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TANGO SAVES
INDIA
12 SPORTS



Pakistan is doing 'balle-balle': PM

JAMMU AND KASHMIR ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a roadshow for J and K Assembly elections, at Katra in Reasi district, Jammu and Kashmir, Thursday

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ KATRA

Training his guns on the alliance partners-- Congress and the National Conference, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday launched a fiercest attack saying that Pakistan is doing 'balle-balle' over their manifesto for the assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Devi Shrine, PM Modi said, "Nobody is giving them (Congress and National Conference) any importance here. But in Pakistan, inki balle balle ho rahi hai (they are being celebrated)." Modi also accused the alliance partners of aligning with Pakistan's interests. The Prime Minister's remarks follow Pakistan's Defence Minister Khwaja Asif's statement in an interview in which he said that Pakistan and the NC-Congress alliance were on the same page on the restoration of Article

370. "They (Congress-National Conference) are declaring that they will bring back Article 370. They want to return to the era of bloodshed. The neighbouring country is asking questions about it. Pakistan seems to be happy with the Congress-National Conference's manifesto. The Defence Minister of Pakistan has openly supported it. The agenda of Congress and the National Conference aligns with Pakistan's agenda," PM Modi said at the rally in Katra.

He said that Pakistan has itself exposed the Congress and the National Conference. He went on to say that the BJP government will not allow the implementation of Pakistan's agenda in Jammu and Kashmir. "Pakistan itself has exposed the Congress and the National Conference. They wanted to implement Pakistan's agenda here... We will not allow the implementation of Pakistan's agenda in Jammu and Kashmir. No power in the world can bring back Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir". PM Modi also sounded a note of caution saying that a vote for Congress would lead to the reinstatement of Article 370, which he said would pave the way for violence to return to the Valley.

"Every vote given to Congress will implement the manifesto of PDP and NC. PM Modi said that the upcoming elections will be a turning point for the region, framing the choice as one that will define the future of Jammu and Kashmir. This election is about choosing Jammu and Kashmir's future," PM Modi said. Addressing another rally earlier inside the fortified Sher-i-Kashmir stadium in Srinagar PM Modi praised the high voter turnout in the first phase stating that it represents a rejection of parties that 'sympathise with stone pelters and terrorists'.

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A Lebanese army bomb disposal specialist wearing a protective gear prepares, with his comrade, to detonate a walkie-talkie that was found at the parking of the American University Hospital, in Beirut, Lebanon AP/PTI

Hezbollah fires new barrage into northern Israel

AP ■ BEIRUT

Hezbollah fired a new barrage into northern Israel on Thursday, continuing its drumbeat of exchanges with the Israeli military as fears of a greater war rise after hundreds of electronic devices exploded in Lebanon, killing at least 32 people and wounding more than 3,000 others. The device explosions appeared to be the culmination of a monthlong operation by Israel to target as many Hezbollah members as possible all at once. Over two days, paggers and walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah detonated, wounding and even crippling some fighters, but also maiming civilians connected to the group's social branches and killing at least two children. It was unclear how the attack fit into warnings by Israeli leaders in recent weeks that they could launch a stepped-up military operation against Hezbollah, Lebanon's strongest armed force. The Israeli government has called it a war aim to end the Iranian-backed group's crossborder fire in order to allow tens of thousands of Israelis to return to homes near the border.

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India takes strong objection to US court's summons over Pannun's suit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking strong objection to a US court's summons to the Indian government over Khalistani terrorist Gurbatwant Singh Pannun's civil suit alleging a plot to murder him, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri on Thursday termed it as "unwarranted" and "unsubstantiated imputations".

The US District Court for Southern District of New York named the Government of India, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval (NSA) and former R&AW chief Samant Goel, in the summons. Foreign Secretary Misri said, "As we've said earlier, these are completely unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations. Now that this particular case has been lodged, it doesn't change our views about the underlying situation. I would only invite your attention to the person behind this particular case whose antecedents are well known."

"I would also underline the fact that the organisation so-called that this person represents is an unlawful organisation, has been declared as such under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act of 1967 and it has been done so on account of its involvement in anti-national and subversive activities aimed at disrupting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India," he added.

Pannun heads the radical Sikhs for Justice and is known to put out incendiary speeches and threats against Indian leaders and institutions. New Delhi designated him a terrorist in 2020.

Earlier, the US District Court for Southern District of New York named



the Government of India, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval, former R&AW chief Samant Goel, in the summons. The summons also named Indian businessman Nikhil Gupta and R&AW agent Vikram Yadav and seeks a reply within 21 days. In November, the UK newspaper Financial Times reported that the US had thwarted a plot to kill Pannun, who holds dual citizenship in the US and Canada. Officials in the Joe Biden administration later confirmed this. In its first response, the External Affairs Ministry had said it is a "matter of concern" and stressed that India has launched a high-level probe. "As regards the case against an individual that has been filed in a US court, allegedly linking him to an Indian official, this is a matter of concern. We have said that this is also contrary to government policy," then MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said.

Continued on page 8

FATF releases mutual evaluation report on India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Global anti-money laundering and terror financing body FATF on Thursday launched its much-awaited mutual evaluation report on India, saying the country's systems were "effective" but "major improvements" were required to strengthen prosecution in these cases. The 368-page report was released after the assessment was adopted by the Paris-headquartered body at its June plenary meeting. The last such review of India's combating of money laundering and terror financing regime was published in 2010. The report, which comes after an on-site visit of FATF experts to India last November, has placed the country in the "regular follow up" category, a distinction shared by only four other G20 countries. India will undergo its next evaluation in 2031. The report said India implemented such an anti-money laundering (AML) and combating financing of terror (CFT) system that was effective in many respects. It, however, said "major improvements" were required to strengthen the prosecution in money laundering and



terror financing cases. It said improvements in the system were also required to protect the non-profit sector from terror abuse. "India's main sources of money laundering originate from within, from illegal activities committed within country," it said, adding the country faced "disparate" range of terror threats, most significantly from ISIL (Islamic State or ISIS) or AQ-linked groups (Al Qaeda) active in and around Jammu and Kashmir. The report analyses the level of compliance with the FATF 40 Recommendations and the level of effectiveness of India's AML/CFT system, and provides recommendations on how the system can be strengthened. Finance ministry Additional Secretary (Revenue) Vivek Agarwal said global crime

watchdog FATF has given high rating to India on parameters, including financial intelligence, anti money laundering and terror financing risks, as well as disclosure of beneficial ownership. Of the recommendations made by FATF, fast tracking trials in terror financing and money laundering cases is important. Rest of the recommendations are ancillary in nature, Agarwal said. "We have passed the test with distinction," Agarwal said, adding since India is in regular follow up as per FATF, the country may report risk assessment after three year. "But there is no compulsion on us," Agarwal said. On possibility of terror financing abuse by not-for-profit organisations (NPO), Agarwal said FATF has said that preventive measures should be taken to check terror financing. The income tax department has used multiple data points to identify "at risk" NPOs and there is ongoing engagement with NPOs to sensitise them so that they are not used as a medium for financing terror, Agarwal said. "India has no low rating (by FATF) on any parameter... It is either high rating or medium rating," Agarwal added.

Iron pole on tracks near Rudrapur; loco pilot averts mishap

PTI ■ NEW DELHI/RAMPUR

The driver of the Naini Jan Shatabdi Express averted a possible accident when he slammed the emergency brakes on finding an iron pole across the tracks near Uttarakhand's Rudrapur, officials said on Thursday, alleging that it could be sabotage. The incident occurred on Wednesday near Rudrapur City Railway Station, approximately 43 kilometres from Uttar Pradesh's Rampur, Railway officials said. "On September 18 at 10.18 pm, the loco pilot of train number 12091 reported to Station Master/Rudrapur City that he found one 6-metre-long iron pole on track between Bilaspur Road and Rudrapur City," a spokesperson from the Railway Ministry said suggesting an act of sabotage. "The driver stopped the train to clear the track. He started the train safely afterwards," the spokesperson said. On the complaint of Rudrapur City Section Railway Engineer Rajendra Kumar, an FIR was lodged at GRP Police Station Rampur under sections of the

Railways Act 1989 against unnamed people. "On seeing the electric pole, the loco pilot applied emergency brakes and stopped the train and after removing the pole the train resumed its journey," the FIR read. Personnel from Government Railway Police (GRP), Railway Protection Force (RPF) and police outpost arrived at the scene and initiated an investigation. Of late, some railway divisions have reported cases in which obstructions in the form of gas cylinders, boulders or broken rails have been placed on the railway tracks with an intent to cause damage to train operations. In Farrukhabad on August 24, a passenger train was stopped on the Kasganj-Farrukhabad railway track near the Bhatasa Railway Station after its engine hit a log placed on the tracks. Earlier, in Kanpur an FIR was lodged for suspected sabotage in the derailment of 20 coaches of a passenger train. The divisions have lodged FIRs in these cases and investigations are going on to trace the anti-social elements and prosecute them.

21 houses set ablaze in Bihar, probe underway

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

Twenty-one houses were set on fire in Bihar's Nawada district near the Capital city Patna. Preliminary investigation suggested that a land dispute could be the cause behind the incident that happened in Manjhi Tola in Mufassil police station area on Wednesday late evening. Nawada District Magistrate Ashutosh Kumar Verma said the district police has arrested 15 people for allegedly torching the houses. Verma said approximately 21 houses, some of which were semi-pucca, were burned by a group in Manjhi Tola. He added that senior administrative and police officials on-site will provide a report detailing the exact number of damaged houses. A police officer said shots were also fired in the air when the houses were being torched. Investigations have revealed that out of a total of 34 houses that were set on fire, 21 were completely destroyed and 13 were damaged partially. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) has been formed to investigate further, and searches are ongoing to apprehend the remaining



Charred remains are seen after multiple houses were allegedly set on fire, in Nawada district, Bihar, Thursday

suspects. "We are providing relief materials, including food packets and drinking water, to those displaced. Temporary tents have been set up for the victims," he noted. The DM refuted claims that cattle were charred, saying, "No evidence has been found to support that." Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar condemned the torching of 34 houses, mostly belonging to SC/ST communities, in Nawada district and asked the Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) to visit the site and oversee the probe. Former Deputy CM of Bihar and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav, said in a social media post: "Respected, Prime Minister, Narendra Modi Ji, houses of Dalits have been set on fire under your double

engine government in Bihar. The PM must say a few words on this 'Mangalraj' as whatever is happening is all because of the will of almighty God and the NDA leaders have no control over this." BSP president Mayawati demanded strict action by the Bihar government. The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister also called for full financial support by the government for rehabilitation of the poor victims. Congress too slammed the NDA government in Bihar over the incident of setting ablaze of houses in Nawada, saying it is another proof of the "jungle raj" prevailing in the state and shows the dispensation's "utter indifference" towards Dalits and the deprived.

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Plans Underway for Incredible India's Vibrant Tribal Homestays

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Get ready to explore the stunning beauty and vibrant culture of India's tribal regions like never before! Exciting plans are underway to encourage tribal communities to welcome tourists into their homes, allowing them to share their unique heritage. Supporting this remarkable initiative, the Union Tourism Ministry plans to promote, to begin with, 1,000 Homestays at tourism-potential villages across the tribal belts of the States like Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu among others. The aim is to preserve rich traditions of the tribal communities as well as enhance their incomes, thus empowering them economically

and fostering sustainable development. The Union Tourism Ministry plans to provide funding to tribal households and villages for the construction of 5 to 10 homestays in each tourism-potential tribal village under its Swadesh Darshan program. "Each household will be eligible for Rs 5 lakhs for the construction of two new rooms and upto Rs 3 lakhs for renovation of existing rooms and Rs 5 lakh for village community requirement," an official of the Ministry shared the details. He said that the plan is the nascent phase and nitty-gritty will be worked out to ensure there is no violation of the regulations and tribals and visitors rights are



REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

protected. The Ministry's Homestay scheme in tribal areas is part of the central flagship Pradhan Mantri Janjatiya Unnat Gram Abhiyan which was cleared by the Union Cabinet

Ministry, a day ago. With a total outlay of Rs.79,156 crore (Central Share: Rs.56,333 crore and State Share: Rs.22,823 crore), the scheme aims to improve the socio-economic condition of tribal

communities, by adopting saturation coverage for tribal families in tribal-majority villages and aspirational districts. Around 5 crore tribals in the 63,000 villages are expected to benefit as 549 districts and 2,740 blocks spread across all tribal majority villages in 30 States/UTs will be covered. The Mission comprises 25 interventions/schemes which will be implemented by 17-line ministries. Each Ministry/Department would be responsible for implementation of schemes related to it in a time bound manner through funds allocated to them under the Development Action Plan for Scheduled Tribes (DAPST) in the next 5 years, as per the official. India has a scheduled tribes

population of 10.45 crore as per 2011 census and there are more than 705 tribal communities, spread across the country, living in remote and hard-to-reach areas. As the Union Tourism Ministry advances plans for homestays in tribal regions, the Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board (MPTB) is already leading the way. Many tribal families have opened their homes as homestays as a part of the homestay project of the MPTB, and are now ready to host visitors. According to the MPTB officials, rural tribal communities have established over 64 new homestays across 28 villages. Post-COVID, homestays have become a favored option for travelers seeking unique and personal experiences. "They often

allow guests to immerse themselves in local culture, enjoy homemade meals, and access off-the-beaten-path attractions. For homeowners, turning a property into a homestay can be financially rewarding, providing a steady income stream while allowing them to share their space and hospitality with others." It's a win-win, creating memorable experiences for guests and fostering connections between visitors and local communities, said an official from the Ministry. According to Cognitive Market Research, India homestay market had a market share of USD 540.44 million in 2024 and is projected to grow at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate(CAGR) of 11.0% during the forecast period.

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Terminated CRPF constable, aide held for extortion bid

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A terminated CRPF constable, along with his accomplice—a woman—was arrested for impersonation by a police team in Mohanlalganj on Thursday. The CRPF suspect was identified as Kuldeep Yadav, also known as Kamlat Yadav (36), from Jhansi. His partner in crime was identified as Seema (name changed). The duo was arrested for attempting to extort Rs 15 lakh from a farmer whose son was allegedly implicated in a sexual harassment case filed by Seema. Kuldeep posed as an additional superintendent of police (ASP) and told the farmer that he could help exonerate his son from the charges, demanding money in return. Seema acted as bait to manipulate the victim. Initially, Kuldeep demanded Rs 20 lakh for the "favour" but later agreed to accept Rs 15 lakh. Sensing something was amiss, the farmer recorded his conversation with Kuldeep and subsequently contacted the police officials in Mohanlalganj, sharing the audio evidence. Shocked by the revelation, the officials launched an investigation and collected all call details from Kuldeep's phone. A police team discreetly worked on the case, gathering information about him. It emerged that Kuldeep had

Shine City VP arrested for duping investors

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow police on Thursday apprehended Manish Jaiswal, the vice-president of Shine City Group, who is accused of defrauding investors of billions of rupees through fraudulent schemes involving land and stock market investments. According to ADCP (North) Jitendra Kumar Dubey, Jaiswal had been on the run for nearly a year, with a reward of Rs 50,000 offered for information leading to his arrest. Multiple fraud cases have been filed against him in both Lucknow and Prayagraj. Inspector, Vikas Nagar, Vipin Singh confirmed that the arrest took place on Thursday morning. Police investigations

been terminated from the CRPF in 2022 and had been living in the Bijnor locality of Lucknow, where he turned to impersonation. During his time in Lucknow, he met Seema, who works as a paramedic at a private hospital. The investigation team was astonished to discover through Kuldeep's call records that he had been in contact with

revealed that Jaiswal was operating as the vice-president of Shine City Infra Project Private Limited. He allegedly made misleading promises to potential investors, enticing them with offers of land at significantly reduced rates and flexible installment plans. Jaiswal is accused of luring victims into schemes that promised to triple their investments. After collecting money, he would then vanish, leaving many individuals with significant financial losses. In addition, he reportedly assured investors that their money could be doubled or tripled quickly through recurring deposits. The extent of the fraud is alarming, with more than 500 cases filed against Shine City Group in Uttar

Pradesh, resulting in 62 individuals facing imprisonment. The company's CMD, Rashid Naseem, also has a bounty of Rs 5 lakh for his capture. As the investigation unfolded, police learned that Jaiswal had been frequently changing residences to evade law enforcement. Initially living in Jankipuram, he continued to shift his hideouts after charges were filed against him. At the time of his arrest, he was residing in Vikas Nagar, Sector 3, Jaiswal is originally from Prayagraj, specifically from Salikganj Road in Mutthiganj, and his arrest marks a significant step in addressing the widespread fraud associated with Shine City Group.

Seema, who had lodged the sexual harassment case against the farmer's son. It also came to light that Seema had invited the farmer's son to meet her at a hotel before later claiming foul play. With these revelations, the police team became convinced of Kuldeep's involvement and took him into custody for interrogation. He confessed to his crime, explaining that Seema had informed him about the case against the farmer's son,

prompting him to devise a plan to extort money from the farmer. He further admitted to threatening the complainant's son with jail if the money was not paid while posing as an ASP. As of now, the police have not detected any other instances of impersonation linked to Kuldeep, but they are reviewing his crime dossier. Investigators are also probing whether Kuldeep instigated Seema to file the sexual harassment case against the farmer's son.

Constable struck by train, dies

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A constable died after being struck by a train in Lucknow on Thursday. Sunil Rawat, who was posted in Sitapur court as police pleader, had come home on leave on Wednesday. He was on his way back to Sitapur to resume duty when the tragedy struck. His family members informed police about the accident and requested an investigation. Reports said that Sunil, a resident of Alambagh area, was hit by a train in Talkatora late on Wednesday night. Police reached the scene, identified him through his ID, and informed his family. The body has been sent for the post-mortem examination, and the police are looking into the circumstances of the accident. Preliminary investigations suggest the incident occurred while the constable was crossing the tracks. According to the Talkatora police, Sunil was reported dead around midnight near Rani Laxmibai Hospital. Brother Anil stated that Sunil joined the UP Police in 1995 and served as a head constable at the Tambour police station in Sitapur. He had taken a five-day leave and left for work on Wednesday night. Anil expressed confusion about how the accident occurred. The Talkatora inspector noted that Sunil was originally from Bainikhedha in Hasanganj, Unnao. The family has not expressed any suspicion of foul play, and the investigation into the exact cause of the accident is ongoing.

Fresh wolf pack sighting causes panic in Bahraich

PNS/PTI ■ LUCKNOW/BAHRAICH

The sighting of a pack of wolves in Mehshi Tehsil has once again stoked fear among the local residents who were beginning to feel relieved after the capture of five man-eater wolves who killed eight people in the area. While the villagers claimed that the pack included the sixth and the last remaining man-eater wolf, who is believed to be lame, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO) Ajit Pratap Singh rejected the assertion. The pack of six wolves had terrorised the residents of several villages in Bahraich as they killed eight people, including seven children, and injured more than 20 since mid-July. Five of them were captured as part of the 'Operation Bhediya' campaign while efforts were on to catch the sixth wolf. The four wolves were seen near BJP MLC Padamsen Chaudhary's farmhouse in Magla village on Wednesday evening. The spot is just five km away from Sisayya

Churamani village which has seen the maximum wolf attacks. Talking to PTI, Chaudhary said, "The villagers saw a pack of four wolves in the mango orchard of my farmhouse at around 4 pm. One of them was lame." "There is a den of wolves near this place. Due to rain and rising water level of rivers, wild animals often come out," he added. However, DFO Singh said it does not seem that the new pack had the man-eater wolf and cautioned against any efforts to capture them. "There has been information about wolves being seen in some villages of the Ramgaon area of Mehshi tehsil. However, till the time it is not certain that the man-eater wolf was among them, any efforts made to catch them can create a new problem as they might start attacking humans," he said. Singh said an officer was sent to the spot and pugmarks of wolves were found. But from their activities, it does not seem that the man-eater wolf was a part of the pack, he asserted.

"We are keeping a close eye on the area where the wolves were seen on Wednesday. It is only after an investigation that we can say with certainty what type of wolves these were," he said.

WOLVES TO BE SHIFTED TO ZOO CAGES SOON
Currently in quarantine at the Lucknow Zoo, the wolves captured from Bahraich will soon be moved to their enclosures for public display ahead of Wildlife Week. Zoo director Aditi Sharma noted that while it's challenging to assess their behaviour at this time, it will be closely monitored once they are in their new environment. She mentioned that both wolves are sub-adults and have not posed any issues for the zoo. "We will be releasing them into the enclosures very soon. We are preparing the enclosures and taking all necessary safety precautions," she stated. Currently, the wolves are housed in small cages at the zoo hospital.

Contract killers land in police net

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A team from the Rahimabad police station claimed to have arrested two contract killers after the surveillance cell uncovered their plan just in time. According to the police, a contract was placed to kill Shishulpal of Chandpur due to an alleged land dispute. Two youths from Kakori were hired for Rs 1.5 lakh to carry out the

murder. The accused, identified as Vijaypal Rawat and Nagendra Rawat, were on a motorcycle armed with weapons when the police received a tip-off. Acting swiftly, the Rahimabad police, with assistance from the surveillance team, apprehended them about 400 metres from the Kaithuliya turn point. During the arrest, officers recovered an illegal .315 bore

pistol, five cartridges, a mobile phone, and Rs 50,000, which was taken as an advance for the contract killing. When questioned, Vijaypal and Nagendra revealed that they had been contracted by Santosh, a resident of Chandpur, to kill his cousin Shishulpal. The surveillance team played a crucial role in preventing the murder, and both suspects have been sent to jail.

Govt go-ahead to Chandigarh University in Unnao

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a significant move to advance higher education, the Yogi Adityanath government has approved the proposal for establishment of Chandigarh University in Unnao district. On Thursday, Higher Education Minister Yogendra Upadhyay formally handed over the authorisation letter for the university's establishment to representatives of the Chandigarh University International Educational Trust at the secretariat. Notably, the proposal for this university, under the leadership of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, received Cabinet

approval through circulation. This decision will enhance students' access to high-quality education in Uttar Pradesh. The new Chandigarh University campus will be located along the Lucknow-Kanpur highway, benefiting students from Unnao and nearby districts. After presenting the authorisation letter for the establishment of Chandigarh University, Yogendra Upadhyay said, "This decision by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's government will be revolutionary for higher education in Uttar Pradesh. Not only will it provide students with access to high-quality education, but it will also mark a new chapter in the

state's educational landscape." Upadhyay emphasised that the Uttar Pradesh government remains committed to enhancing and expanding the scope of higher education. He added, "The establishment of Chandigarh University in Unnao will drive increased competition and raise the standards of higher education, opening up better employment opportunities for the state's youth." "This state-of-the-art institution will equip students to compete on national and international stages, positioning itself as a key hub of higher education in Uttar Pradesh, poised to elevate students' careers to new heights," he

remarked further. A formal notification issued by Special Secretary Girijesh Kumar Tyagi on September 19, 2024, addressed to the Secretary/Chairman of CU International Educational Trust, confirms the inclusion of "Chandigarh University, Unnao" under the private sector at number 45 in Schedule-2 of the Uttar Pradesh Private University Act, 2019, as per the Uttar Pradesh Private University (Seventh Amendment) Ordinance, 2024. The notification grants official recognition to Chandigarh University, Unnao, and permits its operation under the conditions outlined in the authorisation letter.

