the era of sheer dominance when the likes of Michael Schumacher or Sebastian Vettel raced for "The Prancing Horse." The reason behind this unwavering support and loyalty is the bond that fans develop with the sport, their heroes, and their triumphs. For those who don’t watch sports, all this might just be a waste of time, but for lovers of the game, it is an escape from a tedious and mundane life. It connects people and can be a meaningful way of finding purpose in one’s life. Pratyush Tiwari | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

BALANCING WORK AND WELL-BEING

It's time to shift from the disciplinary mantra 'act your age' to 'act your wage'



SHAINY SHARMA

In today's cutthroat and challenging work landscape, finding the right balance between professional devotion and personal well-being can be challenging. The modern work culture often encourages its employees to go beyond their potential, leading to exploitation, anxiety and burnout. The internet, social media, Gen Z and millennials with time have gone crazy about the term quiet quitting all over and now a new trend which is considered to be a 'loud quiet quitting' is buzzing everywhere- the notion of Acting Your Wage. It has emerged as a call from the fed-up workers and employees who believe it's a solution to establish boundaries and ensure that employees are neither overworked nor under-utilized. Since the beginning of the digital era (use of cell phones), Gen Z was expected to be available 24x7 in their workplace whereas the older generation worked according to their job timings. Millennials are tech-savvy and cannot stay away from their gadgets. Acting your wage is a philosophy that revolves around performing only those tasks and duties for which an employee is contracted and compensated and not for taking additional responsibilities without proper recognition or compensation. In layman's language, it means dedicating yourself to the responsibilities explicitly tied to your compensation while avoiding the trap of overextending beyond your job description. Today, younger workers have an egalitarian mindset- a penchant for social activism and expectations of two-way feedback. They work on a simple theory - what is a job worth? It is not about being complacent or neglecting work responsibilities instead, the generation believes in recognising the importance of self-care, setting boundaries and preserving energy for long-term productivity and well-being.



It is about recognising an individual's worth and ensuring that the time and effort they devote to their job align with the compensation they receive. Moreover, studies reveal that employees who practice this approach achieve a healthier work-life balance, preserve their energy levels, protect themselves from potential exploitation and most importantly, prevent burnout. Today many employees are taking the initiative to clarify their job roles with their seniors so that a clear understanding of what is expected is ensured and ambiguity is prevented. Also, employees are now practising the art of politely saying 'no' to additional tasks that fall outside their job description and instead actively seeking opportunities for advancement or higher roles that align with their skill set and career. Employers on the other hand, who tend to implement this notion will benefit as, it will enhance employee well-being, increase job satisfaction, improve productivity and most importantly strengthen the work culture. There will be a culture of transparency, fairness and respect within the organization. Organisations who are already provide clear and comprehensive job descriptions to employees, outline their roles and responsibilities, acknowledge and reward them for their contributions, and invest in training and development programmes that will offer them opportunities to grow and advance within the organisation are already away from this notion. There is no denying the fact that success in any field grows out of learning how to build skills, how to ask for help and how to build capacity in ways that don't even exist. The act of wage is a way to take care of yourself to be stress-free. Remember, one needs to normalise doing the bare minimum at work. An individual signs up for a job. If the employers are not paying extra to do extra tasks, strictly don't do them. It's time to throw the disciplinary line 'act your age' and turn it to 'act your wage'.
(The author is a senior educator, views are personal)

Indian education system: The quest for perfection



JS RAJPUT

The Indian education system stands at a crossroads, poised between recognition and realisation of its inherent potential



Looking back from the transition point to the third millennium, it could indeed be interesting—and revealing—as to what was the most encouraging achievement in the pivotal sector of education! The most mentioned of the responses to the query from seasoned academics and scholars, as well as the policymakers who had contributed to policy formulation and implementation for three-four decades, referred to the change in social responses from various strata of society. The most serious impediment was ignorance of the value of education in the lives of the individual and the family. One wonders whether anything more could be expected from a society seriously emaciated for centuries, and subjected to live their lives in abject misery! Social structures that practised exclusion, seriously flawed assumptions on the role of women and its relationship to female literacy, and the excruciating hold of the clergy in deprecating the education of girls were indeed serious handicaps before all those who were assigned to implement the constitutional directive of providing free and compulsory education to all children till they achieve fourteen years of age! The widely prevalent practice of early marriage, child labour, compulsions to earn daily bread, and the need for extra hands in farms and fields, were also prominent factors that severely impeded the process of enrolment in schools. It may be tough for the millennials to visualise a situation that for decades together, girls' education in India suffered for want of toilets for girls in schools. This is one area that remained neglected all along. After the Prime Minister of India spoke from the ramparts of the Red Fort about sanitation practices, and the need for immediate reforms, things have



OUR EDUCATION INITIATIVES AND EFFORTS, IT MUST BE ACKNOWLEDGED, DRIFTED MORE TOWARDS THE ACQUISITION OF EDUCATION FOR MATERIAL AND PHYSICAL GAINS

changed, and this deserves appreciation. However, considerable alertness and appreciation of the need are still necessary. Why do I say this? What one learns from personal interactions just cannot always be extricated from data! In 2016, one visited several institutions as a member of the TSR Subramaniam Committee on Education policy. In one of the colleges with an enrollment of around two thousand, a mention was made of the neglect of sanitation, the Director had this to say: Oh, it is too dirty and unhygienic for me to inspect! I mention this for two reasons; first; the systems of education paid little attention to such a significant impediment. Second; even after the universally acknowledged and appreciated movement for sanitation, and its great success, there is much more to be achieved on this front! We are much better off at this juncture in educational achievements, particularly in the context of girls' participation in education and subsequently in every sector of knowledge, skills, services, defence and the like. What was the most ignored aspect of Indian education during the second half of the 20th century? Some academics and scholars—adherents of negativity included—would like to criticise all that has been done and achieved during this period. Those who are, ideologically unconstrained and capable of taking an objective analytical view express concern about certain aspects that are essential ingredients total the personality development of any individual. This is usually articulated in


every policy and programme, but current education practices get ignored in schools and even certain well-reputed institutions. Moral and ethical aspects of education, education in human values, and similar expressions are regular parts of every education initiative. We also have the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, who could say "My life is my message"! How many of our present-day leaders—political leaders—could say that with inner conviction and confidence? There are still the old guards and young ones who took Gandhi, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Karpuri Thakur, LK Advani, Narendra Modi, and the like as their role models. A committed work culture, a sound value system, and a pursuit of higher and larger goals in life could only be inculcated in educational institutions and that remains a big challenge before the Indian education system. Our advantage is that we are familiar with how it could be achieved. Indian education has achieved sufficient recognition and success; within and outside the country. India and its ancient education systems aimed at comprehensive personality development, the comprehension of 'Ekam Sat Viprah Baudha Vadanti, 'Sarv bhut Hite Ratah', 'Sarve Bhavantu Sukhina', and much more on similar lines. We were privileged that MK Gandhi gave us a practical model of education that focused on enhancing the economic aspect but did not neglect this totality, and wanted the best to be drawn out of out of head,

hand and heart. Sri Aurobindo; and the mother; dwelled in higher echelons of human advancement, apart from what is usually aimed at imparting education. Our education initiatives and efforts, it must be acknowledged; drifted more towards the acquisition of education for material and physical gains. Education, said the Mother; is not to prepare learners to succeed in life and society but 'to increase his perfectibility!' Addressing the students of the Ashram Schools she said: "Do not aim for success. Our aim is perfection. Remember you are on the hold of a new world, participating in its worth and instrumental in its creation. There is nothing more important than the transformation. There is no interest more worthwhile." The Mother goes on to delineate it further for our comprehension: "To learn for the sake of knowledge, to study to know the secrets of Nature and life, to educate oneself to grow in consciousness, to discipline oneself to become master of oneself, to overcome one's weaknesses, incapacities, and ignorance, to prepare oneself to advance in life towards a goal that is nobler and truer, more generous and vaster..." Could anything more need be said on how our schools and institutions could move ahead in pursuit of excellence once they absorb the golden words and the strength of the philosophy behind them?
(The author works in education, social cohesion and religious amity, views are personal)

The impact of amendments to criminal codes on national policing

The implications of amendments to three criminal codes on civil liberties and the integrity of the legal process remain subject to ongoing debate and scrutiny

Parliament has passed three criminal codes, among which the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) seeks to amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC). There is one provision in BNSS that seeks to increase the number of days within which police custody (PC) can be sought. When someone is in police custody, it means they are held by the police in a lock-up at the station. On the other hand, judicial custody means they are held in a central jail. The investigating agency gets 24 hours to investigate if they are not able to complete the investigation within that bracket, they must get permission from the magistrate, who can grant custody of the accused for up to 60/90 days,



Prakhar Bajpai

depending on the seriousness of the crime. However, within this time-frame of 60/90 days, the magistrate is restricted to granting PC for the initial 15 days from the date of arrest, beyond which only judicial custody can be granted. This 15-day limit was extensively discussed in the Anupam Kulkarni v. CBI case, where the Supreme Court ruled that an accused cannot be held in PC beyond

15 days from the date of arrest and PC in total can be for a maximum of 15 days, which means that PC could be granted by the magistrate in parts for the first 15 days or as a whole. Understanding the new law According to Section 187 of the BNSS, the PC can be granted within the first 40 days (for less serious offences) or 60 days (for more serious offences) after the accused is arrested. The change implies that the prescribed 15-day period of custody can now be split into shorter periods of custody sought over 40 days for offences punishable up to 10 years or 60 days for other offences. This represents a departure from the current practice under Section 167 of the CrPC, where PC can only

be obtained within the initial 15 days. Consequently, concerns have been raised regarding the Government's rationale behind this change, particularly considering the act's aim to prioritise a people-centric criminal justice system. However, further arguments necessitate the examination of two significant cases. Judgements that led to a paradox: First, in the case of Vikas Mishra v. CBI, where the CBI wanted more time to question Vikas Mishra, who was accused of corruption and conspiracy. Despite being in custody for seven days, he was hospitalised and later released on bail. The CBI argued that they couldn't interrogate him properly during this time. However, Vikas's lawyers cited the court's ruling that said PC



beyond 15 days from the arrest date is not allowed. Nonetheless, the court granted custody to the police and noted that every accused person must respect the investigation and court proceedings and went on to mention that these ways of hindering the pursuit of justice would not be tolerated. Second, in the case of Senthil

Balaji v. The State, the Supreme Court decided that the maximum 15 days PC period can be split into shorter periods over the entire investigation, which can last either 60 or 90 days as against the general rule of granting PC in first 15 days, it also questioned its judgement of Anupam Kulkarni and further, said that this interpretation needs to

reviewed by a larger bench. By analysing the two judgements passed last year we can conclude that there is a growing inclination towards favouring the investigating agency. Despite the accused attempting to avoid initial PC in the first case due to medical reasons, it's essential to recognise that the accused might exploit the 15-day bar by taking the excuse of loopholes on grounds of a medical emergency. However, the second case sets a precedent keeping the investigation process at the heart of the criminal justice system which poses a potential series of inconsistencies. Therefore, Section 187 of the BNSS aims to definitively resolve the existing confusion and prevent future inconsistencies regard-

ing the timeline within which PC can be sought and sets the limit of 40/60 days. It seeks to find a middle path where the civil liberties of the accused are not exploited as the maximum number of days for which the PC can be granted is still 15 days which now can be granted in parts in 40/60 days and also favours investigating agencies by granting a reasonable time for custodial interrogation, which is crucial for uncovering the truth as denying the investigating agency the opportunity for further interrogation gives an advantage to the accused to disrupted the legal process.

