

OPINION 6

CHALLENGES OF G20
PRESIDENCY

WORLD 9

IRAN EXECUTION: MAN HUNG FROM
CRANE IN PUBLIC AMID PROTESTS

MONEY 10

IIP CONTRACTS 4% IN OCT,
AT 26-MONTH LOW

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY DECEMBER 13, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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ARGENTINA TO
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11 SPORT

Tawang trespass sparks Indian-PLA troops' clash

Local commanders
of both armies hold
flag meetings to
defuse situation

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

Tension flared up at the border in Arunachal Pradesh after Indian and Chinese troops came to blows leading to injuries to some soldiers on each side. The local commanders of both armies held flag meetings and defused the situation.

The incident took place on December 9 in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) when the Chinese troops transgressed there and the Indian soldiers contested their presence, Army sources said here on Monday. This face-off led to a scuffle resulting in minor injuries on both the sides.

Incidentally, this was the first physical scuffle between the two armies since 2020 when violent face-offs erupted in some parts of the LAC in Eastern Ladakh leading to a major brawl on June 15 in the Galwan valley. Twenty Indian soldiers, including the commanding officer, were killed and more than 40 Chinese also died in the bloody clash.

As regards the latest incident, Army sources said along



Indian Army personnel carrying out drills at Kibithu close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh on Thursday
File Photo I PTI

the LAC in the Tawang Sector in Arunachal Pradesh there are areas of differing perception, wherein both sides patrol up to their claim lines. This has been the trend since 2006.

On December 9, PLA troops contacted the LAC in Tawang Sector which was contested by our troops in a firm and resolute manner. This face-off led to minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides, sources said. Both sides immediately disengaged from the area.

"As a follow-up of the incident, our commander in the area held a flag meeting with his counterpart to discuss the

issue in accordance with structured mechanisms to restore peace and tranquility," the source said.

According to sources, the "scuffle" broke out between personnel of the two armies in Yangtze region of eastern Tawang. Sources said the clash is reported to be "more than pushing and shoving". A similar transgression took place in June 2016, when nearly 250 PLA soldiers had transgressed into the area. But no clashes were reported then.

This sector in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh has seen such face-offs in the past also. The clash has come weeks

after Indian and Chinese troops disengaged from the last stand-off site in eastern Ladakh in late September. India has all along said relations between the two countries could not be normal till the status quo ante is restored as prevailing before May 2020 in Ladakh.

With the latest incident in Arunachal Pradesh, the focus has again shifted to China's intentions regarding the LAC dispute. The Indian security establishment shortly will take an exhaustive view of the situation all along the 4,000-long LAC. It stretches from Ladakh in the west to Arunachal Pradesh in the east.

Suicide horror haunts coaching hub Kota

3 teens kill themselves

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Three students, including two minors, preparing for competitive entrance examinations in Kota district of Rajasthan, allegedly committed suicide on Monday. The three deceased students were just 16, 17, and 18 years old.

Two of the students who allegedly committed suicide, Ankush and Ujjwal, hailed from Bihar. They were friends and were staying in the same hostel in adjacent rooms. One was preparing for engineering college entrance, while the other was studying to crack the medical college entrance tests. The police are yet to recover suicide notes from the scene of incidents.

The third student, Pranav, came from Madhya Pradesh, and was preparing for National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (Undergraduate) or NEET — a pre-medical entrance test.

Kota superintendent of police Keshar Singh Shekhawat said two students from Bihar were studying at a prominent coaching institute. They were found hanging from a ceiling fan in their paying guest (PG) accommodation. The first was 19 years old, while the second was aged 18.



"The two were Class XI students and were staying in different rooms of the same PG accommodation for the past six months. We are trying to find out whether they were friends or not. The incidents came to light when the owner of the PG informed the police control room," Shekhawat said.

The PG owner got suspicious when one of the boys did not come out of his room in the morning and did not respond to repeated knocks on the door. The owner then broke open the door and found him hanging from the ceiling fan.

In the afternoon, the sister of the second boy had come to meet him at the PG. "He was staying in the room next to the first boy. When he did not open the door, it was also broken open, and that boy was also found hanging from the ceiling fan," the SP said.

Police said no suicide notes were found on either of the boys and their mobiles are

being checked to get more information.

"The two were living in Kota for the past three years and they probably committed suicide last night after having dinner. The second boy had even called his sister last night," the police said.

In the third incident, a 17-year-old student, a resident of Shivpuri in Madhya Pradesh, committed suicide by allegedly consuming some poisonous substance. He died during treatment.

"Last night, he was found unconscious in the gallery of the PG and was spotted by another student who had come there to fill water. He informed the hostel owner who took the boy to a hospital where he was declared dead," according to the police.

No suicide note was found on him, but the police have recovered rat poison from the room.

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CAPSULE

INDIA NEEDS TO BE UNSC PERMANENT MEMBER: UK

London: The UK wants India to be among the new permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, alongside Brazil, Japan, Germany and African representation, British Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said on Monday.

INDIA BEAT JAPAN IN FIH WOMEN'S NATIONS CUP

Valencia: India thwarted a late fightback from Japan to secure a 2-1 victory in the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup here on Monday. Salima Tete gave India a fifth minute lead when she tackled two Japanese defenders with a change of direction inside the D before slotting the ball past Eika Nakamura with a cool-headed finish.

EVENT HELD ON 60 YEARS OF CUSTOMS ACT, 1962

Chennai: The Chennai Customs organised an event under the theme "Join Hands: Customs Force multiplier in protecting Flora & Fauna," to mark 60 years of enacting the Customs Act, 1962, on Monday.

ELEVEN PEOPLE KILLED IN JEEP ACCIDENT IN NEPAL

Kathmandu: At least eleven people were killed on Monday when a jeep they were travelling in met with an accident in Jajarkot district in Nepal, police said.

MORBI MUNICIPALITY TO BE DISSOLVED: GUJ TO HC

Ahmedabad: The Gujarat Government on Monday told the High Court it had decided to dissolve the municipality of Morbi, where a suspension bridge collapse on October 30 had killed 135 persons.

I&B Min blocks Pak OTT site, apps, social media a/cs for anti-India content

Web series 'Sevak:
The Confession'
against India's
security, integrity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday issued directions for blocking a Pakistan-based OTT platform's website, two mobile apps, four social media accounts and smart TV app, saying a series being shown by it was detrimental to India's national security and integrity.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on December 12 invoked emergency powers under the IT Rules 2021 to place the curbs on Pakistan-based OTT platform Vidly TV.

The platform Vidly TV had released a web series titled "Sevak: The Confessions" on

the anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. It was found to be detrimental to the national security, sovereignty and integrity of India, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said. Three episodes of the web series have been released till date, it said.

"Action against Pakistan-based Vidly TV follows the assessment that the provocative and wholly untrue web-series 'Sevak' was sponsored by Pakistan's info ops apparatus," senior adviser at the Ministry Kanchan Gupta said on Twitter.

The web-series portrayed an anti-India narrative on sensitive historical events and subjects of national importance such as Operation Blue Star and its aftermath, demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya, killing of a Christian missionary named Graham Staines, Malegaon blasts, Samjhauta Express blasts and inter-state river water dispute related to Sutlej Yamuna Link canal.

Bhupendra sworn in as Guj CM for 2nd term, 11 ex-Mins in new Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A second-time MLA Bhupendra Patel on Monday took oath as the Chief Minister of Gujarat for a second straight term in Gandhinagar in a grand ceremony attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Ministers, and Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States.

Sixteen other Ministers, including eight of Cabinet rank, too were sworn in. The new entrants include 11 former Ministers. Of the 11 former Ministers, seven were part of the Government led by him from September 2021 to December 2022.

They are Harsh Sanghavi, Jagdish Vishwakarma, Kanubhai Desai, Rushikesh Patel, Raghavji Patel, Kuber Dindor and Mukesh Patel. Four others, including Solanki, Bera, Khabad, and Bavaliya had served as Ministers in the BJP Governments in the past.

Patel, 60, was administered the oath as the 18th Chief



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets supporters during the swearing-in ceremony of Gujarat Chief Minister and Cabinet Ministers, in Gandhinagar on Monday
PTI

Minister by Governor Acharya Devvrat at a function held at the Helipad Ground near the new Secretariat.

A huge crowd of BJP workers clapped all the way during the ceremony. Patel won the

Ghatlodia seat with the highest margin of 1.92 lakh votes in the elections.

The Cabinet Ministers include Kanu Desai, Rishikesh Patel, Raghavji Patel, Balvantsinh Rajput, Kunvarji

Bavaliya, Mulu Bera, Kuber Dindor, and Bhanuben Babariya. Harsh Sanghvi and Jagdish Vishwakarma were sworn in as Ministers of State with an independent charge.

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Shifting flights to T1, T2 among 5-point action to unclog IGIA T3

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) along with airport operator Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) on Monday came out with a five-point action plan to avoid congestion and mess during the peak hours.

The measures include reducing flights during morning peak hours and to shift some flights to Terminal 1 and Terminal 2 or to non-peak hours at Terminal 3 and display wait time at arrival gates.

This comes after the Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday morning made a surprise visit to Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), amid complaints of congestion and overcrowding



for the past few days.

Sources said that changes could be seen taking effect within the next six to seven days. The winter holiday rush and wedding season has paid rich dividends to the aviation sector but airports at Delhi's IGI, Mumbai and Bengaluru have seen irate passengers complaining on social media about missed flights and serpentine pre-boarded lines. The situation may worsen after the Christmas rush which is

expected to start in a week if remedial measures are not taken.

Interestingly, this is the first time that over 4.27 lakh passengers boarded domestic flights on Sunday, the highest since Covid outbreak in March 2020 and also higher than the pre-pandemic daily average of 4.2 lakh. Not only Delhi's IGI airport's T3 but Mumbai T2 and Bengaluru also witnessed huge rush.

Passengers have been complaining for weeks about how departure from T3 is a tedious process. Visuals from the airport shared on social media show men and women lined up in queues for security check, with some saying they had to wait for two to three hours in the clearance area.

Continued on Page 2

Tewari moves notice for debate on Govt-judiciary showdown on collegium

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress MP Manish Tewari on Monday gave adjournment motion notice in Lok Sabha to discuss the Centre's confrontation with the judiciary on matters related to judicial appointments.

Tewari's motion came in the backdrop of an ongoing friction between the Centre and the judiciary on the issue of appointment of judges with the Supreme Court telling the Centre that the Collegium system was the "law of the land" which should be followed.

The issue of judicial appointment came to the fore as different Government functionaries made a number of statements on the subject. Union Law Minister Kiren

Rijiju for two months has been strongly criticizing the collegium system for judicial appointments.

Speaking on the Congress' adjournment motion notice on the Centre's confrontation with the judiciary on Friday, Rijiju had said, "We aren't like the Congress party that overturns everything and captures institutions. BJP respects all institutions of the country."

In his letter on Monday which was addressed to the Lok Sabha Speaker, Tewari said, "Discussion on the confrontation with the judiciary brought to the fore by recent statements made by various Government and constitutional functionaries, including the Hon'ble Law Minister".

Continued on Page 2

Cong condemns leader's call for 'killing' PM Modi

PTI ■ BHOPAL

A senior Congress leader in Madhya Pradesh has made a controversial remark against Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking people to be prepared to "kill" Modi to save the Constitution and the future of minorities and Dalits.

A First Information Report (FIR) was registered on Monday afternoon at Pawai police station in Panna district against the Congress leader and former state minister, Raja Pateria, for making the remarks against the Prime Minister.

In a video that surfaced on social media in the morning, Pateria can be heard telling Congress workers, "be ready to kill Modi. Kill in the sense of defeating him".

The Congress on Monday denounced the remarks made

by its leader against the Prime Minister, saying they are not acceptable to the party and need to be condemned.

".....Modi will end the elections. Modi will divide on the basis of religion, caste and language. The future of Dalits, tribals and minorities is in danger.

If you want to save the Constitution, then be ready to kill Modi. Kill in the sense of defeating him, Pateria told a meeting of Congress workers at Pawai town in Panna district.

State Home Minister Narottam Mishra, who had ordered the registration of the FIR, said the police found Pateria spread hatred and enmity among Dalits, minorities, and tribal communities based on religion, caste, and language, at the meeting.

Continued on Page 2

Maha ex-HM gets bail, to wait in jail for 10 days till SC hears CBI

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than 13 months after he was arrested by the ED in a money laundering case, the Bombay High Court on Monday granted bail to Maharashtra's former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in a corruption case registered against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

However, Deshmukh will not walk out of the jail immediately, as the HC noted the bail order would become effective only after ten days. The rider to the bail order came after the CBI sought a stay on the effect of the bail order to approach the Supreme Court. The HC granted 10 days' time to the CBI to challenge his order in the SC.

Detailed report on P5

SIT grills Badal for 3 hrs in Kotkapura firing case

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal was on Monday questioned for nearly three hours by a special investigations team of Punjab Police probing into the 2015 Kotkapura police firing case.

The special investigations team (SIT), led by Additional Director General of Police LK Yadav, had summoned Badal to appear before the probe team on Monday.

Badal was the deputy chief minister and holding the home portfolio when incidents of desecration of religious texts and the subsequent police firing at people protesting against it had taken place in Faridkot in 2015.

The Akali Dal chief

reached the Punjab Police Officers' Institute here around 11:40 am, official sources said.

Badal did not speak to reporters after his questioning.

The incidents relate to the theft of a 'bir' (copy) of the Guru Granth Sahib, putting up handwritten sacrilegious posters, and torn pages of the holy book being found scattered at Bargari in Faridkot in 2015.

This series of events had triggered protests and two persons -- Gurjeet Singh and Kishan Bhagwan Singh -- were killed in Behbal Kalan and a few others injured at Kotkapura in Faridkot in police firing.

The SIT had also questioned Badal on September 14. He was questioned on June 26, 2021, as well.



On October 12, the SIT had questioned former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal in the matter.

On September 6, another SIT led by Inspector General of Police Naunihal Singh had grilled the Akali Dal chief in the 2015 Behbal Kalan police firing case.

While the Yadav-led SIT is investigating the Kotkapura firing case, the Naunihal-led team is probing into the Behbal Kalan incident.