No traffic movement through Rumi Darwaza

Lucknow (PNS): The movement of vehicular traffic through the Rumi Darwaza has been permanently halted, as the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has constructed sandstone bollards in front of and behind the monument. These bollards match the colour and material of the Rumi Darwaza, ensuring aesthetic consistency with the historic site. Superintendent Archaeologist, ASI, Aftab Hussain stated on Thursday that they have received support from the local administration to create a pedestrian pathway. "The local administration has assisted in conserving our heritage by facilitating the construction of these bollards," he said. Hussain explained that while the bollards would be fixed on the sides, those in the centre would be removable. "The removable bollards will allow for the movement of traditional processions, which



are an important aspect of our heritage, through the Rumi Darwaza. We will also install a bench and create a selfie point, as the monument is an iconic symbol of Lucknow," he added. He acknowledged that this change permanently restricts vehicular movement through the monument. The Rumi Darwaza has suffered due to heavy traffic for many years, delaying its restoration. However, after more than five decades, restoration work began in 2023, redirecting traffic away from the monument.

KGMU appoints 75 faculty members

Lucknow (PNS): King George's Medical University (KGMU) has announced the results of its faculty recruitment for 2022, issuing appointment letters to 75 regular faculty members. This includes three professors, eight associate professors, and 64 assistant professors across various departments. The recruitment process, which was previously under review due to concerns regarding the implementation of reservation policies, has now been completed transparently and in compliance with legal mandates. On September 18, KGMU Chancellor and Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel directed the university to present the recommendations from the selection committees to the executive council. Vice-Chancellor Prof Soniya Nityanand expressed gratitude to the chancellor for these directives, which facilitated the timely completion of the recruitment process.



PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY
TENDER CALL NOTICE
NO.EM/WS-25/2024
File No.EM/WS/TECH-05/2024/1298
Date: 11.09.2024

Name of the Work "Grant of license for Supply, Installation, Commissioning, Operation & Maintenance of 02 nos. 100 Ton Capacity HMC's for a period of 05 years" Last date and time of submission of bid: 21/10/2024 up to 1800 Hrs. Refer our website for details: <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>.
Sd/- Executive Engineer (M)
Workshop Division-II
Paradip Port Authority
PPA/PPR/2024-2025 dtd.18.09.2024

Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar
Tender Notice Reference
No.GNDU/Gen/70/2024
The Department of G.N.D.U. Amritsar invites online bids for the following:
Sr. No.1
Item: Printing of 32 pages answer Book, 16 pages answer book and 08 pages practical answer book
Quantity: 06 Lac
Closing date & time: 04-10-2024 at 5:00 P.M.
For details log on to www.eproc.punjab.gov.in
Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above website only.
Assistant Registrar (General)
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

NA/12/25516/2023/37811
Dated CHD :- 9/19/2024

Jilted lover mows down girl under car

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a sensational incident in Gorakhpur, a jilted lover killed a girl just because she turned down his love proposal. The incident took place on Wednesday, when the victim, Ankita Yadav, was waiting for an auto-rickshaw in the GIDA area. The suspect, reportedly infatuated with her, could not accept that her family had arranged her marriage elsewhere. Witnesses reported that the suspect drove a car at speeds exceeding 110 kmph and deliberately ran it over Ankita, who died instantly. The car lost control and crashed into a road divider after the incident. The car driver was later admitted to the district hospital for injuries he sustained in the crash.

The vehicle involved in the accident was registered in the name of Rajiv Prajapati. Shivshankar Yadav, Ankita's father, was preparing for her wedding in November when the family received the devastating news of her death. A relative of the victim informed police that there had been prior communication between Ankita and the suspect, prompting authorities to retrieve call records for further investigation. Ravi Yadav, Ankita's elder brother, revealed that the accused, Prince Yadav, had been harassing Ankita for the past three months. Their mother had previously scolded him for his behaviour. Prince frequently visited the area, using his maternal grandparents' home as an excuse to get close

er to Ankita. Ankita, a 20-year-old undergraduate student at Gangotri College, was waiting for transport on Wednesday to return home. Her family alleged that Prince intentionally ran the car over her after learning about her arranged marriage. Police are investigating whether the incident was an accident or a calculated act.

OVER 30 HURT AS HIGH VOLTAGE LINE FALLS ON HOUSES
More than 30 people were injured in Kannauj when a high tension (HT) power line fell onto rooftops, causing severe electric shocks. The incident occurred in Simant Nagar under Gursahaiganj police station, where the current from the broken high tension line spread in seven houses, affect-

ing both men and women. The local residents rushed to rescue the victims, who were admitted to the hospital in critical condition. Two individuals, who were in serious condition, were referred to a medical college hospital for further treatment. The incident sparked panic throughout the locality, with residents immediately informing the power officials about the mishap. It was reported that the current flowed for about 15 minutes before the power supply was finally cut off. During this time, several electrical appliances, including refrigerators and coolers, were damaged. Following the incident, there was considerable outrage among the villagers towards the electricity department.

CAREER COUNSELLING



Lucknow (PNS): A career counselling session was organised by The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and the department of commerce at Navyug Kanya Mahavidyalay on Thursday. The session was inaugurated by college principal Prof Manjula Upadhyaya. CA Devesh Agarwal provided insights into the soft skills and information technology training provided to CA students. He highlighted that there were limited career choices earlier, but now there are immense opportunities. The CA course is an economic programme with no reservations, and the institute offers scholarships to deserving students. The session benefited around 125 students.

RLD may contest Jharkhand polls

PRABHA SHANKER ■ LUCKNOW

After the decision to contest Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Rashtriya Lok Dal is holding talks with the senior partner of the National Democratic Alliance on contesting the Jharkhand assembly polls. Party insiders said the RLD will contest 10 assembly seats in Jammu and Kashmir. "The party is dipping its feet in the political waters of Jharkhand. The party may contest a few seats if offered as per the pact which is to be inked soon," the party sources said. RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary visited Ranchi on Tuesday to hold a meeting with his party leaders and he also met senior Bharatiya Janata Party functionaries to cobble a pact with the saffron party which leads the NDA. Earlier, a RLD group led by party national secretary

Anupam Mishra, who is also in-charge of Jharkhand, had met BJP vice-president and party's Jharkhand in-charge Laxmikant Bajpai to discuss the prospects of a pre-poll alliance in the poll-bound state. "The talks are underway and we hope for a positive outcome," Mishra said. He said the RLD was broadening its base and contesting elections from the states where it had yet to make its presence have its foot print on the political map of that state. In 2023, RLD's Subhash Garg had won from Bharatpur assembly constituency in Rajasthan. Then RLD was in the INDIA bloc. RLD later switched to NDA before the Lok Sabha elections in 2024 for better political future. "The RLD chief is gaining political experience as he is growing in politics. He knows that the path of confrontation beyond a limit is of no use and

the political clout could be strengthened only by working for people while being in government. That is why the RLD chief chose to remain in NDA rather than being a member in INDIA bloc," the sources said. They said the RLD also aimed to contest elections in Maharashtra under the expansion programme and also in Haryana. "It shelved the Haryana plan under the pressure of the BJP," the party sources said. According to RLD sources, the party sees an opportunity for its political rejuvenation in contesting assembly polls which is also a part of RLD chief's strategy to expand the horizon for the party which is stepping out of UP after late Chaudhary Charan Singh's foray into other states. The RLD witnessed a low in 2014, 2019 Lok Sabha elections and 2017 UP assembly election. In 2022 it fared well in alliance with Samajwadi Party.



NOTICE

Due to mistake in my passport, my Husband's name written as Mohd. Ateek Qureshi where as his correct name is Mohammad Ateeq Quraishi, please correct accordingly.Firdaus Jahan W/o Mohammad Ateeq Quraishi. H.No.19 Bansa Shareef, Nawabganj, distt. Barabanki, UP 225204



NOTICE

I have changed my name from Gautam Jain to Gautam Kumar Jain. In future me known as Gautam Kumar Jain S/o Manna Lal Jain.304, Shrishti Kalpana, 4/276, Parvati bagla road Kanpur 208002



ADMISSION NOTICE



UNITY DEGREE COLLEGE
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DIRECT ADMISSIONS
2024-25

Approved by NCTE, BCI & Affiliated to University of Lucknow.
D.El.Ed(BTC)
Eligibility for D.El.Ed Course:-
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Registration closed: 09.10.2024
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NOTICE



PUBLIC NOTICE
REGARDING IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPUTER INCREMENT IN REGIONAL RURAL BANKS (RRBs)

Under the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court vide order passed in Contempt Petition No. 1798/2018, the Government has reconsidered the decision to implement computer increment in Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and has decided to give effect to it from 01.11.1993. Now, as per the instructions of the Ministry of Finance, Government of India, all those employees who were in Bank service on 01.11.1993 will be given the benefit of computer increment applicable from 01.11.1993. Therefore, through this public notice it is informed to all such employees, who were in the Bank's service on 01.11.1993 and are not currently drawing pay or pension, have been dismissed/retired/assigned, have taken compulsory retirement/resigned or their legal heirs to apply for computer increment to their concerned Regional Office/Head Office through email id (hrd@prathamapubbank.com) or personal visit. The last date for submission of application is 23.09.2024. Application form is available on bank website (www.prathamapubbank.com).
GENERAL MANAGER (HRD)
PRATHAMA UP GRAMIN BANK
HEAD OFFICE, MORADABAD



NOTICE

I have changed my name & address from Savitri Devi W/o Bandilal R/o Agehara Shankarpur Sarai, Gangaghat Unnao To Guddi W/o Babalu R/o Ghonghi, Rautapur, Sheshpur Nari, District Unnao for future purpose



NOTICE

I, Shanti Bisht w/o Late Puran Singh Bisht (JC690290Y, Ex-Subedar), r/o 2C/144, HIG, Vrindavan Colony, Rae-bareilly Road, Lucknow hereby also declare that under the Family particulars of my husband's service and pension records, name of my unmarried daughter has erroneously been mentioned as 'Meneka Bisht', whereas the correct name of my unmarried daughter is 'MONIKA BISHT'.



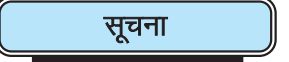
NOTICE

I, Sweta Rai,(Tamang) W/o Service No. 9424229Y, Rank: Hav, Name: Satish Tamang of Unit 6/11 GR, declare that I have changed my surname with the name from SWETA TAMANG to SWETA RAI (TAMANG) vide affidavit dated 19.09.2024 before the Executive Magistrate at Lucknow.



NOTICE

I, Shanti Bisht w/o Late Puran Singh Bisht (JC690290Y, Ex-Subedar), r/o 2C/144, HIG, Vrindavan Colony, Rae-bareilly Road, Lucknow, hereby declare that under the Family particulars of my husband's service and pension records, my date of birth has erroneously been mentioned as '11th December 1957', whereas my correct date of birth is '3rd May 1957'.



सूचना

सूचित करते हैं कि मेरी पुत्री का नाम जन्म प्रमाण पत्र में गलती से Aditi Srivastava अंकित हो गया है जो कि गलत है सही नाम Aadhita Kunwar है। कृपया अभियेक निवासी -लाट्टा रोड 100/25 गन्ने वाली गली अमीनाबाद लखनऊ



सूचना

सूचित किया जाता है कि मेरा नाम बैंक के पासबुक में रुईया नसरीन (Rooaiya Nasreen) अंकित हो गया है जो गलत है मेरा सही नाम आर नसरीन (R-Nasrin) है। रुईया नसरीन और आर नसरीन दोनों एक ही महिला का नाम है। आर. नसरीन पत्नी असरार अहमद निवासी ए 1078 जीटीबी नगर करेली तहसील सदर प्रयागराज।

CM: Gkp witnessing confluence of development & employment

Inaugurates floating restaurant ‘Float’ at Ramgarh Taal

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath remarked that Gorakhpur, which instilled fear in people and lacked basic facilities just 15-20 years ago, is now emerging as a vibrant hub of development, employment and modern tourism. Speaking at the jetty of Ramgarh Taal following the inauguration of the floating restaurant ‘Float’ on Thursday, Yogi also presented allotment certificates to seven recipients of the Greenwood Apartment residential project of the Gorakhpur Development Authority (GDA). Reflecting on the past, the chief minister noted that Gorakhpur was once synonymous with fear and stagnation. “Seven years ago, the city was distant from any semblance of development, and the area around Ramgarh Taal, where today’s event took place, was infamous for filth and crime. Security had to be tightened for guests and officials, and the city faced severe traffic congestion,” he remarked.

Discussing the transformative changes over the past seven years, Yogi said, “Gorakhpur now boasts four- and six-lane roads, a bustling airport, improved railway connectivity, a revitalised fertiliser factory, and a BRD Medical College that has become a premier medical institution, with AIIMS also now operational.” The chief minister noted that Ramgarh Taal, once nearly desolate, has now transformed into a vibrant attraction. This expansive natural lake, covering 1,800 acres, is now drawing tourists with its renewed charm. New hotels are opening, and a cruise service has already been launched. With the inauguration of a floating restaurant, Gorakhpur now offers a unique opportunity to enjoy refreshments and dining by the lake-side, he added. The chief minister emphasised that this modern development is not only enhancing the area’s appeal but also creating new employment opportunities. The chief minister announced that visitors to Gorakhpur will now enjoy five-star facilities. He highlighted the construction of a ring road around Ramgarh Taal that will transform the area into a full-day destination for families, guests and tourists. The experience will include exploring the lake’s beauty, enjoying the cruise and floating restaurant, and visiting the zoo to connect with nature, he added. The chief minister praised the city’s nighttime allure, enhanced by



A floating restaurant during its inauguration by UP CM Yogi Adityanath at Ramgarh Taal in Gorakhpur on Thursday. PTI

People won’t be served ‘rotis with spit’: Yogi

PTI ■ GORAKHPUR

At least one will not be served “rotis with spit” or “Hapur-wala juice” here, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Thursday while inaugurating a floating restaurant in the Ramgarh Taal. He was referring to recent incidents of vendors allegedly spitting on food or mixing urine in fruit juice before serving. “It is good that people here will at least not be served



Hapur-wala juice or rotis with spit. Whatever served here will be pure,” Adityanath said. On September 12, a purport-

ed video showing a teenager spitting on rotis while preparing them at an eatery in Saharanpur district went viral on social media, leading to the arrest of the facility’s owner. Last week, a juice vendor in Ghaziabad district was arrested for allegedly serving fruit juices mixed with urine to customers. In June, two men were arrested by police in Noida for allegedly selling juice contaminated with their spits.

excellent lighting, and expressed confidence that the floating restaurant will offer top-notch amenities to both locals and international tourists. He also mentioned upcoming developments, including a new chain of hotels and a convention centre, thanks to Gorakhpur’s improved connectivity. In his address to the allottees of Greenwood Apartment, Chief Minister Yogi urged the GDA officials to expedite the construction, aiming to complete it six months ahead of schedule while ensuring high quality. Although the GDA has set a target for July 2027, the chief minister emphasised the goal of finishing the project before Makar Sankranti in 2027. This will allow the allottees to celebrate the festival in their new homes and receive Makar Sankranti prasad there, Yogi pointed out. He also highlighted that Greenwood Apartment is being developed in a favorable

environment and assured that the value of the flats will appreciate significantly in the coming years. On this occasion, Member of Parliament Ravi Kishan Shukla remarked that the transformation of Gorakhpur under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s leadership is evident to all. He noted that the city’s remarkable development over the past seven years stands in stark contrast to its previous state. Dr Manglesh Shrivastava, MLA Vipin Singh, Rajesh Tripathi, Mahendrapal Singh, Dr Vimlesh Paswan, Pradeep Shukla, GDA Board member Durgesh Bajaj, Pawan Tripathi, Radheshyam Shrivastava, Bharatiya Janata Party’s city president Rajesh Gupta and others were present at the function. GDA Vice-Chairman Anand Vardhan gave detailed information about the floating restaurant and Greenwood Apartment project.

Meanwhile, after inaugurating the floating restaurant by pressing a button on the jetty at Ramgarh Taal, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath proceeded to the venue, where he cut the ribbon at the entrance and congratulated the staff on the successful launch. He then toured all the floors of the floating restaurant, reviewing the facilities and expressing his satisfaction with the arrangements. Managing director of the floating restaurant, Alok Agarwal, briefed the chief minister on the amenities available. During the visit, the chief minister also enjoyed some light refreshments at the restaurant. The floating restaurant at Ramgarh Taal offers five-star amenities, and according to the GDA, it is the first of its kind in North India. Spanning a total area of 9,600 square feet across three floors, the restaurant can accommodate 100 to 150 guests at a time.

Organised crime thrived under SP rule in the past, says Yogi

PNS ■ AYODHYA/LUCKNOW

Hitting out at the Samajwadi Party and its leader Akhilesh Yadav, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, on Thursday, said that organised crime thrived under SP rule in the past, with mafias controlling animals, forests, mining and land. In a public meeting held at Vidya Inter College grounds in Milkpur on Thursday, Yogi remarked: “The mafia essentially ran a parallel government, spreading lawlessness and terror, while ‘Babua’ never stepped outside and would not even wake up before noon, leaving the public to suffer.”

He criticised SP leaders, pointing out that major mafia figures and criminals from every district had ties to the party, each having a dedicated officer or follower. Yogi also accused SP of indulging in extreme Muslim appeasement, which led to widespread unrest during festivals. He said, “They banned celebrations of Holi, Diwali, Raksha Bandhan, Shivratri, Ramnavami and Janmashtami. They even prohibited the singing of bhajans during Janmashtami in police stations, police lines and jails. Some could not stand the sound of ‘Hare Rama, Hare Krishna’, so the SP banned it. They also banned the Kanwar yatra. Recalling the Ayodhya riots during Durga Puja under SP rule, Yogi said, “The idol was stolen from Devkali temple during their government. I, as an MP from Gorakhpur, had to step in and launch a movement.” Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, focused on his ‘Mission Milkpur’, delivered a significant development boost to Ramnagari Ayodhya on Thursday, inaugurating and laying the foundation stones for 83 projects worth over Rs 1,000 crore. The CM also distributed cheques, keys, certificates and sewing machines to beneficiaries of various government schemes. Highlighting the progress in Milkpur, he announced plans for a mini stadium and the foundation of 30 new routes, along with Rs 9 crore investment for a rural stadium in Revna. The chief minister emphasised Uttar Pradesh’s transformation, noting that the state has now become the driving force behind India’s economic growth. “Before 2017, Uttar Pradesh was seen as an obstacle to the nation’s progress, plagued by anarchy and discrimination in development schemes, with even revered figures being disrespected,” he said. “The Bharatiya Janata Party’s double engine government, however, has rapidly accelerated development over the last seven and a half years. Today, vil-



UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath during foundation stone laying of various development projects at Milkpur in Ayodhya on Thursday PTI

‘Win the booth, win election’

Ayodhya (PNS): Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath held a strategic meeting with public representatives and party officials on Thursday, focusing on Mission Milkpur. Stressing the mantra “win the booth, win the election,” Yogi urged party workers to ramp up their efforts at the grassroots level for maximum impact. He highlighted the importance of targeting every booth, reflecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s victory strategy. He directed party officials to categorise booths into A, B and C, with a clear goal to secure a decisive victory in A category booths, elevate B category booths to A status, and improve C category booths to B. Yogi encouraged

party leaders and public representatives to visit booths on September 25, the birth anniversary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, as well as to engage with local residents and highlight the development schemes launched by both Central and state governments in Ayodhya and Milkpur. Further, he outlined a comprehensive strategy for the party’s organisational activities, including holding conferences for various sectors such as farmers, advocates, intellectuals and traders. He directed party officials and representatives to hold all relevant meetings and conferences by September 30 so that responsibilities for the Milkpur by-election could be assigned.

lages and hamlets benefit from four-lane and two-lane roads, better connectivity, as well as improved access to electricity and water,” he added. Yogi highlighted the key achievements of the BJP government, including the provision of toilets for 2.62 crore families, housing for 56 lakh poor households, electricity to 1.20 lakh small villages and free electricity connections to over 1.56 crore families. Under the Ujjwala scheme, 1.83 crore families received free cooking gas cylinders, with free refills now provided on Holi and Diwali since last year, he added. Additionally, 15 crore people in Uttar Pradesh receive free ration, whereas before 2017, “SP goes on to steal the rations meant for the poor.” Yogi pointed out. The chief minister accused the SP of being complicit in cow smuggling, deforestation and land grabbing. “Today, we have eradicated land encroachments. Since 2017, our anti-land mafia task force has reclaimed 64,000 hectares of land from SP-affiliated mafia and goons, including in Bhadarsa,” he said. Responding to SP’s allegations of a land scam in Ayodhya, Yogi said, “There has been no scam here; rather, Rs 1,700 crore in

compensation was distributed to farmers. Those making these allegations are defending the wrongdoings of their associates. Every rightful victim has been compensated.” He highlighted the transformation in Ayodhya, stating, “In the Ayodhya where they once shed the blood of Ram devotees, over three crore pilgrims have visited Lord Ram Lalla since January 2022.” Yogi remarked that when the temples of Ayodhya are illuminated during Deepotsav, only the SP chief and Pakistan are disturbed. “They understand that each lamp lit in Ayodhya not only brightens the city, the state and the country but also holds the power to destroy Pakistan, a nation that has become a cancer for humanity. Pakistan, as India’s enemy, is naturally troubled, but so is the Samajwadi Party due to its anti-Hindu mindset,” the chief minister said. He added, “The SP, accustomed to operating in darkness, relies on it to carry out their misdeeds.” Chief Minister Yogi also alleged mafia ties within SP ranks, naming criminals from Ghazipur, Ambekar Nagar, Rampur and Prayagraj who were involved in organised crime. He added,

“These mafia figures were considered family by SP leaders. A person who bows to criminals and riots calls the saint tradition a mafia – this is their true character. They are influenced by the spirit of Aurangzeb, which drives their anti-Hindu behaviour.” Yogi also attacked SP for the involvement of its leaders in various atrocities committed against people. “SP leader Moeed Khan in Bhadarsa, Nawab Singh Yadav in Kannauj and their leaders in Aligarh and Mau have been implicated in heinous acts. The SP MLA from Bhadohi is notorious for his misdeeds, and in Hardoi, an SP district president was involved in the murder of an advocate. Similarly, a former SP MLA in Kanpur was guilty of land grabs and violence against the poor. They have always provided shelter to anti-national elements for political gains,” he remarked. “Their malicious intentions, especially toward the safety of daughters, can never be trusted – just like a dog’s tail that can’t be straightened. Our government is giving them the punishment they deserve. While the Chacha-Bhatija duo and their allies may think they can push the boundaries of lawlessness, the government is fully prepared to confront them with vigilance,” Yogi stated. He highlighted the extensive development work carried out in Ayodhya and Milkpur. He noted that under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, 45,664 houses have been provided in rural Ayodhya and 19,964 in urban areas. Of these, 8,195 homes were constructed in rural Milkpur alone. Additionally, 2,369 beneficiaries have been provided housing under the Mukhyamantri Awas Yojana. Under Har Ghar Nal Yojana, efforts are underway to ensure drinking water connections in every household across 1,184 revenue villages in Ayodhya, he added. Furthermore, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi has benefited 4.21 lakh farmers in Ayodhya, with Rs 1,430 crore transferred to their accounts. In Milkpur, 94,549 farmers are receiving the scheme’s benefits, he pointed out. The chief minister also shared that 67,014 smartphones and 26,974 tablets have been distributed to youth in Ayodhya, while 9,726 golden Ayushman Bharat cards have been issued. Additionally, 30,245 girls have benefited from the Mukhyamantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana. “The double-engine government is providing an annual pension of Rs 12,000 to 1,08,228 senior citizens, 54,529 destitute women, and 11,603 disabled individuals in Ayodhya. Over 12,600 cows are being cared for in 59 gaushalas across the district, and 4.32 lakh families are receiving free ration,” he said.