(The writer is a law student, views expressed are personal)

Modi launches AIIMS in five States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/GUJARAT

Development was taking place under his government at a rate many times faster than what happened in the past six to seven decades, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, and emphasised that his guarantee begins from where hope ends from others. He was speaking after inaugurating All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rajkot in Gujarat, Bathinda in Punjab, Raebareli in Uttar Pradesh, Kalyani in West Bengal and Mangalagiri in Andhra Pradesh.

At the function held in Rajkot, the Prime Minister also dedicated to the nation various development works costing Rs 48,000 crore, including more than 200 health care infrastructure projects costing Rs 11,500 crore in 23 States and Union Territories.

“Modi’s guarantee begins from where hope ends from others,” he asserted, adding that even the country was saying this looking at the pace of development.

“For 50 years after



Independence, there was only one AIIMS in the country, and that too in Delhi. In the seven decades since Independence, only seven AIIMS were approved but even these were never completed,” Modi said in a swipe at previous governments.

“But in just 10 days, seven new AIIMS were either inaugurated or their foundation stones laid. That’s why I am saying that we are developing the country many times faster than what happened in the last six to

seven decades and are dedicating it at the feet of the citizens,” he said.

In the past, people from different states used to get tired seeking AIIMS in their areas from the Union government, whereas today modern hospitals and medical facilities like AIIMS are opening one after the other, he said.

Asserting that he had fulfilled his guarantee of setting up a large number of AIIMS, Modi said his government had approved 10 AIIMS in the last

10 years. “I had given a guarantee of (setting up) AIIMS to UP’s Raebareli. The royal family of Congress only indulged in politics in Raebareli, while the work was done by Modi,” he said.

India managed to defeat the COVID-19 pandemic because of changes in the health care system brought about in the last 10 years, Modi added.

“Today in Rajkot we got a glimpse of how the health sector of the world’s fifth largest economy should be and what will be the level of health facilities in developed India,” he said.

Modi said his government had carried out unprecedented expansion in AIIMS and medical colleges as well as a critical infrastructure network by opening more than one lakh ‘Ayushman Arogya Mandirs’ in villages, and taking the number of medical colleges to 706 from 308-309 a decade back.

The number of MBBS and medical PG seats have increased during this period to more than one lakh and 70,000, respectively, from 50,000 and 30,000, he informed.

The priority of his govern-

ment was towards prevention of diseases by increasing the capacity to fight them, Modi said.

“We have focused on nutrition, Yoga, AYUSH and cleanliness so that diseases can be prevented,” he said.

Two hospitals and research centres for Yoga and naturopathy have been inaugurated in Maharashtra and Haryana as part of such efforts, the Prime Minister added.

It is the constant endeavour of the Union government to ensure the poor and the middle class get quality medical treatment, he said.

The Ayushman Bharat scheme has helped the poor save Rs 1 lakh crore, while medicines at 80 per cent discount have helped the poor and the middle class save Rs 30,000 crore, he added. The Ujjwala Yojana (to provide clean fuel through LPG connections) has helped poor families save Rs 70,000 crore, he said.

Cheaper data has helped every mobile phone user save Rs 4,000 every month, and tax reforms have helped taxpayers save Rs 2.5 lakh crore, said the Prime Minister.

PM to lay foundation stone of 553 Amrit Bharat railway stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Monday lay the foundation stone for the redevelopment of 553 railway stations under the Amrit Bharat scheme which includes improving facilities by developing rooftop plazas and city centres at stations.

The prime minister will also lay the foundation stone of nearly 1,500 road overbridges and underbridges across different states during a function that will be conducted virtually at more than 2,000 railway stations and function sites, officials said. The prime minister will join the function via videoconferencing.

Modi will also inaugurate the Gomti Nagar station in Uttar Pradesh which has been redeveloped at a cost of around Rs 385 crores, they said. “To cater to the increased future passenger footfall, this station has segregated arrival and departure facilities. It integrates both sides of the city. This centrally air-conditioned station has modern passenger



amenities like air concourse, congestion-free circulation, food courts and ample parking space in upper and lower basement,” a statement from the prime minister’s office said.

The Amrit Bharat stations, spread across 27 states and Union Territories, will be redeveloped at a cost of over Rs 19,000 crores. These stations will act as ‘city centres’ integrating both sides of a city and will boast of modern passenger amenities such as roof plazas, beautiful landscaping, inter-modal connectivity, a modern facade, kids’ play area, kiosks and food courts, it said.

The stations will be redeveloped as environment and

Divyang-friendly and the design of these buildings will be inspired by local culture, heritage and architecture, it said. The prime minister will also lay the foundation stone, inaugurate and dedicate to the nation 1,500 overbridges and underpasses. These will be spread across 24 states and Union Territories, the statement said, adding that the total cost of these projects is around Rs 21,520 crores.

These projects will reduce congestion, enhance safety and connectivity, and improve the capacity, and efficiency of rail travel, it said.

India to add 18 more nuclear power reactors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will add 18 more nuclear power reactors with a cumulative capacity to generate 13,800 MWe of electricity, taking the total share of atomic power in the energy mix to 22,480 MWe by 2031-32. This was announced by the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) after Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated two home-built 700 MW nuclear power reactors at Kakrapar in Gujarat last week.

Presently, the NPCIL operates 24 reactors with a total capacity of 8,180 MWe.

The prime minister dedicated units 3 & 4 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Station (KAPS 3 & 4) to the nation on February 22.

KAPS-4 was connected to the western power grid on February 20, two days ahead of PM Modi’s visit to Kakrapar.

KAPS 3 & 4 (2 X 700 MW) are the largest indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR) with advanced safety features comparable to the best in the world, the NPCIL said.

“These reactors have been designed, constructed, commissioned, and operated by NPCIL, with the supply of equipment and execution of contracts by Indian industries/ companies, reflecting the true spirit of Atmanirbhar Bharat,” the



NPCIL said. The prime minister said the role of nuclear power in electricity generation is going to increase in the 21st century and it was a matter of pride that India is Atmanirbhar in this advanced technology.

Modi also visited the Kakrapar Atomic Power Station and took a tour of the Control Room on the occasion.

Four nuclear power plants of 1,000 MWe each are being built at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu with Russian assistance.

Four 700 MWe home-built PHWRs are coming up at Rawatbhata (RAPS 7 & 8) in Rajasthan and Gorakhpur (GHAHP 1 & 2) in Haryana.

Ten 700 MWe PHWRs have been sanctioned to be built at GHAHP 3 & 4 at Gorakhpur in Haryana, Kaiga Generating Station 5 & 6 near Karwar in Karnataka, Chutka in Madhya Pradesh (CMPAPP 1 & 2) and four power units at Mahi Banswara in Rajasthan (MBRAPP 1, 2, 3 & 4).

SC to hear Kejriwal plea against HC order upholding summons in defamation case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal challenging a Delhi High Court order which upheld summons issued to him as an accused in a criminal defamation case for retweeting an allegedly defamatory video circulated by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in May 2018.

A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta is likely to hear the matter.

In its judgement dated February 5, 2024, the high court had said that reposting alleged libelous content will attract defamation law.

The high court had said a sense of responsibility has to be attached while retweeting content about which one does not have knowledge and added that retweeting of defamatory content must invite penal, civil as well as tort action if the person retweeting it does not attach a disclaimer.

CBFC regional office in Chandigarh soon, says Anurag

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/CHANDIGARH

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday announced the setting up of a regional facilitation office of the Central Board of Film Certification in Chandigarh, with the objective of promoting ease of doing business for filmmakers of the region.

Making this announcement at the closing ceremony of the Chitra Bharati Film Festival in Chandigarh, Thakur said filmmakers of the region can get the facility of screening their films and submission of cuts/modifications without having to go to either Delhi or Mumbai to get a Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) certificate.

This move will further strengthen the Punjabi film industry, he said.

“I have great faith that the films made in the Punjab region also have great potential. Therefore, the govern-

ment has decided to set up a CBFC facilitation office in Chandigarh so that the process of getting certification becomes easier and the process of film completion becomes faster,” Thakur said.

The minister said in a statement, “From feature films to documentaries and short films to serials, Indian cinema today is capturing every colour of life on its canvas and making local stories global.”

It does not matter what language a film is being made in, it will always have takers as long as the content is interesting, Thakur said.

“Today, India is being viewed as a content hub and we are becoming the preferred country for both shooting and post production for international films. Parallely, our own content is getting a lot of praise across the world,” he added. The Union minister also spoke about the initiatives being taken by the government to make theatre more accessible for specially-abled fans.

Army doctors airlifted by IAF save veteran with timely transplant

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

A timely intervention and seamless coordination between the IAF, army hospital, and medical team facilitated the successful transplantation, ultimately giving a second chance at life to the recipient, an army veteran awaiting the transplant. The Indian Air Force said on Sunday, an IAF Dornier aircraft was deployed at “short notice” to airlift a team of doctors from an army hospital in Delhi to transport a liver from Pune that saved the life of an army veteran here.

The IAF also shared a few pictures of the aircraft and the team of doctors in a post on X social media, formerly known as Twitter.

“An IAF Dornier aircraft was activated at short notice to airlift a team of doctors of Army Hospital (R&R), to retrieve a liver from Pune to Delhi during the night on 23 Feb 24. The subsequent transplant surgery helped save the life of a #Veteran. #HarKaamDeshKeNaam #SavingLives,” it posted on X.

India, Japan begin two weeks military exercise in Rajasthan



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen ties between the two countries, India and Japan on Sunday commenced a two-week military exercise in Rajasthan’s Mahajan field firing range to foster deeper cooperation in confronting common security challenges.

The exercise ‘Dharma Guardian’ between the Indian Army and the Japan Ground Self Defence Force is being conducted under the broad framework of India-Japan strategic cooperation, officials said. It is an annual exercise and conducted alternatively in India and Japan. The contingent of both sides comprises 40 personnel each.

The Japanese contingent is being represented by troops from the 34th Infantry Regiment and the Indian Army contingent is being represented by a battalion from the Rajputana Rifles, the officials said.

“The aim of the exercise is to foster military cooperation and enhance combined capabilities to execute joint operations,” the Indian Army said.

The exercise will focus on “high degree of physical fitness, joint planning, joint tactical drills and basics of special

arms skills”.

“Tactical drills to be practiced during the exercise will include establishing of temporary operating base, creating an intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance grid, setting up mobile vehicle check post, executing cordon and search operations in a hostile village and airborne operations,” the Army said in a statement.

An exhibition of weapons and equipment will also be organised to showcase the ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ initiative and the growing defence industrial capability of the country, it said.

Lt General Togashi Yuichi, the Commanding General, Eastern Army, Japan Ground Self Defence Force, is also scheduled to visit India during the exercise “Exercise ‘Dharma Guardian’ will enable the two sides to share their best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures of conducting tactical operations,” the Army said.

“The exercise will also facilitate developing inter-operability, bonhomie and camaraderie between troops of both the sides. This will enhance the level of defence cooperation, further fostering bilateral relations between the two friendly nations,” it said.

Scientists develop tool to diagnose inflammatory disease

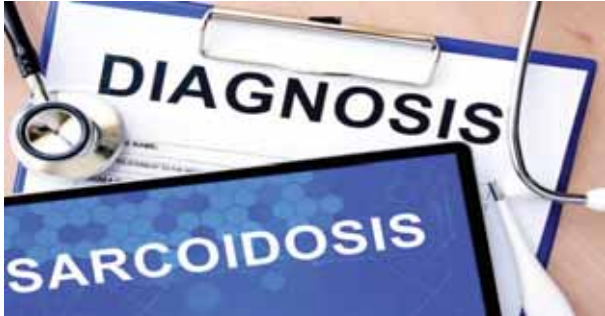
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Scientists have developed a tool to rapidly and inexpensively diagnose sarcoidosis, a chronic inflammatory disease marked by the growth of tiny lumps called granulomas in the lungs and other organs in the body.

