UP govt implements drone technology to monitor rural development projects



LUCKNOW: The Uttar Pradesh government has implemented drone technology to monitor and assess the quality of rural development projects, official sources said here on Monday.

Sources said that under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's leadership, drones are now overseeing critical initiatives in villages, including housing construction, drinking water systems, irrigation, road building, playgrounds and plantation projects.

Special monitoring teams have been constituted at the district level to verify the progress of these works, including those under the MGNREGA scheme, with the capacity to expand as needed. This innovative approach aims to ensure greater transparency in rural development, while holding officials accountable for their performance.

The government believes that using technology in this way will not only improve the quality of development projects, but also bolster the rural economy. In line with the Modi government's national development agenda, the Yogi administration places a strong emphasis on technology to enhance governance.

Continuous monitoring of MGNREGA works is being conducted through drone surveillance, with district-wise inspections in place to ensure the efficient implementation of rural development schemes.

Drone footage is being used to document progress and confirm the quality of work, ensuring that the benefits of these schemes reach the intended beneficiaries without any compromise in quality.

To ensure quality and accountability in rural development, the government is conducting inspections of ongoing development works for the financial year 2023-24. Following these inspections, the accountability of district officials will be determined, particularly in areas where projects have not met the prescribed standards.

The government has directed district officers to fully cooperate with the state-level drone teams overseeing these inspections. Chief Development Officers (CDOs) have been tasked with ensuring that subordinate officers and staff assist the drone teams effectively.

In response to the scale of the initiative, the number of teams deployed at the state headquarters has been increased to ensure broader coverage of drone surveillance, enhancing the transparency and quality of development projects. The first successful trial of this initiative was carried out in the Banda district.

This initiative by Yogi will not only foster transparency in rural development but also strengthen the rural economy. By improving transparency and ensuring high-quality work, the program will create more permanent employment opportunities in rural areas.

The CM believes that the efficient execution of village-level development projects will lead to new job opportunities and pave the way for economic empowerment.

Stubble Burning: Explain for non-prosecution of officials, SC directs Punjab, Haryana govts



NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the States of Punjab and Haryana to explain for the non-prosecution of officials who have not taken action on people involved in stubble burning.

A Bench comprising Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih asked how the stubble-burning incidents had occurred on the day of Diwali.

It said the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) amendment rules 2024 have been brought in force. We direct all concerned to ensure compliance with these rules and to ensure penalty in light of Section 15 of (the Environment Protection Act) EPA 1986 since an adjudicating officer is also in place now.

A counsel mentions a 2020 Interlocutory Application filed in the Court which has sought a complete ban on stubble burning and a complete ban on firecrackers including green crackers as well.

Justice Oka said We have already issued directions today in another case.

The Advocate General (AG) of Punjab said, " One important thing and a good thing which Punjab has done is that they have banned usage of firecrackers on certain conditions.

Justice Oka said, "Place it on record. We will consider it."

The Court was hearing the issue of lack of prosecution done under Section 15 of the Environmental Protection Act, 1986 by the officials against illegal stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana.

Justice Oka said, "What you people have done is that you have picked up around 56 officials who have done something this year. What about previous officials who slept over it, the court asked.

Counsel for Punjab said, "It has to be done in due process. Also, we have to look into the present, the past is gone.

Justice Oka said, "How can the past be forgotten? Look at the past first. Only 56 officials have been prosecuted. What about others? Nothing has been done by you people of continuous stubble burning.

Amicus Curie said, "Please see that during Diwali only these burning instances have increased.

Justice Oka said, "How can this happen? How come this increased in Diwali? Why are you sparing your officers?. Farmers are filing IA before us because they are fearing things.

The compliances filed by Punjab and Haryana indicated that there was large number of fires during Diwali.

Even today we find reluctance on the part of governments to take action under Section 14 of the CAQM Act 2021.

We have observed in earlier orders that instead of direct prosecution, states are still busy just issuing showcause notices despite flagrant breaches.

States owe an explanation to us on Prosecution, the Court said.

High-level Committee approves Rs 725 cr fire services projects for Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Bengal



NEW DELHI: A high-level committee, under the chairmanship of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday approved three projects of Rs 725.62 crore under "Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the states" for Chhattisgarh, Odisha and West Bengal.