The Akali Dal had earlier accused the AAP government in Punjab of politicising the case in order to divert people's attention from its 'failures'.

28 shifted from trade & tax dept for accountability, first-timers brought in

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 28 officers from the trade and tax department have been transferred by Chief Secretary of Delhi Government Naresh Kumar on Monday, at the behest of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, aiming to bring objectivity, accountability, and transparency.

"Entrenched Staff at the middle level, who were posted in Trade and Tax Dept for five to seven years have been shifted out and only the first timers who never worked in trade tax department have been posted and all officials who were on a repeat posting to the department, removed," said Delhi Government sources.

"To ensure farthest possible objectivity, 'First in first out principle' was followed while

transferring from other non-sensitive depts to trade and tax dept," they said.

"It may be noted, that officials at the middle level are at the cutting edge of the Trade and Taxes Department public interface. They are the ones who are entrusted with the assessment, supervision, inspection, and enforcement functions/powers of the Department," sources stated.

As per the order by Amitabh Joshi, Deputy Secretary Services Department, dated December 12, the Competent Authority is pleased to order the transfer/posting of the Grade-I (DASS) officers.

Some of the officers who have been transferred includes, "Geeta Kashyap, Anup Ahuja, Kuldeep Sharma, Raju Tripathi, Rama Rajput, Subhash Dutt, Gurmeet Singh,

Leopard caught napping near highway in Maha, rescued

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A six-year-old leopard was rescued by the Wildlife SOS team and Maharashtra Forest Department officials during the weekend, after it was found sleeping along the highway near Dhotre village in Ahmednagar district of Western Maharashtra.

The residents of Dhotre village were on Saturday shocked to find a leopard taking a cat nap on the side of a nearby highway, which falls the Takli Dhokeshwar Forest Range. The leopard was apparently resting after feeding on prey.

Concerned about the safety of the wild cat, the villagers alerted the state forest officials who in turn called the Wildlife SOS team that operates out of the Manikdoh Leopard Rescue Centre, for assistance.

Centre committed to rehabilitating slum dwellers in Delhi: Puri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre is committed to rehabilitating slum dwellers in Delhi and there is less than one 'jhuggi' per acre of land earmarked for their resettlement, the Centre informed the Rajya Sabha. Replying to supplementaries during the Question Hour, Minister for Housing and Urban Development Hardeep Singh Puri said the Centre has already provided alternative accommodation to the eligible people but only a few have occupied the flats and many of them have gone to court.

He said the policy of the

government of the National Capital Territory of Delhi enunciated on December 11, 2017 is being followed for rehabilitation of slum dwellers.

The policy stipulates that the eligibility for rehabilitation should be there for all 'jhuggi-jhopri' and 'bastis' which came up before January 1, 2006 and those which came up before January 1, 2015 shall not be demolished before providing compensation and no new ones are allowed to come up.

"We have provided alternative accommodation to the eligible people but only a few of them have occupied the flats," he told the House, adding



that many of them have moved courts and several 'jhuggi' dwellers have sought stays.

"The seven government colonies which are coming up for redevelopment are spread over an area of 536 acres and the number of 'jhuggi' house-

holds identified are 507, which means less than one jhuggi in less than one acre of land," he said.

Puri said in terms of eligibility for rehabilitation, 100 EWS flats have been purchased from DDA. But, after that a large number of jhuggi dwellers, whether eligible or not, have gone to the courts and obtained a number of stays.

"Out of 370 or so JJ clusters, we have already done surveys on 210 of them. Recently the prime minister released 3000 flats in Kalkaji to the beneficiaries and two such other projects are ready," he said.

The minister said we are also in an advanced stage of processing the conversion of all JJ clusters under DDA which will provide modern flats, except those clusters which are under DUCIB (Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board).

The central government will conduct a survey and get them built into modern flats since the Delhi government has not moved on them, Puri said.

The minister also suggested that the word informal settlements be used instead of slums.

In his written reply, the minister said the Central

Government is implementing the project for redevelopment of seven General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) colonies in Delhi, which are spread over an area of 536 acres.

"The area of each of these seven colonies is -- Sarojini Nagar 255 acres, Netaji Nagar 111 acres, Nauroji Nagar 25 acres, Kasturba Nagar 50 acres, Thyagraj Nagar 14 acres, Srinivasपुरी 73 acres and Mohammadpur 8 acres.

"Under this GPRA redevelopment project, 12,970 existing old houses are being replaced by 19,206 number of new houses. The 'jhuggis' in the

project area, which are eligible for rehabilitation/relocation in terms of the eligibility criteria prescribed in the policy notified by Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, are offered suitable accommodation," he said.

Puri said the eligibility criteria, inter-alia, includes existence of 'jhuggi-jhopri basti' prior to 01.01.2006 and jhuggi before 01.01.2015 in such jhuggi-jhopri basti.

"In these colonies, there are 507 number of 'jhuggi' households out of which 113 are eligible 'jhuggi' households and 394 are ineligible 'jhuggi' households.

"For rehabilitation/relocation of eligible 'jhuggi' households, 100 EWS flats at Narela have been purchased from the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), out of which 90 have been allotted to eligible 'jhuggi' households, out of which five have already taken possession of the new flats. However, 18 eligible 'jhuggi' households of Thyagraj Nagar (Prem Nagar) have obtained a stay from Hon'ble High Court of Delhi," the minister said.

"No proposal has been received from the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi for development of slums," the minister also said.

Bhupendra sworn in as Guj CM...

From Page 1

The six other Ministers of the State include Parshottam Solanki, Bachu Khabad, Mukesh Patel, Praful Pansheriya, Kuverji Halpati and Bhikhusinh Parmar.

Of these 16 Ministers, four belong to the Koli community (Bavaliya, Khabad, Solnaki and Mukesh Patel), three are Patidars (Raghavji, Rishikesh and Praful), three OBCs (Vishwakarma, Parmar and Bera) and two are tribals (Halpati and Dindor).

Babariya belongs to a Scheduled Caste community, Sanghvi is Jain, Desai a Brahmin, and Rajput a Kshatriya.

PM Modi congratulated CM Patel and his new team in a tweet.

Road safety: Tactical Urbanism trial at Mukundpur Chowk

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

To save lives and make Delhi roads safe for all, the SaveLIFE Foundation (SLF), with support from Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited and in close partnership with the Delhi Traffic Police, the Delhi Transport Department and PWD (North) has launched a Tactical Urbanism trial at Mukundpur Chowk.

As per the Delhi Traffic Police, the intervention area at Mukundpur Chowk where the Tactical Urbanism Trial has been undertaken witnessed 32 serious crashes between 2017 and 2021, leading to 10 deaths and 35 injuries.

Tactical Urbanism (TU) trials are temporary, quick and relatively low-cost interventions, which test out urban design, transportation planning and infrastructural changes for improving road safety for all road users, especially the most vulnerable, like pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised transport users. Once the interventions are proven, the relevant

Government agencies are expected to make them permanent.

As part of the Zero Fatality Corridor (ZFC) initiative, SaveLIFE Foundation tests temporary urban design interventions. An essential component of these trials is road space redistribution to ensure modal equity, road geometrics modification, traffic channelisation, vehicular speed reduction, and addition of pedestrian and cyclist safety infrastructure.

Speaking about the immediate need to support such interventions, the spokesperson of Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited, said, "Road crashes are an enormous cause of concern across the country. The loss of life and livelihood witnessed as a result of road crashes requires immediate attention and innovative solutions.

Suicide horror haunts coaching...

From Page 1

According to information in the open domain, as many as 19 students committed suicide in Kota in 2018, seven in 2017 and 17 in 2016.

The incident has once again put the spotlight on the country's biggest coaching hub where students are subjected to tremendous pressure to crack the cut-throat competitions for medical and engineering entrance examinations.

The coaching students face dual pressure for performing in the academics to clear the 10+2 examinations as also to crack the entrance tests for which the coaching institutes aid them in learning tricks to quickly solve the questions in the entrance.

"The coaching institutes and agencies conducting the entrance tests are to be blamed equally as they never factor in the psychological factors and the stress these tests mount on the young minds. I think it's high time that institutes hire

professional counsellors to cater to the psychological needs of young adolescents undergoing paramount stress from parents and studies," Associate Professor at Gargi College of Delhi University and clinical psychologist Dr Poonam Phogat told *The Pioneer*.

Psychological needs should be addressed in the coaching package itself now. Removing fans in winters so that students do not hang themselves or putting iron mesh under the fans are illogical measures, Dr Phogat quipped.

Earlier, the district administration had set up a suicide hotline where anxious students could call to seek counselling. The move was initiated following widespread media scrutiny of Kota's teen suicides and self-harm cases.

The coaching hub is notorious for pushing students to the edge with long class hours, long assignments, and very competitive internal tests which determine whether a student is

promoted or demoted among the many "batches". Top batches get the most sought after teachers. However, the coaching institutes do not have regular clinical psychologists or the sophistication to handle young minds undergoing stressful mental conditions.

A student in 2016 had called for all coaching centres to be shuttered, before jumping to her death despite having cracked the highly coveted IIT-JEE mains exams.

In 2019, the Rajasthan Government constituted a State-level committee to prepare a legislative draft for regulation of coaching centres to reduce stress among those studying at such institutes. However, the State government is yet to make the draft public. Earlier, the Rajasthan Government has announced plans to bring a Bill to regulate coaching institutes in Kota in the wake of such rising cases of student suicides but the same is yet to see the light of the day.

Shifting flights to T1, T2 among 5-point action to unclog IGIA...

From Page 1

As per the new action plan announced by the airport operator, apart from posting real-time updates on waiting time on social media, a command centre will monitor crowding at the gates on a real-time basis. "A command center will monitor crowding at the gates real-time," the Ministry said in a statement.

The Government has also asked Delhi international airport to deploy crowd managers and ushers to guide travelers. Airlines will be notified of the crowd numbers so that check-in points can be made congestion-free. Real-time updates on wait time will also be posted on social media, the Ministry said.

The Government has also asked airlines to keep their check-in counters completely manned, especially during peak hours.

The Government also asked Delhi Airport to increase

the Automatic Tray Retrieval System used for security checks. "The number of security check counters has been increased to 16 (10 ATRS + 6 conventional x-ray machines) in the last few days. This will be increased further to 17 soon, and subsequently to 20," the Ministry said.

The Ministry also said that an analysis of the manpower requirements at immigration counters will be undertaken immediately at Delhi Airport, and if need be, additional manpower will be deployed. The ministry also said that it will work with airlines and airports to reduce flights during peak hours between 5 am to 9 am. IGIA has three terminals -- T1, T2 and T3. All international flights and some domestic services operate from T3. On an average, it handles around 1.90 lakh passengers and about 1,200 flights daily.



Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No- 23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi- 110005

PUBLIC NOTICE:
Builder Cancellation

This is to bring to your notice that **SHIKHAR VARSHNEY/ SHILPI MUDGAL** (borrower/s) has availed Home loan facility vide facility agreement number **LBNOD00002426050** located at **Apartment No. G-A1210,Windsor Court, Situated at GH 04 A, Sector 78, NOIDA**. The borrower/s has failed to pay the contractual amount to the builder as per the terms and conditions of the agreement.

The Bank had informed the same to the borrower through letter dated **December 07, 2022** informing that **ASSOTECH LIMITED** has cancelled the allotment of the above mentioned property. You are therefore requested to resolve this matter with the builder within 7 days from the date of this publication.

Please take further notice that post cancellation of the allotment of the said property ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any other allotment done by the builder.

Dated: December 13, 2022
Place: Delhi/ NCR

For ICICI Bank Limited
Sd-

कार्यालय, नगर पालिक निगम, मिलाई (छ.ग.)			
निविदा सूचना			
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From Page 1

He further stated that such statements prima facie undermine the faith in our country's highest court and the justice system in general.

The judicial system runs on the faith people repose in the decision-making process of the judiciary.

Speaking about the fall-out between the executive and judiciary, Tewari said "this takes us on a dangerous path where Courts could lose their legitimacy. Judges of the Hon'ble Supreme Court were constrained to discuss these comments in open court".

Pointing out the vacan-

cies in the Supreme Court and High Courts, he said that the rule of law can never be sustained in such a scenario. More particularly, this has led to a stalling of appointments of judges to the Supreme Court and the High Courts. The Supreme Court has a vacancy of seven judges and more than 380 vacancies exist in various High Courts, said the Congress MP.

The Government must forthwith explain its stand and clarify its position with regard to the confrontations with the judiciary," he said.

Referring to Government functionaries' remarks

Cong condemns leader's call for 'killing'...

From Page 1

The FIR was registered against Pateria under sections 451 (House-trespass in order to commit an offence punishable with imprisonment), 504 (Intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace), 505 (statements conducing public mischief), and 506 (Punishment for criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code.

MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan targeted Congress over Pateria's remarks, saying the reality of those who are undertaking the Bharat Jodo Yatra is coming to the fore.

Mishra told reporters Pateria's statement against the prime minister is very objectionable and he had directed the superintendent of police to

register a case against the Congress leader.

Earlier, state BJP chief VD Sharma shared the video clip of Pateria and demanded an inquiry wondering if there is a plot to assassinate the prime minister.

"Former Minister Raja Pateria's incitement of public and Congress workers to assassinate Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi is extremely serious and condemnable. Was there any preparation for this conspiracy in Rahul Gandhi's Bharat 'Todo Yatra from Madhya Pradesh recently? This should be investigated," Sharma tweeted in Hindi.

Meanwhile, Pateria issued a video statement clarifying he meant to "defeat" PM Modi in the elections but his remarks were wrongly presented.

"A video related to a mandal meeting yesterday at Pawai has surfaced. I am a follower of Mahatma Gandhi who can't talk about killing anyone. It was wrongly presented. I wanted to say defeat Modi to protect the Constitution, Dalits, tribals and minorities and also to remove unemployment," he said.

CM Chouhan said the "reality of those who are undertaking Bharat Jodo Yatra is coming to the fore".

"Congress people are not able to compete with PM Narendra Modi in the field, that's why a Congress leader is talking about killing him. This is the height of hatred. True feelings of Congress are being revealed. The law will take its course," the chief minister said in a statement.