The tool, which uses a simple blood test, could allow for selective use of more invasive diagnostic tests often used to identify the disease. The findings were published in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine. The research is supported by the National Institutes of Health.

“Currently, diagnosing sarcoidosis isn’t a straightforward process, and requires tissue removal and testing with additional screenings to rule out other diseases, such as tuberculosis or lung cancer,” said James Kiley, Director of the Division of Lung Diseases at the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of NIH. “Using a blood test will help diagnose faster, particularly in those organs that are more challenging to biopsy and with less harm to the patient.”

Though the exact cause of sarcoidosis is unknown, researchers suspect it is an immune disorder triggered by a group of specific antigens, which are generally foreign



substances that incite an immune response in the body.

Cutaneous sarcoidosis in India is 10 per cent; however, ACCESS study in the USA reported a higher prevalence of 15.9 per cent. Lofgren and Heerfordt syndromes are considered diagnostic for sar-

coidosis (ATS guidelines 2020) but these were not seen in any of the patients in a study in India and none had parotid involvement. Concerningly, the disease may be adding to the development of drug resistance in strains of tuberculosis (TB).

BRS leader Kavitha asks CBI to withdraw fresh summons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BRS leader K Kavitha has asked the CBI to withdraw the notice issued to her under Section 41-A of CrPC summoning her for questioning in connection with the Delhi excise policy scam case. She was asked to appear before the investigation team at the CBI headquarters here on Monday. In a letter to the CBI, the daughter of former Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy said the notice to appear at the probe agency’s headquarters should be put in abeyance in the light of her pressing onerous engagements coupled with the necessity of her personal presence in the state while the parliamentary elections are underway.

“I may request you to firstly revoke or withdraw the



subject notice as it appears to be sent by invoking Section 41A CrPC while not being aware or conscious of the earlier notice sent under Section 160 CrPC,” she said.

A notice under Section 41A of CrPC is issued to a person against whom a “reasonable suspicion” exists that the person had committed a cognizable offence. Section 160 of the CrPC pertains to summoning a witness. Kavita said

the notice under Section 41A CrPC was in complete contrast to the earlier notice under Section 160 of CrPC which was issued to her on December 2, 2022, and which already stands complied with.

“There is absolutely no logic, reason or background forthcoming as to how, why and under what circumstances you have now resorted to Section 41A CrPC,” she said.

The CBI earlier recorded her statement in December 2022 at her residence in Hyderabad. The Enforcement Directorate has alleged that one of the accused in the case Vijay Nair received kickbacks to the tune of at least Rs 100 crore from a group called South Group (controlled by Sarath Reddy, Kavitha and Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy) on behalf of leaders of the AAP.

Micro irrigation only solution in command areas: Experts

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India may have built state-of-the-art dams and canals, but delivering irrigation water to the last mile remains a major issue, thus necessitating the development of micro irrigation in the command area as an only solution for supply side as well as demand side management of irrigation water for the benefit of the small and marginal farmers, experts have said.

Anuj Kanwal, Commissioner Irrigation Water Management and Water Use Efficiency, Union Ministry of Jal Shakti highlighted the importance of addressing the last mile connectivity issue in irrigation management and stressed the role of Command Area Work in managing both supply and demand sides of

irrigation water. He also highlighted the opportunity to implement low-cost community irrigation models, benefiting small and marginal farmers. He was speaking at a workshop titled “Command Area Development Through Micro-Irrigation” in Lucknow held at Lucknow held recently to address critical challenges facing the irrigation sector in India, with a particular focus on Uttar Pradesh.

Ajith Radhakrishnan, Senior Specialist & Country Coordinator, 2030 WRG (World Bank) was of the view that “Improved water use technologies for farmers – such as micro-irrigation systems – can improve nutrient and energy efficiency by 28% and 30% respectively, and this can be directly translated into considerable water savings. Command areas offer an

opportunity to test and implement low-cost community irrigation models that include on-farm storage and solar-powered pumps benefiting the small and marginal farmers of the State.” Looking ahead, Dr. Heera Lal, Chairman and Administrator of Greater Sharda Sahayak Samadash and Special Secretary of the Irrigation and Water Resources Department in the UP Government, announced setting up a technical support unit to coordinate stakeholders and implement pilot projects on the ground, demonstrating a proactive approach to addressing irrigation challenges.

Dr. Yogesh Bandhu, Coordinator of the UP Accelerator Program at 2030 WRG (World Bank), highlighted the need for awareness and guidance in implementing micro-irrigation at scale.

Modi to now visit WB on March 8

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Barasat on March 8 instead of March 6, party sources said on Sunday. According to a senior BJP leader the Prime Minister would visit Barasat, the district headquarters of North 24 Parganas where he would address a women-specific rally on March 8.

“Earlier the Prime Minister was scheduled to visit Barasat on March 6 but as March 8 is the world women’s day it has been decided that the rally should take place on that day as a women-specific rally and should be named Nari Shakti Vandana (hailing women power) rally,” the BJP leader said.

The revelations from the State BJP’s side came on a day when the Prime Minister virtually inaugurated five All India Institutes of Medical Sciences including the one at Kalyani in Nadia district of Bengal.

On a floating proposal of a Prime Ministerial visit to Sandeshkhali — a riverine island where the people have risen up in revolt against the Trinamool Congress government following large-scale land grab and sexual assault of



women — the BJP leader that a large number of women might join the March 8 rally.

“More than one lakh women including thousands of them from Sandeshkhali would attend the rally on March 8,” he said.

The dates of other two prime ministerial meetings at Arambagh and Krishnagar in Hooghly and Nadia district are likely remain the same, he said.

Majumdar too confirmed the date.

He had further said that “if the mothers and sisters of Sandeshkhali want then we may take them to the Prime Minister for a meeting,” Majumdar said.

“If we can bring him here then he will be the first Prime Minister to visit this area since Independence ... it will be a big thing and we have already started our preparations in right earnest ... only the dates are to be obtained... our cadres and the local people are ready to receive him,” BJP leader and MLA Agnimitra Paul.

The Trinamool Congress however remained defiant about the Prime Minister’s meeting saying, many leaders including Modi would come to Bengal as it was an election year but finally the result would be same. “They have been coming to Bengal during the elections for many years ... in 2021 the Prime Minister and an army of senior BJP leaders like Amit Shah, Yogi Aditya Nath and others came to this State as tourists but finally the result was for everyone to see ... Bengal and the Bengalis voted for Mamata Banerjee ... this time also things will be no different.”

However, there was no confirmation or denial of the report from the State administration. “We cannot say anything till there is any official confirmation from the respective agencies,” an official said. Earlier State Opposition Leader Suvendu Adhikari had said that the Prime Minister could visit North 24 Parganas and address a rally there on March six. Subsequently State party president Sukanto

Goods train travels without driver for 80 km, probe ordered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A major rail tragedy was averted early Sunday morning after a 53-wagon goods train, which was halted at Kathua station, traveled a distance of around 80 km without a driver before it was stopped by the railway authorities near Mukerian in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab. A video of the train, reportedly running without the driver, also went viral on various social media platforms prompting the railway authorities to order a high-level probe into the incident.

According to official sources at Kathua Railway station, the goods train was halted at the station for a routine crew change exercise around 7.20 a.m.

“Due to the steep gradient along the Jammu-Jalandhar track the goods train started rolling on the track before the crew members took control in the driver’s cabin” official sources said.

The unusual incident trig-



gered panic among the railway staff. It is suspected that before stepping out of the driver’s cabin the loco pilot and his assistant may have forgotten to pull the hand brake.

To prevent any major mishap along the route the railway authorities alerted the railway crossings. While the goods train covered the 80 km long distance it encountered no other train from the opposite direction. The railway authorities, on their tenderhooks, heaved a sigh of relief only after the driverless train was contained at Unchi Bassi station.

No damages or injuries were reported in the incident. According to Official sources the officials from the Ferozepur railway division have been entrusted with the responsibility to conduct a probe into the incident.

Farmers stir pause brings respite to...

From Page 1

A commuter named Suresh said he commutes to Kundali for work, but due to the barriers, he has to walk an additional distance of more than a kilometer every day.

“There is one narrow passage for the commuters through which only one person can go through.

But now we got to know that the police are opening the barrier for the people. This will surely ease the problem,” Suresh said.

The Delhi Police has directed the security personnel deployed at the city’s Tikri, Singhu, and Ghazipur border points to stay alert. They also conducted mock drills.

Delhi Police officials said the security personnel deployed at the three borders were asked to stay on alert and to keep strict vigil. “Commuters, those coming to Delhi and those going from Delhi to some other places, are facing problems. We have already arranged diversions. But for those who are walking, we have arranged a pathway. This pathway will help commuters to cross the road easily,” said the senior

officer.

Another commuter, Manoj Kumar, at the Tikri Border said, “I work in Delhi and I have to walk for 1.5 km every day to reach my workplace.” Opening the barriers will ensure that the commuters will reach their office on time, he said.

The protesting farmers and Haryana police personnel clashed at the Punjab-Haryana border on Friday. The Tikri and Singhu borders are sealed with heavy deployment of police personnel and multi-layered barricades of concrete and iron nails. Two lanes of the Ghazipur border have also been shut with the deployment of multi-layer barricades and police personnel.

Protesting farmers from Punjab taking part in the march have been camping at Shambhu and Khanauri points of the State’s border with Haryana since February 13, when their march was stopped by security personnel. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha are spearheading the “Delhi Chalo” march.

PM launches two Ayush institutes to give boost to holistic healthcare

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday virtually inaugurated two institutes of the Union Ministry of Ayush, furthering the promotion of holistic healthcare in the country.

The ‘Central Research Institute of Yoga & Naturopathy’ (CRIYN) in Jhajjar, Haryana, and the National Institute of Naturopathy (NIN) titled ‘NISARG GRAM’ in Pune, Maharashtra, were inaugurated. During the inauguration, the Prime Minister emphasized the government’s priority to enhance immunity and disease-fighting abilities, with a focus on nutrition, yoga, Ayurveda, and hygiene to prevent diseases.

He highlighted the promotion of both traditional Indian systems of medicine and modern medicine. Additionally, he announced the inauguration of two major hospitals and research centers related to Yoga and Naturopathy in Maharashtra



and Haryana, along with the establishment of a WHO center for traditional medicine in Gujarat.

Union Minister of Ayush and Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal joined the event virtually from Kalyani, West Bengal, while Eknath Shinde, Chief Minister Maharashtra, and Union Minister of State for Ayush and Women and Child development Dr. Munjpara Mahendra Bhai joined virtually from Gujarat.

At the inaugural event of the ‘Central Research Institute

of Yoga & Naturopathy’ in Jhajjar, Haryana, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, along with other dignitaries, participated. He highlighted the global recognition of Yoga and the spread of Indian traditional systems of medicine worldwide.

The Central Research Institute of Yoga & Naturopathy in Jhajjar, Haryana, is an apex-level Yoga and Naturopathy research and education facility. It includes a 200-bed hospital with OPD, treatment block, academic block, hostel,

residential block, yoga block, and diet block, built at a cost of Rs 63.88 crore.