Mayawati asks BSP cadre to bolster party’s presence to revive lost glory

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati, on Thursday, emphasised the importance of bolstering the party’s presence in light of the current political scenario in Uttar Pradesh. She criticised both the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and opposition parties for focusing on caste-based politics rather than addressing issues affecting the common public at larger. The BSP leader asserted that this narrow approach has led to a lack of public trust in these parties, creating a crucial opportunity for the BSP to connect with voters as the state prepares for upcoming by-elections for 10 assembly seats. Mayawati made these remarks during a review meeting convened at the party’s state office in Lucknow. Those who attended the meeting included BSP district presidents and zonal coordinators, and senior office-bearers of the party. The meeting was also called to assess progress on the directives issued during a meeting held on August 11 last. This meeting aimed to strengthen the BSP’s organisational framework and expand its outreach across all social strata in the state. Highlighting the dire socio-economic conditions faced by the people of Uttar Pradesh, Mayawati pointed to rampant poverty, unemployment and soaring inflation as critical issues. She lamented that neither the BJP government nor the opposition has offered



Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati during a meeting of the party’s office bearers at the party office in Lucknow on Thursday PTI

effective solutions, leading to deteriorating conditions for nearly 250 million residents. Mayawati stated that the claims of the government regarding employment and economic stability are inconsequential compared to the massive population’s needs, likening the situation to “a drop in the ocean.” The former chief minister noted the persistent backlog in government job vacancies and warned that without concrete action, the living conditions of the poor, women and small business owners would continue to suffer. She exhorted BSP members to work diligently and with integrity at the grassroots level to capitalise on the party’s opportunity in the upcoming

by-elections. Addressing the controversial use of bulldozers by the government, which has come to symbolise state action against encroachments, Mayawati expressed concern about its growing prevalence. She argued that the Central government should establish uniform guidelines to ensure that such actions are not taken arbitrarily and do not infringe on the rights of citizens. She urged the Supreme Court to intervene to uphold constitutional governance. In her remarks on the Central cabinet’s recent approval for simultaneous elections at all levels, Mayawati expressed conditional support, stating that any such move must be in the interest of the nation

and its citizens. She also highlighted the critical issue of women’s safety and the alarming rates of violence and exploitation against women in the state, linking these issues to casteist and communal politics that exacerbate the situation. On the issue of reservations for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes, besides a broader vision for social equity, Mayawati reaffirmed the BSP’s commitment to advocating for a national caste census. She underscored the importance of ensuring that Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes have meaningful and effective participation in governance and administration. “The BSP aims to convert this vision into reality through concerted efforts at both state and national levels,” she added. Looking ahead, Mayawati announced plans for the commemoration of the death anniversary of the BSP founder, Kanshi Ram on October 9. She instructed party members to organise the event with dedication, encouraging followers from across the state to pay their respects at significant BSP memorial sites in Lucknow and Noida. As the political climate in Uttar Pradesh evolves, the BSP under Mayawati’s leadership is keenly positioning itself to reclaim its influence and address the pressing needs of its constituents.

Akhilesh hits back at CM Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Thursday attacked Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over his remark that the SP chief was a ‘leader of goons’. “Meri bhi tasveer dekho aap aur unki bhi dekho, mafia kon lagega yeh bata do (You can see my picture and his too, tell me who would be considered a mafia),” Akhilesh said. The SP chief also clarified that he never referred to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in his “mafia and head of mutt are the same” remark. “Here the statements of the chief minister and the mahant are coming in a different way. The SP and especially I have never said anything about any saint, any of our mahant, any sanyasi. If they feel that the word is such that it is being interpreted in a certain way, then we will say that he is not our chief minister, he is a ‘Mathadhiash CM...’,” the SP chief said. The comment by SP chief came a day after Uttar Pradesh minister of state Sanjay Gangwar accused Akhilesh Yadav of being a leader of mafia and criminals. Gangwar claimed that Yadav has lost his mental equilibrium following the recent Lok Sabha elections, resulting in erratic statements. “People have seen his relationship with the likes of Atiq Ahmed and Mukhtar Ansari, Gangwar said, adding, “a donkey will see others as donkeys.” He suggested that khilesh Yadav’s perceptions are influenced by his own experiences during his time in office. “He himself is a leader of mafias and criminals,” the minister asserted. On Wednesday, Yogi



Adityanath had also accused the SP of cowing down to criminals and denigrating religious leaders. “Samajwadi Party members used to rub their noses in front of

notorious mafias and criminals. As per their culture, they call religious leaders mafias,” Yogi Adityanath said at an event, referring to Akhilesh Yadav’s controversial statement. Akhilesh Yadav also lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party over the One Nation, One Election initiative saying “if it is truly BJP’s intention to avoid expenses then, why does the BJP hold so many rallies.” “One fine morning the BJP will also question the need for an Election Commission in the country, saying that a lot of expenditure is made on EC officers. After the One Nation, One Election is implemented, they will point out that there is no need for the Election

Commission and that a lot of money is spent on the EC officers,” he said and added, “If One Nation, One Election gets implemented, officers and workers will be brought through lateral entry and they will be outsourced.” The SP chief also slammed the BJP government for poor maintenance of the Taj Mahal, situated on the bank of Yamuna river in Agra. Reacting to a media report that highlights the poor condition of the Mughal monument which is a UNESCO World Heritage site, Akhilesh Yadav said the BJP government and its dormant departments have completely failed to maintain the Taj Mahal, the wonder that attracts tourists from all over the world.

Ganga still flowing above warning level in Kashi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The flood situation in this holy city continues to remain grim in dozens of affected localities as well as villages. Although the water level of the Ganga river has started receding but the river on Thursday was still flowing above the warning level in the district.

Thousands of residents of many localities on both banks of Varuna river like Konia, Rasoolgarh, Baghwanala, Nai Basti, Puranapul, Saraiya, Nakhghat, Salarpur and others, apart from several villages, including Daniyalpur and Pisaur, are facing flood havoc as water entered their houses.

In the southern part of the city, the residents of many colonies near Nagwa and Sameghat like Gangotri Bihar, Sangampuri, Dumraon Bagh Colony, Saket



Nagar, Rohit Nagar etc are still facing great inconvenience. There has been heavy damage to crops in Ramna and adjoining villages. Apart from this, in the northern outskirts there has been heavy damage to crops in several villages like Mokulpur, Kudhwa, Retapur, Nakhwa, Gobardhanpur, Rampur areas in Chiraigaon block. Besides, the residents of several villages

of Daab areas surrounded by Ganga and Gomti rivers have been affected though the water level of Gomti river has been recorded steady at upstream Jaunpur. As per the report of Middle Ganga Division-III of Central Water Commission (CWC), the river was recorded at 70.6 metres at 8 am and it is expected to decline to 70.3 metres by Friday morning,

against the warning level of 70.262 metres. The water level of the river was recorded steady upstream right from Phaphamau to Mirzapur including Prayagraj. However, the flood situation in downstream Ballia continued to remain grim as the water level was already above the danger mark again and continued rising 10 mm per hour. The Ganga was flowing in Ballia at 59.81 metres against the danger mark of 57.615 metres in the morning and is expected to reach 59.9 metres by Friday morning, closer to the all-time high level of 60.39 metres recorded on August 25, 2016. In downstream Ghaziapur the river was recorded receding at 63.51 metres against the red mark of 63.105 metres and expected to decline to 63.37 metres after 24 hours.

Meanwhile a PTI report from

Ballia adds that nearly 20-metre stretch of National Highway 31 has been washed away by a swollen Saryu river in Bairaia tehsil here, disrupting traffic movement between Uttar Pradesh and Bihar via the Manjhi bridge, officials said on Thursday. According to Bairaia Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Sunil Kumar, the river flooded late on Wednesday night due to the increased water flow and Chanddiyar village, located near the famous Jai Prakash Nagar, was among the worst hit. Approximately 1,200 people living in the area have been displaced by floodwaters. The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has been deployed to assist in rescue and relief efforts, the official added. Local authorities have closed primary and junior high schools in the most severely impacted areas.

Minister suggests theme-based beautification of intersections

Varanasi (PNS): A coordination meeting of public representatives with administrative officials was held at Circuit House here on Wednesday, in which a point-wise review was done regarding various problems of the district. In the meeting, first of all, Varanasi Development Authority (VDA) Vice-Chairman (V-C) Pulkrit Garg gave a presentation regarding various sculptures to be installed for the beautification of various intersections of the city, which are three-dimensional artworks made with different types of materials and methods.

In reply, UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Stamp, Court Fee and Registration Ravindra Jaiswal gave a suggestion for making theme-based beautification of intersections. He asked the VDA to take consent of experts from various fields of the city including educationists, musicians etc in this regard. Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma asked the PWD to identify all the major crossing. He directed the implementing agency UPPCL to prepare a proposal for the beautification of major lanes. During the review of the Power department, the minister instructed the DM S Rajalingam to investigate the plan of the Electricity department to instal 10,000 poles in place of bamboo ones approved three years ago and take strict action in relation to the same if any deficiency is found in it. He directed the officers concerned to arrange the wires hanging at various places through steel poles so that no accident occurs in future. He



UP Minister Ravindra Jaiswal addressing a coordination meeting at Circuit House in Varanasi on Wednesday.

asked the PWD to work carefully regarding damaging the lines of Jalkal and sewer during the construction of roads and directed the chief engineer of Jal Nigam to ensure repair of roads dug in the last one month during Har Ghar Nal Yojana in the next one week so that the common people do not face any problem during the festivals. Jaiswal also directed the officers concerned to distribute ration materials in the flood-affected areas in the presence of public representatives. He said the resolution of complaints received from the general public should be completely ensured and there should be no negligence at any level. He directed the Commissioner of Police Mohit Agrawal to make such arrangements to establish trust in the police administration among the general public, not to harass any citizen unnecessarily and the behaviour of the police should be friendly with the common citizens. It should be ensured that the environment of police stations is such that the complainant coming there does not have any kind of fear, the minister added. Olympian Lalit Upadhyay proposed to build a hockey astroturf in Uday Pratap College to promote hockey, which has been known in Varanasi since

long, on which the DC directed Smart City to prepare a project in this regard with immediate effect and take further action. The minister also directed Smart City to take the opinion of the players regarding the under construction Sigra Stadium. MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma directed the Electricity department to take immediate action regarding the hanging electricity wires and dilapidated poles in various villages of Sewapuri, which are causing frequent accidents. MLC Dharmendra Singh suggested for the construction of parks at various places in the city for the local people to walk. He raised the issue of the connection of people cut by the Electricity department in Khojwa, on which the DM directed to repair it with immediate effect. MLA Saurabh Srivastava spoke about the damaged lines of water supply and sewer of Jalkal department during the road under construction by the PWD in Ramnagar, on which the DC directed to form a joint team of Jalkal, PWD and Ramna STP to visit Ramnagar and investigate the matter apart from ensuring the repair immediately. ZP Chairperson Poonam Maurya, Additional Commissioner of Police S Chinnappa, CDO Himanshu Nagpal and others were also present.

Rly employees take part in essay contest

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the aegis of the Rajbhasha department of North Eastern Railway (NER), Varanasi Division, an essay competition was organised on Thursday at the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) office on the topic of 'India's current education policy and its impact' or 'the condition and direction of Hindi in the era of information revolution'.

A total of 40 employees working in various departments and various stations of Varanasi division of NER participated in this competition. The competition was conducted by Senior Data and Resource Manager and



Rajbhasha Officer Navneet Kumar Verma. On the occasion, junior translators Ajay Kumar Singh, Amit Kumar, Poonam Tripathi and Mamta Yadav were present. Under the Rajbhasha Week, the next competition will be organised on Friday at 3.30 pm at the same

venue on Hindi note and draft writing competition. The first, second and third place winners along with two incentive prizes of ₹1,000, ₹800, ₹600 and ₹400 respectively will be awarded by the DRM in the closing ceremony of the Rajbhasha Week on September 27.

Objective of NSS highlighted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

National Service Scheme (NSS) of SHUATS organized Rangoli, essay, painting and slogan writing competitions at Ethelind College of Community Science under the 'Swachhata Hi Seva' (SHS) programme sponsored by Ministry of Youth and Sports, Government of India here on Thursday.

The chief guest was Director (Public Relations) Dr Ramakant Dubey. Encouraging the NSS volunteers, he said that joining NSS means service to humanity and the country. By participating in social programmes, students get to learn a lot which paves the way for

success. NSS Programme Coordinator Dr Deepak Kumar Bose, while highlighting the objective of NSS, said that NSS programmes develop leadership and personality development skills in students. He also told about the benefits of NSS certificate. Assistant NSS Coordinator Satyam Kumar Kesari encouraged the students with the cleanliness slogan 'Hum Sabne Yeh Thana Hai, Bharat Swachh Banana Hai'. Dean Professor Dr Anshu, Director Development Dr Ritu Prakash Dubey, Programme Officer Dr Alka Gupta, Dr. Reena Mehta, Dr AK Chaurasia and others were present during the programme.

BLW GM inspects offices



GM SK Srivastava inspecting construction work at New Block Shop at BLW in Varanasi on Thursday.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

General Manager (GM) Sushil Kumar Srivastava did a surprise inspection of the offices at Administrative Building and saw the cleanliness at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) on Thursday. During this, Srivastava did a thorough inspection of the offices and instructed the officers and employees concerned to dispose of unnecessary and

scrap materials apart from keeping the office items in an organised manner. After the inspection, the GM reviewed the progress of the construction work going on in BLW. Then he reached in the Officers' Rest House to inspect the progress of construction work going on in the area located at New Block Shop. Thereafter, he thoroughly inspected the new wards being prepared in the Central Hospital in BLW and

gave necessary guidelines from the point of view of convenience and security. During the review of the progress of the construction work, the meeting was also attended by Principal Chief Engineer (PCE) VK Shukla and Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Devesh Kumar and others. Meanwhile, a special cleanliness drive was carried out at Central Hospital BLW with the cooperation of medical officers, staff and NSS volunteers of Government Women's College BLW. Various places of the hospital such as the entrance, the areas behind the registration counter, outpatient department, near the emergency unit and around the western gate were cleaned by cutting the grass and wild leaves, disposing of the garbage and removing the posters pasted on the walls and gates. The students offered *shramdaan* under the guidance of NSS programme officers of the college Dr Saumya Sharma and Dr Kamlesh Singh.

'All depts striving to achieve targets set for use of Hindi'



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Rajbhasha Pakhwada (fortnight) started in Central Organisation for Railway Electrification (CORE) here on Thursday by garlanding the portrait Goddess Saraswati under the chairmanship of Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Yatendra Kumar.

On the occasion Chief Official Language Officer and Chief Electrical Engineer (CEE) SS Negi welcomed everyone and said September 14, 1949, was the historical day when Hindi got the proud place of official language in the Constitution. In memory of this, every year this date is celebrated as the national festival of Hindi Day. He urged all the officers and employees to use Hindi as much as possible in their day-to-day government work and also inspire their subordinate employees.

He said that various competitions are being organised during this period. In his presiden-

tial address CAO Yatendra Kumar said under Article 351, the Government of India has been entrusted with the responsibility to promote and develop the Hindi language. As a result, all departments are striving to achieve the targets set for the use of Hindi. He said Indian Railways is the backbone of the country's economy and development. While Indian Railways is the strong base of the country's transport system, it also strengthens the unity and integrity of the nation through Hindi. Railways are connected to the common people, hence the use of common language and official language Hindi in trains is mandatory. He said that we all should take a pledge with firm determination that we will do all our government work in Hindi.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Brijendra Singh, Office Superintendent and the programme was conducted by Brajesh Khare, Head Office Superintendent.

Man's body recovered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The body of a 26-year-old man was found lying in a paddy field in a village under Manda police station here on Thursday. People passing through the village heard the sound of a mobile ringing continuously from the field. On hearing it the villagers reached there, spotted the body and informed the police about the matter. As soon as the news of the incident was received, panic prevailed in the village. The body of Sandeep alias Sonu Soni, a resident of Garetha (Andhi) village of Manda police station, was found in a paddy field in Dharavanara village on Thursday morning, creating a sensation in the area. The incident has created panic among the family members. Sonu used to run a jewelry shop in Unchadib bus stop market. When he did not return home till late night his father Santosh Soni started looking for him, but he could not trace him at night. On Thursday morning, his body was found lying in a paddy field in Dharavanara village. His bike was also found near the body. The trader's mobile was also on and devotional songs were playing when a call came on the mobile. The villagers informed the Manda police. The family is suspecting murder. Manda SHO Shailendra Singh said whether Sonu was a victim of an accident or conspiracy is a matter of investigation. The cause of death will be revealed after the post-mortem report comes.

Bank of India bags 1st prize under 'Rajbhasha Kirti Purushkar' Scheme



MD&CEO, Bank of Baroda, Devdutt Chand receiving the Rajbhash Kirti Purushkar from Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Bank of Baroda (BOB) bagged the first prize under the 'Rajbhasha Kirti Purushkar' Scheme of the Government of India for 2023-24 for its best performance in the field of Rajbhasha. MD & CEO Devdutt Chand received the prize from the Union Home and Cooperative Minister Amit Shah at a function of Hindi Diwas Samaroh and 4th Akhil Bhartiya Rajbhasha Sammelan organised at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, on September 14. The Bank of Baroda bagged this prize consecutively for the third time under the 'nationalised banks' category. During the past two years, it received first and second prizes respectively. Manager (Office Administration) Prashant Mane said this prize was testimony of bank's sensitivity towards its crores of customers who use Hindi and other Indian languages and feel comfortable in

getting banking services in their respective language. The bank is providing banking services in different Indian languages, including Hindi through its mobile banking app 'BOB World'. Besides, the bank has also ensured the availability of transaction-related SMS facility in different Indian languages, including Hindi.

EMPLOYMENT FAIR: An employment fair was organised at VSSD College auditorium under the aegis of CSJM University on Wednesday. As many as 10 companies participated in the fair. A total of 1,200 candidates applied for 450 jobs in 10 major companies — Aditya Birla Insurance, BSS Education, L&T, All DG, Jana Small Finance Bank, Paytm, Google Pay, SBI, Just Dial, RIC Dial - in which 408 students participated, out of which 192 students were selected.

34-yr-old man commits suicide

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

A man allegedly committed suicide by hanging himself in AB Nagar under Sadar Kotwali police area of Unnao late Wednesday night. His kin found him hanging on Thursday morning and informed the police which rushed to the spot and sent the

body for autopsy. According to a report received here, Anurag Sharma (34), son of Rajendra Sharma of AB Nagar, was employed in a private company as a store incharge in Unnao. He had returned late on Wednesday night and after dinner, went to sleep in his room. On Thursday morning, when he did not come out of

the room till late, father Rajendra went there and found him hanging. His wife Rachna alias Vandana Sharma had gone to her parents house two days ago. The deceased is survived by wife and an eight months old daughter. He was married to Rachna five years ago. Police have started a probe in the matter.

Regency Health honoured

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

The Regency Health Kanpur has been honoured with two prestigious awards at the IHW Smart Hospitals & Diagnostics Summit & Awards 2024, held at Taj City Centre, Gurugram. The hospital received accolades for Telemedicine Integration and Robotics for Patient Care, underscoring its leadership in employing cutting-edge technologies to enhance healthcare delivery in India. Regency Multi Super Speciality Hospital in Lucknow has also been awarded the Smart & Future-Ready Renal Care Hospital Award. The summit gathered healthcare innovators and thought leaders to discuss advancements such as AI, telemedicine, and robotics in healthcare. The focus was on how these technologies improve patient care, accessibility, and operational efficiency, with Health 4.0 innovations like smart diagnostics and remote monitoring leading the conversation. Regency Health Kanpur's Telemedicine Integration award highlights its success in extending expert care to remote areas, ensuring

high-quality, and accessible treatment. The Robotics for Patient Care award recognises the hospital's advanced use of robotic systems, which enhance surgical precision and patient management. Chief Executive Officer of Regency Health, Abhishek Kapoor, said, "We are honoured to receive these awards, which reflect our commitment to advancing healthcare through technology. Our telemedicine initiatives have significantly improved access to care in underserved areas, while our robotics integration enhances the precision and safety of our medical procedures. These recognitions inspire us to continue leading in healthcare innovation." **ARRESTED:** Unnao police have arrested a criminal in an encounter with him near Ugu railway crossing under Safipur Kotwali police station area on Thursday. During vehicle checking, the criminal opened fire on police party. During exchange of fire, he sustained bullet injury in his limb. The injured criminal was admitted to the CHC for treatment.

Poetry competition concludes at IFFCO



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The poetry competition organised on the occasion of Hindi Week at IFFCO Phulpur unit concluded successfully here on Thursday. It was organised in honour of the beauty and richness of Hindi language in which participants from different age groups took part enthusiastically. The event took place at the Community Centre, IFFCO Ghyianagar, where a large number of poets and Hindi lovers showcased their original works. The participants pre-

sented Hindi poems on topics like culture, nature, patriotism and social issues, which inspired the audience and the judges. The competition was held in three categories: children (below 18 years), women's and men's. The competition was evaluated by an eminent judge, Professor Prabhat Kumar Sahu, former Vice-Chancellor, Allahabad University. He judged the poems on the basis of originality, expression and quality of language. In the children's category, Khyati Singh got the first position for her poem 'Vriksha', in the female category, Pragya Mishra got the first position for her Bhakti Rasa poem, while in the male category, Ajay Kumar Mishra got the top position for his poem 'Urvashi'. Professor Prabhat Kumar Sahu said the poetry competition was a suitable event for Hindi Week and the talent among the participants was truly inspiring. This competition was not only a celebration of the Hindi language but also an effort to unite people through poetry. IFFCO employees, women and children participated in the poetry recitation competition. Apart from this, the presence of a large number of audience made the programme successful which conducted by Hemlata Sijoria. General Manager GM/Technical Sanjay Vaish, GM (Production) Sanjay Bhandari, Joint General Manager and convener of Hindi Working Committee Anil Kumar Gupta, General Secretary of IFFCO Officers' Association Swyam Prakash, Arvind Chauhan and a large number of people were present in the programme.