Developed nations must walk the talk on their climate pledge...

From Page 1

"But that country may have a per capita emission which is one-tenth that of the rest of the world. This was not the country which occupied the carbon space. So somewhere people need to be truthful about it and say who is really responsible for the

global warming and the countries which need to step up," he said.

In conversation with Dr Anwar Mohammed Gargash, Diplomatic Adviser to the UAE President, Jaishankar also highlighted two big divides in the world today - one being the east-west divide

centering around Ukraine and the other is a north-south divide centering around development.

"Ukraine is also having an impact on development. I do believe a country like India can play that bridging role, not alone but with countries like UAE. There is the need today

to bridge," he said at the forum, organised by UK-headquartered India Inc Group.

"The real problem that you are facing today is same problem we had multiple COPs ago, which is that the developed countries are still not sincere about keeping their promises... The more

climate events and emergencies you have, the more there's going to be the sense that these countries are unwilling to walk the talk," he added.

Two years ago, the US had pulled out of Paris Climate Accord -- which aims to stop global warming by cutting emissions and eliminating green-

SI turns to social media to fight GBV

Pregnant cop says her lawyer husband beat her, seeks DCW's help; kin accuses him of hiring goons

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi Police Sub-Inspector (S-I) was allegedly thrashed and abused by her advocate husband outside her house in South West Dwarka on Sunday afternoon. Delhi Police has registered a case against the husband Tarun Dabas and are probing the incident which came to light after S-I Doli Tevathia, posted a video on social media about the alleged assault.

In the video, Dabas could be seen entering the lane and hitting a car with his black SUV. Tevathia comes out and starts arguing with him. Both are seen fighting as she takes out the side view mirror of his car. Dabas then hits and pushes her. He also threatens to kill her.

"I am a Sub-Inspector in Delhi Police. Presently on maternity leave. I am constantly facing abuse from my husband advocate Tarun Dabas. Today he beat me in broad daylight. Please ensure action," she tweeted from her personal Twitter handle. The S-



I has also sought help from Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) through Twitter following which the panel has issued notice to the police.

On Monday, Tevathia said they have filed three complaints against Dabas so far. Taking action, the Delhi Police has registered a case against her husband and are probing the matter.

"A case under Sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (wrongful restraint), 427 (Mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of



the IPC has been registered at Najafgarh police station as per law. Further investigation is going on," a senior police officer said. The case has been registered on the complaint of the S-I and her brother Sumit Kumar. In the complaint, Kumar alleged Dabas assault him as well on several occasions in September.

"I was attacked near Rohini Helipoint on September 4, 2022, by Dabas and five-seven goons he brought with him. I made PCR calls and was somehow saved by the police. A complaint was also given to the

office of the Joint Commissioner of Police, Rohini, New Delhi (copy enclosed).

Fearing repeated threats of the same type I asked the police to ensure mine and my family's safety. However, no substantial pre-emptive action was taken to thwart Dabas," Kumar said.

"On September 11, Dabas brought nearly 15 goons along with him in three cars and tried to attack me and my family at my home. I again made PCR calls ... And called for police help," he alleged in the com-

plaint. "Dabas is a habitual drunkard and women beater, this man frequently gives alcohol parties to his friends and is often involved in brawls in the nearby areas... He often pressures my sister for money. My sister is a Government servant... Due to the inaction of the police, Dabas has been emboldened and is beginning to surpass all limits and my family is living under constant threat," he further alleged in his complaint.

Meanwhile, DCW chairperson Swati Maliwal took to Twitter and said that even a policewoman is not safe and had to seek help on social media.

"Delhi Police's Sub-Inspector was being subjected to domestic violence for past many months but no action has been taken. Even the police are forced to seek help on Twitter. I am issuing a notice to Delhi Police and strict action should be taken. If a policewoman is not safe how can a common woman be safe?" Maliwal tweeted in Hindi.

SC nixes Sisodia's plea against Biswa Sarma's defamation suit

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea by Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia challenging the Gauhati High Court (HC) order dismissing his plea for quashing a criminal defamation case filed against him by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

After the apex court showed its disinclination to entertain Sisodia's plea against the November 4 order of the HC, the AAP leader withdrew it.

Sarma had filed a criminal defamation case against Sisodia for making "baseless" corruption allegations against him in connection with the supply of PPE kits at "higher than market rates" to the National Health Mission (NHM) authorities during the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The AAP leader had claimed that Sarma, as the State Health Minister in 2020, had given supply orders to a firm belonging to his wife.



Sarma has denied these allegations. The matter came up for hearing on Monday before a Bench comprising Justices SK Kaul and AS Oka. Senior advocate AM Singhvi, appearing for Sisodia, said the AAP leader had nowhere said any money was taken.

"If you reduce public debate to this level, you have to face the consequences," the Bench observed, adding the petitioner should have unconditionally apologised earlier. "You have to face the consequences," the top court asserted, adding the allegations were made during the pandemic.

The apex court observed that instead of realising what the country was going through

during the pandemic, the petitioner was making allegations. After the hearing, advocate Nalin Kohli, who was representing the Assam Government, said, "Essentially, while issuing summons, a court has to see whether a prima facie case exists with regard to false imputations which are per se defamatory...."

In its order, the HC had said Sisodia has not been able to make out any case for quashing of the proceedings in the matter which is pending for disposal before the court of Chief Judicial Magistrate, Kamrup, at Guwahati.

The HC had noted Sarma filed the complaint alleging that on June 4 this year Sisodia addressed a press conference in New Delhi where he made a defamatory statement against the Assam Chief Minister accusing him of indulging in corruption.

Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, the wife of the Assam Chief Minister, had on June 21 filed a Rs 100-crore defamation case against the Delhi Deputy CM over the same allegation.

Structural audit over, secondary tests of 15 G'gram societies to be done

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

After receiving the structural audit reports of 15 residential societies in Gurugram that was carried out by four listed firms, the district administration will conduct secondary tests of these societies. Deputy Commissioner NK Yadav convened a joint meeting of RWAs, representatives of the auditing firms and builders in which the audit reports were shared with everyone.

The firms that conducted the rapid visual inspection study said that in most societies some deficiencies have been observed in the basement and there have been complaints of falling plaster or water leakage. Yadav said that no serious

structural issues have been found that would make the building unsafe for the residents. In most societies either the plaster is falling or there are gaps in the balcony or basement and water is filling up.

"A second test has been recommended, which we will start in a few days. Based on that, suggestions will come from audit firms on what kind of repair and maintenance work has to be done. The administration will try to complete the audit in these societies by getting all these works done in next few months," Yadav said. After the audit of the 15 societies in the first phase the audit of 50 other societies will be done in the second phase. He asserted, "The problems found in all societies can be

cured by repairs. Now, how it is to be repaired will be decided by the audit firms after a non-destructive test i.e. secondary test. After that these societies will be repaired and maintained."

Yadav said that after the accident in Chintal Paradiso Society in February, the administration is trying to identify unsafe buildings and repair them if needed and get them vacated if they are not repairable. This is also the purpose of this structural audit.

Yadav said that the structural audit report would be shared with the RWAs and if any aspect is left untouched then the RWAs can raise that point on which the firm concerned will respond and review the society again.



Police detained a student during the protesting by various organisation students JNU, Jamia, DU, and SFI, to demands immediately restore of the Maulana Azad National Fellowship and fight back against on scholarships and education, restore pre metric SC/ST/OBC scholarships, at Shashtri Bhawan in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Students of Delhi Govt schools becoming entrepreneurs: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Students of Delhi Government schools are becoming smart entrepreneurs as well as responsible citizens by learning the concepts of establishing their start-ups at a young age, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said on Monday.

Addressing students at a Government school in East Delhi's Mandawali Fazalpur, Sisodia said, "Students in city Government schools are not only developing the core entrepreneurial skills but are also becoming responsible citizens through this program."

"I am happy to see that the children of our schools are dreaming of starting their own businesses and are eager to



experiment in their respective fields. The Delhi government will support their determination and hardwork in every way and their businesses will create new job opportunities for the future," he said.

"Through Business Blasters, the journey of our students from job seekers to job creators has begun. Their unique business ideas will be transformed into multinational companies in the future.

Such a job-creator mindset will make India No.1 in the future. Business Blasters has completely changed the definition of career for the students in Delhi government schools now," Sisodia said.

Sisodia said that this is important to inculcate the entrepreneurial mindset among students from the school level and make them understand that their ability to create job opportunities will give a bright future to the country. "Students from Class 12, continuing in the second year of Business Blasters said that when they used to present their ideas to someone in the maiden year of the Business Blasters Program, they lacked self-confidence and hesitated to approach clients.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Details of all entry-level classes along with seats available for admission in private schools for the academic sessions 2023-24 are expected to be declared by Friday. The admission process for entry-level classes in over 1,800 private schools in Delhi began on December 1. The last date to submit applications is December 23, the Delhi Government's Directorate of Education had said in a circular last month.

The first list of students selected for admission and the waitlist will be out on January 20, according to the circular. The second list of students shortlisted for admission will be uploaded on February 6.



Private unaided recognised schools have already uploaded their criteria for admission on their respective websites.

The circular said, "No deviation from the above schedule shall be permitted. Each school shall display the aforesaid admission schedule on its notice board and website.

"Further, each school shall

ensure that application forms for admission are made available to all applicants till the last date of submission." The notification said a non-refundable amount of Rs 25 could be charged as admission registration fee. Purchase of the school prospectus by parents will be optional. It said all private schools would have to reserve 25 per cent seats for students from the economically weaker sections and disadvantaged groups and children with disabilities.

The draw of lots will be conducted under videography and the schools have been instructed to maintain and retain the footage. The slips will be shown to the parents before being put in the box being used to draw the lots.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

More than 260 dengue cases have been reported in the national Capital in December, taking the infection tally of the vector-borne disease past 3,800 so far this year. In November, 1,420 cases were logged, while 1,238 cases were recorded in October.

According to the reports released by the Municipal Corporation, the dengue infection tally stood at 3,595 till December 2, and 262 more cases have been recorded since then till December 9. The city has also recorded 241 cases of malaria and 44 cases of chikungunya this year.

Of the total of 3,857 reported cases, 693 were logged in September. In 2017, the city logged 4,704 cases in the January 1-December 9 period, the report stated.

No death has been reported so far this year due to the disease while in 2021, dengue claimed 23 lives, the report said.

In 2015, the city witnessed a massive dengue outbreak, with the number of cases crossing 10,600 in October. It was Delhi's worst dengue outbreak since 1996.

According to the MCD report issued on Monday, the city recorded 23 dengue cases in January, 16 in February, 22 in March, 20 in April, 30 in May, 32 in June, 26 in July, and 75 in August.

Cases of vector-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria are usually reported between July and November, sometimes stretching till mid-December. According to the officials of the MCD's health



department, symptoms of vector-borne diseases include high fever, headache, rash, muscle, and joint pain, which are quite similar to that of COVID-19 which also include fever or chills, muscle or body aches, fatigue and headache among others.

Last year, 9,613 dengue cases were recorded in the city, the highest since 2015, along with 23 deaths -- the highest since 2016.

In 2018, Delhi reported 2,774 dengue cases during the January 1-December 9 period, according to the report. The corresponding figures in 2019, 2020, and 2021 were 1958, 1030, and 9,260.

Ten deaths each were reported due to dengue in 2016 and 2017, four in 2018, and two in 2019.

The official data showed that 4,431 dengue cases were recorded in Delhi in 2016, 4,726 in 2017, 2,798 in 2018, 2,036 in 2019, and 1,072 in 2020.

The MCD report stated that breeding of mosquito larvae has been found at 1,69,766 households this year till November 18.

Authorities have issued 1,20,144 legal notices for mosquito-genic conditions, and 45,829 prosecutions were launched so far.

Nora files plaint against Jacqueline for defaming, linking her to Sukesh

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Actor Nora Fatehi on Monday filed a criminal complaint against Jacqueline Fernandez before a Delhi court for allegedly defaming her by "unfairly dragging" her name into a Rs 200 crore money laundering case involving 'conman' Sukesh Chandrashekar. According to her advocate Vikram Chauhan, Fatehi, a Canadian citizen, also arrayed 15 media organisations as accused in her complaint, which is likely to come up for hearing on December 19. "The complainant has a pristine reputation apart from a rapidly progressing career which has quite obviously threatened her rivals who are unable to compete with her on a fair footing," the complaint said. "The defamatory statement was made by Fernandez in bad faith and with mala fide intention and was circulated by



the media houses made accused in the complaint with an intent to defame her," the counsel said.

The complaint claimed the allegations made by Fernandez, that Fatehi had received gifts from Chandrashekar were wrong. "The only time the complainant spoke to Chandrashekar was when his wife, Leena Maria Paul, made her speak to him over speakerphone at the event in Chennai where the complainant was invited by Leena. At the event, the complainant was gifted an iPhone and a Gucci bag by Leena. No gifts were ever received by the complainant from Chandrashekar," Fatehi said.

JNU: Outsiders might be involved in scribbling of anti-Brahmin slogans

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) VC Santishree Dhulipudi Pandit on Monday said "outsiders" might be involved in the scribbling of anti-Brahmin slogans on several walls inside the campus and that further inquiry into the matter was underway.

The vice chancellor asserted JNU is a place for everyone and nobody can use it to spread hatred against any group.

"The School of Indian Languages would house centres for different states where literature, culture and history would be taught," said VC, Pandit, while addressing the media.

Several states have shown interest in this regard and Tamil Nadu has already given Rs 10 crore for its centre, Pandit said. "JNU (Jawaharlal Nehru University) is starting a new School of Indian

Languages where different state governments are giving the university a corpus to set up chairs. They will become special centres of not only languages but also literature, culture and history of that state. "Tamil Nadu has already given Rs 10 crore. Four more states — Odisha, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Assam will give Rs 10 crore each. We will have a corpus of Rs 50 crore," Pandit said.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin recently sanctioned about Rs 10 crore for the Centre for Tamil Studies. The vice-chancellor said it was approaching different states in this regard.

The school will help develop a deeper knowledge about different Indian languages. The university already offers several language courses. It now plans to introduce more research, postgraduate and diploma courses.