NISARG GRAM in Pune is a 250-bed hospital with a multi-disciplinary research and extension service center, along with a Naturopathy Medical College for UG/PG/Para Medical Courses. The project, costing Rs 213.55 Crore, includes residential facilities, auditorium, yoga hall, cottages, and the famous Gandhi Memorial Hall.

These institutes represent significant milestones in promoting holistic healthcare through traditional healthcare systems. They utilize diverse approaches such as hydrotherapy, massage, clinical nutrition, and yoga therapy to prevent and address emerging healthcare challenges, especially the growing prevalence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). With their state-of-the-art infrastructure and educational programs, these institutes will empower individuals to prioritize their health and well-being.

Kerala BJP leaders look for answers over song faux pas in party padyatra

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Songs demanding the ouster of corrupt and communal BJP Government at the Centre formed the hallmark of Kerala Padayatra which is set to conclude on February 27 at Thiruvananthapuram. What is shocking is that the Padayatra was led by BJP’s Kerala president K Surendran. This is just one of the many bloomers that unfolded during the Kasaragod to Thiruvananthapuram walkathon led by Surendran as a prelude to Lok Sabha election 2024 and shows how pathetic the party is in Kerala despite all round support and help from the Centre.

Thanks to group rivalries and shadow boxing, chances of Kerala having a BJP representative in Lok Sabha after the 2024 elections look bleak. Even hardcore party activists were forced to stay away from the walkathon before it completed half of the distance.

Though Surendran remained tight-lipped over the faux pas played by the song, Prakash Javadekar, the State in charge (prabhari) claimed that it was a mix up and need not be taken seriously.

The hopes of an influx of

Christians into the party following the joining of veteran Kerala Congress leader P C George into BJP remain shattered as the State leadership has been cold to the veteran Christian leader’s arrival. The attitude of Surendran and union minister V Muraleedharan have dampened the spirit of the minority community.

The State leadership of the party, fully under the control of Surendran and Muraleedharan, is against fielding George from Pathanamthitta constituency despite the considerable influence enjoyed by the latter in the region.

Muraleedharan, who was denied a Rajya Sabha nomination from Maharashtra has been sent to Kerala to contest from Attingal near Thiruvananthapuram. “Chances of Muraleedharan getting elected from any constituency in Kerala is remote and bleak.

To win the election, he has to convince the voters that he is amenable and approachable to them,” said a top central leader of the party. Muraleedharan is pitted against V Jory, the CPI(M) district secretary of the capital city. In the

2019 Lok Sabha poll, Adoor Prakash of the Congress, a political lightweight scraped through by a margin of 38,000 votes against an incompetent CPI(M) candidate. “Despite the internal fights between Surendran-Muraleedharan gang unleashed against her, the then BJP candidate Shobha Surendran mobilized 24.66 per cent of the total votes polled, a commendable feat,” said a senior BJP leader.

There are reports that union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar is being fielded from Thiruvananthapuram as BJP candidate. Though the battle for the capital city may get the image of a battle royale, as the other candidates are Sashi Tharoor (Congress), Panniyar Ravendran of the CPI, chances are that the Left parties would transfer their votes to Tharoor to defeat Chandrasekhar. This has been the practice in Kerala for the last four decades and there won’t be any change in the pattern of voting.

The only two constituencies which has attracted public attention are Thrissur (where Suresh Gopi is the BJP candidate) and Pathanamthitta (where George is the likely BJP candidate).

Keeping alive the...

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The gurus do not impose the study materials on the students but guild them what to learn and how to learn. “It is for the disciples to select their style of learning,” said K Jayanarayanan, Mimamsa Siromani, who besides holding MA, BEd, and is an authority on Yajurveda taittiriya kramapati, and Tantra shastram. Jayanarayanan was honoured with the award Mimamsavisarada.

Though the modern day liberals and the comrades hold a scorn at Sanskrit language and describe it as anti-modernism, the fact is that only those who specialise in Sanskrit language and the related topics like Advaita Vedanta, Vyakarana, Jyothi Sasthra and Jyothisha could grasp the modern science and philosophy with ease.

“The modern and ancient systems of education are

capable of rising the understanding power of the disciples. Mimamsa Sasthram is known as the Uthama Sasthram by scholars throughout the world. There is no instance of a Sanskrit scholar committing any bloomers or blunders,” said Jayanarayanan.

What remains unknown to the outside world is that the course syllabus offered at Madras Sanskrit College is sure to put the so called global universities in India and abroad behind a shadow.

Sanskrit-Prak Siromani (for beginners), Sanskrit Shiromani-Madhyama (equivalent to B A) and Sanskrit Shoromani (equivalent to MA) are the flagship courses of MSC.

Students from the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana clad in traditional veshti, angavastram and shirts are

the hallmarks of the college.

At no point of time, students of this college have felt inferior to their counterparts in other colleges, “An integration of modern science, philosophy, Ayurveda and allopathy is what we imbibe through the courses,” said students and teaching faculty unanimously.

Jayanarayanan disclosed that many youth who were earning five to six lakh rupees per month in IT companies have given up those jobs to escape from the stress and have joined MSC as students and they are all doing quite well. All these happen at a time when a concerted effort is on to destroy the age old Sanskrit education from within and outside. The first question that the faculties ask new girls joining Sri Sankara Sanskrit University in Kerala’s Kaladi is whether they continue to be virgins! That’s the Marxist style.

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“You should keep in mind that your first vote should be for the country,” he said, urging influencers and other prominent personalities to motivate first-time voters. The bigger the participation of the young voters in the electoral process, the more beneficial its consequences will be for the country, the PM said.

While sharing several anecdotes from the country, Modi lauded a “Goat Bank” initiative of an Odisha couple which promotes goat rearing at the community level and helps the villagers move towards self-reliance in the field of animal husbandry. In Kalahandi, Odisha, goat rearing is becoming a major means of improving the livelihood of the village people as well as their standard of living, the PM said. In his broadcast, Modi also discussed individuals

working in the field of language. He cited the example of Mohammad Manshah from Ganderbal, Jammu and Kashmir, who has been engaged in efforts to preserve the Gojri language for the past three decades.

“He comes from the Gujjar Bakarwal community, which is a tribal community. In his childhood, he had to work hard to study,” he said.

Days before International Women’s Day, Modi also praised ‘nari shakti’ and said it is reaching new heights of progress in every field.

“Great poet Bharatiyar ji said that the world will prosper only when women get equal opportunities. Today, the ‘nari shakti’ (women power) of India is reaching new heights of progress in every field,” the PM said.

“Who would have thought until a few years ago that in India, women living in villages would also fly

drones,” he said. “But today, this is becoming possible. There is so much discussion about Drone Didi in every village. ‘Namo Drone Didi, Namo Drone Didi’ is on everyone’s lips,” he said. The PM also spoke with ‘Drone Didi’ Sunita from Uttar Pradesh’s Sitapur.

The ‘matrishakti’ of the country is playing a significant role in saving Mother Earth, who is suffering from pain and hardships due to chemicals, he said.

Similarly, Modi said a Bengaluru company that has created two mobile apps -- Bagheera and Garuda. The Bagheera app monitors the speed of a vehicle and other activities during a jungle safari, while the Garuda app uses artificial intelligence and internet of things to provide real-time alerts when connected to any CCTV, Modi said.

Announcing the decision on X (formerly Twitter), Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, “Bolstering PM @narendramodi’s vision of zero tolerance against terrorism ‘Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI)’ has been declared as an ‘unlawful association’ for a further period of five years under the UAPA (unlawful activities prevention act). The SIMI has been found involved in fomenting terrorism, disturbing peace and communal harmony to threaten the sovereignty,

security and integrity of Bharat.” SIMI has caused problems for the Government and police over the years especially after the organisation split in 2005 into two groups - moderate one led by Shahid Badr Falahi and radical faction led by Safdar Nagori. Its leaders, including Riyaz Bhatkal and Iqbal Bhatkal (now in Pakistan), were formed Indian Mujahideen (IM) in 2006-07 along with Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) to carry out attacks in India, while SIMI started providing logistical support.

Since a Mass was under progress in the Church, Fr Attuchalil came out of the church hall and requested the vehicle owners to move out till the conclusion of the program. But the group of youngsters took strong objection to the stance of the priest and started assaulting him physically. Meanwhile a member of the group hit the priest from behind with his car and this sent Fr Attuchalil off balance and he collapsed. He was rushed to the hospital by people belonging to the parish as the troublemakers escaped to safety. What makes the incident shocking is the troubled relations between two communi-

Attack on Christian priest draws wide condemnation

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A tense atmosphere prevails in Kottayam district following an attempt on the life of a Christian priest by some anti-social elements. The police is tight lipped about the identity of the persons behind the attack except the fact that the trouble makers included some school students.

The police have issued stern warning against anybody who spreads the news and related developments through social media. Father George Attuchalil, the assistant vicar of St Mary’s Forane Church, Poonjar was physically assaulted by a group of people on Friday afternoon when they drove their motor cycles and cars in breakneck speed in the Church ground.

Since a Mass was under progress in the Church, Fr Attuchalil came out of the church hall and requested the vehicle owners to move out till the conclusion of the program. But the group of youngsters took strong objection to the stance of the priest and started assaulting him physically. Meanwhile a member of the group hit the priest from behind with his car and this sent Fr Attuchalil off balance and he collapsed. He was rushed to the hospital by people belonging to the parish as the troublemakers escaped to safety. What makes the incident shocking is the troubled relations between two communi-

ties in the town which has a considerable Christian and Muslim population. It was reported in the vernacular media that the superintendent of police had sent a communication to the authorities about the deteriorating relations between the two communities in the town as many extremist outfits have started operating in Poonjar in a big way.

It may be remembered that P C George, former chief whip during the UDF regime and a seven-time legislator from Poonjar, has come under attack by the local community for his stance against the Love Jihad and Narco Jihad.

Dr Bhargava Ram, a Hindu activist, demanded that a team of central ministers should undertake a trip to Poonjar for an on-the spot assessment situation and this would be a morale booster to the Christian community. “The silence from the intellectual and secular camp over the Poonjar incident is disturbing while they have gone overboard on the Manipur issue. Let the Union Government order a thorough probe into this incident as the Kerala Government would not do anything which will upset their vote bank,” said Dr Ram.

The condition of Fr Joseph Attuchalil is stable according to the hospital where he has been admitted following injuries. The attack on the priest has drawn widespread condemnation from various sects of the Church.

Banned SIMI member held after 22 years...

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“A local court declared him proclaimed offender in 2002,” Kumar said.

“A team from the Special Cell was tasked with collecting data, information and other digital footprints about the absconding SIMI cadre, sympathisers and sleeper cells across states. The team extensively visited and collected information from various parts of the country,” he said.

The information collected by the team helped the Delhi police’s special cell to zero in

on Hanif. Following this, a raiding party was formed which laid a trap, the officer said.”Around 2.50 pm on February 22, a person travelling from Mohmadin Nagar to Khadka Road was identified as Hanif. As members of the team began to corner him, Hanif attempted to escape but was arrested after a scuffle,” the DCP said.

He said Hanif became highly radicalised after coming in contact with SIMI activists and after joining the organisation and he started attending its weekly

programmes and radicalising youths.

Hanif was later appointed as the editor of the Urdu edition of the SIMI’s magazine in 2001, the police officer said.

The DCP added that Hanif was one of the think tank members of Wahadat-e-Islam and played an important role in Maharashtra and other adjoining States. “He was also involved in collecting money under the guise of donations to support and finance the agenda of SIMI as well as Wahadat-e-Islam.”