BJP slams Congress-NC alliance over Article 370 remarks

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday slammed the Congress-National Conference alliance for their remarks on restoration of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir after the Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif backed the allies over their stance on Jammu & Kashmir's special status. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and several other BJP leaders posted Asif's remarks to a Pakistani channel that his country shared the view of the Congress-NC alliance that Article 370, which gave the union territory special powers and was scrapped in August 2019, should be restored. The controversy erupted after Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif during an interview with Geo News said that the Shehbaz Sharif government and the Congress-National Conference alliance are on the "same page" on the issue of restoration of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.



Shah said the Pakistan defence minister's statement on the Congress and National Conference lending support to Article 370 and 35A has once "again exposed" the opposition party. Shah also claimed that the tune of opposition leader Rahul Gandhi's party and Pakistan has always been the same and the Congress has always been "hand in glove with the anti-national forces". He said the statement of Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif proved that the



neighbouring country and the Congress have the "same intentions and agenda". "Pakistan defence minister's statement about the Congress and the JKNC's support on Article 370 and 35A has once again exposed the Congress. This statement has once again made it clear that the Congress and Pakistan have the same intentions and agenda. For the last few years, Rahul Gandhi has been standing with every anti-India force, hurting the sentiments of the countrymen," Shah

wrote on X in Hindi. The home minister said he is asking for proof of air strikes and surgical strikes against Pakistan or saying "objectionable things" about the Indian Army, the tune of the Congress Party and Pakistan has always been the same. The Congress has always been "hand in glove with the anti-national forces", he asserted. "But, the Congress party and Pakistan forget that there is Modi government at the Centre, hence neither Article

370 nor terrorism is going to come back in Kashmir," he said. BJP's Amit Malviya also attacked Congress and Rahul Gandhi, sharing the video of the interview on social media. "Pakistan's defence minister Khawaja Asif, on Hamid Mir's Capital Talk on Geo News says, 'Pakistan and National Conference-Congress alliance are on the same page in Jammu & Kashmir to restore Article 370 and 35A,'" he wrote. Former Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekar echoed similar sentiments, accusing Congress of aligning with Pakistan on various issues. He questioned what leverage Pakistan might have over Congress. BJP general secretary Tarun Chugh, who is in charge of the party's affairs in Jammu and Kashmir, claimed the opposition alliance is running Pakistani agenda in the ongoing polls. Ram Madhav, one of the two BJP election in-charges for the polls, said on X while sharing Asif's reported

comments, "A clear challenge to people of J&K. NC-Congress alliance is 'on same page' with Pakistan, declares Pak Defence Minister Khawaja Asif. People will teach a big lesson to this treasonous alliance in the elections. J&K will stand with those who stand with Hindustan, not those 'on same page' with Pakistan." Chugh alleged that it is now clear that the Congress-NC alliance is working at the behest of Pakistani government, and that the intention of Pakistan to interfere in the elections has been exposed as well. It has been a key agenda of the Abdullah and Gandhi families to keep the situation unstable in Jammu and Kashmir, he charged. Expressing confidence in the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Chugh said they would not succumb to Pakistan's agenda. "The nationalist people of Jammu and Kashmir will not allow the implementation of Pakistan's agenda through the Gandhis and Abdullahs."



JP Nadda hits back at Kharge, accuses Rahul Gandhi of abusing PM Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

BJP National President J P Nadda on Thursday hit back at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, calling it an effort to "polish and re-launch" their "failed product" and accused Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi of having a history of abusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and OBCs, and of siding with anti-India forces. Nadda also accused the grand old party of hurling abuses at PM Modi over 110 times in the past decade after Kharge asked the PM to school his party leaders regarding the use of "violent languages" against Rahul Gandhi. In a tit for tat response Nadda wrote, "Respected Kharge ji, due to what compulsion are you trying to justify Rahul Gandhi, a person whose history is of abusing the entire OBC community including the Prime Minister of the country by calling them thieves, and using extremely indecent words for the Prime Minister of the country?" He further criticized Kharge for allegedly overlooking or ignoring past actions of Congress leaders, including Rahul Gandhi. "It's unfortunate that under the influence of its 'famous prince', the oldest political party in the country has now become a 'copy-paste' party," Nadda's letter stated. "After reading that letter, I felt

that the things said by you are far from reality. It seems that in the letter you have either forgotten the misdeeds of your leaders including Rahul Gandhi or have deliberately ignored them, so I felt that it is important to bring those things to your notice in detail. It is sad that the oldest political party of the country has now become a 'copy & paste' party under the pressure of its famous prince," Nadda responded in the letter. Further intensifying his attacks, the BJP chief said, "It is very sad that the oldest political party of the country has now become a 'copy and paste' party under the pressure of its famous 'yuvraaj' (prince)." Listing over a series of abuses, Nadda alleged, "In the last 10 years, the leaders of Congress and Company have abused the country's illustrious Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji more than 110 times and the unfortunate thing is that the top leadership of Congress is also involved in this." "Sometimes it was said 'Modi will dig your grave', sometimes it was said 'neech', sometimes 'bastard', sometimes 'merchant of death', sometimes 'poisonous snake', sometimes 'scorpion', sometimes 'rat', sometimes 'Ravan', Sometimes 'Bhasmasur'," he said as he went on to mention a series of inappropriate words. He said that the Congress' letter exposed the "double standards" of the party adding that



Def Min urges navy commanders to strengthen Indo-Pacific presence

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said the Indian Navy's growing strength in the Indo-Pacific region should not be taken for granted and called upon the naval commanders to continue introspection from time to time, and be prepared for every situation in today's volatile global scenario. This note of caution was in apparent reference to China flexing its muscle in the region. Making these observations here while addressing the second edition of Naval Commanders Conference, he also emphasised on the need of a strong naval capability to protect the economic, trade, transport and overall national interests. He commended the Indian Navy for playing a crucial role in promoting peace and prosperity in the Indian Ocean, terming the region as valuable and sensitive in view of the economic, geopolitical, trade and security aspects. Pointing out that India was once a landlocked country with sea shores, but now it can be seen as an island country with land borders, Rajnath Singh lauded the Indian Navy's readiness towards safeguarding the maritime interests of the country, which has resulted in establishing its credibility as the first responder in the region. "A large part of the world's trade passes through the

region, which makes it valuable. At the same time, incidents like piracy, hijacking, drone attacks, missile attacks and disruption of sea cable connections in the seas make it extremely sensitive. Our Navy has made a significant contribution in protecting the economic interests of all stakeholder nations of Indo-Pacific and in smooth movement of goods in the Indian Ocean region. Its anti-piracy operations are garnering appreciation not only in India but also globally. India is now seen as a preferred security partner in this entire region. Whenever need be, we will ensure security in the region," Rajnath Singh said. The defence minister reiterated Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's endeavour to make the Indian Navy more potent by inducting state-of-the-art ships, submarines etc. for its capability development, with focus on being Aatmanirbhar. He highlighted that 64 ships and submarines are currently under construction in Indian shipyards, and orders have been placed for 24 additional platforms. He added that, in the last five years, more than two-third of the Navy's modernisation budget has been spent on indigenous procurement, resulting in accelerated development of the domestic defence ecosystem.

Delhi High Court seeks dismissed IAS response to UPSC perjury charges

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the stand of Puja Khedkar on the UPSC's charges that the former IAS probationer committed perjury by making a false statement in relation to her anticipatory bail plea. Justice Subramaniam Prasad asked Khedkar to file her reply to the Commission's application, which is filed in the proceedings on her pre-arrest bail plea. "I will issue notice. File your reply," Justice Prasad told Khedkar's counsel, and listed the matter for hearing on September 26. Khedkar has been accused of cheating and wrongly availing Other Backward Classes (OBC) and disability quota benefits in civil services examination.

The UPSC submitted that Khedkar, in her rejoinder, made an "absolutely false" statement on affidavit that the Commission had collected her biometrics during personality tests. Seeking initiation of inquiry and appropriate proceedings against her for the violation, the application alleged that even in another proceedings pending in the high court, Khedkar has committed "perjury", which is an offence under the Bhartiya Nyay Sanhita. Senior advocate Naresh Kaushik, appearing for the UPSC, said her conduct was "dangerously wrong". "The claim that the Commission collected her biometrics is absolutely false made with the sole aim and purpose of deceiving this Hon'ble Court for obtaining



favourable orders. The said claim is denied since the Commission did not collect any biometric (eyes and fingerprints) during her Personality Test or carried out any attempts verification on the basis of the same. The Commission has not collected any biometric information from any candidate during the Personality Test of the Civil Services Examinations held so far," the application said. "There is little doubt in the

conclusion that the conduct of Ms. Puja Manorama Dilip Khedkar amounts to perjury," it asserted. Khedkar's counsel, on the other hand, termed the application a "pressure tactic". Khedkar allegedly misrepresented information in her application for the UPSC Civil Services Examination, 2022 to get reservation benefits. The High Court has earlier granted her interim protection from arrest in the case. Both the UPSC and the Delhi Police have sought dismissal of her plea for pre-arrest bail. The UPSC initiated a series of actions against Khedkar in July, including lodging a criminal case against her for availing attempts in the civil services exam by faking her identity.

PM Modi urges public to bid on auctioned mementoes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday urged people to bid for the mementoes he has received and which are now being auctioned, noting that their proceeds will be used for the 'Namami Gange' initiative. He said in social media post, "Every year, I auction the various mementoes I receive during the public programmes. The proceeds of the auction go to the Namami Gange initiative. I'm delighted to share that this year's auction has opened. Do bid for the mementoes you find interesting!" Namami Gange is a government's initiative for conservation and rejuvenation of the Ganga river.

Modi and Biden to sign agreements at Quad Summit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden will have a substantive engagement on the sidelines of the Quad summit on Saturday, and the two sides will sign at least two agreements following the talks. One pact will be related to the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the other memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be on the India-US drug framework, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri said here on Thursday. Modi will pay a three-day visit to the United States beginning September 21 to attend the annual Quad summit and address the "Summit of the Future" at the United Nations General Assembly. Modi will hold separate bilateral talks with Biden, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida on the sidelines of the Quad summit in Wilmington, Delaware on September 21.



At the meeting with Biden, Modi is also expected to apprise US President of his recent talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow and with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv on finding a peaceful solution to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. "There will be an opportunity to have a substantive engagement between the prime minister and President Biden, where they will have the opportunity to review the comprehensive global strategic partnership between

India and the US, which today covers almost every aspect of human endeavour through the 50-plus engagements and bilateral dialogue mechanisms," Misri said. He was briefing the media on Modi's trip to the US. "It will also give an opportunity to thank President Biden for his pioneering role in strengthening the India-US relationship and several new initiatives, such as the initiative on critical and emerging technologies," Misri said.

The foreign secretary said there will be an opportunity for both sides to exchange a few agreements, including one on the IPEF. The pact on the IPEF is related to the clean economy and fair economy pillars. In line with Washington's long-term vision for the Indo-Pacific, Biden launched the ambitious Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) in May 2022. It is an initiative aimed at deeper cooperation among like-minded countries in areas like clean energy, supply-chain resilience and digital trade. Besides India, Japan and Australia, the other member countries of the IPEF are Brunei Darussalam, Fiji, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The IPEF has four pillars -- trade, supply-chain resilience, clean economy and fair economy. India is yet to join the trade pillar and discussions between the two sides on it are underway.

Jawhar Sircar resigns from RS, after criticising TMC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Jawhar Sircar, who had questioned the TMC government in West Bengal over steps taken after the Kolkata rape-murder incident, on Thursday resigned from his Rajya Sabha membership. According to official sources, Rajya Sabha chairperson Jagdeep Dhankhar has accepted his resignation as Rajya Sabha member with immediate effect. Sircar had recently written to his party head and state chief minister Mamata Banerjee describing the steps taken by her government in handling the rape and murder of the doctor at RG Kar hospital "too little and quite late". He had also announced that he would quit politics altogether.

PM2.5 pollution linked to increased brain stroke risk surpassing smoking: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As winter approaches and smog becomes a concern, a study published in The Lancet has sounded alarm that fine ambient particles like PM2.5 in the environment can directly damage arterial cells, the risk of subarachnoid hemorrhage, a serious type of brain stroke, surpassing the impact of smoking. The research, led by an international team from India, the US, New Zealand, Brazil, highlighted how PM air pollution was responsible for the loss of 2.6 million healthy life years due to subarachnoid hemorrhage in 2021, surpassing the impact of smoking. It has called for urgent need for public health measures to improve air quality and protect vulnerable populations like kids, elders and those with co-

morbidities. The authors said that air pollution contributed to 14% of deaths and disabilities caused by this severe stroke subtype, the same level as smoking. Data speaks: As pollution has been on rise, in 2021, 11.9 million people experienced new strokes—an increase of 70% since 1990—while stroke-related deaths reached 7.3 million, a 44% rise since 1990. The study has identified 23 modifiable risk factors responsible for 84% of the global stroke burden in 2021. The top five were high systolic blood pressure, particulate matter air pollution, smoking, high LDL cholesterol, and household air pollution. Despite significant efforts to reduce these risk factors, more work is needed to mitigate the damage caused by



environmental pollutants and unhealthy lifestyles, said the study. Dr Catherine O Johnson, co-author and lead research scientist at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), emphasised on the urgent need for climate actions and air pollution reduction strategies, particularly as air

pollution is intricately linked to climate change. The findings, based on the Global Burden of Disease Study, revealed that more than three-quarters of those affected by strokes live in low- and middle-income countries. Professor Valery Feigin from Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand, explained that fine particles

like PM2.5 can directly damage arterial cells, increasing the risk of ruptures. Prof. Kalpana Balakrishnan from Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research, Chennai, and Dr. K. Srinath Reddy from the Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) echoed these concerns. "Masking is not a solution because it is impossible to reduce exposure for large populations with them. Emission reductions at source and use of cleaner technologies are proven ways. We just need to allocate sufficient resources to make green development possible," Prof Balakrishnan said. According to Dr Reddy, well-ventilated indoor spaces and an outdoor environment with good airflow and greenery reduce pollution-related complications.

Shashi Tharoor to head parliamentary standing committee on external affairs

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor will head the parliamentary standing committee on external affairs and veteran leader Digvijaya Singh will head the panel on education, party sources said on Thursday. Former Punjab chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi will lead the parliamentary standing committee on agriculture and Koraput MP Saptagiri Ulaka will head the panel on rural development. Channi, who is a Dalit, and Ulaka, who hails from a tribal community, were chosen by the party with social justice being the centrepiece of all recent appointments. The leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi



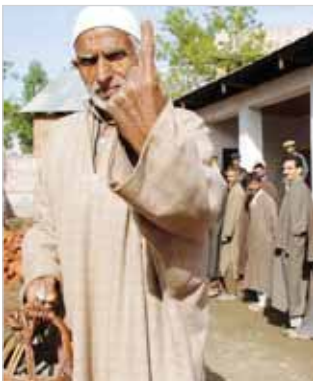
has been stressing the participation of the deprived sections in governance and calling for the party organisation to be more inclusive. The sources said the Congress has forwarded the names of the four leaders to head the four department-related parliamentary standing committees it has been assigned to lead. While there has been no official notification on the chairship of the

parliamentary standing committees, it is expected to come out soon. The Congress will chair the Department Related Standing Committee on External Affairs; Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Food Processing; Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in the Lok Sabha; and Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports in the Rajya Sabha. This was decided after hectic parleys between the government and the opposition over the panels' chairship. Congress' chief whip in the Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh and the party's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi were involved in the negotiations with the government to arrive at a consensus.

India wins in J and K

The large turnout and peaceful voting in phase I of the elections marks a significant victory for the nation

The first phase of polling in Jammu and Kashmir, held on September 18 was not only peaceful but also a thumbs up for democracy as 58 per cent voters cast their vote. Approximately 23.27 lakh voters, including 5.66 lakh youths, were eligible to cast their votes to determine the fate of 219 candidates in Phase 1. Though two more phases are left but morning shows the day. Widespread apprehensions arose following a series of attacks in Jammu, raising serious concerns about the high likelihood of disruption. The successful democratic exercise in itself is a victory for the country. Indeed, it marks a crucial moment in the political landscape of the region. For the first time since the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, the Union Territory is witnessing elections that hold significant weight for both the state and the country at large. This election is not merely a democratic exercise; it is a test of the stability, governance, and the long-term vision for integrating the region more firmly with the rest of India. The elections are being



closely watched, particularly after the transition of Jammu and Kashmir from a state to a Union Territory. For the people of the region, the act of voting is more than just a participation in democracy. The return of democratic process after years of instability, militancy and unrest is expected to reassure the local population that their voices matter in shaping their future. The turnout, especially in rural areas, is a clear indication that people feel secure enough to participate in democratic process.

The election campaign has brought a range of issues to the forefront, which will determine how the political winds blow in the region. Development, unemployment, and security are the most pressing concerns, with local leaders attempting to address the economic stagnation that has plagued Jammu and Kashmir for years. Tourism, once the backbone of the state's economy, has taken a severe hit, and while efforts have been made to revitalise the sector, it remains a sensitive issue in the polls. At the same time, political parties have taken contrasting stances on the abrogation of Article 370. While some align with the central government's move, touting it as a path to progress, others continue to advocate for the restoration of special status. This dichotomy underscores the ongoing divide between different regions of Jammu and Kashmir, which will likely influence the outcome of the elections. A high voter turnout and peaceful elections emboldens the government's stance on its Kashmir policy, reinforcing the narrative that the decision to revoke Article 370 was justified and has led to positive outcomes for the region. For opposition parties, the elections offer an opportunity to challenge the ruling government's narrative and build alliances with local players. As the first phase of polling concludes, Jammu and Kashmir stands at a crossroads. The region's political future hinges on how the rest of the election unfolds and what messages the electorate sends through their vote.

PICTALK



Pilgrims arrive at the Shri Badrinath Dham in Chamoli district

Modi@74: A journey of triumphs and challenges



K S TOMAR

Narendra Modi, a man who rose through the ranks, from RSS worker to become a global leader, has undergone a remarkable transformation

As Narendra Modi turns 74, the Prime Minister of India stands at a pivotal point in his political career. Having transformed from a grassroots worker in the RSS to a global leader, Modi's leadership has been marked by several triumphs, while also weathering significant criticism. A closer look at his governance reveals a complex blend of successes and shortcomings, reflecting his unique vision for India and the challenges of implementing sweeping reforms in a diverse, evolving democracy. Successes: Economic Reforms: Modi's tenure has been defined by key economic reforms aimed at spurring growth and investment. The implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 stands as one of India's most transformative reforms, simplifying the tax system and promoting ease of business. Another flagship initiative is the "Make in India" program, which sought to position India as a manufacturing hub, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) in sectors such as defence, electronics, and pharmaceuticals.

Digital India: Modi's push for a digital revolution has reshaped India's financial and technological landscape. The Digital India campaign significantly expanded internet connectivity, especially in rural areas. Innovations like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) have revolutionized digital transactions, while the Aadhaar system has streamlined welfare distribution, reducing inefficiencies in benefit transfers.

Foreign Policy: On the global stage, Modi has strengthened India's relationships with key nations like the U.S., Japan, and Israel. Under his leadership, India has played a more prominent role in global forums such as G20 and BRICS. A major achievement has been the International Solar Alliance (ISA), promoting global cooperation on renewable energy and showcasing India's leadership in sustainable development.

Nationalism and Identity Politics: Modi has adeptly tapped into nationalist sentiments, reinforcing the Bharatiya Janata Party



(BJP) as a champion of Hindu pride and Indian sovereignty. His government's initiatives, such as the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, reflect a blend of cultural and political assertiveness, though the latter move drew international criticism.

Infrastructure Development: Under Modi's leadership, infrastructure has seen significant growth. Projects like Bharatmala and Sagarmala have expanded transportation networks, while initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Ujjwala Yojana have improved housing and provided cooking gas to millions of households.

Challenges Before Modi: As Narendra Modi enters the later stages of his political journey, he faces a series of challenges that will shape his legacy and influence India's future. While his tenure has seen significant achievements, Modi's leadership must now address pressing concerns across various sectors that demand urgent attention and innovative solutions.

Economic Recovery and Job Creation: India's economic recovery post-COVID-19 remains fragile. Despite some growth, inflation continues to be a persistent challenge, driven by rising global oil prices and domestic supply chain disruptions. For the average citizen, higher living costs are

ON THE GLOBAL STAGE, MODI HAS STRENGTHENED INDIA'S RELATIONSHIPS WITH KEY NATIONS LIKE THE US, JAPAN, AND ISRAEL. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, INDIA HAS PLAYED A MORE PROMINENT ROLE IN GLOBAL FORUMS SUCH AS G20 AND BRICS

squeezing household budgets, particularly for the poor and middle class. Modi's government must balance inflation control with promoting sustained economic growth. The issue of unemployment, especially among the youth, looms large. Urban and rural areas continue to experience high joblessness, and despite various reforms, the informal sector, which provides most jobs, is still recovering from the effects of demonetization, the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the pandemic. Modi will need to focus on bolstering labour-intensive industries, strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and encouraging entrepreneurship. Agriculture and Farmers' Discontent: Even after repealing the controversial farm laws following large-scale protests, rural distress persists. Indian farmers continue to face challenges such as low productivity, insufficient infrastructure, and limited access to credit. To address these problems, Modi will need to prioritize rural development and improve agricultural infrastructure. However, he must tread cautiously with new reforms to avoid reigniting protests. Farmers will require sustained support through initiatives like improving Minimum Support Prices (MSP) and introducing technological innovations to

enhance productivity. India-China Relations and Regional Security: India's strained relations with China, particularly after the 2020 Galwan Valley clashes, remain a significant foreign policy challenge. The border standoff continues, and while diplomatic negotiations have curbed escalation, the potential for conflict still exists. Managing the delicate balance between regional security and diplomatic efforts with China is critical. Despite these successes, Modi's tenure has not been without shortcomings. The "Make in India" initiative has struggled to create enough manufacturing jobs, and his government's 2016 demonetization policy disrupted the informal economy without yielding long-term benefits. Modi also faced one of the largest protests in Indian history over controversial farm laws, which he ultimately had to repeal. Additionally, his leadership has been criticized for deepening communal divisions, with incidents of religious violence and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) sparking social tensions. As Modi continues to lead, his legacy will depend on balancing development with social harmony and democratic governance.