Change of placement of parcel vans inconveniencing train commuters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The sudden change of placement of Parcel and Luggage vans of passenger trains at New Delhi Railway Station has been causing a great inconvenience to the facility of Wheel Chairs and Carts for the needy passengers like senior citizens, handicaps, sick people and VIPs at times.

While there are other important trains when the change of placement and berthing are being done as per the roster, a case in note has come to surface after Joint inspection of Station authorities last week pertaining to the movement of Bandra terminus-Amritsar Train no 12925 which runs between Mumbai to Amritsar via New Delhi.

Following the change of originating station in Mumbai, the placement order at New Delhi station has also been affected and as per the inspection safety reports the parcel and luggage van which use to be stationed in front side is now relocated in rear side of the



platform number 5 as per the train coach manifesto. The train halts at New Delhi Railway Station, for 25 Minutes (10.40 am to 11.05 am). "The previous location of the VP at

New Delhi Railway Station is 13.65 meters at Delhi End near pillar No.22 and now the current location is 3.95 meters at Nizamuddin End near last electric pole. Due to shifting of par-

cel van from front side to rear side, passengers are facing acute difficulties as the platform No.5 at New Delhi Railway station is not so wide, especially users of Wheel Chairs and Golf Cart are not convenient to catch the train.

There is always a possibility of mis-happening due to this situation, which is very risky from passengers point of view, it is important to note that VIP movements at New Delhi Railway Station are in very high ratio and this newly raised situation may become a cause of complaint.

The report submitted to the DRM Delhi Division office through the Station Director of New Delhi Railway Station, further, remarked there is also always possibility of the unloaded parcel falling on either side of the track, which may create hindrance in train operation.

They have also given reminder that the station in past seen mishappenings due to the mismanagement particularly during festive occasions.

BJP, Opp lock horns over probe agencies' misuse

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

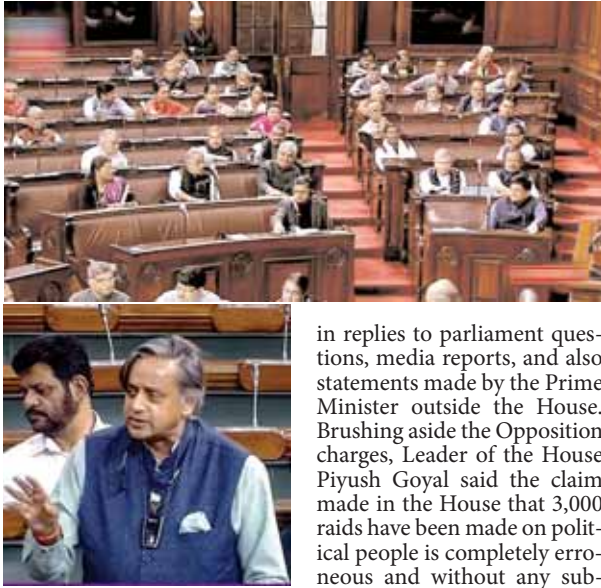
The Rajya Sabha on Monday witnessed heated exchanges between the Opposition and the Treasury Benches for a short while on the issue of alleged misuse of investigating agencies like the Enforcement Directorate (ED) against Opposition leaders.

Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar cautioned the MPs that they should not make unsubstantiated remarks as that can tantamount to breach of privilege of the House adding MPs should refrain from making sweeping statements.

This observation came after Sanjay Singh (AAP) alleged the government was misusing investigative agencies to target opposition leaders. He said in the past eight years, the ED conducted 3,000 raids on the opposition leaders but only 23 persons could be convicted.

Some members from the treasury benches objected to the remarks, prompting the Chair to intervene. Dhankhar said anything being spoken in the House has to be precise and with sanctity and ownership.

He said "We cannot allow any member to give out facts



that are not substantiated and that constitute a very serious breach of privilege. I am very particular about it..." Dhankhar also said a newspaper report or an opinion given by someone has absolutely no consequence. He said legally admissible documentation must be the premise of making an allegation in the House.

Congress President and Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said members use information provided

in replies to parliament questions, media reports, and also statements made by the Prime Minister outside the House. Brushing aside the Opposition charges, Leader of the House Piyush Goyal said the claim made in the House that 3,000 raids have been made on political people is completely erroneous and without any substance.

Goyal said there is a special directive from the court that action should be taken against MPs and MLAs who are found to be culpable in economic or other offences.

Continuing his Zero Hour mention, Sanjay Singh alleged the government was not taking action against offenders like Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya, Lalit Modi and Reddy brothers, but put Sanjay Raut (Shiv Sena MP) and Satyendra Jain (Delhi Government minister) in jail.

Kheri killings: SC tells court to finish trial of Min's son

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the sessions court judge to specify the tentative time schedule for completion of the trial involving Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish and 12 others for murder and related offences in the case of mowing down of protesting farmers in October 2021 in Lakhimpur Kheri.

The top court also asked the Uttar Pradesh Government, which opposed the bail plea of Ashish Mishra terming the offence as "grave", to file an affidavit with regard to the status of the second case filed over the killing of three occupants of the SUV, which allegedly mowed down the farmers.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Krishna Murari, said it needs to balance the interest of all the parties including the accused, the victims and society at large.

"We have to see that the accused, who is inside the jail for over one year, also has rights. Now the charge sheet has been filed and charges have been framed. The victims and witnesses also have their

rights. Even society also has interest in the case. Now, we have to balance all the rights in the case," it said.

The bench also asked the Additional District and Sessions Judge hearing the second case related to the killing of the occupants of the car, to consider the desirability of framing charges. It posted the matter for further hearing on January 11.

On December 6, the trial court had framed charges Ashish and 12 others for murder, criminal conspiracy and related offences in the case of mowing down of protesting farmers in October 2021 in Lakhimpur Kheri, paying the way for the start of the trial.

A total of 13 accused, including Ashish Mishra, have been charged under IPC sections 147 and 148 related to rioting, 149 (unlawful assembly), 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapons or means), 427 (mischievous), 120B (punishment for criminal conspiracy), and section 177 of the Motor Vehicle Act.

Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra, is the main accused in the case.

Post Bharat Jodo success, Cong to hold 'Bihar Yatra'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA/NEW DELHI

On the lines of Bharat Jodo Yatra, the Bihar Congress on Monday announced to hold a 1000 km 'Bihar Yatra' from this month end. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and former chief Rahul Gandhi will also briefly join the yatra.

Assam and Odisha are already doing its part of State Yatra while a Porbandar to Itanagar yatra has been planned for next year.

The Politically sensitive state of Bihar will get an opportunity to witness two yatras simultaneously. The first one is by poll strategist and former JDU leader Prashant Kishor which started on October 2.

Addressing his inaugural Press conference upon being appointed as the BPCC president, Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Prasad Singh said Kharge has already accepted the invitation to address the rally at Banka, where the state-wide yatra will take off on December 28.

Others present at the press briefing included outgoing BPCC president Madan Mohan Jha, CLP leader Ajeet Sharma and AICC secretary and MLA Shakil Ahmed Khan. "When the yatra reaches Patna, a huge rally will be organised which will be addressed by either former chief Sonia Gandhi or party's general secretary



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi plays football during Bharat Jodo Yatra , in Sawai Madhopur on Monday PTI Photo

Priyanka Gandhi, depending upon their respective availability," Singh said. He said Rahul Gandhi, "will definitely be at the public meeting in Gaya where the yatra is scheduled to conclude. By that time he will be through with the Bharat Jodo Yatra".

The new Bihar Congress president also said that his party was not satisfied with only one cabinet berth in the Nitish Kumar government and he would be meeting the chief minister soon to press for more.

He also said that there was a need for a "coordination

committee" in the ruling "Mahagathbandhan" and claimed, "had there been better coordination among allies, we would not have lost Kurhani assembly by-poll".

"When we demand a coordination committee, we are not challenging the wisdom of the Chief Minister who is the leader of the Mahagathbandhan in Bihar.

We are only pointing out to his initiative when the Grand Alliance was first formed in 2015 and he used to meet even district-level office bearers of the RJD and the Congress", added Singh.

Centre using sops as temp solution to woes ailing nation: Opp

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Attacking the government on Monday over its supplementary demands, the Congress said its "fondness for grand announcements and flashy statements" are "destroying foundation of everything good and noble in old india" as the ruling party retorted back sharply.

Policies of the previous UPA governments had led to the bad state of economy which the BJP inherited, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey said.

During a discussion in Lok Sabha on the supplementary demands for excess grants for 2019-20, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor accused the government of not addressing the root cause of issues but choosing to use SOPs as a temporary solution. "Throwing SOPs because you failed to address the underlying problem is no solution at all," he said.

"I am sorry to say that the underlined budget that this government presented in union budget 2022-23 and supplementary grant is a story of failures, a fondness for grand announcements and flashy statements are destroying the foundation of everything good and noble in old India.

"We will not oppose these demands because the country needs them and more but we deplore the needless rigmarole that brought us to this point," he said. He said more than 95 per cent of houses enrolled under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act have not got 100 days of work. "And you, finance minister, chose to offer token additional funds," he said. Tharoor also said consistent reduction in allocation in rural development and social security schemes. "If China took two inches of land we would be up in arms that they have taken mother India's territory.

Here the sea has taken 64 sq km of territory in my constituency and no one is bothered...The government is not even looking into offering a special economic package for the coastal community," the Thiruvananthapuram MP said.

He regretted that the healthcare sector has been consistently underfunded and barely features in supplementary demands for funds. "Aam aadmi expenditure is what is sustaining the healthcare business in our country," he said. He said the fuel prices are kept unchanged before assembly elections and then increased.

"It is clear that oil marketing companies have to bear brunt to suit government's political convenient. This will ultimately cost taxpayers," he said.

In his riposte BJP MP Dubey stated how policies of the previous UPA governments had led to the bad state of economy which BJP inherited. Accusing the Congress governments of pursuing votebank politics and politics of lies", Dubey congratulated Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for the action taken to revive Air India.

Parliament passes Energy Conservation Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Parliament on Monday passed a Bill seeking to mandate the use of non-fossil energy sources such as biomass, ethanol and green hydrogen.

Lok Sabha had passed the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in the previous session in August this year, while Rajya Sabha cleared by voice vote the legislation on Monday.

The Bill provides for penalties for violations by industrial units or vessels, and on manufacturers if a vehicle fails to comply with fuel consumption norms. The amendments also seek to promote renewable energy and the development of a domestic carbon market to battle climate change. The bill

is also aimed at helping the country achieve its international commitments on climate change. It aims to introduce new concepts such as carbon trading and mandate the use of non-fossil sources to ensure faster decarbonisation of the Indian economy and help achieve sustainable development goals in line with the Paris Agreement.

Opposition members picked holes in the Energy Conservation (Amendment) Bill, 2022, saying it encroaches upon the jurisdiction of the Environment Ministry and the government should have brought the legislation after consultation through a standing committee of Parliament. The Bill was introduced in the Rajya Sabha for passage on December 8, 2022 by Power

Minister R K Singh. Replying to a debate on the bill, Singh said the bill is environment friendly and will allow carbon trading in the country.

"For the government, the environment is precious and will take all steps for that," he said, adding India has now become a leader in the energy transition. Currently 24 per cent of the energy consumption is from the housing sector and the government has targeted only the big commercial establishments having a load capacity of 100KW, he said. However, he added the state government has been given the liberty to reduce the building load up to 50KW.

"We are also expanding the concept of green building. We are making it more sustainable. Earlier, it has energy

efficiency and we are also adding the concept of renewable energy in this," he said. Taking part in the discussion on the Bill, P Wilson (DMK) said, "I observed accurately, the proposed Bill majorly concerns the environmental aspects which fall to the expertise of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change."

"By making the Ministry of Power as the nodal agency, he said, the Bill "is acting without jurisdiction and usurping the power of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change."

While Sandeep Kumar Pathak (AAP) also pointed out that while it is a "futuristic Bill", it has many issues which needed to be addressed, Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD) said there is

a domain conflict and the Bill would have been better than its present form had it been introduced after taking wider inputs through consultation with a Parliamentary Standing Committee.

Shaktisinh Gohil (Congress) said had the Bill had gone to the standing committee, it would have been much better. Binoy Viswam (CPI) urged the government to refer the Bill to a Parliamentary Standing Committee, arguing that it needs to be improved with several changes.

Priyanka Chaturvedi of the Shiv Sena said it is the "need of the hour that we look towards energy conservation and energy efficiency". However, she suggested the jurisdiction should be done through an inter-ministerial group.

MEA to oversee signature events in UNSC from Dec 14

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will be visiting New York to preside over two High-Level Ministerial signature events of India's ongoing Presidency of the UN Security Council on December 14 and 15. The High-Level Ministerial Open Debate on December 14 is on the theme of "New Orientation for Reformed Multilateralism" [NORMS] and the High-Level Briefing on December 15 is on "Global Approach to Counter Terrorism - Challenges and Way Forward". Both these themes have been key priorities for India during its current tenure at the UN Security Council, the ministry



of external affairs said here on Monday. The primary focus of Open Debate on Reformed Multilateralism is to encourage all Member States to seriously address pressing need for reforms in global governance multilateral architecture, including long-standing reforms of the UN Security Council. The meeting will also witness briefings by Secretary General of the United Nations and President of 77th UN General Assembly.

Black cash, GST, Jamia dominate RS proceedings

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A diverse range of issues including a demand for phasing out Rs 2,000 rupee currency note to check hoarding and money laundering, compensation for revenue loss to states after introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and situation in the Jamia Milia Islamia University figured prominently in the Rajya Sabha on Monday.

Raising the issue of Rs 2,000 notes, Sushil Kumar Modi (BJP) said, it should be phased out over a period of two years adding many advanced countries do not have currency notes of such a high denomination.

ination.

He said 2,000 rupee notes have vanished from most ATMs in the country and there are rumours that they may not be legal tender soon. "The government has to clarify on this," the BJP leader said, adding the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stopped printing the 2,000 rupee currency notes 3 years back.

The 2,000 rupee currency note along with a new 500 rupee note was introduced when the government overnight demonetised old 500 and 1000 rupee notes.