After fleeing Delhi in 2001,

Hanif moved to Jalgaon and subsequently to Bhusawal in Maharashtra from where he was arrested, police said. SIMI was first banned in September 2001 and since then the ban has been extended on it by the government

Last month, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended the ban against the SIMI for another five years. The organisation was declared an “unlawful association,” under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) for the first time in 2001.

Trump triumphs over Haley in South Carolina

PTI ■ CHARLESTON

Donald Trump secured a resounding win over his Indian-American rival Nikki Haley in her backyard in South Carolina in the Republican primary, enabling the former US president to move closer to clinching a third straight presidential nomination from his party in 2024.

Refusing to give up, Haley, 52, a two-time former governor of South Carolina on Saturday vowed to take the fight to the Super Tuesday states on March 5 when Republican primaries are scheduled to be held in 21 US states. Trump, 77, has now won every contest that counted for Republican delegates, adding to his previous wins in Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and the US Virgin Islands.

The South Carolina primary race was called mere minutes after polls closed. After results were counted, US media outlets said Haley received 39.5 per cent

of the vote in the Palmetto State while Trump 59.8 per cent, giving the former president 44 delegates and just three to the former South Carolina state governor.

A candidate needs 1,215 delegates to bag the party's nomination in the November 5, 2024 presidential election. So far, Trump has won 102 delegates while Haley, the only major contender to the Republican frontrunner, has just 17 delegates.

"This was a little sooner than we anticipated, and an even bigger win than we anticipated," Trump told a crowd at his election night watch party in Columbia shortly after being projected the winner.

Saturday's result now places the onus on Haley, who continued in her concession speech to insist she has no plans to drop out of the race – a move that she said would leave the Republican voters in the upcoming primary states with "a Soviet-style



Republican presidential candidate former UN Ambassador Nikki Haley speaking at an election night event, Saturday in Charleston, S.C. AP/PTI

election with only one candidate."

"There are huge numbers of voters in our Republican primaries who are saying they want an alternative. I said earlier this week that no matter what happens in South Carolina, I would continue to run for president. I'm a woman of my word. I'm not giv-

ing up this fight when a majority of Americans disapprove of both Donald Trump and Joe Biden," she told her supporters in this historic city, a few blocks away from where she had launched her presidential campaign about a year ago.

"What I saw today was South Carolina's frustration with our country's direction. I've seen that same frustration nationwide. I share it. I feel it to my core. I couldn't be more worried for America. It seems like our country is coming apart. But here's the thing. America will come apart if we make the wrong choices. We need to beat Joe Biden in November," she said amidst cheers from her supporters.

"I don't believe Donald Trump can beat Joe Biden. Nearly every day, Trump drives people away, including with his comments just yesterday. Today, in South Carolina, we're getting around 40 per cent of the vote. That's about what we got in New

Hampshire too. "I'm an accountant. I know 40 per cent is not 50 per cent. But I also know 40 per cent is not some tiny group. There are huge numbers of voters in our Republican primaries who are saying they want an alternative," Haley said, making her case for her to continue her battle against Trump.

"South Carolina has spoken. We're the fourth state to do so. In the next ten days, another 21 states and territories will speak. They have the right to a real choice, not a Soviet-style election with only one candidate.

And I have a duty to give them that choice. We can't afford four more years of Biden's failures or Trump's lack of focus," Haley said. A confident Trump celebrated his victory in Columbia, South Carolina. "There's never been a spirit like this, and I just want to say that. I have never seen the Republican Party so unified," he

Manhattan residential building kills Indian journo

New York (PTI): A 27-year-old Indian national, who worked as a journalist here, tragically lost his life in a "devastating" fire caused by a lithium-ion battery in an apartment building in Manhattan. Fazil Khan was killed in the fire that broke out in a six-story residential building at 2 St. Nicholas Place in Harlem, Manhattan that left about 17 other people injured.

The New York City Fire Department said that its marshals have determined that the "devastating" fire was caused by a lithium-ion battery.

Khan is a journalist with New York-based media company The Hechinger Report, which is focused on innovation and inequality in education.

The Consulate General of India in New York expressed condolences on Khan's death and said it is extending all possible assistance to repatriate his mortal remains to his family in India. "Saddened to learn about the death of 27-year old Indian national Fazil Khan in an unfortunate fire incident in Harlem, NY," the Consulate said in a post on X Saturday.

The Consulate said it is in touch with Khan's family and friends.

"We continue to extend all possible assistance in repatriation of his mortal remains to India," the Consulate said.

Khan was a data reporter at The Hechinger Report and according to his profile on X, he was an alumnus of Columbia Journalism School. The Hechinger Report said in a post on X that it learned Saturday that Khan died in a fire in the New York City building where he lived. "We are devastated by the loss of such a great colleague and wonderful person, and our hearts go out to his family.

He will be dearly missed," it said. Firefighters said the fire originated in the building's 3rd floor. At 2:14 pm Friday, the FDNY responded to the 2-alarm fire at 2 St. Nicholas Place in Harlem. Firefighters arrived within minutes to find people on the fire escape.

Sunak warns of 'toxic' culture in UK politics

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has warned against a growing toxic culture in politics amid reports of members of Parliament facing security threats over their voting intentions in the House of Commons related to the Israel-Gaza conflict.

The 43-year-old British Indian leader issued a statement on Saturday to condemn the hijacking of protests on the streets of the country by extremists to glorify terrorism. It came as a report in 'The Sunday Times' newspaper claims that three unnamed female MPs have been sanctioned additional security after concerns about their safety. "The explosion in prejudice and antisemitism since the Hamas attacks on the 7 October [2023] are as unacceptable as they are un-British. Simply put antisemitism is racism," said Sunak in his statement.

"Legitimate protests hijacked by extremists to promote and glorify terrorism, elected representatives verbally threatened and physically, violently targeted and antisemitic tropes beamed onto our own Parliament building," he said, with reference to an offensive projection on the Palace of Westminster recently.

"And in Parliament this week a very dangerous signal was sent that this sort of intimidation works. It is toxic for our society and our politics and is an affront to the liberties and values we hold dear here in Britain," he said of the scenes of chaos in the Commons last week over a Gaza ceasefire vote.

While he did not make a reference to it specifically, his intervention came soon after the governing Conservatives suspended party MP Lee Anderson after he claimed during an interview that Pakistani-origin London Mayor Sadiq Khan was under the control of "Islamists".



The Opposition had demanded action over the remarks, which Labour Leader Keir Starmer branded as a "racist and Islamophobic outburst".

"This isn't just embarrassing for the Conservative Party, it emboldens the worst forces in our politics," said Starmer.

The row follows an article by former home secretary Suella Braverman over the weekend that claimed Islamists and extremists were taking charge in all walks of life in Britain, attacked as "extreme rhetoric" by the Opposition parties.

Braverman, sacked from the Cabinet by Sunak last year, was reacting to Commons Speaker Sir Lindsay Hoyle saying that he had selected certain amendments to a motion related to ceasefire in Gaza in a bid to ensure all options were on the table for MPs to vote on and to protect MPs' safety.

According to 'The Sunday Times' report, UK Security Minister Tom Tugendhat has been working with the Home Office, the police and the parliamentary authorities to significantly enhance the safety and security of MPs. As part of the overhaul, the royal and VIP executive committee (RAVEC), which is responsible for the security of the royal family as well as senior politicians including the prime minister and home secretary, has been brought in to help assess the threat to MPs. "Many MPs are petrified by the abuse they are facing," a senior security source was quoted as saying.

Gaza temporary truce in progress: Israeli media

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Mediators are making progress on an agreement for a weeks-long ceasefire between Israel and Hamas and the release of dozens of hostages held in Gaza as well as Palestinians imprisoned by Israel, Israeli media reported Sunday. Israel's War Cabinet met to discuss the proposal late Saturday, but there was no official word on what they had decided. Several Israeli media outlets, citing unnamed officials, said it tacitly approved the deal and that Israel would send a delegation to Qatar for further discussions.

Hamas says it has not yet been involved in the latest proposal developed by the United States, Egypt and Qatar, but the reported outline largely matches its earlier demands for the first phase of a truce. Hamas' top political leader, Ismail Haniyeh, was in Cairo last week. Israel is meanwhile developing plans for expanding its offensive to the southern-most city of Rafah, on the

Gaza-Egypt border, where more than half the territory's population of 2.3 million have sought refuge in squalid tent camps, packed apartments and overflowing shelters. Aid groups have warned of a catastrophe and the US and other allies of Israel have said it must avoid harming civilians.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he'll convene the Cabinet this week to "approve the operational plans for action in Rafah", including the evacuation of civilians.

A senior official from Egypt, which along with Qatar is a mediator between Israel and the Hamas militant group, said Saturday that the draft cease-fire deal includes the release of up to 40 women and older hostages in return for up to 300 Palestinian prisoners, mostly women, minors and older people.

The Egyptian official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the negotiations, said the proposed six-week pause in fighting would

include allowing hundreds of trucks to bring desperately needed aid into Gaza every day, including the northern half of the besieged territory. He said that both sides agreed to continue negotiations during the pause for further releases and a permanent cease-fire.

The prime minister's office did not respond to a request for comment on the War Cabinet's discussions or the Israeli media reports.

Negotiators face an unofficial deadline of the start of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan around March 10, a period that often sees heightened Israeli-Palestinian tensions. Hamas has said it will not release all of the remaining hostages until Israel ends its offensive and withdraws its forces from the territory, and is also demanding the release of hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, including senior militants — conditions Netanyahu has vehemently rejected.

But an earlier proposal from Hamas outlined an initial phase that resembles the

reported draft agreement, indicating the two sides might be able to converge on a temporary cease-fire.

Israel declared war after the October 7 Hamas attack on southern Israel, in which militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took around 250 hostages. More than 100 hostages were released in a cease-fire and exchange deal in November. Around 130 remain in captivity, a fourth of whom are believed to be dead.

Families of the hostages have followed the fits and starts of the negotiations with hope and anguish.

"It feels like Schindler's list. Will he be on the list or not?" Shelly Shem Tov, the mother of Omer, 21, who is held captive, told Israeli Army Radio of her son's chances of being freed in an emerging deal.

Israel responded to the attack with a massive air and ground offensive that has driven around 80 per cent of Gaza's population from their homes, putting hundreds of

thousands at risk of starvation and the spread of infectious disease. The Health Ministry in Hamas-ruled Gaza says 29,606 Palestinians have been killed since the start of the war, two-thirds of them women and children.

The ministry's death toll doesn't distinguish between civilians and combatants. Israel says its troops have killed more than 10,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has devastated the territory's health sector, with less than half of hospitals even partially functioning as scores are killed each day in Israeli bombardment.

At the Emirates Hospital in Rafah, three to four newborns are placed in each of its 20 incubators, which are designed for just one. Dr. Amal Ismail said two to three newborns die in a single shift, in part because many of their families live in tents in rainy, cold weather.

"No matter how much we work with them, it is all wasted," she said.

Corruption scandals cast shadow over Portugal's general election

AP ■ LISBON

The official two-week campaign period before Portugal's early general election began on Sunday, with the country's two moderate mainstream parties once again expected to collect the most votes but with the expected rise of a populist party potentially adding momentum to Europe's drift to the right. The centre-left Socialist Party and centre-right Social Democratic Party have alternated in power for decades. But they are unsure of how much support they might need from smaller rival parties for the parliamentary votes needed to form a government after the March 10 vote.