(The writer is a strategic affairs columnist and political analyst; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ONE NATION ONE POLL

Madam — The Cabinet nod for 'One nation - One election' (19-9-24) displays the misplaced priority of the Union government. Except the cost factor there is no other point worth considering to support the decision of the Cabinet. Election is an opportunity for the people to demonstrate their democratic sanction or resentment over the policies and programmes of a government. People exercising this right to ventilate their agreement or disagreement over the governments in the Center or the States should not be curtailed just to avoid expense. The expectations of the people being state specific in assembly elections and nation specific in the Parliament elections there is possibility of either of them getting swayed by the general mood. Possibility of holding elections in a massive way is not practically feasible. We are seeing the inability of the Election Commission to hold elections to a few States at one stroke. The Commission is not able to hold elections to Maharashtra Assembly along with elections in J&K and HP. Even elections to the state assembly are held in multiple slots. We have also seen the Commission rendered helpless to deal properly with the violations reported during the last General elections. The very idea of mandating holding elections to assemblies along with election to the Parliament is against the very Federal structure of the constitution. Proposal to hold elections to local bodies in 100 days after the General elections is also expensive and it is aimed at swaying the polls taking advantage of the outcome of national level elections. The arbitrary decision is undemocratic, anti-federal and strangulates the right of the people to decide their choice on local, state and nation specific needs and demands. Above all, the move of government is, as usual, to divert the attention of the people from the basic and burning issues of the nation in many of which the performance of the government is definitely not upto the mark.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

Hundred days of achievements



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first 100 days of his third term have demonstrated a clear focus on development and global leadership. The government's investments of 73 lakh crore in infrastructure projects like roads, railways, and ports are vital steps toward boosting the economy and creating jobs. Raising capital expenditure to Rs11.11 lakh crore reflects

a strong commitment to job creation and overall economic growth. Efforts in agriculture, such as the 720,000 crore allocation to farmers and increased MSP, along with the recognition of 1 crore "Lakshpati Didis," are praiseworthy. Foreign policy initiatives, including Modi's engagement with nations like the U.S., Russia, and China, indicate a proactive approach in shaping India's global standing. These accomplishments set a positive tone for the future, even as challenges like inflation and political tensions remain.

In his first 100 days of a third term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has focused on development and global leadership, with significant investments in infrastructure, agriculture, and foreign relations. While progress is evident, challenges like inflation and political tensions continue to test his government's future agenda.

Vishesh Shukla | Lucknow

WORLD BAMBOO DAY

Madam—Bamboo is one of the largest members of the grass family and is the fastest growing woody plant on the planet. Its growth rate varies according to the soil and climate, and is best known as a major food source for pandas. Bamboo is also used for culinary and medicinal purposes in many parts of the world, as well for construction materials, furniture, textiles, musical instruments, bicycles, clothing and more. As a packaging material, bamboo is strong, durable and sustainable. It is one of the more remarkable natural materials available to us. The Economist recently quoted that bamboo is literally, the green equivalent of plastics. This is because it is renewable and low-carbon. It also said bamboo is now part and parcel of our packaging material. Furthermore, bamboo produces up to 35% more oxygen than trees, thus helping to offset carbon-dioxide emissions. It's easy to see why bamboo is a favorite when it comes to sustainable materials.

C.K. Subramani Iyer | Coimbatore

CONGRESS PROMISING THE MOON

Madam — The Congress election manifesto in Haryana is a bundle of high cost freebies not at all feasible financially for the State to implement. While the political parties must examine the impact of their pre poll announcements over the health of the State exchequer and present the detailed outline of available revenue which would bear the brunt of the freebies.

The poll regulator Election Commission of India should also draft strict rules for manifestos and promises which are not viable.

The cult of freebies must stop if we really wish to progress morally, economically and socially and if Election Commission fails, the Supreme Court of India must take cognizance of the matter and direct the Election Commission to stop this nonsense. The freebies can become a real liability for the exchequer.

Jai Prakash Gupta | Ambala

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Kolkata's protests and the culture of rape: A call for societal change

The tragic incident at RG Kar Medical College, Kolkata underscores the urgent need for a profound societal shift in attitudes toward women

The recent public outcry in Kolkata, sparked by the tragic incident at RG Kar Medical College, has transformed into a significant and sustained protest. Junior doctors gathering in front of the Health Department, alongside widespread public engagement, underscores a profound frustration with the pervasive violence against women in India. Reflecting on the August 9 incident, it's evident that the protest is not merely about the individual responsible. Despite the apprehension of the perpetrator, the continuing movement raises crucial questions about why such intense outrage persists.

The root problem, as I see it, lies in the cultural context that enables such violence. It's not just about one person's actions but about a broader cultural environment. The protests highlight a growing recognition that the issue is embedded within a culture that normalizes and perpetuates violence against women. The Kolkata demonstrations have brought to light a critical aspect of this cultural problem: the normalization of rape and the way women are



perceived and treated. In Indian culture, women are often valued primarily for their reproductive roles, linking respect to their capacity as mothers. This perspective reduces women to their biological functions, overlooking their full humanity. The "culture of rape" is evident in societal behaviors and attitudes that tolerate and perpetuate violence against women. This deeply ingrained culture is reflected in everyday interactions and institutional practices, indicating that the issue goes beyond individual acts.

The ongoing protests signify a crucial desire for a profound cultural shift. The movement in Bengal represents a broader call for cultural transformation. To address the problem effectively, we need to funda-

mentally change societal norms and practices that contribute to a pervasive culture of violence and exploitation. As long as these cultural attitudes persist, incidents of rape will continue. The troubling normalization of sexual violence in Indian society is evident in various ways. For instance, the fact that the name of the doctor murdered and raped in Bengal was trending on porn websites for an extended period reflects a serious cultural issue. It shows how sexual violence is often sensationalized and dehumanized rather than addressed with the seriousness it deserves.

This critique extends to societal behaviors and attitudes, illustrated by the public reaction to the Ujjain incident. The fact that such a violent act occurred in a busy area, with onlookers observing and recording it, underscores the disturbing normalization of sexual violence. Such incidents are met with alarming indifference. Examining the cultural foundations of this issue reveals how cultural norms perpetuate gender inequality and violence. There are many

subtle signs of rape culture that are often overlooked, such as the objectification of women and the normalization of harmful attitudes and practices. Addressing this issue requires a profound cultural transformation. It's not just about legal measures or punishing offenders; it's about transforming the norms and values instilled from a young age. Culture is nurtured in our homes, and changing how we educate and raise our children is crucial to addressing rape culture.

In conclusion, the protests in Kolkata and similar movements across India are not just reactions to individual cases of violence but a critical response to a deep-seated cultural issue that normalizes and perpetuates sexual violence. This situation underscores the urgent need for a fundamental cultural shift. Until we address the broader culture of rape, incidents of sexual violence will continue to plague our society.

(Aacharya Prashant is a Vedanta teacher and an advocate of women rights; views expressed are personal)



ACHARYA PRASHANT

FIRST COLUMN

APPLY SPORTS ETHICS IN THE WORKPLACE

The lessons learned through sports cultivate a healthier and productive work environment



SAKSHI SETHI

Sports have since long been a crucial element of human culture, teaching participants important life skills and values. The discipline, teamwork and perseverance developed in sports can easily be translated into a professional setting, where these qualities often lead to success. Applying sports values to the workplace creates a healthier and more productive environment that benefits individuals and teams alike.

The term 'resilience' is one of the core values in sports, where athletes regularly face challenges, setbacks and failures. Whether it's losing a game, dealing with injuries or facing tough competition, athletes learn to recover, adapt and continue working toward their goals. The similar value is crucial in the workplace, where employees encounter stress, failed projects and unexpected obstacles. Resilience helps employees bounce back from difficulties and maintain a positive attitude despite setbacks. It encourages them to see failure as an opportunity for growth rather than a reason to give up.

There is no denying the fact that athletes exhibit tremendous commitment and passion for their sport, dedicating hours of practice, maintaining a strong mental focus and striving to overcome challenges. At the workplace, too, similar commitment is essential for both personal as well as organizational success. Employees who are passionate about their work are more engaged, motivated and willing to go the extra mile. Just as athletes work toward improving their performance, committed employees consistently seek opportunities to learn, grow and contribute to their team.

When talked about the Paralympics, these athletes provide a powerful source of inspiration when it comes to work ethics. They demonstrate exceptional dedication, resilience and perseverance—qualities that can directly inspire and shape one's approach to professional life. The lessons learned from their incredible journeys highlight the importance of maintaining a strong work ethic, overcoming adversity and striving for excellence in any field. Passion fuels innovation and creativity, leading to breakthroughs and a sense of fulfilment in one's job encouraging professionals to remain committed to their goals even when facing challenges at the workplace. It teaches us that obstacles, whether personal or professional, can be overcome with time, effort and persistence.

The values learned through sports are not only essential for athletic success but also for professional growth and productivity in the workplace. By embracing these values, individuals and teams can foster a work culture that promotes collaboration, perseverance and a drive for excellence. Recognizing progress, no matter how small reinforces one's belief that effort pays off and celebrating these victories along the way keeps the individual motivated and energized to continue. Instead of shying away from difficulties, one must see them as opportunities to learn and grow. When an individual approaches obstacles with the belief that effort leads to improvement, they build resilience and perseverance.

As stated above, undoubtedly, Paralympians have to cope with significant adversity, whether it's learning to use a prosthetic limb or recovering from a life-altering injury. In the workplace, this means that failures, mistakes or even unexpected challenges are not the end but an opportunity to bounce back stronger. In the workplace, adopting a mindset that welcomes challenges rather than avoiding them is a key part of developing a strong work ethic. It pushes professionals to take on difficult tasks, expand their capabilities and evolve in their careers. Sports values do provide excellent lessons that can be transferred to the workplace, promoting personal growth, team cohesion and overall success.

(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)



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(The writer is an educator; views expressed are personal)

Chronicles of compliance: The missing case diaries in money laundering probes

Money laundering poses a significant threat to society, undermines democratic institutions, and fosters criminal activities and corruption

The international community established the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to combat money laundering and terrorist financing through international standards. The FATF's 40 Recommendations provide a comprehensive framework for countries to prevent and address these financial crimes. India enacted the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in 2002, effective from July 1, 2005, in alignment with its international obligations. The PMLA aims to combat the laundering of illicit funds, including those from activities such as drug trafficking, thereby safeguarding the country's financial integrity.

The Role and Importance of the Case Diary: The case diary, as mandated under section 172 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), maintains a chronological record of the investigation process conducted by the police officer. This detailed documentation includes every step taken during the investigation, such as the date and time of receiving information about the crime, the start and finish times of the investigation, locations visited, witness statements recorded, and evidence collected.



Prakhhar Bajpai

This comprehensive record ensures continuity and transparency in the investigation, serving as a crucial handover document when different officers handle the case at various stages. The case diary is essential for maintaining continuity and transparency in the investigation process, offering a comprehensive overview of progress to courts and defence lawyers. This transparency is indispensable for maintaining procedural integrity and accountability in the investigative process.

Concerns Regarding the Absence of a Case Diary under PMLA: In contrast, the PMLA mandates thorough investigations into money laundering but does not specify the need for a detailed case diary as in the CrPC. This absence raises concerns about potential misuse by the Enforcement Directorate. Without a mandated case diary, there is no obligation for investigators to maintain a comprehensive, chronological record of their actions. This lack of documentation could reduce accountability and allow for the manipulation or selective presentation of evidence without a transparent trail of how and when it was obtained, compromising the investigation's integrity.

This can lead to biased or unjust conclusions, undermining the integrity of the investigation and in cases where multiple officers are involved in different stages of the investigation, the absence



of a detailed case diary can result in inconsistent handovers. Critical information might be lost or altered, impacting the continuity and coherence of the investigation. This ultimately leads to violations of individual rights and compromise on due process of law.

Case Diary Maintenance: It is important to understand that the accused under CrPC does not have an automatic right to

view the case diary. Access to the case diary is at the discretion of the Court or the police officer. However, the significance of maintaining a case diary as noted above lies in its ability to keep investigating agencies diligent and accountable throughout the investigation process.

Furthermore, under the criminal law procedure, it is considered a dereliction of duty if the Magistrate does not request and review the case diary before authorizing any form of custody to the accused which means the perusal of the case diary by the magistrate is essential before any remand, whether judicial or police custody and haphazard maintenance of a case diary discredits those responsible and defeats the very purpose for

which it is required. Therefore, it is suggested that similar practice needs to be followed under the PMLA cases as well. Mandating ED to maintain a case diary ensures that it adheres to the due process of law during investigations and thereafter, the court will become entitled to use the case diary during trials or inquiries as an aid in the inquiry or trial, thereby holding the ED accountable for its investigative procedures, doing this the magistrate will be getting aid and true picture of the detailed record of the investigation proceedings conducted by ED till date in a narrative form, recorded promptly, with sufficient detail, and in chronological order and thus, will be able to objectively decide whether to remand the

accused or not. The Supreme Court is set to review 2 aspects of PMLA in July 2024, firstly, the FIR which is akin to ECIR under PMLA should be supplied to the accused or not. Secondly, the reversal of the presumption of innocence. It is to be noted that giving a case diary a statutory requirement under PMLA and thereby, mandating the ED to maintain one will be crucial in shaping the final judgement, which could fundamentally impact the legal framework for money laundering investigations in India. A ruling in favour of maintaining a case diary would enhance the fairness and transparency of PMLA proceedings, ensuring the accused's right to a fair trial.

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

Sri Lanka's pivotal presidential election

With traditional parties in decline and new alliances emerging, this election may spring surprises. The outcome will determine Sri Lanka's capacity to address its urgent challenges



Nilantha Ilangamuwa



THE FRAGMENTATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES, THE ABSENCE OF ANTI-DEFECTION LAWS, AND THE FORMATION OF NEW ALLIANCES DRIVEN MORE BY PERSONAL INTERESTS THAN BY COHESIVE AGENDAS POSE SIGNIFICANT RISKS TO DEMOCRATIC STABILITY AND GOVERNANCE

politics. However, Wickremesinghe has effectively stabilised the situation after the social upheaval. In this context, Wickremesinghe has emerged as a major candidate, yet the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna has nominated its candidate, Namal Rajapaksa.

Reports suggest that Rajapaksa's ambitions to secure the prime ministership were opposed, leading a faction of his party to break away from Wickremesinghe. Rajapaksa's candidacy appears more focused on maintaining his family's political lineage rather than presenting a genuine bid for leadership. Nonetheless, his endorsement of supporting Sajith Premadasa, where he appeals to supporters to cast their second vote for Premadasa, could be a decisive factor in the election outcome. Meanwhile, the NPP, initially opposed to the public uprising that led to Rajapaksa's removal, has become a significant political entity.

Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who ironically led his political party into alliances with traditional parties to secure ministerial positions over the past few decades, has skillfully capitalised on widespread dissatisfaction with corruption and the growing anger towards conventional politicians to bolster his standing. His alliance's emotionally charged propaganda has infiltrated every corner of society, despite its lack of deep ideological substance. The Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), his original party, has skillfully harnessed this discontent to challenge the status quo.

However, Dissanayake's path to victory remains uncertain, especially with three major candidates in the race. Voter statistics reveal additional obstacles: with 17.1 million registered voters and an anticipated 80% turnout (13.7 million), a candidate would need approxi-

mately 7 million votes to secure the presidency in the first count. The NPP's past performance shows limited success, receiving 418,553 votes (3.16%) in 2019 and 445,950 votes (3.84%) in parliamentary elections in 2020. The party faces challenges in Tamil-majority districts like Nuwara-Eliya, Jaffna, Wanni, Batticaloa, and Trincomalee, and in areas with lower voter counts, such as Polonnaruwa and Matale. To succeed, the NPP must secure substantial votes from Colombo, Gampaha, Kalutara, Kandy, and Kurunegala, requiring an estimated 700,000 to 800,000 additional votes.

Given these dynamics and the competition among three candidates, the NPP or JVP may struggle to achieve significant success in this election. However, the election remains crucial in determining the country's social and governance structure.

Conversely, Sajith Premadasa appears to have significant potential to garner a majority of the votes, while Wickremesinghe has also gained substantial ground. Therefore, it is unlikely that any candidate will secure over 50% of the vote in the first round of counting, which may necessitate counting the second votes.

This uncertainty could trigger a new wave of political instability if major alliances and key candidates fail to manage the results effectively and refuse to accept the people's verdict. Despite flashy manifestos and hefty campaign budgets, none of the candidates have provided a clear plan to tackle the staggering \$100 billion national debt. They all parrot the same old IMF rhetoric, yet almost none offer a concrete strategy beyond this worn-out solution.

The situation in the island nation is dire, and there's no straightforward

ward path for the incoming leader to steer the country out of its deepening crisis. As of 1 July 2024, about 24.8% of Sri Lanka's population lives in poverty, with rates varying dramatically between districts—3.5% in Colombo versus 44.2% in Nuwara-Eliya.

Poverty in rural areas has surged from 15% to 32%, while urban poverty has tripled from 6% to 18%. A recent survey revealed that 31% of the population is impoverished, with 33% skipping meals and 47% cutting back on meal sizes. Malnutrition affects nearly one-third of children under five, and over 40% of women aged 18-60 are overweight or obese, reflecting severe economic and health issues.

Regardless of the election's outcome, Sri Lanka's entrenched political divisions threaten to entrench a fragmented legislative body, where effective governance and decisive action may become increasingly elusive.

Such divisions risk entrenching a cycle of delays and inefficiencies, potentially leading to a state of perpetual gridlock that hampers national progress. Antonio Gramsci's notion of passive revolution becomes pertinent here, warning of significant changes that merely preserve existing power structures. Hannah Arendt's insight that "The most radical revolutionary will become a conservative the day after the revolution" cautions against decisions driven by emotion over reason.

Thus, the question looms: can this election transcend emotional politics to instigate genuine reform, or will it simply entrench the status quo? Regrettably, the candidates' manifestos seem to hint at the latter.

(The writer is a journalist and author. Views expressed are personal)

CPI(M) objects to one nation, one election policy

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Thursday condemned the Government's push for 'one nation, one election', urging all political parties that value democracy, pluralism, and federalism to unite against the move. The party issued a statement a day after the Union Cabinet accepted the recommendations of the Kovind Committee advocating simultaneous elections for Parliament, state assemblies, and local bodies. The CPI(M) Central Committee urged all political parties that value democracy, pluralism, and federalism to unite in opposition to the government's move, vowing to resist any constitutional amendments aimed at implementing this policy. The CPI(M) said that implementing this model would shorten the terms of some legislative assemblies to synchronize with Lok Sabha elections, which violates the people's constitutional right to elect represen-



tatives for a full five-year term. "The CPI(M) will strongly oppose any move to amend the Constitution for this purpose. Every party, which values democracy, pluralism and federalism, should come out firmly in opposition and unitedly thwart this pernicious move," the statement said. The party also criticised the proposal for mid-term elections that would only last until the next general elections, claiming it defeats the stated goal of reducing the frequency of elections. The CPI(M) said the one nation, one election model, if implemented, will undermine the parliamentary democratic

system itself and the federal structure. "The attack on federalism is all the more insidious with the move to hold simultaneous election to all panchayats and municipal bodies. This is centralization to the extreme and goes against the very purpose of decentralized decision-making local bodies. Holding of panchayat and local body elections is under the purview of the state governments and this is sought to be denied," it said, adding that the RSS-BJP of attempting to establish a unitarian state structure with centralised control, driven by ideological motives.

Jaishankar holds telephonic talks with newly appointed Ukrainian FM

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday held a phone conversation with newly-appointed Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha with a focus on boosting bilateral ties and finding a solution to the conflict in Ukraine. The conversation came nearly a month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's high-profile trip to Kyiv. "I spoke with Subrahmanyam Jaishankar to build on Narendra Modi's historic visit to Kyiv and talks with Zelenskyy," Sybiha said. "We agreed to take our bilateral relations forward in all promising areas of cooperation. We exchanged views ahead of UNGA and coordinated next steps in political dialogue," he said after the talks. In a social media post, Jaishankar said he was looking forward to working with the Ukrainian foreign minister. "Spoke with the new Ukrainian FM @andrii_sybiha today. Congratulated him on his appointment. Look forward to working with him," he said. It is learnt that the Russia-Ukraine conflict figured in the



talks. In his talks with Zelenskyy, Modi said both Ukraine and Russia should sit together without wasting time to end the ongoing war and that India was ready to play an 'active role' to restore peace in the region. The prime minister said India was on the side of peace since the beginning of the conflict and he would even like to contribute personally for a peaceful resolution of the crisis. Modi's nearly nine-hour visit to Ukraine, the first by an Indian prime minister since its independence in 1991, came six weeks after he held summit talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow. India has been maintaining that the conflict in Ukraine must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy.

ABVP, NSUI condemn DSGMC's move to cancel Khalsa College student polls



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Among the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee's (DSGMC) decision to cancel Khalsa College student elections, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and National Students' Union of India (NSUI) on Thursday condemned the decision with the former asking the committee to withdraw the decision and the latter alleging pressure by ABVP to do so. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) backed ABVP said that, in protest against the administrative anarchy, their members are on an indefinite strike, demanding the reversal of this decision. They claimed that it has not been approved by the univer-

sity administration. State Secretary of ABVP Delhi Harsh Attri stated, "The reclassification of DUSU colleges as Non-DUSU by the Khalsa Governing Committee is unfortunate. ABVP condemns this autocratic and unilateral decision and demands for its withdrawal." He added that the student body has long been advocating for the inclusion of Non-DUSU colleges in the DUSU category. "However, instead of expanding the DUSU category, a DUSU college has been moved to Non-DUSU, which ABVP will oppose. We will ensure that these colleges are reinstated into the DUSU category," Attri said. Meanwhile Congress' NSUI strongly condemned the DSGMC's decision to cancel

Khalsa College student elections without any prior notification. "The cancellation, done under pressure from ABVP, is viewed as a blatant attempt to favor them. NSUI has consistently held a strong position in Khalsa College elections," the student body said in a statement. NSUI National President Varun Choudhary stated, "ABVP is clearly afraid of facing elections. They know they will lose. I openly challenge them that NSUI will win by 4-0 in these elections." He further criticized the undemocratic decision and demanded the immediate reinstatement of the elections. "NSUI stands firm in defending the students' democratic rights and calls for a fair electoral process," he added.

India undertaking plan to establish interstate cheetah conservation complex

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India is undertaking an ambitious plan to establish an inter-state cheetah conservation complex within the Kuno-Gandhi Sagar landscapes spanning Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, according to a 2023-24 progress report of Project Cheetah released recently. Hence while authorities have been busy preparing the 368-square kilometre Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary for the next batch of cheetahs, the ones in Kuno National Park where felines were brought in phases in two years remain inside enclosures that are only 0.5 to 1.5 square kilometres in size, the new complex aims to create a sustainable habitat for 60-70 cheetahs over the next 25 years. The report, released by the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) on the completion of two years of Project Cheetah on September 17, said while a new batch of cheetahs was likely to be brought to the Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary by the end of the year, they would be released into free-ranging conditions over the next five years. In the initial phase, 5 to 8 cheetahs will be released into a 64-square kilometer fenced area designed to promote breeding. The combined landscapes of both states include



several districts, such as Sheopur, Shivpuri, and Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, and Baran, Kota, and Chittorgarh in Rajasthan. Additionally, neighboring districts like Bhind, Datia, and parts of Uttar Pradesh may be included depending on the cheetahs' movements. "Both these landscapes, along the interstate border of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, are adjacent to each other, and the combined landscapes together can constitute the Kuno-Gandhi Sagar cheetah landscape for metapopulation management of 60-70 cheetahs after restorative measures, prey availability, and scientific management are effectively in place, as an interstate cheetah conservation complex within the next 25 years under the umbrella of Project Cheetah," the report read.