"There was no logic of bringing a 2,000 rupee note when 1,000 rupee note circulation was stopped," Sushil

Modi said and went on to cite examples of developed nations that do not have currency notes of higher denomination. He said 2,000 rupee notes are being hoarded and are often used in illegal trades such as drugs, and money laundering.

The 2,000 rupee note - the highest currency denomination in the country - has become synonymous with black money, he said. Elamaram Kareem (CPM) sought an extension of the compensation paid to states for revenue lost from the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for another five years. Kareem said Covid led to a substantial slowdown in the economy.

UAE India's 3rd largest trade partner

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/ABU DHABI

The growing ties between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have seen a "veritable transformation" after a landmark trade deal, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday.

India and the UAE signed UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February this year. The UAE is today India's third largest trade partner. It is India's 2nd largest export market. He also said both the countries want to use this relationship to shape the changing world. A defining decision of this transformation is signing of the bilateral trade

pact which led to such effective results and speaks volumes for bilateral relationship, the minister added. "The fact that we were able to conclude the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement so quickly and has led to such effective results thereafter, speaks really volumes for the relationship.

We're now moving into new areas," he said while delivering keynote address at India Global Forum and panel discussion - India-UAE: Partners for Global Impact in Abu Dhabi. "Today, our discussions are about space, education, artificial intelligence, health and startups. The old, traditional energy trade investments continue, but a new agenda is also coming into being," Jaishankar said."

UGC notifies curriculum for UG courses

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission on Monday notified the curriculum and credit framework for undergraduate programmes which will provide students with multiple options for entry and exit, a choice between single major and double major and interdisciplinary choices of subjects. The framework has been developed by revising the existing Choice Based Credit System.

According to the programme, students will only be able to pursue a four-year honours degree rather than a three-year course like the present. Honours degree will also be offered in two categories -- honours and honours with research."

A four-year UG Honours degree in the major discipline will be awarded to those who complete a four-year degree



programme with 160 credits and have satisfied the credit requirement.

Whereas students who secure 75 per cent marks and above in the first six semesters and wish to undertake research at the undergraduate level can choose a research stream in the fourth year," the notification said. "They should do a research project or dissertation under the guidance of a faculty member of the university or college.

The research project and dissertation will be in the major discipline. The students who secure 160 credits, including 12 credits from a research project and dissertation, will be award-

ed UG degree (honours with research)," it said. Currently, students get an honours degree after completing three years of undergraduate programmes.

The Curriculum and Credit Framework for Undergraduate Programmes also allows multiple entry and exit options for students. If they leave before three years, they will be allowed to rejoin within three years of their exit and will have to complete their degree within a stipulated period of seven years.

"Students who opt to exit after completion of the first year and have secured 40 credits will be awarded a UG certificate if, in addition, they complete one vocational course of four credits during the summer vacation of the first year.

These students are allowed to re-enter the degree programme within three years and complete the degree programme within the stipulated maximum period of seven

years. "Students who opt to exit after completion of the second year and have secured 80 credits will be awarded the UG diploma if, in addition, they complete one vocational course of four credits during the summer vacation of the second year.

These students are allowed to re-enter within a period of three years and complete the degree programme within the maximum period of seven years," it said.

In the case of students pursuing a multidisciplinary programme, the credits to core courses will be distributed among broad disciplines such as life sciences, physical sciences, mathematical and computer sciences, data analysis, social sciences and humanities.

"For example, a student who opts for a UG program in life sciences will have the total credits to core courses distributed across botany, zoology and human biology disciplines.

India, Canada Mins review bilateral ties

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Canada on Monday reviewed the entire spectrum of their bilateral ties with the focus on possible areas of cooperation between the two countries in the Indo-Pacific in the backdrop of China adopting an aggressive stance there.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly discussed these issues in a telephonic conversation.

The telephonic conversation took place two weeks after Canada came out with a comprehensive strategy for the Indo-Pacific that aimed to promote peace, resilience and security while listing challenges emanating from China's aggressive behaviour in the region. "Good to talk to Canadian FM @melaniejoly.

Spoke about enhancing our bilateral cooperation and promoting people to people ties.

Also exchanged views on the Indo-Pacific and how Canada's new strategy can contribute to our relationship," Jaishankar tweeted.

Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy also listed India as a key player in the region and said Ottawa will focus on expanding economic engagement with New Delhi including through deeper trade and investment, as well as cooperating on building resilient supply chains "India's strategic importance and leadership — both across region and globally — will only increase as India, the world's biggest democracy, becomes the most populous country in the world and continues to grow its economy," the Canadian policy mentioned.

1,179 Bru militants surrender, deposit 350 firearms in Assam

PTI ■ HAILKANDI

A total of 1,179 Bru militants belonging to two outfits surrendered in Assam's Hailakandi district and laid down 350 firearms on Monday, police said.

Additional Director General of Police (Special Branch) Hiren Chandra Nath said that insurgents who surrendered belonged to the United Democratic Liberation Front of Barak Valley (UDLF-BV) and Bru Revolutionary Army of Union (BRAU).

The two outfits that were active mostly in areas along the Assam-Mizoram border laid down AK series rifles, M16 rifles and other firearms besides over 400 cartridges.

Altogether 634 members of BRAU, led by Rajesh Charki, and 545 UDLF-BV militants, headed by Dhanyaram Reang, surrendered during the day, Nath said.

"The peace process with these two groups had been

underway since 2017. There were some differences, but under the guidance of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, we could convince them to come to the negotiating table."

"Other formalities and rehabilitation process will begin soon. We will take the process forward in such a manner that no new militant group is formed in the area in future," the senior police officer said.

The militants, who were already in ceasefire with security forces, formally laid down their arms before Assam Assembly Speaker Biswajit Daimary and Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika.

Talking to reporters after the ceremony, Daimary said, "The government will be adequately addressing their concerns and provide them with funds for development. I also urge all other youth who are still in armed groups to abjure violence."

Hazarika said that the sur-



rendered militants raised mostly developmental issues and the government will ensure that the genuine demands are met.

BRAU 'commander-in-chief' Charki said that they are happy to come overground and reiterated the demand for an autonomous economic council for the Bru community.

He claimed that most Bru-inhabited villages near the Assam-Mizoram border areas are yet to see development and sought schemes from the government for the betterment

of these areas.

The BRAU also submitted a charter of demands addressed to the chief minister, seeking land for the community under the Forest Rights Act, 2006, and Scheduled Tribe (Plain) status in the state.

Their other demands include government jobs for the youth of the Bru community and developmental works such as electrification and construction of roads, schools and hospitals in the area predominantly inhabited by the community.

Withdraw vehicles bought using Nirbhaya Fund from Shinde MLAs' security: NCP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Monday demanded immediate withdrawal of vehicles procured under the Nirbhaya Fund and deployed for security of legislators from the Shiv Sena faction led by Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

The Opposition party said these vehicles should be given back to the Nirbhaya Squad, a dedicated force formed to put a stop to various crimes perpetrated against women and girls.

The Sharad Pawar-led party has written a letter to the director general of Maharashtra police about the demand.

A police official had on Sunday claimed some of the vehicles procured by the Mumbai police earlier this year with money from the Nirbhaya Fund were being used for providing Y-plus security to MLAs and MPs of the Shiv Sena faction led by the chief minister. "The Nirbhaya Fund was



created to enable the police machinery to effectively deal with issues relating to the safety of women in the state. Diverting vehicles meant for women's safety and pressing them in the service for protecting MLAs supporting the government is clearly violative of the Nirbhaya Scheme," state NCP chief spokesperson Mahesh Tapase wrote in the letter.

In June this year, the city police procured 220 Boleros, 35 Ertigas, 313 Pulsar motorcycles and 200 Activa two-wheelers using the Rs 30 crore corpus that it had received under the Nirbhaya Fund.

Didi flies to Shillong for poll strategy meet

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday commenced her three-day visit of Meghalaya, where she would hold organisational meetings with the Trinamool Congress functionaries ahead of the next year's Assembly elections.

Banerjee is accompanied by her nephew and Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee.

Banerjee, who is scheduled to address a party workers' convention on Tuesday at the State central library in Shillong, is expected to brief the local leaders about the TMC's electoral strategy.

The Chief Minister is also likely to visit Tripura subsequently. Both the North-eastern States will go to polls early next year.

"Our party supremo has come to Meghalaya and will be talking to the foot soldiers who are looking forward to take guidance from her... under her leadership we are confident of coming to power next



year," former State Chief Minister Mukul Sangma said. Sangma and 11 other MLAs had broken ties with the Congress last year and joined the TMC.

"The TMC became the principal opposition party after Mr Sangma and 11 other MLAs joined it... but the matter of fact is they still remain legislators who were elected on Congress ticket... so the next year's elections will be crucial for Mamata Banerjee and the TMC because they will be required to prove their acceptance in the public," a senior Congress leader said.

Adhikari tones down his 'December Dhamaka' threat

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

In an apparent climbdown from his earlier posture that political dhamakas (bang) would take place on December 12, 14, and 21, Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari's from a Monday rally clarified his statement saying he never meant that the Mamata Banerjee Government would be pulled down or for that matter the BJP would engineer defections in the Trinamool Congress.

"Whatever I said was my personal reading of the situation and my party does not support the idea of toppling governments... By dhamaka I meant gradual unfolding of events that may see its senior leaders going to jail or the Government getting forced to clear the DA to the Government employees coughing up, in that event, Rs 23,000

crore in one go," Adhikari said.

The Opposition Leader however, insisted that the to9p TMC leadership including the Bhaipo (apparently Abhishek Banerjee) would go to jail soon. "After chit fund the biggest scam that the State has seen is the coal scam worth Rs 2,400 crore... the Bhaipo has extracted Rs 1,000 crore out of it... just wait and see what happens in the coming months... he has to go to jail," Adhikari said.

Besides, the State Government would also be in jeopardy if the Supreme Court ordered the payment of DA to the state employees. The hearing to this effect is pending with the Apex Court. "If the SC asks the Government to clear the DA of the employees and the pensioners then the Government will have to cough up Rs 23,000 crore in one go... then how will they run their

populist schemes," the Adhikari a former pointsman of Mamata Banerjee --- who had joined the saffron outfit weeks ahead of the last year's Assembly elections --- said.

Back to the Dhamaka issue. Both Adhikari and State BJP president Sukanta Majumdar had generated quite a curiosity among the people over their Dhamaka calls.

While Adhikari had repeatedly told in public meetings that "December is the deadline for the TMC and the Government will not last beyond that... its time has come to an end," Majumdar had said that December will see the end of the Pishi-Bhaipo (read the Chief Minister and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee) government.

The two top leaders' statements were further buttressed by cine star Mithun Chakrabarty's comments.



Chakrabarty during his visit to Bengal recently said at least two dozen TMC leaders and MLAs were in touch with him and they could dump the party any day.

Even on Saturday when Adhikari was asked about the suggested Dhamaka he said "watch out for three dates of 12, 14 and 21 December... I will not speak beyond that."

While one section of political experts predicted either

repetition of what they called Maharashtra or Madhya Pradesh like "Operation Lotus" through a mass defection to the BJP, others felt some senior TMC politicians could be arrested by the ED.

It was the second statement that led to a political hullabaloo even as senior politicians wondered how the BJP leaders were getting information of likely arrests of TMC leaders in advance.



A TMC Parliamentary delegation comprising leaders Saugata Roy, Kalyan Banerjee, Sukhendu Sekhar Ray and Derek O'Brien after a meeting with the Election Commissioner regarding the alleged violation of the representation of the People's Act in connection with spokesperson Saket Gokhale's arrest, in New Delhi on Monday
Ranjana Dimri/Pioneer

SC to resume hearing of Delhi Gencos vs discoms' case today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Supreme Court of India on Tuesday will resume hearing in a case that will have a far-reaching impact on the power supply to 25 million citizens in the national Capital.

In the last hearing on September 28, the court had restrained Delhi power utilities (IPGCL, PPCL and DTL) from disconnecting power-supply to BSES and ordered them to maintain status quo till further orders.

The case will see India's highest ranked legal officer (Attorney General of India) and the second highest (Solicitor General of India) representing rival parties.

Delhi Government owned IPGCL / PPCL have enlisted the services of the Attorney General of India. He will be representing the Delhi Gencos



in the on-going payment dispute with two-Delhi discoms'.

On the other hand, the Solicitor General of India is representing the Ministry of Power, which is a party in the case.

The case in question goes back to 2014 when Gencos, including Delhi Gencos, had threatened to cut BSES power supply for non-payment. BSES had moved the apex court, arguing that it was unable to

pay in full because the tariffs set by the Delhi power regulator did not cover the costs fully.

SC by its two orders — March 26, 2014 and May 12, 2016 regarding payment of current dues had granted protection to the Discoms against any coercive action. The Court had allowed the discoms to pay 70% of the current dues. These actions of the Delhi Power Utilities were in violation of these orders.

HC grants deferred bail to Deshmukh in graft case

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

More than 13 months after he was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering case, the Bombay High Court on Monday granted bail to Maharashtra's former Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in an alleged corruption case registered against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

In a development that came more than nine weeks after he was granted bail in the money laundering case, Justice MS Karnik of the high court granted Deshmukh bail against a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh along with sureties of like amount and directed him to cooperate with the investigations.

However, 72-year-old Deshmukh will not walk out of the jail immediately, as the high court noted that the bail order pronounced by him



would become effective only after ten days.

The rider to the bail order came after the CBI sought a stay on the effect of the bail order to approach the Supreme Court.

Justice Karnik granted 10 days' time to the CBI to facilitate it to challenge his order in the Supreme Court.

Deshmukh had moved the high court on October 27, three weeks after the HC granted him bail in the money laundering case on October 4.

Deshmukh is being investigated by the ED in a money laundering case, while he is being prosecuted by the CBI in an alleged corruption case..

Based on a case of corruption registered by the CBI, Deshmukh was arrested by the ED November 2, 2021 under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) on charges of bribery, conspiracy and misuse of office.

Simultaneously, the senior NCP state leader is being investigated by the CBI in connection with a First Information Report (FIR) registered by it on April 24 section 7 of the amended Prevention of Corruption Act and section 120-b (conspiracy) of IPC for an "attempt to obtain undue advantage for important and dishonest performance of the public duty".