Corruption scandals have cast a shadow over the ballot. They have also fed public disenchantment with the country's political class as Portugal prepares to celebrate 50 years of democracy, following the Carnation Revolution that toppled a rightist dictatorship on April 25, 1974. The election is



Socialist Party leader Pedro Nuno Santos, left, and Luis Montenegro, leader of the Social Democratic Party, greet each other before an election TV debate in Lisbon, Portugal. The center-left Socialist Party and center-right Social Democratic Party have alternated in power for decades. But they are unsure of how much support they might need from smaller rival parties to form a government after the March 10 vote.

being held after a Socialist government collapsed last November following a corruption investigation. That case brought a police search of Prime Minister António Costa's official residence and the arrest of his chief of staff. Costa has not been accused of any crime.

Also in recent weeks, a Lisbon court decided that a former Socialist prime minister should stand trial for corruption. Prosecutors allege that José Sócrates, prime minister between 2005-2011, pocketed around 34 million euros (USD 36.7 million) during his time in power from graft, fraud and money laundering.

The Social Democratic Party has also been tainted by corruption allegations.

During the recent weeks of unofficial campaigning, a graft investigation in Portugal's Madeira Islands triggered the resignation of two prominent Social Democrat officials. The scandal erupted on the same day the Social Democratic Party unveiled an anti-corruption

billboard in Lisbon that said, "It can't go on like this."

A housing crisis, persistent levels of low pay and unreliable public health services are other areas where the records of the two main parties are at issue.

Hot-button topics that have driven political debate and encouraged populist parties elsewhere in Europe, such as climate change, migration and religious differences, have largely been absent in Portugal's campaign. A five-year-old populist and nationalist party called Chega! (in English, Enough!) has made the fight against corruption one of its political banners. "Portugal needs cleaning out," one of its billboards declares. The party's leader, 41-year-old lawyer André Ventura, has been riding in third place in opinion polls and could become a kingmaker if his political influence grows. His party got just 1.3 per cent of votes in a 2019 election, but jumped to 7.3 per cent in 2022. It could collect more than double that this time, polls sug-

gest, if a protest vote materialises. A key question is whether the Social Democrats will end up needing the votes of Chega! to make up a parliamentary majority after eight years in opposition.

The Socialist Party could, as in the past, forge parliamentary alliances with the Portuguese Communist Party or Left Bloc party to take power. Socialist leader Pedro Nuno Santos, his party's candidate for prime minister, is a lawmaker and a former minister for housing and infrastructure. Santos, 46, quit the previous government under a cloud over his handling of bailed-out flag carrier TAP Air Portugal and a dispute over the site of a new Lisbon airport. Luís Montenegro, the 51-year-old Social Democrat leader aiming to become prime minister, has been a lawmaker for more than 20 years. He heads the Democratic Alliance, a grouping with two smaller right-of-centre parties formed for the election.

Brit Indian doctor's rock band embarks on UK-wide tour

PTI ■ LONDON

A 25-year-old British Indian doctor whose passion for music resulted in a band with some of his fellow medical colleagues has embarked on his first UK-wide tour, with the launch show in London recently proving a sell-out. Gulzar (Gulz) Singh Dhanoya started the indie-rock band named Gulz during his university days as a medical student. It was over the COVID pandemic that the singer-songwriter plucked up the courage to put out some of his musical creations onto the audio streaming service SoundCloud and soon this one-man bedroom project struck a chord with an ever-expanding fan base. The lead singer and songwriter is now busy rehearsing with his four bandmates for their next live gig in Birmingham on March 16.

"How it usually works is that at the moment I go away and think of an idea for a song and it's very bare bones. Then we go into a studio rehearsal room and all of us together kind of think about our parts and we just keep playing it over and over. It's a great way to kind of balance our creative ideas," Gulz told PTI.

While two of his other bandmates are also National Health Service (NHS) doctors like him, two are professionals in other fields which he feels helps bring some flexibility to striking a balance with late-night hospital shifts.

He admits sometimes wondering how they are all able to commit to their music with stressful full-time jobs. "It's a huge commitment. Obviously, the working day is long and then it's fitting in shows and rehearsals and social media

stuff. It's like a second job and one that doesn't realistically pay compared to a 'normal' job. It's very cliché, but it's just because we love it," he said.

Born in Newcastle to a Punjabi father born in India and mother born in Southall, west London, music was a part of Gulz's life from a very young age.

From strains of Mohammed Rafi to Stevie Wonder, his musical influences were an eclectic mix – something that chimes with the kind of tunes he is now creating lyrically and musically.

"I began by sort of writing music that sounds like the music I like and have tried to retain that in some ways. I just try to weave certain themes of my life at the time into the stuff that I'm writing, be it relationships and breakups or just having some fun," he said.

Tractor protests threaten to derail green farming policies

AP ■ WESTROZEBEKE (BELGIUM)

It was the puddles of green sludge left by the tires of massive tractors in western Belgium's industrial farmlands that drew the attention of biological engineer Ineke Maes. The slime was destructive algae, the result of the excess of chemicals used by farmers to boost their crops, but at a high cost to nature. Maes had hoped the European Union's environmental policies would start to make a fundamental difference by improving exhausted soils.

In recent weeks, some of those tractors moved off the land and onto the roads, blocking major cities and economic lifelines from Warsaw to Madrid and from Athens to Brussels. Farmers were demanding the reversal of some of the most progressive measures in the world to counter climate change and protect biodiversity, arguing

that the rules were harming their livelihoods and strangling them with red tape.

And the impact has been stunning.

The farmers' protests affected the daily lives of people across the 27-nation bloc, costing businesses tens of millions of euros in transportation delays. The disruption triggered knee jerk reactions from politicians at national and EU level: they committed to rolling back policies, some of them years in the making, on everything from the use of pesticides to limiting the amount of manure that could be spread on fields. To environmentalists like Maes, who works for the Belgian Better Environment Federation umbrella group, it would almost be laughable if it were not so depressing.

"In the environmental movement, we joke that we should get tractors ourselves to make a point. Then we would

be competing fair and square. The purpose should be that we get negotiations, and that we get a deal through democratic process — the rules, you know," she said. Reasoned arguments, she says, have been drowned out by the rumble of tractor engines.

And there's no end in sight.

After hundreds of tractors disrupted the EU summit in Brussels early this month at a volume that kept some leaders awake at night, farmers plan to return on Monday. They intend to be there when agriculture ministers discuss an emergency item on the agenda — the simplification of agricultural rules and a decrease in checks at farms that environmentalists fear could amount to a further weakening of standards.

The political noise level from the tractors — not to mention the loads of manure dumped outside official buildings — does get through, offi-

cials said. "That puts a bit more pressure on the ministers inside. So I would believe that ministers will be a bit more — insisting to have concrete results," said a high-level EU official, who asked not to be identified because the meeting has yet to take place.

It is this attitude that drives the environmental lobby and NGOs to distraction: knowing that scientific arguments are too often no match for the rule of the street. As a result, the EU's flagship Green Deal, that aims to make the continent carbon-neutral by 2050, is under threat.

"You really should not lose that long-term view, that vision of the future when you are working on policy," said Maes. "You should not respond to the issues of the day by simply scrapping very important rules that have been seriously discussed, considered, that have been included in environmental impact reports and so on —

and that have also been democratically approved in that way."

Yet ahead of Monday's farm protest and meeting of agriculture ministers, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, for many the most powerful EU politician, insisted that she "remains fully committed to delivering solutions to ease the pressure currently felt by our hard-working farming women and men."

Von der Leyen's change in emphasis comes ahead of the June 6-9 elections, when a good showing by her Christian Democrat group, the European People's Party, will be key to keeping her at the helm of the all-powerful Commission. As her party has swayed toward putting farmers and industry first, so has she.

"It is a bit difficult putting a pin on Mrs. von der Leyen," said Jutta Paulus, a Green member of the European Parliament.

Markets may face volatility amid derivatives expiry: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

With no major domestic market-moving event scheduled this week, stock market investors would largely focus on global trends and foreign fund movement, and may face volatility amid monthly derivatives expiry, analysts said.

“We expect volatility to remain high due to the scheduled expiry of February month derivatives contracts. Besides, participants should keep a close watch on the performance of the global indices, especially the US for cues,” Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research at Religare Broking Ltd, said.

Last week, BSE Sensex rose 716.16 points or 1 per cent to close at 73,142.8 points and inched closer to its record high level of 73,427.5.

“Markets remained volatile in the passing week but managed to end with a gain of nearly a per cent. After the initial rise, mixed global cues combined with profit taking in select heavyweights capped the momentum.

“Consequently, the

benchmark indices, Nifty and Sensex, continued to oscillate in a narrow range till the end and finally settled at 22,212.70 and 73,142.80 respectively,” Mishra said.

After the marginal dip, the US benchmark index, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) has resumed the uptrend and also crossed a new milestone of 39,000. With a strong base of around 38,400, we expect the prevailing tone to continue in the index and that could also help our markets to maintain the positive bias, Mishra added.

Investors are also expected to take guidance from the minutes of the February Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting released by the central bank last week. The rate-setting panel has hinted a cautious approach towards monetary easing amid uncertainties around inflation outlook.

“On the economy front, almost all MPC members continued to express a cautious approach to monetary easing, given the uncertainties surrounding the inflation outlook,” Shrikant



Chouhan, Head Equity Research at Kotak Securities, said.

In the latest bi-monthly policy review held earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India's six-member panel decided to leave the key policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the sixth time in a row.

Analysts pointed out that

factors like crude oil prices, rupee movement, quarterly GDP data to be released in India as well as in the US, and monthly global manufacturing PMI data in the coming week will also influence the market sentiment.

With Q3 FY24 results season behind us, the market focus will be on the macro

developments both domestic and international, Chouhan said.

Besides, six IPOs worth more than Rs 3,300 crore will be hitting the stock markets next week, including Platinum Industries and Exicom Tele-Systems public issues which will open for subscription on February 27 and IPO of Bharat Highways

Infrastructure Investment Trust on February 28.

Paytm issue may be reviewed, scrutiny on Byju's progressing well: ICAI By Bishaswar Malakar

Kolkata, Feb 25 (PTI) Amid the unfolding Paytm Payments Bank Ltd crisis, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal on Sunday said its financial reporting review board (FRRB) may deliberate on issues of the fintech firm in the near future.

The FRRB of the statutory body is currently conducting a review of the accounts of tech-based education unicorn Byju's over alleged governance concerns, and the exercise is progressing well, the ICAI president said.

“So far, we have not considered it (Paytm issue), but the board meeting of the FRRB will take place in the near future and it will consider appropriate action if required. So far, we have not decided anything as far as this matter is concerned,” ICAI President Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal told PTI in an interview.

Newly elected committees, including FRRB, of the ICAI are expected to hold meetings from March onwards, he said.

Notably, the banking sector regulator Reserve Bank of India has already imposed restrictions on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd due to alleged regulatory concerns.

The FRRB may determine whether any scrutiny of the books is necessary over allegations of regulatory lapses and their impact on the payment bank's accounting, he said.

“It is the discretion of the board whom to review and when to do so. It has a robust system,” the newly elected ICAI chief said.

Asked whether ICAI was waiting for a complaint regarding Paytm, Agarwal said, “The institute can take cognizance both suo motu and through complaints. In Byju's case, it was suo motu.”

Speaking on Byju's, he said that the progress on the board's scrutiny is “going well and the report is expected by the end of this year.”

While explaining the FRRB structure, the ICAI chief said, “The board has a three-tier

structure--technical, group, and then finally the board review.”

According to him, the FRRB is empowered to review the financial statements of listed companies.

“In cases of gross negligence, we proceed with further investigation. If there are minor issues, we provide advisory guidance,” Agarwal said.