Drunken college goers meet mishap

SAUMYA SHUKLA ■ NEW DELHI

Two Delhi University students were grievously injured while three received minor injuries when their speeding SUV crashed into a guardrail that pierced through the middle of the vehicle near Rajghat in north Delhi on early Thursday. According to police, the black coloured Hyundai Venue car had five occupants, all students of Delhi University colleges, who were returning from a birthday party at a pub in neighbouring Gurugram. Prima facie, it appears that the car was being driven at a high speed and the driver lost control leading to the crash, police said, adding that the incident occurred on the stretch of road from Shanti Van to Geeta Colony. "The car was going from Shanti Van Red light towards Geeta Colony, when it reached at ISBT Slip road at around 05.52 am where it collided with the

divider," DCP North Manoj Kumar Meena said. 19 year old Ashwani Mishra, who was driving the car, is a first-year student at Delhi University's Dyal Singh College and hailed from Uttar Pradesh's Etawah. He had rented the car for a night to celebrate his birthday. "On Thursday, a call was received of an accident on the road from Shanti Van to Geeta Colony. It was subsequently found that one Ashwani Mishra to celebrate his birthday, along with his friends 19 years old Ashwani Pandey, who was a first year student at Deshbandhu College, and 20 year old Keshav, second year student at Dyal Singh College, rented a Hyundai Venue for the night at Rs 1500 from Shadipur," he said. Mishra, Pandey, and Keshav, all residents of east Delhi's Laxmi Nagar, along with 18 year old Krishna, who lives in Saket and 19 years old Ujjawal, a resident of Chhatarpur in south Delhi,

drove to 'Zee Town', a pub in Gurugram on Wednesday night. On the way back, Mishra was at the wheel of the car, police said. Krishna is studying in Moti Lal College in second year and Ujjawal is studying in third year in Dyal Singh College. They all were drunk while driving back from Gurugram. "After celebrating with drinks and partying, they left the club in the early hours of Thursday. On their way back, while crossing the Geeta Colony flyover, Ashwani Mishra, who was driving the vehicle, attempted to change a song on his mobile phone and, in doing so, lost control of the vehicle. The car collided with the side railings, causing severe damage," the DCP added. Among the five admitted to Delhi's Lok Nayak Hospital, the condition of Mishra and Pandey is critical and all injured individuals are currently undergoing treatment.

Delhi Crime Branch arrests man for duping more than 50 women under pretense of marriage

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Crime Branch's Anti Extortion and Kidnapping Cell (AEKC) arrested a 38 year old conman who allegedly duped over 50 women, including a Judicial Officer, under the pretense of marriage through matrimonial websites like Jeevansathi.com and Shadi.com, posing as a senior government official. According to the police on Thursday, the accused has been identified as an interstate wanted criminal namely 38 year old Mukeem Ayyub Khan, who is a resident of Delhi's Shastri Park and is originally from Gujarat's Vadodra. He has five cases registered against him including two in Delhi and three in Uttar Pradesh's Raibareli, Rampur, and Lucknow. DCP Crime Branch Sanjay Kumar Sain said, "During a detailed interrogation, Khan confessed to his involvement in numerous crimes. He revealed that he created fake profiles on matrimonial websites like Jeevansathi.com and Shadi.com, posing as a senior government official. He primarily targeted high-profile Muslim women, including widows and divorcees, as it was easier to gain their trust." He added that to gain their sympathy, Khan would engage the women in tales of personal tragedy, such as the death of his wife and his struggle to care for his daughter. "He would then meet the



women's families to discuss marriage, gaining their trust further. Once the women were convinced, he would ask for money under various pretexts, such as booking marriage venues," Sain stated. Khan also took expensive items, including mobile phones, jewelry, and even vehicles. Khan, a native of Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh, is married with three children. "He started his con operations in 2020, meeting a divorcee in Vadodra through Shadi.com. After gaining her trust and marrying her, he took Rs. 30,000 from her under false pretenses. In 2023, he employed the same tactics to marry another woman in Preet Vihar, Delhi," the DCP added. Despite continuous raids in different states, Khan evaded arrest by frequently changing locations and continuing his crimes. However, using technical surveillance and human intelligence, the team received a credible lead that Khan was coming to Delhi from Vadodra where they laid a trap and apprehended him near Nizamuddin Railway Station.

India takes strong...

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In May this year, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said India is investigating the matter, but stressed that it would not impact the "upward trajectory" of India-US ties. "The United States brought to our attention certain information in good faith because we also believe some of it has implications for our own system," he said in an interview to news agency PTI. "We are investigating it. But I do not think the fundamental course of the upward trajectory of India-US is impacted by this at all," he said. Nikhil Gupta was arrested last year in the Czech Republic at the request of the US government on charges of being involved in a plot to assassinate Pannun in New York. He was extradited to the US from the Czech Republic in June this year.

In April 2024, The Washington Post reported that Vikram Yadav, an officer with India's Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), was implicated as the official behind the plot. The report also mentioned that then R&AW chief Samant Goel approved the operation. India, however, dismissed the report, saying it makes "unwarranted and unsubstantiated imputations" to claim that Indian agents were involved in the plot to kill Pannun. Gurbatwam Singh Pannun holds dual citizenship of the US and Canada, and is wanted in India on terror charges. He has been designated a terrorist by the Union Home Minister under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Cong, NC celebrated in Pak...

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Modi said that the three families want to deprive Kashmiris of their fundamental rights, and that "it is their agenda from the very start." The three families, Modi said, think they shouldn't be questioned, "but, J&K will not remain in the grab of these families," said Modi. "They have only given violence to the people of J&K," he said as he continued his attack against them. The youth of J&K, Modi said, is now challenging dynastic politics. "It is the same youth that these parties didn't allow to move forward," Modi said. "The three families considered J&K politics as their family property. They didn't let anyone else take the stage". This is why, Modi said, these families stopped the Panchayat elections from happening as they thought new people would come and replace them. This resulted in youth losing trust in democracy, Modi said.

"They thought whether they would vote or not, power would remain with these three families." Modi in his trademark style questioned the audience about the past, saying, "Do you remember how elections used to take place in the past"? Everything closed down after evening while door-to-door campaigning was not possible, said Modi. "Your rights were snatched while they lived in luxury," Modi highlighted. This is the first time, Modi said that the elections in J&K are not being held under the "shadow of terrorism." Naming prominent religious places in the valley namely Hazratbal shrine, Char-i-Sharif, Khwaja Sahab's Shrine, Shankaracharya, and Kheer Bawani temple, Modi said that during the reign of three families, these places of sanctity weren't safe either. "Film shooting was barred, cinemas were locked, while hoisting tricolour in Lal Chowk was equal to playing

with fire. However, the picture has changed now," Modi said. Before, going to Lal Chowk was scary, but today, there is a buzz till late evening. From shopkeepers to Shikara wala (boatman), everyone is earning his livelihood with ease now, claimed the Prime Minister. "This environment, this silence, this peace, who brought it? You brought it, the people of J-K did this work," Modi said. Modi said Kashmiri Hindus have played a pivotal role in strengthening 'Kashmiriyat'. However, the three families subjected them. "They subjected our Hindu brothers to injustice," he said. These three families were hand in glove over the injustices done to Kashmiri Sikhs and Hindus, Modi said. The Congress, JKNC, and the PDP divided people over the desire to rule, but the BJP is here to unite, Modi said. "They have always sold hate," Modi said. In the last 35 years, Modi said,

Kashmir remained shut for 3000 days, "means in 35 years, Kashmir was shut for eight long years. But in the last five years, the valley hasn't been shut for even eight hours," claimed the Prime Minister. "We had promised on the floor of the parliament that we will restore J&K's statehood, and only we are capable of doing that," Modi said. Before winding up his speech, the Prime Minister urged the audience to "break all the voting records on 25th of September, when Srinagar among several other districts is going to polls. "Would you break the records? Would you write the history? Would you give BJP a chance?" asked Modi. The candidates of BJP are coming to you for peace and prosperity, Modi said as he called all the candidates over to the stage. "You grow saffron here, Srinagar is also known for Tulip Garden, BJP's Lotus will be the icing on the cake for it," Modi concluded.

Plans Underway for Incredible ...

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India's homestay sales will increase due to the country's rich cultural heritage, diverse landscapes, and the rising popularity of experiential travel among domestic and international tourists, it said. In a study 'The Future of Homestays: A Study on Opportunities and Challenges in the State of Himachal Pradesh (India)', published in International Journal Of Research Culture Society, authors Dr. Mamta Joshi and Dr. Pooja Joshi, both Assistant Professor at Kumaun University, Nainital have a cautionary note. "It is beneficial to create a homestay environment and facilitate the host community to carry out the business to the benefit of all stakeholders. There are nonetheless countless temporary challenges which can be resolved with appropriate strategies and careful planning."

21 Dalit homes set...

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Union Ministers Chirag Paswan and Jitan Ram Manjhi condemned the torching of houses in Nawada district of Bihar, and said the state government is investigating the matter and culprits will not be spared. "This is a sad incident. It is condemnable

and also shameful. I am in touch with the state government. First of all, it is necessary to ensure that those who have been affected should be rehabilitated and injured can be treated," Food Processing Minister Chirag Paswan told reporters on the sidelines of World Food India 2024 event.

Two sharpshooters held after encounter

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Two sharpshooters of the Hashim Baba gang, including an 18-year-old man who was allegedly involved in the firing incident at Delhi's GTB Hospital that left a patient dead, were held from Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar following an encounter early Thursday, officials said. The Delhi and Uttar Pradesh Police forces launched a joint operation to catch the duo -- Anas Khan, and Asad Aameem, 21, who suffered bullet injuries on their legs in the exchange of fire, they

said. Anas was allegedly involved in two murder cases including the killing of the patient at GTB hospital in a case of mistaken identity in July, police said. Hashim Baba, a northeast Delhi-based gangster, who is lodged in a jail in the national capital has also cropped up in the recent killing of a gym owner in south Delhi's Greater Kailash area. According to the Delhi Police officials, information was received that Khan and Aameem were seen in the national capital and neighbouring Ghaziabad.

Exploding devices dealt a major but not crippling blow to Hezbollah, analysts say

AP ■ BEIRUT

The waves of remotely triggered explosions that hit pagers and walkie-talkies carried by Hezbollah members in grocery stores, on streets and at a funeral procession this week made for an eerie and shocking spectacle. Analysts said Hezbollah will be able to regroup militarily and find communications workarounds after the attack, but the psychological effects will likely run deep. The explosions — widely blamed on Israel, which has neither confirmed nor denied involvement — killed at least 37 people, including two children, wounded more than 3,000 and deeply unsettled even Lebanese who have no Hezbollah affiliation. The detonating devices hit workers in Hezbollah's civilian institutions, including its health care and media operations, as well as fighters, dealing a blow to the militant group's operations beyond the battlefield. It is not clear how many civilians with no link to Hezbollah were injured. The attacks also exposed the weaknesses in the low-tech communications system the group had turned to in an

attempt to avoid Israeli surveillance of cellphones. Retired Lebanese army Gen. Elias Hanna described the attacks as the "Pearl Harbor or 9/11 of Hezbollah." Mohanad Hage Ali, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center think tank who researches Hezbollah, said that because the blasts hit people across the group's institutions, the attack was "like a sword in the guts of the organization." Hundreds of people were severely wounded, including many who lost eyes or hands. "It will require time to heal and replace those who were targeted," he said. But Hage Ali and other analysts agreed that the loss of manpower is not a crippling blow. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah has said the group's fighting force numbers more than 100,000, meaning that the attack — as dramatic as it was — would have put only a small percentage of its militants out of commission even if all those wounded and killed were fighters. Qassim Qassir, a Lebanese analyst close to Hezbollah, said the detonating devices actually struck mostly civilian workers within the group and not military or security officials, which

Lebanon bans pagers, walkie-talkies on flights from Beirut

AP ■ BEIRUT

Lebanon's civil aviation authorities have banned pagers and walkie-talkies on all airplanes departing from Beirut's Rafik Hariri International Airport. The measure announced Thursday comes after such devices, mainly used by members of the militant Hezbollah group, exploded in different parts of Lebanon, killing dozens and wounding 3,000 people over the past two days. The authorities called on all airline companies to inform passengers using the airport that carrying pagers and walkie-talkies onto jets is banned "until further notice." It added that authorities will confiscate such devices found with passengers.

has allowed it to contain the impacts on its war effort. Hezbollah, which is Lebanon's strongest armed force, has exchanged fire with Israel's military almost daily since Oct. 8, the day after a deadly Hamas-led assault in southern Israel triggered a massive Israeli counteroffensive and the ongoing war in Gaza. Since then, hundreds have been killed in strikes in Lebanon and dozens in Israel, while tens of thousands on each side of the border have been displaced.

Hezbollah said its strikes are in support of its ally, Hamas, and that it will halt its attacks if a cease-fire is implemented in Gaza. Hezbollah continued to launch rockets over the border Wednesday and Thursday after the pager and walkie-talkie attacks, though at a slower pace than usual. The impacts on Hezbollah's communications network are likely to be more disruptive than the human loss. "Telecommunications is the nerve of military operations

and communications," said retired Lebanese army Gen. Naji Malaeb, an expert on security affairs. A delay in communication could spell disaster, he said. During a speech in February, Hezbollah's leader, Nasrallah, warned members against carrying cellphones, which he said could be used to track them and monitor their communications. But long before that, Hezbollah relied on pagers and its own private fiber-optic landline network to avoid the monitoring of its communications. The pagers that detonated Tuesday were a new model the group recently began using. It appears that small quantities of explosives had been implanted in the devices at some stage in the manufacturing or shipping process and then remotely detonated. Hanna said the group might rely more heavily on its landline network — which Israel has attempted to tap into on multiple occasions — going forward, or on even lower-tech solutions such as hand-delivered letters. "Maybe you have to go back to human communication, the postman," he said. "This is what is really helping (Hamas

leader) Yahya Sinwar not to be targeted" in his hiding spot in Gaza. Orna Mizrahi, a senior researcher at the Tel Aviv-based think tank Institute for National Security Studies and former intelligence analyst for the Israeli military and prime minister's office, said losing the ability to communicate through pagers is a "dramatic blow," but the militant group has other communication methods and will rebuild their communication network. The bigger damage to Hezbollah was psychological, she said. "It's the humiliation of having such an operation, it shows how much the organization is exposed to the Israeli intelligence," she said. Amal Saad, a lecturer in politics and international relations at Cardiff University in Wales who researches Hezbollah, said much of the attack's impact was the "demoralization and the fear" it sowed. "It's not just a security breach against the military," she said. "Hezbollah's entire society is going to be extremely concerned because everything is liable now to being hacked and rigged." The group will "be rethinking many things now, not just the pagers," Saad said.

'Israeli indicted for role in Iranian assassination plot'

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israeli security officials on Thursday said an Israeli citizen has been indicted for involvement in an Iranian assassination plot against top Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. A statement from the Shin Bet internal security agency said that the citizen was recruited by Iranian intelligence to "carry out terrorist activities" on Israeli soil and "promote assassination attacks" on Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant and the head of the Shin Bet, Ronen Bar. It was unclear how far the alleged plot had advanced. The statement did not say whether the Israeli had obtained a weapon or developed a concrete plan. The statement said the Israeli had traveled to Iran twice — once in August following the assassination of top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in an explosion in Iran's capital that was widely blamed on Israel. Israel has not said whether it was involved. The Shin Bet said the assassination plot was an attempt by Iran to follow through on its pledge to avenge his death. The statement said the Israeli was paid 5,000 Euros (USD 5,575.60) but had demanded a million dollars before doing anything. The Iranians refused the demand but said they would be in touch, according to the Shin Bet. Earlier this week, the Shin Bet said an explosion in a Tel Aviv park last September was linked to an attempt by Hezbollah to assassinate Moshe Yaalon, a former military chief of staff and defense minister. The Lebanese militant group is closely allied with Iran.

Starmer faces backlash over freebies; insists he's done nothing wrong

AP ■ LONDON



Less than three months after he was elected on a promise to restore trust in politics, British Prime Minister Keir Starmer is trying to shake off criticism over donations from a wealthy businessman and the hefty salary of his most senior aide. The Labour Party leader, who won power in a landslide victory on July 4, denies impropriety over thousands of pounds (dollars) worth of clothes and eyeglasses paid for by Waheed Alli, a media entrepreneur and longtime Labour donor. Starmer is also facing grumbling among his own employees over the salary of chief of staff Sue Gray. The BBC disclosed that she is paid 170,000 pounds (\$225,000) a year — about 3,000 pounds more than the prime minister's salary. Gray's salary is at the top of a set of pay bands for political advisers, which have been

raised since the election. The government said it did not interfere in setting the pay scale. "The pay bands for any official, any adviser, are not set by politicians. There's an official process that does that," Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds said Thursday. In recent days British media have been full of largely anonymous grumbling from government officials about Gray, a former senior civil servant best known for leading an investigation into lockdown-breaching par-

ties in government buildings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gray's findings helped topple Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson, and her subsequent move to work for Starmer led the Conservatives to claim the "partygate" probe was politically biased, something Gray denies. Labour claims the leak of Gray's salary and the donation revelations -- branded "frockgate" in the press after dresses bought for the prime minister's wife, Victoria Starmer -- is being whipped up by the Conservatives and their media supporters to tarnish the government. Lawmakers are allowed to accept gifts but have to declare donations and extra-parliamentary income within 28 days. Starmer missed the four-week deadline to declare the donations of clothes and a personal shopper for his wife from Alli. He says the delay was due to his staff seeking advice on

exactly what needed to be declared. "I'm very consistent with following the rules," Starmer said this week. He rejected suggestions that prime ministers should get a wardrobe budget, saying taxpayers should not have to pay for politicians' clothes. The scale of the freebies accepted by Starmer has raised eyebrows even among supporters. Sky News reported that Starmer has declared "gifts, benefits and hospitality" worth more than 100,000 pounds since December 2019, more than any other lawmaker. The donations include thousands of pounds' worth of tickets for Premier League games involving Starmer's beloved team Arsenal. "I'm a massive Arsenal fan," Starmer told reporters during a trip to Rome this week. "I can't go into the stands because of security reasons. Therefore, if I don't accept a gift of hospitality I can't go to a game.

Voters view Harris more favourably as she leads Democratic ticket, poll says

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Until recently, Lillian Dunsmuir of Bullhead City, Arizona, "didn't really think about" Kamala Harris and had no opinion of the vice president. But now she likes what she's seeing. "She's funny. I think she's very smart. She can speak well," said Dunsmuir, a 58-year-old real estate agent. "I would feel safe with her because I think she can handle herself with foreign leaders. I like her because she's for pro-choice, and so am I." Voters view Harris slightly more favorably than they did in July, just after President Joe Biden dropped out of the race, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. The Democratic presidential nominee is now seen more positively than negatively. Former President Donald Trump's favorability ratings remained steady,

although the poll was conducted prior to the apparent assassination attempt of the Republican nominee on his golf course in Florida on Sunday. According to the survey, about half of voters have a somewhat or very positive view of Harris, and 44% have a somewhat or very negative view. That's a small shift since late July, just after Biden dropped out of the race, when views of Harris were slightly more unfavorable than favorable. Six in 10 voters, meanwhile, have a somewhat or very unfavorable view of Trump, while about 4 in 10 have a somewhat or very favorable view of him. Changes in views of national figures like Biden, Trump or Harris have been rare over the past few years. Trump's favorability rating didn't budge over the course of the summer, despite a felony conviction, a close call with a would-be assassin in Pennsylvania, and a new opponent in the presi-

dential contest. But Trump has prevailed in the past with similarly low favorability ratings. He won the 2016 election despite being broadly unpopular, and came close to winning in 2020 under similar conditions. The survey also found that relatively small shares of voters — around one-third — say the phrase "would change the country for the better" describes Trump or Harris extremely or very well, suggesting that voters retain some gloom about their options in the race. "Everyone talks about how polarized we are. I don't see the election solving that," said Sean Luebbers, a 55-year-old high school history teacher in Upland, California, who supports Harris. "I don't see Harris solving that. I think a lot of the damage has already been done, so I'm not hopeful that the election will solve that. Right now, you might call it triage. We can't make things worse."

Pak-origin man jailed for stirring up racial hate during UK riots

London (PTI): A Pakistani-origin man who used a fake identity to stir up racial hatred online during last month's riots in different parts of the UK has been sentenced to two years and four months imprisonment after admitting to disseminating offensive messages on social media. Ehsan Hussain, 25, was sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court on Wednesday after a West Midlands Police investigation revealed he had used a fake name belonging to an innocent member of the public. He is said to have posted "numerous and vile messages" through the app Telegram in a chat group containing over 12,000 members during far-right and anti-immigrant violent disorder in August. The police presented screenshots captured of the posts, which called for disorder in Alum Rock and Bordesley Green in Birmingham and incited racial violence.

Canada cuts study permits for foreign students

Ottawa (PTI): Canada has announced to reduce study permits for international students, a move that is likely to affect many Indian nationals. In a post on X late Wednesday night, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said, "We're granting 35% fewer international student permits this year. And next year, that number's going down by another 10%." "Immigration is an advantage for our economy - but when bad actors abuse the system and take advantage of students, we crack down," he said. The move comes as the Canadian government is looking to reduce the number of temporary residents. Canada is one of the most sought-after destinations for Indian students. Trudeau's announcement is likely to impact many Indian students who wish to study in Canada.

Floods spread in central Europe; heavy rains hit Italy

AP ■ WARSAW



A massive flood wave moving across Central Europe was threatening new areas and raising concerns among residents and leaders. It also prompted European Union head Ursula von der Leyen to plan a visit to the region on Thursday. Heavy rains also caused flooding and evacuation of some 1,000 residents in the northern Italian region of Emilia-Romagna. The death toll was rising in Central Europe, as receding waters were revealing the huge scale of the destruction caused by exceptionally heavy rains that began a week ago. Czech Interior Minister Vit Rakusan said the death toll had risen to five in the hard-hit northeast Czech Republic, and that eight were still missing. That brings the death toll so far to 24 in the region. Authorities have also reported seven deaths each in Poland and Romania, and five in Austria. Authorities across the

affected region have deployed their militaries. In the two hardest-hit regions in the northeast Czech Republic, troops joined firefighters and other emergency officials to help residents with cleanup and recovery efforts. Army helicopters have been used to distribute humanitarian help while soldiers are building temporary bridges after many were destroyed in the flooding.