Appearing for Deshmukh, senior Advocate Vikram Chaudhari and Advocate Aniket Nikam contended that both cases were connected, their client be granted bail in the corruption case as he had already been granted bail in the money laundering case.

Chaudhari also told the

court that that the former minister has spent over a year behind the bar, for allegedly committing an offence which was punishable up to 7 years' imprisonment.

Chaudhari told the high court that the former Mumbai cop Sachin Waze — based on whose evidence the Prosecution had built its case --had been made an approver in CBI's case.

Opposing Deshmukh's bail, Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh --appearing for CBI --told the court the former minister had been involved in corruption of the highest level that affected governance in the state.

Singh also contended that bail granted in a money laundering case could not be a ground for granting bail in the predicate offence involving alleged corruption.

In his bail plea, Deshmukh had stated that the CBI Court had failed to consider the 's observations of the High Court

in its order granting bail to Deshmukh in the alleged money laundering case which prima facie indicated that the former minister might not be ultimately not convicted.

Contending that the trial court's approach over reached the order of the High Court while granting bail to Deshmukh in the money laundering case, Deshmukh had stated in his plea: "While it may not be contended that the order granting bail in PMLA case would ipso facto bind the trial court to grant bail in the scheduled or predicate offence, the findings recorded in the order passed by the High Court could not have been brushed aside lightly".

The CBI, which had registered a case against Deshmukh on April 21, 2021 against Deshmukh, filed a charge-sheet against him, his personal secretary Sanjeev Palande and his personal assistant Kundan Shinde on June 2, 2022.

UP Cong foot march kicked off in Awadh

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A foot march across Uttar Pradesh by the Congress in support of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra was kicked off in the Awadh zone on the second day of the programme on Monday. The march started from Charbagh after UP Congress president Brijlal Khabri and zonal president Nakul Dubey garlanded the statue of Babasaheb Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar.

Giving this information here on Monday, Congress spokesperson Krishnakant Pandey said the march was started by the Uttar Pradesh Congress last Friday and it would continue till Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra enters Uttar Pradesh in the beginning of next month.

Starting the yatra in Lucknow, Khabri said that Bharat Jodo Yatra was a sign of change under the leader-



ship of Rahul Gandhi. He said the march would highlight rising unemployment, recession in industrial trade, increasing gap between rich and poor, loot of resources, back-breaking inflation, increasing suicides by unemployed and farmers, communal hatred, plight of farmers in a farmer-dominated country as well as the state.

"Today, change is the only option by which the people of the country can be united and the atmosphere of hatred can be ended," he said.

Gold seizures hit three-year high; Kerala tops the list

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Gold seizures by enforcement agencies hit a three-year high of 3,083 kg in November this year and Kerala accounted for the maximum cases of seizure, the Lok Sabha was informed on Monday.

Gold seizures across the country have gone up this year when compared to 2,383 kg seized in the 2021 calendar year and 2,154 kg in 2020. In 2019, 3,673 kg of gold was seized. In 2022 (up to November), 3,083.61 kg of gold was seized in 3,588 cases.

In Kerala, 690 kg of the yellow metal was seized in 948 cases in 2022, up from 587 kg in 2021 and 406 kg in 2020. In 2019, 725 kg was seized. Besides Kerala, states which account for high gold seizures this year till November 2022 are



Maharashtra (474 kg in 484 cases), Tamil Nadu (440 kg in 809 cases) and West Bengal (369 kg in 214 cases).

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the Customs field formations and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) keep constant vigil and take operational measures, such as passenger profiling, risk-based interdiction and targeting of cargo consignments, non-intrusive inspection, rummaging of aircraft and coordination with other agencies to deter

gold smuggling.

Last week, addressing the officers of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that smuggling of gold "seems to have its own cycle" irrespective of customs duty. She had also asked the intelligence officers to study if there is a pattern and relationship between imports and smuggling.

In July, the import duty on gold was hiked to 12.5 per cent from 7.5 per cent to ease pressure on the domestic currency and dampen imports. Gold imports rose 33 per cent to USD 46.14 billion in 2021-22. India is the world's second-largest consumer of gold after China. As per a DRI report, the bulk of the precious yellow metal seized by it in 2021-22 fiscal came from the bordering nation Myanmar.

Jammu hoteliers concerned over loss of business, demand restoration of 'darbar move'

PTI ■ JAMMU

Hotel and lodge owners here on Monday raised concern over the loss of business over the past several years and demanded immediate restoration of 'darbar move', a practice under which the Government functioned six months each in Jammu and Srinagar.

The Lt Governor Manoj Sinha-led administration stopped the age-old practice in June last year after moving to e-office to ensure smooth functioning of the Civil Secretariat in the twin capitals in all the 12 months, thus saving Rs 200 crore per year on shifting of offices.

"The business in Jammu used to thrive before the start of the direct train to Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting Mata Vaishno Devi shrine (in 2014). The COVID-19 outbreak and the government



decision to end the darbar move has dealt a severe blow to our business," President All Jammu Hotels and Lodges' Association Pawan Gupta told reporters here.

He said the pilgrim traffic to Vaishno Devi is expected to cross 90 lakh this year but it has no benefit for the business community of Jammu which is facing the worst situation as only 10 to 15 percent of the pilgrims visit Jammu city.

"The government should deliberate and discuss the losses being suffered by the business community in Jammu and take necessary measures for our survival," he said.

Gupta said various government projects like Artificial Lake and Mubarak Mandi heritage complex were tipped to make Jammu an independent tourism attraction but these projects are moving at a snail's pace.

New low

A Congress leader in MP wants PM Modi killed, though he added that he meant political defeat

Not a day passes when political debate doesn't degenerate a bit. The first day of the week was no exception with reports pouring in about a Congress leader and former minister in Madhya Pradesh calling for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assassination. Addressing villagers, Raja Pateria accused Modi of plotting to abolish elections and dividing the country on the bases of language, religion and caste. There is no evidence to suggest that the abolition of elections is on the anvil. What was more objectionable was his remark that the Constitution can only be saved by defeating Modi. According to a news report, Pateria "did also add that by killing he meant defeating Modi." What he actually said and meant can be debated, but the point to be emphasised here is that the very phraseology used by politicians reeks of enmity (often hatred), pettiness, vindictiveness... well, a variety of attitudes and emotions which debase the human heart and mind. In a liberal democracy, there are always leaders of different ideologies and perspectives; difference of opinion is implicit in the system, so if there is a lack of civility political debate will reduce to vituperation and abuse. Much of that has already happened in our country. All political leaders and parties believe that they are the repositories of the truth, the good, and the beautiful (*satyam, shivam, sundaram*).

The natural corollary is that their adversaries are the embodiments of mendacity, evil, and ugliness. Hence, Bharatiya Janata Party leaders have no compunctions in calling anyone they don't like as 'anti-national.' Ad hominem attacks have become routine; those who don't conform with the sanskari consensus are maligned no end. In a way, this is the revenge of the votaries of Hindutva. Before the rise of Modi, they were treated with similar spite and nastiness. Leftists and liberals regularly and viciously slammed anyone who even slightly agreed with the views of, say, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani (Interestingly, Left-liberals now fondly remember the duo for their gentleness and liberality. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, the two BJP leaders were relentlessly demeaned and denounced). BJP and RSS leaders and luminaries ought to realise that revenge is not justice. Just because Congress leaders and Leftwing intellectuals behaved deplorably in the past doesn't give the saffron brigade a licence to say or do anything whatever they want to. Unfortunately, they have decided to pay their rivals back in the same currency. Congress and other anti-BJP leaders have also refused to discard their abrasiveness. PM Modihas especially been targeted by his political rivals. He has been called, among other things, *maut ka saudagar* and Ravan by his opponents. The Congress should stop calling Modi names—if not for the sake of decency then for the fact that, as he himself said, abuse gets converted into nutrition for him.



People take boat rides as the sun sets at Sangam, in Prayagraj

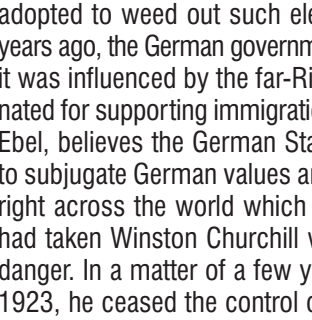
PTI

Neo-Nazis rising

The coup in Germany by Reichsbürger movement shows that the ultra right is steadily growing

It may not have been a perfect coup, in fact a clumsy one to say the least but it is an eye opener nevertheless. The bid to violently topple the democratic set up in the Germany, (and it was not to topple the government but to overthrow the entire political system) should not be taken lightly as many people are doing, brushing aside as childish attempt to overthrow a strong political system which is far more powerful than the neo Nazis might have thought. This is of course true but the rise of neo Nazis in Germany as also in several parts of the western world is alarming and should be nipped in the bud before it grows like cancer and becomes a threat to the world.

The German police foiled the coup and arrested dozens of members of the far-Right Reichsbürger movement for a bid to overthrow the German republic. The movement was led by individuals from different backgrounds and included army personnel, a pilot, a lawyer, and even a chef. They planned to storm the German parliament, take legislators as hostages, and then install Heinrich Ruess, a far right activist as a king. The Reichsbürger plotters were inspired by American QAnon networks, which hold the belief that President Donald Trump is waging a secret war against an international cabal of satanic pedophiles. Though there is little doubt that the attempt could not have fetched the desired result, the conviction and stubbornness of the extremists is worrisome. And this is not for the first time that such a thing has been witnessed and if no stern measures are adopted to weed out such elements the situation could become even worse. Two years ago, the German government disbanded an entire élite Special Forces unit because it was influenced by the far-Right. Walter Lübcke, a German politician was assassinated for supporting immigration. The Reichsbürger movement Founded by Wolfgang Ebel, believes the German State is an illegitimate foreign occupation, a conspiracy to subjugate German values and history. This is high time to curb the tide of the ultra right across the world which if goes unchecked could be a big nuisance. Nobody had taken Winston Churchill when he said the rise of Hitler in Germany was a big danger. In a matter of a few years after he was imprisoned for a ridiculous coup in 1923, he ceased the control of Germany. Will history repeat itself?



Challenges of G20 presidency

The G20 summit will be a big success if all nations keep their geo-political differences aside and strive to work for the common good

The motto of the G20 summit - 'One Earth, One Family and One Future' — is indeed quite thoughtful. It calls for global citizenry to align their priorities to lead a lifestyle that proves healing for the planet, world leaders to strive for peaceful and harmonious relations with other countries and humanity to hope for a bright future. An understanding has to be arrived at that it's about time that nations understood that there's no scope for war or conflict, and rather how all must strive towards a global society that provides equal opportunity to all. This is an era where focus should be on eradication of poverty, hunger and disease; an era to bridge gaps rather than strengthen boundaries.

With respect to agendas in the G20 summit in 2023, India has its task cut out. There will indeed be many challenges that India will have to manoeuvre through, however, this is an opportunity for the nation to be the guiding light to a group of 19 powerful nations and EU on global issues like climate action, digital divide, disruption of supply of food, fuel and fertilisers, terrorism, corruption and so on. We have seen how the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine has led to shortages of food, fuel and fertilizer due to disruption in the supply chain. Due to this many economies world over are facing the brunt of it. This has led to major humanitarian crises over food and energy security. The war must end while India is the President of G20 summit and consensus must be built around depoliticisation of ongoing tensions between the two warring nations. Climate action is another big issue around which a sense of urgency needs to be further built. In terms of accountability and transparency, a lot needs to be done to ensure timely action. A feeling of oneness, inclusivity and 'we are in this boat together' attitude must dawn on both developing and developed nations alike. While the former must cut down on its carbon emissions drastically,



the latter must supply aid without any delay to help the emerging economies both adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change. Goals as set in COP27 must be achieved on ground and a framework for that should be spelt out in 2023 by the G20 nations.

The summit must also give a push to the UN's SDG goals which talk about education, health, gender equality, zero hunger, affordable and clean energy in a planned manner and the developed countries must provide required aid for the same. The pandemic plunged a lot of people into poverty with many children dropping out of schools and people losing their jobs. Basic necessities like education, food, health-care continue to be elusive to millions of people across the world. A 'Joint Research Platform' should be established with top scientists on its board to research on food productivity, global health care and ways to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change. This research platform could have various centers of excellence. Joint research must be also conducted in the fields of space technology, renewable ener-

THERE WILL INDEED BE MANY CHALLENGES THAT INDIA WILL HAVE TO MANOEUVRE THROUGH, HOWEVER, THIS IS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NATION TO BE THE GUIDING LIGHT TO A GROUP OF 19 POWERFUL NATIONS AND EU ON GLOBAL ISSUES

gy and on ways to arrest the effects of natural disaster.

All nations of G20, keeping their geo-political considerations aside, must realise that terrorism is a curse for humanity. Hence, they must in all earnestness build a roadmap to identify organisations indulging in terrorism and isolate them to build a just and safe environment.

Draconian regimes, like Taliban, are a reminder for humanity as to how fundamentalism is a curse and the biggest impediment towards gender equality. G20 nations must endeavor to involve the International court of justice to ensure justice for all victims, mostly women and the minorities. It is also incumbent upon the G20 nations to financially isolate such regimes. India's own progress can dole out a lot of inspiration and zeal to world leaders to emulate and make their own nations more digitally savvy. For instance, UPI and Aadhar have been a game-changer in India in the last few years. While technology is a boon indeed if used in the right manner, the growing cyber crime instances like ransomware attacks, identity frauds, theft of financial data are rising

and need to be curbed. It has affected innocent citizens across the globe and at the summit, a consensus must be reached as to how to take action against cyber criminals.

The relations between many powerful economies are at rock bottom as seen in recent times. The NATO and China's discord over Taiwan, India and China's hostile relations due to standoff at LAC in the past, Russia and western nations' ongoing tiff over war in Ukraine — all of these can pose a hurdle in meaningful collaboration and cooperation among nations at the G20 summit. Hope, harmony and the power of healing are the three H to deal with the global challenges. A focus on developing countries and the Global south seems to be the only way forward. How India steers through all these challenges, brings nations together for a greater good while maintaining diplomatic ties remains to be seen.