According to a Home Ministry statement, the committee has approved Rs 147.76 crore for Chhattisgarh, Rs 201.10 crore for Odisha and Rs 376.76 crore for West Bengal.

The high-level committee comprised of Finance Minister, Agriculture Minister and Vice Chairman NITI Aayog as members.

To fulfil the government's vision of disaster resilient India, the Home Ministry has taken several initiatives to ensure effective management of disasters in the country. Several steps have been taken to prevent any extensive loss to life and property during disasters by strengthening disaster risk reduction system in India.

The Central Government has allocated a total of Rs 5000 crore under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) for "Expansion and Modernization of Fire Services in the states", proposals of 15 states at a total outlay of Rs 2542.12 crore had already been approved, the statement added.

More than Rs 21,026 crore has already been released to the states during this year. This include Rs 14,878.40 crore from State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) to 26 States, Rs 4,637.66 crore from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to 15 States, Rs 1,385.45 crore from State Disaster Mitigation Fund (SDMF) to 11 States and Rs 124.93 crore from National Disaster Mitigation Fund (NDMF) to three states.

India-Russia partnership serves both sides and world too: EAM



NEW DELHI: A partnership between an India that has an 8% growth rate for multiple decades ahead, and a Russia that is a key natural resources provider and a major technology leader, serve both sides and the world well, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday at the India-Russia Business Forum in Mumbai.

Addressing the event, attended by Russian First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov, EAM said that with the world moving towards ever greater multi-polarity and with Russia consciously focusing more deeply on Asia since 2022, it has created many more avenues of cooperation between the two nations.

He flagged 10 significant developments that both sides need to take note of: Our bilateral trade is today at USD 66 billion. This makes the goal of reaching USD 100 billion by 2030 more than realistic.

The balance of trade however needs urgent redressal since it is so one-sided. It is imperative that non-tariff barriers and regulatory impediments are speedily addressed for this to happen.

The India-Eurasian Economic Union trade in goods negotiations commenced in March this year. We need to vigorously take it forward.

The first ever bilateral Investment Forum took place in Moscow in April 2024. We also need to expedite negotiations on the Bilateral Investment Treaty.

The programme for cooperation in regard to the Russian Far-East from 2024-29 was signed in July during the Annual Summit. It encourages other related activities including in the connectivity sphere.

Mutual settlement of trade in national currencies is of great importance, especially in the current circumstances. Special Rupee Vostro Accounts are right now an effective mechanism. However, even in the short run, a better trade balance with national currency settlements is the answer.

Signing of a bilateral agreement between the customs authorities of the two countries in May 2024 on Authorized Economic Operators, has had a big impact on smoothening the ease of doing trade.

The three connectivity initiatives between us – INSTC, Chennai-Vladivostok Corridor and the Northern Maritime Route – all need continued attention, if we are to realize full potential.

A growing Russian appreciation of Make In India as a program to deepen business will certainly help to take forward our cooperation in many many domains.

And finally, I flag to your attention, the importance of non-economic domains, such as education and film as contributions to a larger societal but also an economic connect between us. EAM said the above issues are expressions of the task that Leaders of India and Russia have given during the Annual Summit to develop a Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

In fact, they have also charged us with developing a Programme of Economic Cooperation till 2030, on which work is currently underway."

He said there are concerns regarding banking and payment related issues, logistical challenges like shipping, insurance and reinsurance as well as market access, and added that both sides have to find solutions that work to the comfort level of those actually involved in trade.

EAM said that their two economies are complementary in nature and their approach is not transactional but aimed at building long-term partnerships. In energy domains such as oil, gas, coal or uranium, India will always be a major player in the international markets. This applies as well to the demand for fertilizers of various kinds. Constructing a mutually beneficial arrangement will help us both address the volatility and the uncertainty of our times, he added. He also said that demographic unevenness has created demand and supply imbalances across the world, and that India and Russia can be partners in this regard too.

"It would require a focused initiative that customizes human resources for the Russian market. That is best done with the active participation of businesses," EAM said.

Tomorrow the two sides meet in New Delhi, for the 25th Session of the Intergovernmental Russian-Indian Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation.