Constituted in July 2002, it is an important wing of ICAI that works to bring improvements in financial reporting practices and thereby promote investors' confidence in audited statements.

Meanwhile, investors and the founder of the troubled edu-tech firm Byju's had locked horns over alleged mismanagement and governance issues.

The investors voted for a leadership change in an Extraordinary General Meeting on Friday and also moved NCLT.

The six investors, who moved the resolutions, hold more than 32 per cent stake in Think & Learn (T&L), the firm that operates the online tuition platform Byju's.

Government makes efforts to improve soil health

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nearly 8,300 soil testing labs have been set up across the country since 2014-15 as part of the government's efforts to improve soil health and reduce input cost incurred by farmers to grow crops, according to an official.

These are static soil testing labs, mobile testing labs, mini labs and village level soil testing labs.

That apart, the government has also distributed 23.58 lakh soil health cards to farmers free of cost. The move is aimed at promoting balanced use of fertilisers, cut input cost and boost crop productivity.

“The root of farmers' welfare is in the health of soil,” a senior government official said.

The government is implementing Soil Health Management & Soil Health Card Schemes under the National Project on Soil Health & Fertility of National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture since the year 2014-15.

Now, these schemes have been merged as Soil Health & Fertility component of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).

“So far, 23.58 crore soil health cards have been distributed free-of-cost to farmers under the scheme,” the official said.

Based on the recommendations on Soil Health Card (SHC), the trainings and demonstrations are conducted to create the awareness among the farmers for adopting the recommendations on judicious use of chemical fertilizers.

So far, 93,781 farmer's trainings, 6.45 lakh demonstrations, 7,425 farmer's melas/ campaigns on soil health card recommendations have been organized across the country, the official highlighted.

Since 2014-15, the official said that a total of 8,272 soil testing labs have been set up across the country.

Out of these, 1,068 are static soil testing labs, 163 mobile soil testing labs, 6,376 mini soil testing labs and 665 village level soil testing labs.

“Total Rs 229.95 crore has been released to states/UTs for soil testing labs under the scheme. Out of this, Rs 83.31 crore has been released to states/UTs for the past five

IOC, GAIL, ONGC fined for third straight quarter

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned oil and gas giants including IndianOil, ONGC and GAIL (India) have been slapped fines for the third straight quarter for failing to meet listing norm requirements of having the requisite number of directors on their board.

Stock exchanges have fined oil refining and fuel marketing giant Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), explorers Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL), gas utility GAIL, and refiners Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) a cumulative Rs 32.5 lakh, stock exchange filings showed.

In separate filings, the companies detailed the fines imposed by the BSE and NSE for either not having the requisite number of independent directors or the mandated women director in the third quarter ended December 31, 2023, but were quick to point out that appointment of directors was done by the government and they had no role in it.

The companies had faced



fines for the same reason in the previous two quarters as well.

The six PSUs in separate filings said they have been slapped with a fine of Rs 5,42,800 each for the third quarter. While ONGC and its subsidiaries HPCL and MRPL, GAIL and OIL faced fines for not having the required number of independent directors on their board, IOC for not having a woman independent director on its board.

Listing norms require companies to have independent directors in the same proportion as executive or functional directors. They are also required to have at least one woman director on

the board.

For the second quarter, IOC, ONGC, OIL, GAIL, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd, HPCL and Engineers India Ltd had faced a fine of Rs 5.42 lakh.

For the latest fine, IOC in the regulatory filing said that “being a government company, the power to appoint directors (including independent directors) vests with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India, and hence the non-appointment of women independent director on the Board during the quarter ended December 31, 2023 was not due to any negligence/fault by the company.”

Accordingly, IOC said it should not be held liable to pay the fines and the same should be waived-off.

“IOC regularly takes up with ministry for appointment of requisite number of independent directors (including woman independent director) to ensure compliance with corporate governance norms enunciated under SEBI (LODR) as well as the Companies Act,” it said, adding, it had in the past received similar notices from the two stock exchanges and its waiver request was granted.

GAIL in the filing said “appointments are outside the purview/control of the GAIL's management.” “The non-compliance with regard to the composition of the Board was not within the control of the company and the company has been regularly pursuing with the Government of India (GoI) for appointment of requisite numbers of independent directors to meet the compliance requirements,” ONGC said.

The appointment of directors on its subsidiaries HPCL and MRPL too are done by the government.

Number of M&A deals in India falls in 2023: PwC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The number of merger and acquisition (M&A) deals during 2023 dropped by 10 per cent on an annual basis to 793, said a PwC India report on Sunday.

However, the total disclosed deal value for M&A declined much steeper at 38 per cent during the year, according to the report titled 'Deals at a glance'.

The report further observed that PE (Private Equity) investments totalled USD 36 billion, marking a substantial 36 per cent drop from 2022.

Despite this decline, the average investment size per deal increased to USD 46 million from USD 42 million in 2022, reflecting a potential shift towards larger opportunities.

While early-stage investments were 53 per cent less compared to that in 2022, the report said, these along with growth-stage investments continued to make up the major share, constituting around 73 per cent of fundings in 2023. On the other hand, buyouts demonstrated resilience with only a 5 per cent decline compared to 2022. This suggests a nuanced landscape, where investors show interest in diverse strategies and larger-scale ventures, even amid an overall decrease in PE investments, the report said.

“In 2023, India resiliently navigated global headwinds, solidifying its appeal to international investors. The economic fundamentals stay strong reflecting investor enthusiasm for the country's expanding economic opportunities and this optimism is also echoed in



PwC's latest CEO Survey.

Despite a restrained deal-making environment throughout the year, the deal activity stabilised towards the last quarter leading us to anticipate an upswing in 2024,” said Dinesh Arora, Partner & Leader Deals, PwC India.

In calendar year 2023, PwC said the retail and consumer sector emerged as the most active sector with technology finishing up marginally behind for the second consecutive year.

Following closely were the professional services and fintech sectors, which exhibited high activity in terms of volume. Meanwhile, financial services, renewable power, and healthcare dominated in deal value.

Top 10 deals of 2023 included JV buyouts, strategic investments, PE buyouts, and stock mergers and contributed 21 per cent of the total deal value. While PE deals were higher in volume overall, strategic deals dominated the top deals with domestic deals and group-level consolidations as a significant theme, the report said.

PwC is a network of firms in 152 countries with over 3,27,000 people providing assurance, advisory and tax services.

GST Council may soon clarify tax exemption to RERA

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council is likely to soon clarify that Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) will not be required to pay Goods and Services Tax (GST), an official said.

According to the official, RERA, which functions as a regulator as well as facilitator for the realty sector, is covered under Article 243G of the

Constitution dealing with powers, authority and responsibilities of panchayats.

RERA was set up in different states to ensure transparency in real estate projects, protect the interest of consumers and to establish an adjudicating mechanism for speedy dispute redressal.

The official said that after discussions with RERA functionaries about the nature

of their function it was decided that GST is not applicable on them. The official further said that RERAs are funded by respective state governments and hence levying GST would mean taxing state governments.

A meeting of GST Council, chaired by Union Finance Minister and comprising state ministers, is likely to be held before the imposition of Model

Code of Conduct for the general election due in April-May.

The last meeting of GST Council was held on October 7, 2023.

Moore Singhi Executive Director Rajat Mohan said before July 18, 2022, certain services offered by key regulatory bodies in India, including the Reserve Bank, Securities Exchange Board of

India (SEBI), Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), and the Goods and Services Tax (GST) network, were not subject to GST.

This exemption was lifted on July 18, 2022, leading to discussions about the tax implications for RERA bodies as well.

“Furthermore, in the residential real estate sector, Input Tax Credit (ITC) is not permissible, which means excluding RERA authorities from GST considerations could potentially reduce expenses for both developers and homebuyers. Consequently, a clarification from GST Council on this matter would be significantly beneficial for the sector,” Mohan added.

V-TAPP 2024 unveiled



Amaravati: VIT AP University, a leading institution in technical education, proudly announced the launch of V-TAPP2024 (VIT AP Technical Fest) today, marking the beginning of a two-day extravaganza that brings together students from various colleges, universities, and institutions.



Neelam Yadav, Manager (PR), POWERGRID was conferred with Media Federation of India Award for the “Best Women Communicator of the Year” at 18th, Media Excellence Awards, 2024 held at New Delhi

India seeks permanent solution to food security



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will strongly oppose a China-led proposal for an investment facilitation pact besides pressing for finding a permanent solution to public stock holding of grains for food security and protection of the interests of fishermen at the WTO ministerial meeting beginning Tuesday.

The Indian delegation is led by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal. The four-day 13th ministerial conference (MC13) will start on February 26 in Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Trade ministers of 164 member countries of the World Trade Organisation



(WTO) are meeting against the backdrop of the uncertain global economic situation due to the Red Sea crisis, the Ukraine-Russia war and the Israel-Hamas conflict.

The key issue of India's interests at the meeting relates to finding a permanent solution for its minimum support price (MSP) issue for food security,

agricultural reforms, fisheries subsidies, e-commerce moratorium on import duties, dispute settlement, and WTO reforms.

***Food security issues**

The public stock-holding (PSH) programme is a policy tool under which the government procures crops like rice and wheat from

farmers at MSP, and stores and distributes foodgrains to the poor.

India stresses the need for PSH for its large, vulnerable population and wants a permanent solution from the MC13. Food procurement, stockholding, and distribution are crucial to India's food security strategy.

MSP is normally higher than the prevailing market rates and sells these at a low price to ensure food security for over 800 million beneficiaries. However, the WTO's Agreement on Agriculture limits the ability of a government to purchase food at MSP.

Under global trade norms, a WTO member country's food subsidy bill should not breach the limit of 10 per cent of the value of production based on the reference price of 1986-88.

As part of the solution, India has asked for measures

like amendments in the formula to calculate the food subsidy cap. Developed nations are of the view that such programmes distort global trade prices of food grains.

***Joint Support Initiatives (JSIs) or plurilateral agreements**

India opposes this move being pushed for certain nations. For example, India is strongly opposing efforts of a group of countries led by China to push a proposal on investment facilitation for development agreement at the WTO.

The country has maintained that this agenda falls outside the mandate of the global trade body.

According to experts, the attempt of the group to integrate the proposal into the WTO has systemic concerns for the organisation and it would impact

developing nations in pursuing their interest in future.

***Agricultural reforms**

India's stance is to protect farmer livelihoods and ensure equitable market access. However, developed nations are pushing to reduce domestic support and increase market openness irrespective of the fact that they themselves provide large subsidies to their rich farmers.

***WTO reforms**

India advocates for inclusive reforms that consider developing countries' interests, against the backdrop of developed nations' proposals for flexible negotiation processes, dropping of decision-making by consensus and the integration of non-trade issues into WTO without consensus.

India supports efforts to improve the working of the

WTO but its key pillars like special and differential treatment for less developed and developing nations, equal voice and dispute settlement mechanism should be retained while undertaking reforms, an official said.

India also seeks a revamp of the Appellate Body to ensure fairness, facing off against the USA's reluctance to do so and EU's proposal for alternate mechanisms.

The US, a frequent participant in WTO disputes, has been obstructing the process due to dissatisfaction with inefficiencies and perceived overreaches by the WTO's judiciary.

***Fisheries subsidies**

The members have already reached the first part of the agreement in 2022 under which subsidies will be prohibited for illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

ASHWIN, JUREL, KULDEEP SHINE

PTI ■ RANCHI

Dhruv Jurel's defensive chef-d'oeuvre found a perfect match in the destructive symphony of spin by fifer-man Ravichandran Ashwin and Kuldeep Yadav as India seized decisive control of the fourth Test against England at the end of a dramatic third day here on Sunday.