Some 400 people remain in evacuation centres in the regional capital of Ostrava and are not able yet to return home. In the country's southwest near the border with Austria, the water level of the Luznice River has reached an extreme level but the evacuation of 1,000 people in the town of Veseli nad Luznici was not necessary for the moment, officials said. Further to the south, in

Hungary, flood waters continued to rise on Thursday as authorities shut down roadways, rail stations and ferries along the Danube River. In the capital, Budapest, water spilled over the city's lower quays and threatened to reach transport infrastructure like trams and metro lines. Some transport services were suspended. Further upriver, in a region known as the Danube Bend, homes and restaurants near the riverbanks were inundated as officials and volunteers continued to place sandbags to reinforce levees. Nearly 6,000 professionals, including members of Hungary's water authority and military, have been mobilised to assist in flood preparations, Prime Minister Viktor Orban said in a news conference Thursday morning. Inmates from prisons had also been mobilised to help fill sandbags, Orban said. The Danube rose nearly one metre (3.3 feet) in 24 hours, and by Thursday morning stood at

771 cm, approaching the 891-cm record set during major flooding in 2013. In southwestern Poland, the high water reached the city of Wroclaw and a stretched-out wave was expected to take many hours, even days to pass, exerting pressure on the embankments. Concerned by the scope of the destruction and the need for immediate aid, Prime Minister Donald Tusk invited von der Leyen to Wroclaw to see the situation with her own eyes. Government leaders from the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Austria are also to be present. To the south in Italy, about a thousand residents were evacuated in the northern region of Emilia-Romagna after it was hit by torrential rains and severe flooding overnight, local media reported Thursday. Rivers flooded in three of the region's provinces - Ravenna, Bologna and Faenza - as local mayors asked people to stay on the upper floors or leave their houses.

US lawmakers express outrage over vandalism of temple in New York

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

More than two dozen top American lawmakers have expressed outrage over the recent vandalism of a Hindu temple in New York, which came days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the US. The road and the signage outside the BAPS Swaminarayan Temple in Melville, New York, were sprayed with expletives on Monday. Melville is located in Suffolk County, on Long Island and is about 28 kilometres from the 16,000-seater Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, where Prime Minister Modi is scheduled to address a mega community event on September 22. "The desecration of this Hindu house of worship is vile. Hate has no place on Long Island or anywhere else in New York or across America," Senate Majority Leader Senator Chuck Schumer said. "I am deeply saddened by the desecration of the BAPS Mandir in Melville, NY. This act of vandalism is a clear attempt to incite hatred against Hindus and has no place in our country. We must come together to show that love and understanding will always triumph over intolerance and division," Congressman Rich McCormick said. "It is upsetting to see the hateful vandalism of the BAPS Hindu Temple in Melville, New York. I'm wishing our Hindu community strength and peace in the face of this unacceptable display of intolerance. Standing together, we can remain stronger than hate," said lawmaker Andy Kim. Congressman Brad Sherman said the vandalism of the temple is not only a "vile act of hate" against the Hindu community but also an "unjust attack on our shared value of

religious pluralism." "I stand with Hindu Americans. Those responsible must be prosecuted to the law's fullest extent," he said. "Hate has no home in our community. That was the unified message from more than a dozen of my fellow elected officials and me in response to the hateful, intolerant graffiti and vandalism at the BAPS Hindu Temple in Melville," said Congressman Nick LaLota. "Our great nation was founded on the principles of religious and political freedom, and I'm proud to see leaders from both parties swiftly come together to support the BAPS community during this difficult time," he said. Congresswoman Michelle Steel strongly condemned the "hateful act of vandalism" targeting the Hindu community in New York. "Now more than ever, Americans must unify behind the values of decency and respect for one another," she said. "No one should face fear due to their faith. I strongly condemn the recent attacks on BAPS Mandir in New York. Standing in solidarity with our BAPS community and united against all forms of hate," lawmaker Glenn Grothman said. Congressman Buddy Carter said that religious prejudice is "not welcome" in America. Congresswoman Young Kim said no one should live in fear because of their faith. "I fully condemn the hateful acts targeting at BAPS Mandir in New York & join my bipartisan colleagues in standing in solidarity with our BAPS friends and united against hate. Love triumphs hate always," she said. Congressman Jonathan L. Jackson said he was deeply saddened by the desecration of the "magnificent temple and all threats of hatred against the Hindu community."

Congo gold mining town emerges as mpox hot spot

AP ■ KAMITUGA

Slumped on the ground over a mound of dirt, Divine Wisoba pulled weeds from her daughter's grave. The 1-month-old died from mpox in eastern Congo in August, but Wisoba, 21, was too traumatized to attend the funeral. In her first visit to the cemetery, she wept into her shirt for the child she lost and worried about the rest of her family. "When she was born, it was as if God had answered our prayers — we wanted a girl," Wisoba said of little Maombi Katengey. "But our biggest joy was transformed into devastation." Her daughter is one of more than 6,000 people officials suspect have contracted the disease in South Kivu province, the epicentre of the world's lat-

est mpox outbreak, in what the World Health Organisation has labeled a global health emergency. A new strain of the virus is spreading, largely through skin-to-skin contact, including but not limited to sex. A lack of funds, vaccines and information is making it difficult to stem the spread, according to alarmed disease experts. Mpox — which causes mostly mild symptoms like fever and body aches, but can trigger serious cases with prominent blisters on the face, hands, chest and genitals — had been spreading mostly undetected for years in Africa, until a 2022 outbreak reached more than 70 countries. Globally, gay and bisexual men made up the vast majority of cases in that outbreak. But officials note mpox has long dis-

proportionately affected children in Africa, and they say cases are now rising sharply among kids, pregnant women and other vulnerable groups, with many types of close contact responsible for the spread. Health officials have zeroed in on Kamituga, a remote yet bustling gold mining town of some 3,000 people that attracts miners, sex workers and traders who are constantly on the move. Cases from other parts of eastern Congo can be traced back here, officials say, with the first originating in the nightclub scene. Since this outbreak began, one year ago, nearly 1,000 people in Kamituga have been infected. Eight have died, half of them children. Last month, the World Health Organisation said mpox out-

breaks might be stopped in the next six months, with governments' leadership and cooperation. But in Kamituga, people say they face a starkly different reality. There's a daily average of five new cases at the general hospital, which is regularly near capacity. Overall in South Kivu, weekly new suspected cases have skyrocketed from about 12 in January to 600 in August, according to province health officials. Even that's likely an underestimate, they say, because of a lack of access to rural areas, the inability of many residents to seek care, and Kamituga's transient nature. Locals say they simply don't have enough information about mpox. Before her daughter got sick, Wisoba said, she was infected herself but didn't know it. Painful lesions emerged

around her genitals, making walking difficult. She thought she had a common sexually transmitted infection and sought medicine at a pharmacy. Days later, she went to the hospital with her newborn and was diagnosed with mpox. She recovered, but her daughter developed lesions on her foot. Nearly a week later, Maombi died at the same hospital that treated her mother. Wisoba said she didn't know about mpox until she got it. She wants the government to invest more in teaching people protective measures. Local officials can't reach areas more than a few miles outside Kamituga to track suspected cases or inform residents. They broadcast radio messages but say that doesn't reach far enough. Kasindi Mwenyelwata goes door to

door describing how to detect mpox — looking for fevers, aches or lesions. But the 42-year-old community leader said a lack of money means he doesn't have the right materials, such as posters showing images of patients, which he finds more powerful than words. ALIMA, one of the few aid groups working on mpox in Kamituga, lacks funds to set up programmes or clinics that would reach some 1,500,000 people, with its budget set to run out at year's end, according to programme coordinator Dr Dally Muamba. If support keeps waning and mpox spreads, he said, "there will be an impact on the economy, people will stop coming to the area as the epidemic takes its toll. ... And as the disease grows, will resources follow?"

SC rejects telecom companies curative pleas on AGR computation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a jolt to telecom firms, the Supreme Court has dismissed a batch of pleas filed by companies, including Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, seeking correction of alleged errors in the Adjusted Gross Revenue. A bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Sanjiv Khanna and B R Gavai also rejected the plea of telcos seeking to list the curative petitions for open court hearing. A curative petition is the last legal recourse in the apex court and is generally considered in-chamber unless a prima facie case is made out for reconsideration of the verdict. "Application for listing the Curative Petitions in open Court is rejected. We have



gone through the Curative Petitions and the connected documents. In our opinion, no case is made out within

the parameters indicated in the decision of this court in Rupa Ashok Hurra v Ashok Hurra. The Curative Petitions are dismissed," the bench observed in an order dated August 30, which was uploaded on Thursday. On October 9 last year, the top court had taken note of submissions of some telecommunications companies seeking listing of their pleas on Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) due issue. The telcos had referred to alleged errors in the arithmetic calculation for arriving at the AGR-related dues by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). In July 2021, the Supreme Court dismissed a plea seeking correction of errors in the demand of AGR dues. The telecom companies had moved the top court claiming

there were several errors in arriving at the AGR dues which totalled over Rs 1 lakh crore. Vodafone-Idea's total liability was Rs 58,254 crore and Bharti Airtel's Rs 43,980 crore. Earlier, the top court had given the telecom companies 10 years to clear their outstanding dues to the government. The top court held that the demand raised by the DoT with respect to AGR dues would be final. It also said that telecom companies shall not raise any dispute and there shall not be any re-assessment. It had said telecom operators shall pay 10 per cent of the total dues as demanded by DoT by March 31, 2021, and the rest in yearly instalments commencing from April 1, 2021, to March 31, 2031.

India-US trade potential worth 500 billion USD: Hardeep Puri

PTI ■ HOUSTON

The United States is India's sixth largest energy trade partner and the growing bilateral trade has the potential to cross the USD 500 billion-mark from USD 200 billion at present, Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said. The hydrocarbon trade between the two countries has reached USD 13.6 billion in 2023-24 nearly double the figure from 2018-19, Puri said at a roundtable with energy companies. The roundtable, held on the sidelines of the global energy conference Gastech 2024, here was attended by Mukesh Agshi, President and CEO of USISPF, and Consul General of India in Houston, D C Manjunath, among others. Puri said that the US is now India's sixth-largest energy trade partner, with hydrocarbon trade valued at USD 2.43 billion in the first two months of FY 2024-25. This momentum indicates the potential for total bilateral trade to soar from around USD 200 billion to over USD 500 billion, he said. During his visit the minister also engaged with stakeholders from the US-India Business Council (USIBC), the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), and industry leaders to underscore the significance of the US-India energy partnership. The conference was organised by USISPF, an advocacy group dedicated to strengthening



the strategic partnership between the US and India. Puri highlighted India's leadership during its G20 Presidency, where it launched the Global Biofuels Alliance in collaboration with the US and other like-minded countries. This initiative aims to develop and deploy low-carbon solutions, further reinforcing the commitment to sustainable energy practices. In a meeting with Brad Crabtree, Assistant Secretary of the Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management at the US Department of Energy, Puri discussed the unique challenges India faces as the third-largest hydrocarbon consumer while aiming for net zero emissions by 2070. The discussion covered issues such as carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS) as a vital solution for enhancing energy security and emissions reduction, alongside advancements in CO2 removal and innovative biofuels.

Banking sector to play major role in India's development: Sitharaman

PTI ■ PUNE

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the banking sector will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda of making India a developed nation or Viksit Bharat by 2047. The Finance Minister was speaking at an event here to mark the 90th Foundation Day of the Bank of Maharashtra, a public sector lender. "Banks will have to play a crucial role in driving the agenda set by the Prime Minister and by your role, we are going to give greater momentum to achieving this dream," she said. Sitharaman said banks will be required to give strong momentum to the infrastructure sector, ensure the availability of need-based



funding to MSMEs, bring unbanked population under the ambit of formal banking channels, and help increase insurance penetration. She noted that technology is changing the banking landscape as it provides a secure and easy-to-navigate digital banking experience to all customers. However, she added that "you (banks) cannot have a digital system which somewhere gets hacked, and the entire system and the trust which is laid on it getting compromised. So

you need to have a robust and resilient system for which every now and then you need to make sure that the firewalls are adequate, any emergency drill which you need to do, what if situation so you know to handle if there is an emergency in terms of digital insecure incidents". The minister also highlighted the rising popularity of the UPI in driving digital payments, saying 45 per cent of all real-time digital payments globally take place in India.

Government to soon release committee report on MSP of crops: Shivraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday announced that the government will soon release the report of the committee on Minimum Support Price (MSP) for crops, which was established following the withdrawal of the three controversial farm laws. The minister also unveiled new initiatives aimed at modernizing agriculture and improving farmer engagement during a press briefing on the achievements of the Modi 3.0 government's first 100 days. 'Adhunik Krishi Choupal', a new programme featuring scientists sharing agricultural innovations with farmers, will be aired on Doordarshan and All India Radio from October. The minister will hold weekly interactions with farmers and agricultural leaders at the



Shivraj Singh Chouhan at a press conference on 100 days achievements of the ministry at National Media Centre, in New Delhi on Thursday.

Photo By: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

agriculture ministry, in an initiative dubbed "Kisan Samvad." On genetically modified (GM) cotton technology awaiting regulatory approval, Chouhan said, "This is a sensitive topic for us. The approval will be given after wider consultations." "The report has not been prepared yet. The committee is working continuously," Chouhan told reporters when asked about the status.

The committee on MSP, headed by former agriculture secretary Sanjay Agrawal, has held more than two dozen meetings and workshops so far. "The committee members are in touch with me. We will make the report public soon," he added. The committee was established in July 2022, eight months after the government promised to set up such a panel while withdrawing the three contentious farm laws. The committee was tasked to

make suggestions so as to make MSP more effective and transparent; to promote natural farming; and to change crop patterns keeping in mind the changing needs of the country. Asserting that the government is pursuing a three-pronged strategy to boost farm output, the minister said the focus is on ensuring timely supply of affordable crop inputs, enhancing farmers' income and ensuring fair prices for produce. To combat impact of climate change, 109 high-yielding, climate-resilient crop varieties have been released, Chouhan said. The government has asked states to submit their seed requirements early, particularly for new crop varieties for the upcoming rabi season in order to prevent the delays. Fertiliser affordability is another key focus. The Cabinet recently approved subsidies for non-urea fertilisers, a decision

expected to provide significant relief to farmers preparing for rabi sowing, he said. Risk mitigation remains a cornerstone of the government's agricultural policy. "The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana continues to be our primary tool for crop insurance," Chouhan explained. He also highlighted the ongoing financial support through PM-KISAN, which provides Rs 6,000 annually to eligible farmers. Addressing the perennial issue of fair pricing, Chouhan said the government has increased the MSP for kharif crops. Additionally, it has recommended to the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshana Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) scheme. The Cabinet has approved the continuation of price support scheme under PM-AASHA to stabilize crop prices and increase farmers' income.

SEBI eases rules for public issuance of debt securities

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi has amended rules to streamline the process for public issuance of debt securities aimed at providing faster access to funds for such issuers. Under the amended rules, Sebi has reduced the period for seeking public comments on the draft offer documents from 7 working days to 1 day for issuers whose specified securities are already listed and 5 days for other issuers. "The issuers whose specified securities are listed on a recognised stock exchange having nationwide trading terminals shall post the draft



offer document filed with stock exchange(s) for one day immediately after the date of filing the draft offer

document with stock exchange(s)," the regulator said in a notification. Also, the minimum subscription

period has been cut from 3 to 2 working days. Further, in case of revision in the price band or yield, the bidding period disclosed in the offer documents, can be extended by one working day instead of three working days. The new rules are aimed at facilitating ease of doing business and providing flexibility to issuers. Additionally, Sebi has provided flexibility to issuers by providing discretion to them with regard to advertisement of public issues through electronic modes subject to a window advertisement (containing a QR Code and Link to full

advertisement) in newspapers. Further, Sebi has simplified disclosure requirements for non-convertible securities in the offer documents. It has removed the requirement for PAN and personal address disclosure of promoters in offer documents. The regulator clarified the key operational and financial parameters will be disclosed in line with financial information requirements. To give this effect, Sebi's issue and listing of non-convertible securities rules have been amended on September 17 that became effective from the same day.

India to become third largest economy by FY31: S&P Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is on track to becoming the third-largest economy by 2030-31, driven by a projected annual growth rate of 6.7 per cent this fiscal, S&P Global said in a report on Thursday. The report also said that with 8.2 per cent growth rate in FY2024, continued reforms are crucial to improving business transactions and logistics, boosting private sector investment, and reducing reliance on public capital. It said equity markets are

expected to stay dynamic and competitive due to strong growth prospects and better regulation, and foreign inflows into Indian government bonds have surged since the country joined major emerging market indexes, with further growth anticipated. To maximize trade benefits, India must develop infrastructure and geopolitical strategies, particularly regarding its extensive coastline, said the first edition of 'India Forward: Emerging Perspectives' report.

Nearly 90 per cent of India's trade is seaborne, necessitating robust port infrastructure to manage increasing exports and bulk commodity imports, it added. Noting that India faces rising domestic energy demands and can look to sustainable technologies, including renewable and low-emission fuels, balancing energy security with its energy transition plans, the report stated that agriculture will rely on advanced technologies and new policies to improve infrastructure and productivity.

Centre announces steps to resolve shipping related woes of traders

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday announced steps, including reducing certain charges at ports and purchase of five additional second-hand container vessels by SCI, to resolve shipping sector-related problems of exporters and importers. These measures were announced after a meeting of all the concerned stakeholders of the international trade segment, including senior officials of ministries like commerce and industry, shipping, ports, finance, civil aviation and railways; apex exporters body FIEO (federation of Indian export organisations), customs officials, freight forwarders, transport operators and shipping companies. Exporting community and experts have flagged shipping sector issues which are hurting the country's exports, which has contracted by 9.3 per cent in August. The issues figured in the discussions include container shortage, surge in ocean freight rate and shipping cost,

shipping delays at the Indian ports, and turnaround time at the ports. Briefing media after the deliberations, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said that several issues were discussed to look at addressing the challenges that exporters and importers are facing in the shipping area. "I am confident that it (decisions taken today) will result in significantly bringing down the shipping cost, improve the availability of empty containers, help faster evacuation of export consignments, and significantly reduce the congestion at ports," he said. It was announced that the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) will "purchase five additional second-hand container vessels" to further boost cargo handling capacity. The SCI also announced that they are chartering container ships to significantly increase the container capacities, on an immediate basis capacity will be enhanced by 9,000 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent unit). The Railway board and Container Corporation

announced that empty containers can now be stored at the yard at zero cost for 90 days. The charges of Rs 3,000, that is being levied beyond 90 days, are now halved to Rs 1,500. Further, the storage and handling rates will be reduced for containers from Rs 9,000 to Rs 2,000 (for a 40 ft container) and from Rs 6,000 to Rs 1,000 (for a 20 ft container). The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) announced that custom clearances at the ports will be expedited by simultaneous screening of two twenty feet containers. Further, the shipping ministry said that the port capacities have already been enhanced by 2.3 million TEUs. Furthermore, the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) assured to eliminate any congestion and bottleneck at NhavaSheva port. The shipping lines assured that all charges like container transportation and Lift-on-Lift-off at yards would be embedded in the delivery order given to shippers.

India, South Korea begin to share electronic bill of lading

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and South Korea have started sharing the bill of lading in an electronic transfer mode between the customs of both sides, a move that will help promote ease of doing business, a senior official said on Thursday. A bill of lading is a legal document that serves as a receipt, contract, and proof of ownership for shipped goods. Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) Santosh Kumar Sarangi said as and when the system becomes a norm for all the countries, there will be no requirement for physical submission of records. "India in collaboration with South Korea has now started this concept of sharing the bill of lading in an electronic transfer mode between the customs of both sides," he said while addressing a session in the 'Deloitte Government Summit' here. South Korea is a key trading partner of India and both countries have implemented a comprehensive free trade agreement in 2010. India's exports to the country stood at USD 6.41 billion in 2023-23, while imports aggregated at USD 21.13



billion. Sarangi added that doing away with physical submissions may happen in the next 1-1.5 years. The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) has taken this initiative to ensure that all trade documentations happen through the electronic transfer mode and that work is under progress as various countries are participating. UNCITRAL is the core legal body of the UN system in the field of international trade law. Its business is the modernisation and harmonisation of rules on international business. Sarangi also said a lot of startups are working in the direction of ensuring tracking and tracing of goods

and containers on real-time basis. "Each of the containers coming into our country is RFID tagged and the movement is tracked on real time basis and going forward enabling IoT (internet of things) and ensuring that these containers movement is tracked from origin till it is shipped and beyond outside our shores also is something which is a work in progress," he said. The DGFT has taken a series of measures to ensure ease of doing business for exporters and importers. It has recently launched the Trade Connect e-Platform, which is a one-stop shop for traders to get information related to all areas such as duties, markets, and free trade agreements.

INBRIEF

KENYA HIGH COMMISSION VISITS GNDU

AMRITSAR: Esther Karema Mutua from the Kenya High Commission visited Guru Nanak Dev University. During her visit, Ms. Mutua met with Kenyan students and the Chairman of the International Student Cell at the Golden Jubilee Centre for Entrepreneurship and Innovation of the Guru Nanak Dev University.



REC SIGNS MOU WITH RE DEVELOPERS



GANDHINAGAR: REC Limited has signed an MoU during the 4th Global Renewable Energy Investors Meet & Expo (RE-INVEST 2024) in Gandhinagar with RE developers aggregating about Rs 1.12 lakh crore.

STUDENTS ENGAGE IN CONFERENCE ON ANATOMY, AI &

KATTANKULATHUR: The 45th National Conference of the Association of Anatomists-Tamil Nadu at the SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre, drawing participation from over 300 students.



VIT-AP UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE



AMRAVATI: Global South as a region signifying economic growth questions of inequality, development, sustainability take precedence in scholarly debate as witnessed in the efforts of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (VISH), VIT-AP to highlight these issues.

A DIVINE JOURNEY

SHARANYA CHANDRAN'S *Hymns to Hara* was more than a performance, it was a profound tribute to Lord Shiva, blending tradition, personal devotion and artistic grace in a moving return to the stage, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

The stage was set, the lights dimmed and the air filled with anticipation as Sharanya Chandran stepped gracefully onto the Stein Auditorium stage. What followed was not merely a dance performance but a spiritual journey, an exquisite expression of devotion, emotion and divine energy. In her solo Bharatanatyam presentation, *Hymns to Hara*, Sharanya Chandran paid tribute to Lord Shiva. The term *Hymns to Hara* refers to devotional songs or praises dedicated to Lord Shiva, who is often called "Hara," meaning "the remover" or "destroyer of evil" in Sanskrit. This title perfectly encapsulated the performance, as it was a spiritual offering through dance, celebrating the multifaceted aspects of Lord Shiva, his power, love and divine qualities. From the very first moment, it became evident that this was much more than a dance, it was a deep exploration of the divine, a celebration of devotion and a portrayal of the complex emotions evoked by Lord Shiva. Sharanya's depiction was powerful and moving, capturing the essence of Shiva's multifaceted nature. As the daughter of the renowned Bharatanatyam dancer Geeta Chandran, Sharanya has long been admired for her ability to infuse



depth and emotion into her performances. In *Hymns to Hara*, she explored the many dimensions of Shiva, his compassion, his wrath, his fearlessness and even his more unsettling aspects. Each emotion was brought vividly to life through

Sharanya's precise movements, her expressive face and her profound understanding of the Bharatanatyam tradition. What made this performance particularly meaningful was the personal connection Sharanya

brought to it. After a hiatus from the stage, *Hymns to Hara* marked her return to performing and it was clear how much the experience meant to her. The performance was a tribute to her grandparents, both devout followers of Lord Shiva, making it a poignant expression of familial love and devotion. Additionally, the evening carried personal significance for Sharanya as it coincided with her ten-year anniversary at J-PAL South Asia, where she successfully balances a career in development alongside her passion for dance. The beauty of *Hymns to Hara* lay in Sharanya's ability to work together with various elements of Indian culture. Drawing inspiration from poems and verses in Tamil, Maithili and other languages, she crafted a vivid portrayal of Shiva's complex character. The traditional Bharatanatyam pieces were carefully selected, creating a cohesive and visually captivating performance. Throughout the evening, Sharanya was accompanied by her mother and guru, Geeta Chandran, who provided the rhythmic beats of the Nattuvangam. The live music, featuring K Venkateshwaran on vocals, Manohar Balachandran on the Mridangam, Varun Rajasekharan on the ghatam and G

Raghavendra Prasath on the violin, enhanced the emotional depth of the performance, adding an even greater spiritual resonance to the evening. What set Sharanya's performance apart was not just her technical prowess as a dancer but her ability to connect with the audience on a deeper level. Her dual life as a policy professional and a dancer gave her work a unique perspective, adding richness to her portrayal of themes such as duty, devotion and the search for meaning. In *Hymns to Hara*, Sharanya Chandran did more than just perform Bharatanatyam, she invited the audience into her world, a world shaped by family, faith and art, where tradition and personal history beautifully intertwined. It was a performance that touched the heart, leaving the audience not only in wonder of her talent but deeply moved by the sincerity and emotion she poured into every step.