SC issues notice on PIL seeking mandatory restrictions on children buying liquor

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday issued notice to the Centre, all states and Union Territories (UTs) and sought their response on a PIL seeking imposition of mandatory restrictions on buying and selling of liquor across the country.

The PIL was filed by an NGO Community against Drunken Driving (CADD).

A bench comprising Justice BR Gavai and Justice KV Viswanathan sought the response of the Central government as well as all States and Union Territories (UTs) on the PIL seeking effective and mandatory age checks at Liquor Shops.

The founder and social activist of the NGO, Prince Singhal requested the court to please see that nowadays younger children are buying liquor freely without any restrictions and no specific regulations at all.

In countries where age is high on buying of liquor, the crime rate is low and vice versa. Please see the World Health Organization (WHO) reports as well, the petitioner said.

Justice Gavai at the outset said, "What can we do? They can instead of going directly to buy can send their servants to buy.

The Petitioner said, " I understand. But the restrictions, if any, can be made more stricter."

The Bench eventually issued the notice on the limited prayer of restriction aspect.

The Court issued a notice in the matter and asked the Central government and all States and UTs to file their response on the plea, which calls for the strict enforcement of rules to prevent underage drinking and mandatory age-checks at liquor shops.

Siddique murder Main shooter has no criminal history say UP cops

BAHRAICH: Suspected main shooter Shivkumar Gautam arrested in the NCP leader Baba Siddique's murder case has no criminal history while three of his accomplices have been booked here earlier for molesting a minor girl, a senior official said on Monday.

The Uttar Pradesh STF and Mumbai Police on Sunday arrested Shivkumar along with his four protectors -- Anurag Kashyap, Gyan Prakash Tripathi, Akash Srivastava and Akhilendra Pratap Singh -- from Nanpara in Bahraich district.

During investigation, we have found that main accused Shivkumar Gautam alias Shiva and his accomplice Anurag Kashyap have no criminal history in Bahraich," Superintendent of Police Vrinda Shukla said.

However, Shukla said that a case was registered against three others -- Akhilendra, Akash and Gyan Prakash -- who were arrested on Sunday, for allegedly molesting a minor during a Moharram procession and under sections of the POCSO Act.

It has also come to the fore that they had some land dispute with the other party, she said, adding that a probe is on in the matter.

According to police, Anurag, Gyan Prakash, Akash, and Akhilendra have been arrested for sheltering Shivkumar and helping him flee to Nepal.

Former Maharashtra minister Siddique, 66, was shot dead on October 12 by three assailants outside his son MLA Zeeshan Siddique's office building in Bandra East, Mumbai.

Meanwhile, during interrogation, Shivkumar said he was told that in exchange for killing Siddique he would get Rs 10 lakh after the murder and that every month he would get something, the UP STF said in a statement.

Shivkumar also told the STF that they had been following Siddique in Mumbai for several days and on the night of October 12 when they got the right time, they killed him, the statement said. According to the STF, Shivkumar told the force that "he and Dharmaraj Kashyap (already arrested in the case) are from the same village. He used to work as a scrap dealer in Pune. His and Shubham Lonkar's scrap shops were next to each other".

The main shooter said Lonkar worked for gangster Lawrence Bishnoi and made him talk to Lawrence's brother Anmol Bishnoi several times through SnapChat, according to the statement.

Meanwhile, Shivkumar's mother Suman said her son could not commit murder.

"I was unwell, the media people woke me up in the morning and then I came to know that Shiva has been arrested," the mother told reporters with tears in her eyes.

"We had no news of him since four days after Holi in March. We do not know what he did but he has never even killed an ant here. We do not believe that he would do such a thing," she said. Meanwhile, family members of the Shivkumar's accomplices said they are "innocent".

Vishal Srivastava, the elder brother of Akash, told reporters, "We only know that Anurag, a resident of the village, took them all with him. My brother is innocent. He is being framed in the case."

Pradeep Tripathi, father of Gyan Prakash, also said that his son is innocent.

"Two boys from the village lived next door, they did something wrong there (in Maharashtra). My son was their friend. My son used to work at a mobile shop. The day before yesterday he said that he was going to Gonda...at night we came to know that police had taken him away," he said.