India walked off at the stumps, having chiselled off 40 runs from the 192-run target without losing a wicket.

Rohit Sharma (24 batting) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (16 batting) would be confident of the team mustering the remaining 152 runs without much theatre.

However, it was Jurel who started India's resistive movement with a defiant 90 that came in 149 balls and 211 minutes. It carried the hosts to 307 in their first innings from the overnight 219 for seven.

In their second essay, England just did not have any answers to the questions posed by Ashwin (5/51), his 35th five-wicket haul in Tests, and Kuldeep Yadav (4/22), getting bowled out for a meagre 145.

Opener Zak Crawley (60) was the lone post of fight.

It would have been worse



for England without that Crawley fifty before his innings was halted by Kuldeep.

Ravindra Jadeja bagged a solitary wicket but it was the

key wicket of Jonny Bairstow.

In fact, Crawley was the only English batter to go past 30 as they lost their last seven wickets for just 35 runs with Ashwin and Jadeja weaving

their magic.

Introduced late, the left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep struck in his third over when he cleaned up Crawley with a gem of a delivery that

skidded through, unsettling the middle-stump.

Crawley was looking in an ominous mood and tore into the Indian attack against the run of play to stretch their

overall lead past 150 as Rohit persisted with Ashwin and Jadeja in the second session.

But Kuldeep breathed fire into the attack as he got drift and was at his deceptive best.

Having survived through an umpire's call, England skipper Ben Stokes was castled by Kuldeep with the ball staying low.

Bairstow looked in firm control in his 42-ball 30 (3x4) but fell in the first ball after tea when Jadeja exploited the cracks on the pitch to turn it away and the batter drove it straight to short cover.

Kuldeep then dismissed Tom Hartley and Ollie Robinson in four balls, before Ashwin raced to his fifth wicket as stumper Dhruv Jurel took a brilliant reflex catch to oust James Anderson. In the process, Ashwin also became the highest wicket-taker at home for India. He now has 354 wickets from 59 Tests at home, overtaking Anil Kumble's tally of 350 from 63 matches.

'Jurel' in the crown

But Jurel's innings might just have ended India's search for a wicketkeeper batter in Tests in the absence of recuperating Rishabh Pant.

The 23-year-old from Agra was not only terrific with his glovesmanship but exhibited oodles of maturity during that determined fifty as India mounted an incredible fightback, trimming England's first-innings lead to a mere 46 runs.

After reaching his maiden

fifty in 96 balls, the Rajasthan Royals' wicketkeeper-batsman shifted gears, taking on English spinners Shoaib Bashir and Tom Hartley.

Jurel hurried for a single off Hartley to bring up his fifty in an entertaining 40-run stand off just 75 balls for the ninth wicket with Akash Deep (9).

But Hartley denied him a hundred with a quicker delivery that stayed low.

Young England off-spinner Bashir completed his maiden Test five-wicket haul, trapping Akash to finish with figures of 5 for 119 in only his second Test.

Jurel and Kuldeep's 76-run partnership for the eighth wicket also rescued India from a precarious position when they were reduced to 177 for seven on the second day.

Under overcast conditions in the morning session, the overnight duo of Jurel and Kuldeep faced a 134-run deficit.

Kuldeep showcased superb application on a pitch with variable bounce, playing 131 balls with immaculate defence and effective strike rotation.

Kuldeep's determined innings ended when an Anderson delivery that stayed low took a bottom edge and disturbed the timber.



Irfan lauds Akash for a memorable debut

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former India all-rounder Irfan Pathan on Sunday praised Akash Deep for making an immediate impact on his Test debut, with the right-arm seamer producing a three-wicket burst on the first day morning of the ongoing fourth Test against England in Ranchi.

Pathan said that for a fast bowler to make his debut in India is very difficult, but the way Akash bowled and picked up his three wickets, he showed promise of a bright future ahead of him.

"As a batter you want your debut to happen in India but as a fast bowler you dream to have your debut in England, Australia, South Africa or New Zealand," Pathan told PTI on the sidelines of the New Delhi Marathon on Sunday.

"The way he bowled in the first session of the match and to pick up three

wickets is commendable. We can only hope to see Akash's career graph to go up from here," he added.

The former India player also praised opening batter Yashasvi Jaiswal for becoming only the fifth from the country to have scored 600 or more runs in a Test series.

"Yashasvi Jaiswal is a very special cricketer, he has very bright future and he will make it big", the former cricketer said.

Pathan, who was at the marathon as chief guest, said India had the potential of becoming a sporting nation.

"To participate in such events is really special. I have always believed that India can become a sporting nation. Twenty thousand people participated here today and everyone was smiling. The people want to be fit and want to participate in such activities, it is always good to see this," he expressed.

Australia beats New Zealand

AP ■ AUCKLAND

Australia beat New Zealand by 27 runs under the Duckworth-Lewis system in the heavily rain-affected third T20 international Sunday to complete a 3-0 sweep the series and to harden its favoritism for the World Cup later this year.

New Zealand captain Mitchell Santner won the toss in his 100th T20 international and sent Australia in, mindful the rain might dictate terms later in the match. It did.

Australia's was interrupted three times by rain breaks and finally terminated after 10.4 overs when it was 118-4. New Zealand was set 126 to win in 10 overs under the Duckworth-Lewis system, which seemed a relatively charitable target.

But New Zealand botched the run chase for the second time in three days at Eden Park, unable to conquer Australia's world class attack.

Under the revised rules for the 10-over innings, Australia was allowed five bowlers who could bowl two overs each with a three-over power play.

The young left-armed Spencer Johnson took 1-10 from his two overs, showing why he made \$1.4 million in the IPL auction earlier this year. Nathan Ellis conceded only 11 from his two overs, Mitchell Starc only 15 and Adam Zampa took 1-20.

Ellis bowled four dot balls to New Zealand's biggest hitter, Glenn Phillips, in the fifth over and at the midpoint of its innings New Zealand was 51-2, needing 75 from the last 30 balls.

Australia's bowlers continued to bowl a tight line and length to frustrate the



Black Caps batters and after Ellis bowled the ninth over for the cost of only 8 runs, New Zealand needed 43 off the last over to win.

The honor, or duty, of bowling the last over went to Matt Short who already had contributed for Australia, making 27 off 11 ball, batting at No. 3.

The first ball of the over went for six but the next three

balls were singles, the fifth ball went for two and the last ball for a boundary as New Zealand fell hopelessly short.

"I think I feel most comfortable when I'm playing shots," Short said. "It was a bit of a strange game because of the rain and being off and on.

"The aggressive way is the way we want to play our T20."

Credit also goes to wicketkeeper Matthew Wade

who took over the captaincy from Mitch Marsh and led Australia with great tactical insight in tricky conditions.

"Our bowlers were unbelievable today the way they came out and executed," Wade said. "It's as clinical a bowling performance as I've seen from an Australian unit and for Matt Short to come out and bat the way he did is exciting for the future.

"We've got depth in our squad and everyone's enjoying their cricket."

Australia should have been massively disadvantaged by the fact its innings was abruptly ended after only 10 overs when it had been playing for 20. But it already was in a powerful position.

Thanks to Short and to Travis Head, who made 33 from 30 balls, and Glenn Maxwell who made 20 off 9 after being dropped first ball, Australia already was 67-2 after its six-over power play.

New Zealand couldn't match the clinical aggression of the Australian batters. Glenn Phillips and Mark Chapman faced most of the last five overs and simply couldn't find a way to score consistent boundaries against the outstanding Australian attack.

Australia has demonstrated the ability to win in all circumstances in this series, including its thrilling final ball victory in the first match, before an emphatic 72-run win in the second game.

"They're obviously a quality side," Santner said. "Their big three quicks and obviously the power they possess, I guess they showed us (how to play) throughout the series.

"The first one was a close one and I guess we got outplayed the last two.



England spinner Leach to undergo knee surgery

PTI ■ LONDON

Left-arm spinner Jack Leach is set to undergo a knee surgery on Tuesday after being ruled out of the England's ongoing five-Test tour of India.

Leach, who came into the India series as England's most experienced spinner, took part in only the opening Test at Hyderabad which his side won by 28 runs.

The 32-year-old spinner suffered an injury on the field which caused severe swelling, forcing him to leave the tour after missing the second Test and subsequently returning home.

"I'm going to have an operation to get the rest of the swelling out because it's not budging," Leach was quoted as saying by the BBC.

The report added that the knee injury trouble is the latest for Leach who suffers

from Crohn's disease, having also missed last year's Ashes in England due to a stress fracture in his back. On the tour of New Zealand five years ago in 2019, Leach had also contracted sepsis.

"It was quite an unfortunate one. It was the second ball of the first innings in the field so that whole game I was playing with this knee problem. I obviously knocked it a few times throughout that game and it has just created a long period of recovery," he said.

"I need to get the operation done and then hopefully I can get back to playing cricket. I'd love to have a run of playing cricket and getting into a bit of a rhythm again and hopefully that can happen again once I've got this sorted."

After the conclusion of the India tour, England's next assignment will be the first home Test at Lord's from July 10.

ICC suspends Hasaranga for two matches, Gurbaz fined match fees

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC has suspended Sri Lanka captain Wanindu Hasaranga for two matches and docked a fine of 15 per cent on the match fee of Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz for breaching its Code of Conduct during the third T20I in Dambulla.

The global governing body said in a release that Hasaranga has been banned after the spin bowling all-rounder accumulated a total of five demerit points within a 24-month period, which includes his latest breach of the ICC Code of Conduct.

"Sri Lanka's T20I skipper and second-ranked T20I bowler on the ICC Men's Player Rankings, Wanindu Hasaranga, has been presented with a two-match suspension after his total demerit points reached five within a 24-month period following his latest breach of the ICC Code of Conduct, for which he received a 50 per cent fine and three demerit points," the ICC said in a statement. The incident involving Hasaranga took place towards the end of the third and final T20I on Wednesday when he approached the on-field umpire Lyndon Hanibal to criticise a decision



regarding a full toss delivery not being adjudged a no-ball.

Hasaranga was thus found guilty

of breaching the article 2.13 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel. The

article relates to "personal abuse of a Player, Player Support Personnel, Umpire or Match Referee during an International Match".

With Hasaranga accumulating five demerit points, it converts to two suspension points, the ICC said. "This means he will either get a ban for one Test match or two ODIs or T20Is, whichever comes first, for the player or player support personnel. Consequently, Hasaranga will be suspended from participating in Sri Lanka's first two T20Is against Bangladesh next month," the ICC said.

Gurbaz penalised

Afghanistan batter Gurbaz too

was penalised for breaching Level 1 of the ICC Code of Conduct in the same match for having violated the article 2.4 of the code, which concerns "disobeying an Umpire's instruction during an International Match".

This has resulted in one demerit point being added to Gurbaz's disciplinary record, which marks his second such offence in a 24-month period and the player accumulating two demerit points.

"The sanction was imposed on Rahmanullah for altering the grip of his bat on the field despite repeated warnings against doing

so," the ICC said.

The ICC added that both the players have admitted to the offences and have accepted the sanction proposed by Chris Broad from the elite panel of match referees. "The charges were brought forth by on-field umpires Lyndon Hannibal and Raveendra Wimalasiri, third umpire Ruchira Palliyaguruge, and fourth umpire Ranmore Martinez," the ICC said.

Sri Lanka won the series 2-1 with Afghanistan sealing a narrow three-run win in the final T20I.

Hasaranga was named the Player of the Series for his all-round show.