Photos: Pankaj Kumar

EXPLORING THE ARTISTIC SPIRIT

The Capital Art Show in Delhi is a vibrant celebration of artistic expression, showcasing the rich diversity and creativity of Indian artists through over 80 stunning artworks and sculptures, says **SAKSHI PRIYA**

Delhi, a city full of cultural richness, has become a vibrant place of artistic energy, blending its historic heritage with modern creativity. As visitors entered The Claridges for "The Capital Art Show," they were immediately immersed in Delhi's vibrant artistic spirit. The exhibition unfolds as a space of mesmerising beauty, where every artwork tells a unique story that goes beyond language. This curated collection stands as a tribute to the artist's mastery, each piece reflecting their inner world with precision and passion. The exhibition celebrates the artist's world, where every piece is a masterpiece that touches the soul. It's a space where everyone wants to be included, as artists have a special way of expressing what words cannot, painting straight from the heart. The Capital Art Show is more than an exhibition, it's a compelling display of human creativity and expression. Each piece offers a distinct appeal, drawing visitors into a space where emotions, memories and nature blend seamlessly. The gallery's peaceful yet vibrant atmosphere makes it feel as though the artworks are alive, quietly engaging with those who appreciate them. This collection, rich in diverse styles and mediums, invites deep reflection and enriches a profound connection. It pulls you into the artist's world, much like M.F. Hussain's bold acrylic strokes, which capture the energy and complexity of Indian life in a single painting. The show, curated by the renowned Rahul Kumar and featuring the debut of Sameera Anand, offers a fresh perspective on Delhi's evolving art scene. Her collection masterfully blends works from past legends with emerging talents, showcasing both legacy and innovation. Attendees were treated to



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

masterpieces by iconic artists like F.N. Souza, S.H. Raza, B. Prabha and Krishen Khanna, along with dynamic pieces from contemporary artists such as Jeram Patel. With over 80 stunning artworks and sculptures, the exhibition celebrated the rich diversity and creativity of India's artistic landscape. The exhibition left no doubt that in the world of art, everyone yearns to be

included. Through the universal language of visual expression, The Capital Art Show had created a space where attendees could feel truly alive, connecting with the indescribable and experiencing the profound beauty of human creativity. It was, in every sense, a masterpiece of curation and artistic expression. The gallery was thoughtfully arranged into thematic

sections, each offering a unique yet interconnected view of artistic expression. "Post-Modernism & The Indian Approach" challenged Western conventions with abstract and figurative works rooted in Indian identity. "Memory as a Tool," featuring Viswanath Kuttum's evocative pieces such as What Do We Want to See in the World - (2024) and Ellora Caves Series (Set of 6) (2024), explored

recollection through materials like paraffin, beeswax, resin and brown powder on paperboard, creating a dreamlike experience. In "The Self," N. Ramachandran's mixed media boxes captured childhood memories, revealing different stories when opened or closed, with nostalgic engravings. "In Celebration of Nature," highlighted by KP Pradeepkumar's Flower Seasons (2020), used mixed media including watercolours, gouache, tempera and pastels to honour the beauty and fragility of the natural world. In "Ecology & Environment" showcased Pankaj Chouhan's compelling watercolour on paper, addressing environmental degradation and human impact. "Changing Architecture," represented by Sunil Yadav's Geometric Paradox (2024) in pastels on paper, blended geometric and organic forms to explore how spaces shape emotions. "Abstracted Forms" featured deep sentiments manifested in non-representational works, with notable pieces like Kumaresan Selvaraj and Yuwan Bothisathuvu's Nothing From (2022) on Canson paper and plywood, evocative art. Finally, "Progressives & Associates" paid tribute to the pioneers of Indian modernism, celebrating their bold innovation and influence on the future of Indian art. The Capital Art Show was a deeply moving experience. It felt as though each artwork was speaking directly to us, creating a dialogue that spanned across time and personal boundaries. The art didn't just hang on the walls, it seemed to breathe and interact, inviting us to see our own reflections in its depths. The show made the beauty of human creativity feel personal, reminding us that in the world of art, we all have a place. It was truly an immersive journey that left a lasting impression.

A RICH TRIBUTE TO THE DHRUPAD MAESTRO

By **GYANESHWAR DAYAL**

The 18th edition of the Pandit Siyaram Tiwari Music Festival paid a grand tribute to one of the most revered figures in Indian classical music. The festival honoured the life and legacy of Pandit Siyaram Tiwari, a maestro of the ancient Dhrupad tradition. Dhrupad, the oldest form of North Indian classical vocal music, has roots in the chanting style of the Samaveda, a sacred Sanskrit text dating back over 3,000 years. This meditative and contemplative genre, once confined to Hindu temples and royal courts, has evolved into a sophisticated art form over the centuries. A key feature of Dhrupad is its deep connection to nada yoga, the practice of exploring the inner sounds and vibrations of the body, believed to be the fundamental building blocks of the universe. Dhrupad vocalists cultivate an extraordinary resonance, enabling them to express a wide range of tones and microtones. It is this ancient tradition that Pandit Siyaram Tiwari, a leading exponent of the Darbhanga gharana, championed throughout his life until his passing in 1998. Born on March 10, 1919, Pandit Siyaram Tiwari was celebrated for his mastery of Dhrupad and was particularly known for introducing fast-paced laykari (rhythmic play) within the genre. His contributions were recognised with prestigious awards such as the Padma Shri in 1971 and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship in 1984, India's highest honor for musicians. The Pandit Siyaram Tiwari Memorial Sangeet Trust, under the curatorship of Dr. Sumeet Anand Pandey, organised this festival to preserve and promote the rich tradition of Dhrupad. Dr. Pandey, Tiwari's maternal grandson and an acclaimed Dhrupad vocalist, continues to uphold the family's musical legacy. As the co-founder and secretary of the Trust, Dr. Pandey is committed to sharing the timeless beauty of Dhrupad with a wider



Photos: Pankaj Kumar

audience. This year's festival featured captivating performances, beginning with Shashi Kant Pathak's performance, which earned him the "Navodit Kalakar Samman" award. He was accompanied by Rajesh Mishra on the Sarangi and Dr. Pandey himself on vocals. The evening concluded with a masterful Sarod recital by Pandit Biswajit Roy Chowdhury, who performed ragas from the Malhar family, accompanied by Pandit Durjay Bhaumik on Tabla. The noted music critic Pandit Vijay Shankar Mishra served as the compère for the event, guiding the audience through the evening's rich offerings. Speaking at the event, Dr. Pandey said, "It's a great honor to continue the legacy of my grandfather, Pandit Siyaram Tiwari, through this annual festival. Dhrupad is a timeless tradition that deserves to be celebrated and shared with the world. We hope that this festival will inspire new generations to appreciate and learn this beautiful art form." This year's festival held particular significance as the Pandit Siyaram Tiwari Memorial Sangeet Trust marked its 10th anniversary. Over the past year, the Trust organised 10 festivals

across India, showcasing the beauty of Indian classical music. Two notable initiatives, Geetam Vadyam Nrityam and Vani Veena Venu, received widespread acclaim. Additionally, Dr. Pandey launched the "Naya Swar" series in Delhi, featuring performances by young maestros, with plans to expand to cities like Kolkata, Mumbai, and Bengaluru in the coming year. The Darbhanga school, to which Pandit Siyaram Tiwari belonged, is known for producing versatile vocalists skilled in Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumri and Bhajans. Pandit Tiwari's exemplary mastery in these forms continues to serve as a guiding light for future generations of musicians. Dr. Pandey's dedication to his craft extends beyond India. He has been invited as a Fulbright visiting fellow for 2024-25 at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he will engage in teaching, research, and concerts. His recent tour of seven European countries, where he presented Dhrupad on prestigious stages, further solidifies his role in taking Indian classical music to a global audience. As the 18th Pandit Siyaram Tiwari Music Festival concluded, it not only celebrated the enduring legacy of the Dhrupad maestro but also reaffirmed the vibrant future of this ancient musical tradition.

ASHWIN, JADEJA TANGO SAVES INDIA AFTER HASAN MAHMUD'S EARLY STRIKES

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Seasoned off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin sparked on home turf with his sixth Test hundred as he combined with Ravindra Jadeja to steer India out of trouble and post a formidable 339 for six on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh here on Thursday.

Ashwin (102 batting) and Jadeja (86 batting) added 195 runs (174 minutes, 225 balls) for a riveting unbroken seventh wicket stand after young pacer Hasan Mahmud (4/58) reduced India to 144 for six, despite Yashasvi Jaiswal making a solid 56.

The ebb and flow of the day's proceedings was quite remarkable and mostly revolved around Ashwin, Jadeja and Mahmud, who made his Test debut in March this year and was just three games old in the format before this match.

In a stunning first spell of 5-2-6-3, the 24-year-old Mahmud accounted for the cream of Indian top-order -- Rohit Sharma (6), Shubman Gill (0) and Virat Kohli (6) -- before snapping Rishabh Pant's return to Test cricket (39 off 52 balls) in the initial moments of the second session.

KL Rahul, another Indian batter who is re-entering the Indian Test establishment, fell for 16 to off-spinner Mehidy

Hasan Miraz as fortune's pendulum stayed firmly in Bangladesh's quarter.

But then came the two gladiators who know Chepauk like the back of their hand -- Ashwin by birth and Jadeja through his long association with the Chennai Super Kings. One more wicket at that stage would have extended the dominance of Bangladesh, but such thoughts hardly disturbed Ashwin and Jadeja.

Ashwin went off the blocks with a flurry of boundaries, a firm validation of his oh-so-smooth timing born out of fluent hand movement through shots and precise footwork.

There was this ramp shot off Mahmud, who tried to rattle Ashwin with a short-pitched delivery that climbed onto his body.

But the veteran player arched himself back ever so slightly to gain space to execute the ramp over the slip -- fabulous in conceptualisation and execution.

At times, he scored at a strike rate in excess of 100 and was not hesitant to travel the more uncultured way. A slog sweep that went for six over mid-wicket off left-arm spinner Shakib Al-Hasan testified that. Jadeja was a tad different in his approach. Sensing that Ashwin was in good touch, the left-hander had the simple job of keeping his end going and he



did that with minimum fuss.

A past master in operating from behind the giant shadows of superstars, Jadeja looked extremely comfortable doing that once more, providing the assurance Ashwin needed.

But there were moments, the showman in Jadeja came forth and Shakib was the aggrieved party, getting hammered for three fours.

Bangladesh's star of the day Mahmud, too was not spared as Jadeja, who raised his fifty off 73 balls, played a drag-pull off the pacer to send him for a six.

Other times, he wing-heeled across the pitch for those ones and twos to keep the Bangladesh bowlers frustrated. The spectators eventually witnessed the moment that they had been waiting for when Ashwin reached the hundred with a single off Shakib, and they welcomed it with applause, cheers and loud bugling. It was his second consecutive hundred at his home ground after going past the three-figure mark here against England in 2021. And it could not have come at a better time as well.

But before the epic fightback, the Indian innings resembled a crumbling rampart. It's not often that a team winning the toss would elect to bowl first here as that translates into a fourth-innings chase.

But Bangladesh skipper

Najmul Hossain Shanto bit the bullet while going against the trend, and was rewarded for it too. Rohit, who was saved by DRS when he was on 1, was the first to depart.

The Indian skipper had little choice other than playing a wobble seam delivery that came at him on a tight angle as he edged to Shanto at second slip.

Gill lasted just eight balls but he would count himself unlucky, feathering Mahmud's down the leg side delivery to stumper Litton Das.

Kohli walked into the Chepauk amid loud cheers and looked confident. But an old failing resurfaced to haunt him.

Mahmud pitched one just short of the length outside the off-stump, and the length was not suitable for a drive.

But the star batter chose to play an expansive one with the ball nestling in Litton's gloves after taking a healthy edge off his bat.

Jaiswal and Pant added 62 runs for the fourth wicket to temporarily check the free fall before both perished in close succession in the middle session.

Bangladesh might have thought the effort was good enough to keep the home side flat on the ropes, but Ashwin and Jadeja made them wiser as to why it is so tough to keep India on the back-foot at home for long.



Indian women crush Georgia; Gukesh leads men to victory over China

PTI ■ BUDAPEST

Grandmaster R Vaishali and Vantika Agrawal put up impressive performances as Indian women defeated Georgia while World Championship challenger D Gukesh led the men to victory over China in the seventh round as both teams continued their unbeaten streak in 45th Chess Olympiad here.

Vaishali and Vantika notched wins against Lela Javakhishvili and Bella Khotenashvili as Indian women thumped second seeds Georgia 3-1, while the men eked out a 2.5-1.5 over China.

On a day that saw D Harika settling for a draw with Nana Dzagnidze and Divya Deshmukh being held by Nino Batsiashvili from a better position, it was Vantika who handled her time pressure extremely well to play almost 20 moves with just about a minute on her clock to win her game and seal India's seventh straight victory.

The Indian women took their tally to an impressive 14 points out of a possible 14 and stretched their lead to two points over nearest rivals Poland, Kazakhstan and France who all have 12 points apiece.

In a surprising turn of events a blunder by Olivia Kiolbasa of Poland against Nataliya Buksa of Ukraine cost the Polish team dearly in the sixth hour of play as what looked like a certain victory became a 2-2 draw.

In the open session, Indian Grandmaster Gukesh showed the way.

Playing the white side of a Closed Sicilian Gukesh reached a drawn endgame after nearly five hours of play but he remained focus to find one mistake that was made by Chinese top board Wei Yi.

Speculation were rife about a possible clash between D Gukesh and Ding Liren - the two contestants in the next World Championship for a final showdown ahead of their match in Singapore in November.

However, the Chinese think tank decided to rest the

reigning world champion. That was already a shock for the pundits of the game.

R Pragganandhaa played out a quick draw as black against Yangyi Yu of China while P Harikrishna pressed for some time before the position petered out to be equal in the ensuing rook and pawns endgame against Wang Yue of China on the fourth board.

Earlier Arjun Erigaise went for the kill against an alert Bu Xiangzhi and the latter found a nice piece sacrifice to force a draw through repetition.

With just four rounds to come, the Indian men have done everything correct thus far and are sitting pretty with a 100 percent score like their female counterparts.

Iran is the only team in close pursuit of the leaders on 13 points while a pack of four teams - Serbia, Hungary, Armenia and defending champions Uzbekistan share the third spot on 12 points each.

In the next round now, the Indian men will take on Iran while the women are pitted against Poland.

RESULTS ROUND 7 OPEN: India (14) beat China (11) 2.5-1.5 (D Gukesh beat Wei Yi; Yu Yangyi drew with R Pragganandhaa; Arjun Erigaise drew with Bu Xiangzhi; Wang Yue drew with P Harikrishna); Iran (13) beat Vietnam (11) 2.5-1.5; Lithuania (10) lost to Hungary (12) 1.5-2.5; Uzbekistan (12) beat Ukraine (10) 3-1; Serbia (12) beat Netherlands (10) 3-1; Armenia (12) beat England (10) 2.5-1.5; France (11) drew with Georgia (11) 2-2.

Women: India (14) beat Georgia (11) 3-1 (D Harika drew with Nana Dzagnidze; Lela Javakhishvili lost to R Vaishali; Divya Deshmukh drew with Nino Batsiashvili; Bella Khotenashvili lost to Vantika Agrawal); Ukraine (11) drew with Poland (12) 2-2; Azerbaijan (10) lost to Kazakhstan (12) 1-3; Armenia (11) drew with United States of America (11) 2-2; Mongolia (11) drew with Germany (11) 2-2; Spain (10) lost to France (12) 1.5-2.5.

Kevin de Bruyne injury scare as Man City is held 0-0 by Inter Milan in the Champions League

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City faces a new injury concern for Kevin de Bruyne ahead of a showdown with Premier League title rival Arsenal after the playmaker was substituted at halftime of Champions League match against Inter Milan.

The Belgium international looked in discomfort after making a run late in the first half. After receiving treatment, De Bruyne didn't return for the second half and was replaced by Ilkay Gundogan. The game ended 0-0.

City hosts title rival Arsenal at Etihad Stadium on Sunday. City manager Pep Guardiola said he didn't know the extent of De Bruyne's injury, but was informed by the club doctor the playmaker could not carry on in the second half.

"I didn't speak with the doctors yet," Guardiola said about De Bruyne's availability for the weekend. "(He will be) Assessed tonight, maybe tomorrow. We will have more info tomorrow."

De Bruyne endured an injury-disrupted campaign last season when he was sidelined from August to January with a hamstring problem. He returned to help the club secure a record fourth straight English title.

He has started every game this season and scored in City's 4-1 win against Ipswich last month.

City held off challenges from Arsenal in each of the last two seasons to lift the title. The north London club is expected to be City's main rival again this term.

Arsenal has its own injury



problems ahead of the game after captain Martin Odegaard was ruled out with ankle ligament damage.

Without De Bruyne, City failed to find a breakthrough against Inter and was shut out at home in the Champions League for the first time since a 0-0 draw with Sporting Lisbon in March 2022.

It was only the second time in all competitions since then that Guardiola's team failed to score at home - the other coming in a 0-0 with Arsenal in the league in March.

City extended its unbeaten home run in European games to 32, dating back to a 2-1 loss to Lyon in 2018.

Haaland locked on 99 Erling Haaland has looked unstoppable this season with nine goals in his first four games of the campaign before

Wednesday match. But that run was snapped by Inter with the Norway striker stuck on 99 goals for City.

Haaland also failed to score against the Italians when the teams met in the Champions League final in 2023, which City won 1-0 to lift the trophy for the first time in its history.

"They are masters of defending," Guardiola said.

With his contract expiring at the end of the season, Guardiola sounds like he's still loving life at City.

Asked by an Italian journalist if he could see himself working in Italy in the future, Guardiola said: "I really enjoy being here. I love English football, it is fantastic, really enjoyable. They leave you alone to get on with the job. That doesn't happen anywhere else."



PSG's post-galactico era begins with a last-gasp win

THANKS TO GIRONA GOALKEEPER'S BLUNDER

AP ■ PARIS

It took a huge blunder to gift Paris Saint-Germain victory in the first Champions League match of its post-galactico era. PSG scraped a 1-0 home win over tournament newcomer Girona on Wednesday with a stoppage-time goal, which came when goalkeeper Paulo Gazzaniga let a left-wing cross from Nuno Mendes trickle under his hands and through his legs.

For the first time in more than a decade, PSG began its Champions League campaign without at least one star player, known in soccer as a "galactico."

But after the likes of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Edinson Cavani, Neymar, Kylian Mbappé and Lionel Messi came and went without winning Europe's elite club competition, PSG started this campaign with a new identity based on more French players and greater teamwork.

It was also PSG's first Champions League game without Mbappé for seven years after France's star joined Real Madrid, scoring for his new club on Tuesday.

Mbappé was reproached by his critics for not tracking back or closing down enough when he played up front for PSG.

Yet PSG coach Luis Enrique could be heard shouting when his players failed to close down properly and, at one point, Girona kept the ball for 2 1/2 minutes with PSG's ball-watching players chasing aimlessly.

"They defended well and we struggled to create clear-cut chances," Enrique said.

After 34 minutes, whistles could be heard from the crowd at a subdued Parc des Princes. Aside from half-chances from midfielder Warren Zaire-Emery and Marco Asensio, who went off injured late in the first half with an apparent

hamstring injury, there was scant attacking play.

"All the teams have things to improve," Zaire-Emery said. "We have new players coming into the team who need to settle in."

Yet this was even more the case for a Girona team that lost several key players from last season, including striker Artem Dovbyk, winger Savinho and right back Yan Couto.

Girona defender Ladislav Krejčí made a brilliant tackle on Ousmane Dembélé after the PSG attacker went clean through on goal in the first half.

But with moments left, Gazzaniga's howler spared PSG.

"We didn't play very well, and we have to say it," PSG midfielder Vitinha said. "We had trouble keeping the ball. You have to give Girona credit, but we need to look at what we didn't do well."

Malvika beats Kristy Gilmour to enter China Open quarterfinals

PTI ■ CHANGZHOU (CHINA)

Young Indian shuttler Malvika Bansod continued her fine form as she cruised to her maiden Super 1000 quarterfinal after eking out a hard-fought victory against higher-ranked Kristy Gilmour in the China Open here on Thursday.

Malvika, ranked 43rd, toiled hard for one hour and five minutes before pulling off a 21-17 19-21 21-16 win over the two-time Commonwealth Games medallist and world number 25 from Scotland in a women's singles round-of-16 contest.

"This is the first time I will play a quarterfinal of a Super 1000 tournament so it is a dream come true and the biggest achievement of my life so far," Malvika said after the match.

"I dreamt about this before the tournament that how would it be if I reached the quarters and now I'm top 8, so it's a great feeling," she added.

Talking about the match, the Indian, who now leads head-to-head against Gilmour 3-2, said "There is a lot of drift from this part so I found it difficult to control in the last parts of the last game and second game as well. But I'm glad god helped me."

The win comes a day after the 22-year-old defeated Paris Olympics bronze medallist Gregoria Mariska Tunjung of Indonesia.

The Nagpur shuttler feels she has been able to control the shuttle in the tricky conditions here.

"My retrieving is working well, I am able to control the shuttle better than the others. The conditions are a bit tricky for



both players but I'm able to handle it better," she said.

She added that she has focused on enhancing her strength,

and it is yielding positive results.

"This circuit is very tough because if you are entering a Super 500 or 1000 you end up playing a top 10 in the first round as I'm not seeded yet. So, I need to be physically strong from the beginning itself. I have been working on that."

However Malvika, who is the lone Indian shuttler remaining in the competition, has a tough challenge ahead of her as she will be up against fourth seed and two-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the last eight stage.

Although the Japanese shuttler has won both the outings against Malvika, the Indian had come close to defeating Yamaguchi and hopes she can cross the line this time round.

"Hope for the best. I am in good form let's see how it goes tomorrow. I will give my best," she said.