(The author keenly follows news pertaining to women's rights & writes to shape opinion on social and environmental issues. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

GUJARAT BJP GOING STRONG

Sir — Gujarat caretaker Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel met Governor Acharya Devvrat and staked a claim to form a government after he was elected as the leader of the BJP Legislature Party, two days after the party won a record mandate in the State elections. Patel will be sworn in as the 18th CM of the State at a function at the Helipad ground near the new Secretariat in Gandhinagar on December 12. He replaced Vijay Rupani in September 2021 ahead of the Assembly elections. BJP is playing its card close to the chest in the political game. After winning 156 of the 182 seats, BJP is making a big push in Gujarat Assembly. Opposition Congress and AAP lost their trace in the bargain.

Jayanthi Subramaniam | Trichy

A FEAST FOR THE CRICKET LOVERS

Sir — With the emphatic win over Bangladesh in the last ODI, at last the Indian cricket lovers can heave a sigh of relief, after miserable loss in the previous two ODIs. I presume that the last ODI match was the feast for the eyes for the Indian cricket lovers due to several reasons. Indian cricket fans are elated to see the double century by Ishan Kishan and also the 44th century in ODIs and 72nd overall for Virat Kohli. With this double century, Ishan Kishan created unbelievable records like the first batsman to convert his maiden century into double century, the youngest batsman to score a double century in ODIs. Also he created the record of the fastest double century in the ODIs eclipsing the record of Chris Gayles' double ton against Zimbabwe. This proves that there is no dearth for talent in Indian cricketers, but sometimes the inappropriate team selections disappoint with undesirable results.

Whether it is ODI or T20 or Test series, the talented players, who can deliver and perform consistently, should be given chances, otherwise the talent would go in vain and the team may face undesirable and unfavorable results like the loss in the recent series. For instance, in

Tantalizing game of football



A determined goalkeeper with numerous saves and Croatia battled past tournament favourite Brazil 4-2 on penalties to reach the World Cup semifinals following a 1-1 draw

CKR Nathan | Ghaziabad

spite of good performance in domestic cricket and IPL, a brilliant player like Surya Kumar Yadav entered the national team very late. In my opinion, he should have entered the national team long back. Recently we witnessed fantastic batting of Surya Kumar Yadav in T20s. I opine that, had he been in the team from the past few years, his extraordinary batting would have helped Indian team in fetching some more wins. I hope the BCCI and selectors would consider the recent series as a lesson and select the players for the team accordingly.

Dr Mejari Mallikarjuna | Chittoor

UNIFORM CIVIL CODE BILL

Sir — Though the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) bill only envisages a collection of laws to protect the personal rights of all citizens belonging to different faiths was proposed to be introduced twice earlier but for various reasons could not be moved. But BJP MP Kirori Lal Meena firm this time introduced a private member's bill in Rajya Sabha seeking the enactment of a Uniform Civil Code. Despite uproarious protests from opposition and demands to withdraw the bill, chairman of the Rajya Sabha called for a voice vote and the motion for introduction was passed in

its favour. The leader of the house Piyush Goyal defending the right of the member to move it as a legitimate right of a member to raise an issue which is a directive principle of the constitution contended the subject be debated instead of casting aspersions on the government and criticising the bill which prima facie aims to accord equality. In fact, the opposition terming UCC hurts 'Unity in Diversity' even before the start of the debate and going further to say that it would bring rift in social life is not justified. Moreover, the opposition instead of taking cognisance the directive of the framers of the constitution backing UCC since its inception have only visualised losing muslim votes if UCC is implemented and coming to conclusion is incorrect and unacceptable. Further the contention of opposition that once UCC comes into being, it would further polarise the country is unfounded. All in all, it also goes to show that fear of losing muslim votes and power matters more than their welfare.

KR Srinivasan | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

India of the 21st Century is a new India, which is making a mark on the global platform, and as a result, the perspective of the world is changing rapidly.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

Russia welcomes India's decision to not support the price cap on Russian oil announced by the

G7 and their allies. Russian Deputy Prime Minister — Alexander Novak

I worked with her (Norah Fatehi) a couple of times. I felt she was a 'blow hot, blow cold' kind of a person.



Actor — Mallika Arora

For the Sri Lanka series, where does Dhawan stand? It is going to be interesting to see how they are going to leave out Ishan Kishan. If Rohit Sharma is available, somebody has to miss out. It could well be him (Dhawan). That could be a sad end to a glorious career.

Cricketer — Dinesh Karthik

Karnataka is going to the polls next year and Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai has staked claim to Akkalkot and Solapur (in Maharashtra). Next year,



Former Maharashtra CM — Uddhav Thackeray

FIRST COLUMN

LIC INCREASED PROFIT BY ACCOUNTING TRICK

Rise in profit is not because of increased efficiency



S KALYANASUNDARAM

Life Insurance Corporation of India has reported a multifold increase in net profit during July–September (Q2) of FY23. It has reported a net profit of Rs 15,952.49 crore, which is 11 times more than its Q2 of FY 22 of Rs 1,433.71 crore. During the preceding quarter, LIC had reported a net profit of Rs 682.88 crore.

On the face of it, one may perceive this as a fabulous work by the LIC. But if one goes deep into the details, one can understand the accounting gimmick that has been employed, though the said treatment is perfectly legal.

It is important for investors to understand how suddenly the LIC has increased its net profit 11 times. Only recently, the LIC came out with the public issue with the issue price of Rs 949. Strangely, it has allowed discounts to policyholders and also retail investors and accordingly policy holders got allotment at Rs 889, whereas the retail investors got it at Rs 904.

As the share price has been beaten down in the market after allotment right from day one of listing, the investors are sitting at huge losses. The policy holders who have subscribed are sitting at a loss of 29 per cent and the retail investors are at a loss of 30 per cent. Others have suffered a loss of 34 per cent. (All these based on the listed price of Rs 627 as on November 25).



Now the reported increase in the recent result is basically on account of change in accounting policy and not due to any improved working of the company, which the investors must clearly understand to make any informed decision.

Due to the change in accounting policy, the LIC has transferred Rs 14,271.8 crore from the non-participatory account to the revenue of this quarter. The LIC has said, “In accordance with a recent IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) letter and subsequent approval by the Board of Directors, the corporation has changed its accounting policy. It has transferred Rs 14,271.80 crore (net of tax) from non-par to shareholder’s account. Due to this, profit for the quarter and half year ended September 2022 has increased to that extent.”

Further the report said, “The amount comprises Rs 5,580.71 crore for the quarter ended September, Rs 4,148.77 crore for quarter ended June, and Rs 4,542.30 crore for quarter ended March.”

The reported net profits of the LIC for the various quarters since September 21 are as follows: Rs 1,433.71 crore (September, 2021), Rs 234.91 crore (December 21), Rs 2,371.55 crore (March 2022), Rs 682.89 crore (June 2022) and Rs 15,952.49 crore (September 2022).

When the September 2022 figure is adjusted for this exceptional item, we get an actual profit figure of Rs 1,680.69 crore (15,952.49 -14,271.80) compared to Rs 1,433.71 crore of September 2021. Hence actually the net profit has increased only by 17 per cent and not 11 times as it is made out to be.

The reported net profit is not out of any increased or efficient working pertaining to this quarter and it is a mere book entry of previous years’ earnings appropriated now.

It is for the investors to take a call based on these details. It may be easy to be carried away by the headline “LIC sees multifold increase in Q2 net profit at Rs 15,952 crore” but that may be a risky proposition.

(The author is a retired banker)

Islamabad’s deadly game of guns



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI



NIKHIL SHARMA

Indian security agencies must prepare for cross-border provocations in the form of infiltrations and terror strikes

The Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) is an Afghanistan-Pakistan-based branch of the Taliban with a Deobandi-Wahabi sectarian orientation. The origins of TTP trace back to the Jihadi elements based in Afghanistan. These groups returned to the tribal areas of Pakistan as a consequence of the post-9/11 American war on terror and began coalescing.

The official formation of TTP took place in 2007, and in 2014, the appearance of Daesh or the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in West Asia in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region complicated the situation further. The deadliness of the TTP can be recalled from the December 2014 Peshawar school attack. Consequently, Operation Zarb-e-Azb, a government anti-militant offensive in North Waziristan, and the excesses of these operations led to further alienation among the tribal militants. The two groups jointly demanded establishing an 'Islamic Caliphate' in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region and beyond.

The development left Pakistan with only two hard choices. First, to cooperate with the US and finish off the entire umbrella of terror, and second, to go against the US and completely Talibanise the society by accepting Sharia law and an Islamic Caliphate for itself. The establishment at Rawalpindi agreed to none as either of the decisions would have entailed compromising its 'authority' and 'power' in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Simultaneously, the US was increasingly seen as a 'burden' for Pakistan; thus, getting the region freed from its clutches became essential. Pakistan adopted a two-pronged approach, the core at which lies the distinction between 'good' and 'bad' Taliban. The strategy first comprised letting the US finish off the terror modules based in Afghanistan, while encouraging some factions, such as the Haqqani network. This was done to use terror as an active foreign and security policy tool, especially regarding Afghanistan and India. The Haqqani network also served as crucial interlocutors between Rawalpindi and anti-Pakistan groups, such as the TTP.

Second, coax the US to the negotiating table with the Taliban and provide some 'breather' for the acceptable groups. In addition, Islamabad also complicated the 'talks' and made the Taliban a central stakeholder from a 'terrorist module', legitimising its safety for a planned US exit. In 2013 and 2014, the Taliban opened its office in Doha and Khorasan-e-Razavi (Iran) with the stated objectives of 'peace and reconciliation,' giving it a political and diplomatic space. Taliban thus got a stronghold, and Pakistan emerged as the most important player in Afghanistan.

As the developments unfolded, the US was forced to exit the region in 2021.



PAKISTAN HAS ADOPTED A TWO-PRONG APPROACH WHEREIN IT HAS HEIGHTENED THE MILITARY COUNTER-OFFENSIVES AGAINST THE MILITANTS AND MADE PARALLEL OVERTURES TO THE AFGHAN TALIBAN TO REIN IN TTP

However, during the momentum of the 'grand chessboard' game, i.e., between 2018 and 2021, Pakistan was so motivated to throw the US out of the region that it made some glaring mistakes. First, the conciliatory approach during the ceasefire agreement backfired as it allowed the TTP to regroup and led to the proliferation of its bases in the hilly regions.

The political establishment negotiated a ceasefire agreement starting in November 2021 which was extended indefinitely in May 2022 as a process building towards conciliation. On the other hand, the military leadership under Qamar Javed Bajwa did not hesitate to carry out military counter-offensives during the same period, thereby jeopardising the peace process. It resulted in the extra-judicial extermination of many militant cadres during the process of engagement with the government. The TTP saw this as a direct contravention of the ceasefire agreement. Thus, the TTP undertook what it branded as "Defensive targeted attacks" against the Pakistani establishments to counter the Army's offensives.

Second, Pakistan also ignored the role of Noor Wali Mehsud in shifting the jihadi narrative from a regional to a local one. The Afghan Taliban and the TTP joined hands on the grounds of commonality. As Pakistan had betrayed both during its heyday of the US proximity, the objective of avenging the killings of its leaders brought the two groups into a firm embrace. Nevertheless, in 2020, the TTP stated that it had no regional or global agenda and that its sole focus was Pakistan.

Consequently, hardcore militants started expressing loyalty to the TTP and its other affiliate or splinter groups, rapidly spreading to Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan. Further, to deepen its outreach, TTP had started providing guerrilla war training to the Baloch freedom fighters apart from successfully creating tactical cross-overs with different affiliates of Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Third, given Rawalpindi's control over the use of force and violence, it naturally expected the TTP to continue supporting the Afghan Taliban, respect the Durand Line, and keep itself involved in Afghanistan. However, as the Taliban became devoid of any strategic challenge, it became relatively free to think beyond the Afghan borders. It set out to deconstruct the image of Afghanistan as a 'strategic backyard of Pakistan' and hence perceived itself as an independent player. The developments allow Washington to regain its strategic foothold in the region. Although the United States has pledged to support the Pakistani establishment against TTP, the matter might take an interesting turn if the US, too, decides to avenge its 'betrayal' in Afghanistan. The aforesaid scenario presents a new set of challenges to Pakistan Army chief Gen Asim Munir, who is considered a hardliner on security issues. The ouster of Lt Gen Hameed as head of ISI, who had an 'accommodative' posturing towards the TTP, further strengthens the hawkish stance of current military leadership.

Pakistan has adopted a two-prong approach wherein it has heightened the military counter-offensives against the militants and made parallel overtures to the Afghan Taliban to rein in TTP. Pakistan's call for a "reorientation in its strategy", apart from Hina Rabbani Khar calling on the Taliban to check the footprints of the TTP in Pakistan, speaks volumes of its double approach. However, the situation might escalate if Al-Qaeda, the TTP, and the ISKP open a joint terror front against the Pakistani State while engaging in parallel targeted attacks.


The Indian security agencies must prepare for cross-border provocations in the form of increased infiltrations, terror strikes on security establishments, disturbances in Kashmir, and minor skirmishes along the borders. Pakistan might resort to this tactic to divert attention from its internal disturbances. The agencies must enhance manual and drone surveillance and use drone jamming technology extensively apart from the completion of the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) installation.

Further, forward air bases should be equipped with short and medium-range missiles, which should be in a state of operational readiness to deter any Pakistani misadventures. Perception management, both domestic and international, is required for the diversion of resources and a more significant build-up of security apparatus along the borders.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

DEAR RISHI SUNAK, LOOKING FORWARD TO THE GAME TONIGHT. IF LES BLEUS WIN (THEY WILL!), YOU'LL WISH US LUCK IN THE SEMI-FINAL... RIGHT?

— THE FRENCH PRESIDENT EMMANUEL MACRON



HOPEFULLY I WON'T HAVE TO BUT YOU'VE GOT A DEAL. LOOK FORWARD TO YOU GETTING BEHIND THE THREE LIONS IN THE NEXT ROUND.

— THE UK PRIME MINISTER RISHI SUNAK

Awareness & alertness can prevent breast cancer

Onset of breast cancer may be determined with proactive screening; healthy lifestyle and diet can beat the malady

According to various studies, around 2.25 million individuals are living with cancer and it contributes to approximately eight per cent of the total deaths in India.