Radhey Kashyap, father of Anurag said, "He (Anurag) was here four or five

days ago. We only knew that he had gone with some businessmen to sell clothes and would come back. In the morning, we came to know that Anurag was arrested."

Steve Jyrwa crowned as winner of Best Dancer Season 4



MUMBAI: After months of spectacular performances in a fierce competition, Sony Entertainment Television's homegrown dance reality show India's Best Dancer Season 4 has drawn curtains on another electrifying season with Steve Jyrwa being crowned as the reigning champion.

The Grand Finale was a night of electrifying energy, heartfelt performances, and a fitting culmination of the journey to find India's ultimate dance icon.

Hosts Jay Bhanushali and Aniket Chauhan along with the esteemed panel of judges – Karisma Kapoor, Geeta Kapur, and Terence Lewis, rooted for the Great Grand Finalists – Steve Jywra, Harsh Keshri, Nextion, Nepo, Akanksha Mishra aka Akina, and Aditya Malviya.

The finale was further enhanced by the presence of 'Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa Season 11' winner Manisha Rani, and artists Urvashi Rautela & Shael Oswal who came to promote their upcoming song 'Rabba Kare'.

The team from Sony Entertainment Television's upcoming reality show 'IBD vs SD: Champions Ka Tashan' – led by Dance Ka Pitamah - Remo D'Souza, Malaika Arora and Geeta Kapur were also part of this episode and elevated the entertainment quotient with their witty remarks, creating memorable moments for the audience.

'IBD vs SD: Champions Ka Tashan' will premiere on November 16 and air every Saturday and Sunday at 7.30 PM on Sony Entertainment Television.

Steve Jyrwa, the reigning champion of India's Best Dancer Season 4, lifted the coveted trophy and was honored with a generous prize of INR 15 lakhs while his choreographer Raktim Thakuria was awarded a cheque of INR 5 lakhs from Sony Entertainment Television.

Steve also won a brand new Maruti Suzuki Swift felicitated by Partho Banerjee, Senior Executive Officer, Marketing and Sales, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd.

Shillong's Steve Jyrwa, along with choreographer Raktim Thakuria, has been unstoppable on India's Best Dancer, wowing the judges and earning full marks week after week with his rapid, precise footwork.

Despite early challenges that affected his ability to walk, Steve's grandmother's unwavering support transformed his life, helping him become the remarkable dancer he is today. His talent has caught the attention of guest Remo D'Souza, who wants to meet him after the show for his film.

Steve Jyrwa – Winner of India's Best Dancer Season 4 said, "Winning India's Best Dancer is a dream come true. This journey was full of learning, and challenges filled with long hours of practice, dedication, and constant learning, but it's also been incredibly rewarding. I am deeply grateful to the judges—Karisma Kapoor, Geeta Kapur, and Terence Lewis—who believed in me and pushed me every week to give my best. A huge thank you to my choreographer, Raktim Thakuria, and all those who supported me in this journey. This win is not just mine; it's for everyone who believed in me."

Karisma Kapoor – Judge of India's Best Dancer Season 4 said, Steve's journey has been nothing short of remarkable. From the moment he first performed, he captured our attention with his incredible talent, raw energy, and his fastest footwork. Steve has set a new standard on this stage with his livewire performances. It was a tough decision to make...But his win is truly well-deserved, and we are all incredibly proud of what he has achieved. Congratulations, Steve!

Geeta Kapur – Judge of India's Best Dancer Season 4 said, Congratulations, Steve! Your growth as a dancer has been remarkable, and it's been a privilege to watch you evolve with every performance. You truly embody what it means to be India's Best Dancer, and I do not doubt that you'll continue to shine and inspire dancers across the country. This is just the beginning of a remarkable journey for you. Keep dancing and keep inspiring! Terence Lewis – Judge of India's Best Dancer Season 4 said, "Congratulations on the incredible win, Steve! From the very beginning, you have brought something unique to the dance floor, blending skill, grace, and sheer determination into every performance. You've truly elevated the art form, and your growth throughout this season is a testament to your hard work and love for dance. This victory is just the beginning of many great achievements.