The breast cancer incidence rate is more in women after 45 years of age. However, approximately 10 per cent of breast cancer cases are seen in younger women under 45 years of age.

There are several risk factors for breast cancer, as epidemiological studies have attributed it to early menopause, alcohol and tobacco, exposure to radiation, obesity or decreased physical activity, urbanization and sedentary lifestyle, high fat diet and frequent spontaneous miscarriages. Lack of

breast-feeding, hormone replacement therapy, ageing, socio-economic conditions, and last but not the least, family history of breast cancer or other cancers can also be reasons.

However, among the risk factors for breast cancer, family history is the most important. According to studies, the genetic or hereditary risk factor is responsible for 5-10 per cent of all breast cancer cases and up to one third of all early-onset breast cancer. Studies have found that hereditary breast cancer is characterized by early-onset disease, more chances of involving both the breast and high risk with ovarian cancer.

In fact, germ-line mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2

genes are the most important of genetic and hereditary factors for breast and ovarian cancers. These genes are the strongest susceptibility genes for breast cancer. Normally, the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes protect us from getting certain cancers. But some mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes prevent them from working properly, so that if someone inherits one of these mutations, they are more likely to get breast, ovarian, and other cancers.

However, one must understand that not everyone who inherits a BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation will get breast or ovarian cancer. Everyone has two copies of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes, one copy inherited from their mother and one from their father.

Even if a person inherits a BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation from one parent, they still have the normal copy of the BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene from the other parent. Cancer occurs when a second mutation happens that affects the normal copy of the gene, so that the person no longer has a BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene that works properly.

Unlike the inherited BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutation, the second mutation would not be present throughout the person's body, but would only be present in the cancer tissue. In fact, genetic counselling before testing for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer is important to determine if there is enough mutation

that it is worth testing. Usually, genetic testing is recommended if you have a strong family health history of breast and ovarian cancer or a known BRCA1, BRCA2, or other inherited mutation in your family. Genetic testing for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer looks for mutations in the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes. There are several treatment options for women with BRCA1/BRCA2 mutations. Several medical options are available for managing breast and ovarian cancer risk in women who have BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations, but who have not yet had breast or ovarian cancer themselves.

These options have risks and benefits, and you should discuss them with a doctor knowledgeable about medical management for women with BRCA1 or BRCA2 mutations. The most effective option for preventing cancer is surgery to remove the breasts (mastectomy) and ovaries and fallopian tubes (salpingo-oophorectomy). Other available options may reduce the chance of developing cancer or improve the likelihood of detecting it earlier, but the effectiveness of these options is less certain. One may take medications to lower the chance of developing breast or ovarian cancer or plan yearly screening with mammogram and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI), possibly starting at a younger age.

Clinical breast exams, starting at a younger age and

done more frequently, screening for ovarian cancer with transvaginal ultrasound and CA-125 blood tests, engaging in healthy behaviours such as keeping a healthy weight and exercising regularly and self-breast examination and letting your doctor know right away if you notice any changes are some of the easily available methods to detect the disease.

Effective treatments are available for women at risk for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer that can make them less likely to get these cancers. Because of this, all women should learn about their family health history of breast and ovarian cancer to know if they could be at risk for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer.

CHANDAN TIWARI

(The author is a consultant radiologist with the Indian Air Force)

UKRAINE PM URGES MORE MILITARY AID TO COUNTER RUSSIA ATTACKS

AP ■ KYIV, UKRAINE

Ukraine's prime minister is appealing for Patriot missile batteries and other hi-tech air defense systems to counter Russian attacks, as more Russian shelling was reported on Monday in the eastern

regions of Ukraine where Moscow is trying to make battlefield gains.

Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal told French broadcaster LCI that Russia wants to swamp Europe with a new wave of Ukrainian refugees by its targeting of infrastructure in Ukraine that has caused electricity and

water outages for millions during freezing winter weather.

The provision of Patriot surface-to-air missiles to Ukraine would mark a major advance in the kinds of air defense systems the West is sending to help the war-torn country defend itself from Russian aerial



attack. So far no country has offered them, although Germany has provided Patriot missiles to neighboring Poland, its NATO ally.

Millions of Ukrainians have already fled the country since the Russian invasion started on Feb. 24, and there are fears that many more could leave their homes during winter. Thousands of people have died and dozens of cities and towns across Ukraine have been reduced to rubble during the more than nine months of the Russian onslaught.

Ukraine also needs resupplies of artillery shells and modern battle tanks, Shmyhal said in an interview broadcast on Sunday night ahead of meetings in Paris this week to raise and coordinate more international aid for Ukraine. The more than 1,000 Russian attacks on infrastructure since October are designed "to trigger another wave of migration toward Europe," he insisted.

The Kremlin has said attacks on Ukraine's energy supply system were a retaliation for what Moscow says

was a Kyiv-orchestrated attack on the key, Russian-built bridge to the Crimean peninsula, which Russia annexed in 2014.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke on the phone with U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday. Biden offered "to underscore ongoing U.S. support for Ukraine's defense as Russia continues its assaults on Ukraine's critical infrastructure," the White House said.

Repeated Russian strikes on infrastructure have left millions of Ukrainians without power, heating or water throughout the country. Russian drone attacks near the Black Sea port of Odesa last weekend destroyed several energy facilities at once and left all customers except hospitals, maternity homes, boiler plants and pumping stations without power.

Ukraine's power provider, Ukrenergo, on Monday said that the situation in the country's energy system has remained difficult after Russian attacks, particularly in Odesa.

To defend against further strikes, Shmyhal reiterated previous Ukrainian calls for Patriot surface-to-air missiles — a highly sophisticated system that so far hasn't been forthcoming. He also asked for more German and French air-defense systems that those countries have already supplied.

Ukraine needs large quantities of shells to respond like-for-like against Russian artillery, Shmyhal said. Russia fires 50,000 to 70,000 shells per day at Ukrainian targets and "we need at least one third of that quantity every day," he added.

Organizers of the conference in France say they are expecting more than 45 nations and 20 international institutions to take part. A focus of the meeting will be rushing aid to Ukraine to meet its needs for water, power, food, health and transport during the tough winter months and sending a message to Moscow that the international community is sticking by Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the European Union's foreign ministers on Monday also were gathering in Brussels to discuss fresh sanctions to further punish Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney sharply condemned "deliberate targeting by Russia of civilians in terms of inflicting suffering on a broad population." He described Russia's actions as "a crime, in terms of both aggression and a crime against humanity."

"This is one country invading another," he said. "Brutalizing civilian populations in order to try and get its way, and I think the world has to try and take a stand against that."

On Monday, Ukraine's Prose-

cutor General's office said that two civilians were killed and 10 others were wounded in Russia's shelling of the town of Hirnyk in the eastern, Donetsk region.

"It was yet another Russian attack against civilians," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said on his messaging app channel.

The eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions together make up the Donbas, an expansive industrial region bordering Russia that Putin identified as a focus from the war's outset and where Moscow-backed separatists have fought since 2014.

Russia in September unlawfully declared annexation of four Ukrainian regions — including Donbas — though it does not fully control them.

The latest fighting has focused in Donbas, particularly around the city of Bakhmut, after Ukrainian forces recaptured the southern city of Kherson nearly a month ago. Russian President Vladimir Putin is now seeking to make visible gains.

Russia has shelled Kostiantyivka, and fighting is going on around Avdiivka, Zarinka and Krasnohriivka in the same area, Ukrainian officials said.

The Ukrainian governor of the Russia-occupied Luhansk region, Serhiy Haidai, said that a Ukrainian strike on Kadiivka on Sunday hit a hotel that served as headquarters for the Wagner group, a Russian military contractor. He claimed that hundreds of Russians were killed, a claim that couldn't be independently verified.

Haidai also pointed to a difficult humanitarian situation in the village of Nevske, under Ukrainian control, where people live in basements following relentless Russian shelling.

Dog therapy for kids facing trauma of war in Ukraine

AP ■ BOYARKA, UKRAINE



Bice is an American pit bull terrier with an important and sensitive job in Ukraine — comforting children traumatized by Russia's war.

The playful 8-year-old gray dog arrived on time this week to a rehabilitation center on the outskirts of the Ukrainian capital, ready to start his duties.

As Bice waited in a hallway, inside of what looked like a school classroom with paintings and some books, a dozen children were seated around a table listening to Oksana Slepova, a psychologist.

"Who has a dog?" she asked and several hands raised at once while the space filled with shouts of "Me, me, me!"

One youngster said his dog was named Stitch; "Tank," said another boy, adding that he has a total of five, but he forgot all their names. Everyone burst out laughing.

The seven girls and nine boys — ranging in age from a 2-year-old boy to an 18-year-old young woman — look at first like schoolchildren enjoying class. But they have particular stories: Some witnessed how Russian soldiers invaded their hometowns and beat their relatives. Some are the sons, daughters, brothers or sisters of soldiers who are on the front lines, or

were killed on them.

They come together at the Center for Social and Psychological Rehabilitation, a state-operated community center where people can get help coping with traumatic experiences after Russia's invasion in February. Staffers provide regular psychological therapy for anyone who has been affected in any way by the war. In the past they have worked with horses, but now they are adding support from another four-legged friend: Canine therapy.

Located in Boyarka, a suburb around 20 kilometers (12 miles) southwest of Kyiv, the center was established in 2000 as part of an effort to give psychological support to people affected, directly or indirectly, by the explosion at the nuclear plant in Chernobyl in 1986.

Now it focuses on people

affected by the war. These days, when some areas are without power after the Russian attacks to Ukrainian energy infrastructure, the two-story building is one of the few places with light and heating.

With the kids gathered, some wearing festive blue or red Christmas hats, Slepova cagily asked if they wanted to meet someone. Yes, they did, came the response. The door opened. The faces of the children glowed. They smiled.

And in came Bice, the tail-wagging therapist.

Darina Kokozei, the pooch's owner and handler, asked the children to come one by one, to ask him to do a trick or two. He sat. He stood up on his hind legs. He extended a paw, or rolled over. Then, a group hug — followed by a few tasty treats for him.



Fire engulfs another Moscow mall, 2nd such fire in 4 days

AP ■ MOSCOW

A massive fire gutted a shopping mall on Moscow's eastern outskirts on Monday, the second such blaze in four days.

The blaze at the mall in Balashikha that trades in construction items and home decoration materials first erupted at a storage area and later spread to part of the building. A guard was hospitalized after inhaling toxic fumes from the fire.

Fire-fighting teams managed to localize it to an area of about 9,000 square meters (97,000 square feet) and prevent it from engulfing the entire mall.

Officials said the fire was caused by a short circuit that came amid heavy rain in Moscow.

The blaze follows Friday's fire that destroyed the huge OBI construction materials store, part of the MEGA shopping mall in Khimki on the Russian capital's northwestern outskirts.

Officials said that the fire that killed one security guard was sparked by welding that apparently violated safety regulations.

Peru Prez proposes moving up elections amid protests

AP ■ LIMA, PERU



Peru's newest president, Dina Boluarte, gave in to protesters' demands early Monday announcing in a nationally televised address that she will send Congress a proposal to move up elections.

Boluarte's decision came after thousands of demonstrators took to the streets around Peru for another day on Sunday to demand that she resign and schedule elections to replace her and Congress. The protests turned deadly, with at least two reported deaths in a remote community in the Andes, according to officials.

Boluarte said she will propose the scheduling of general elections for April 2024. That marks a reversal as she had previously said she should be

allowed to hold the office for the remaining 3 1/2 years of her predecessor's term.

"My duty as president of the republic in the current difficult time is to interpret, read and collect the aspirations, interests and concerns, if not of all, of the vast majority of Peruvians," Boluarte said. "So, interpreting in the

Democratic lawmakers visit Havana, meet with Cuban Prez Díaz-Canel

AP ■ HAVANA



A delegation of at least three US lawmakers visited Havana and met with Cuba's government this week, American and Cuban officials confirmed. Reps. James McGovern (D-MA), Mark Pocan (D-WI) and Troy Carter (D-LA) met with Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, leaders in Cuba's congress and its foreign minister, the US Embassy in Cuba told The Associated Press on Sunday.

It's one of just a handful of such visits to the island in recent decades. While officials provided few details about what was discussed, Díaz-Canel and Cuba's Congress tweeted photos

broadest way the will of the citizens... I have decided to assume the initiative to reach an agreement with the congress of the republic to advance the general elections."

Many of those demonstrating in the ongoing political crisis are demanding the release from custody of Pedro Castillo, the center-left president ousted Wednesday by lawmakers after he sought to dissolve Congress ahead of an impeachment vote.

The protests rocking Peru heated up particularly in rural areas, strongholds for Castillo, a former schoolteacher and political newcomer from a poor Andean mountain district. Protesters set fire to a police station, vandalized a small airport used by the armed forces, and marched in the streets.

of the meetings.

One photo shows Rep. McGovern shaking hands with the Cuban leader and another shows the politicians meeting with other Cuban officials. "We addressed our differences and topics of shared interest. We affirmed our willingness to improve bilateral relations," tweeted Díaz-Canel Saturday, also noting he expressed the importance of ending the US government's six-decade trade embargo on the island.



Greek Foreign Minister slams Turkey's missile threat

AP ■ ATHENS

Greece's foreign minister has clashed out at Turkey after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan threatened to hit Athens with ballistic missiles.

"It is unacceptable and universally condemnable for threats of a missile attack against Greece to be made by an allied country, a NATO member," Nikos Dendias said Monday, arriving in Brussels for a European Union foreign affairs meeting.

"North Korean attitudes cannot and must not enter the North Atlantic Alliance," he said.

Speaking during a town hall meeting with youths in the northern Turkish city of Samsun late Sunday, Erdogan said Turkey has begun making its own short-range ballistic missiles called Tayfun, which, he said, was "frightening the Greeks."

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INDIA, UAE WANT TO USE THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SHAPE CHANGING WORLD: JAISHANKAR

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

India and the UAE which have linked a landmark trade deal have seen a "veritable transformation" in their ties which are now beginning to have a broader ripple impact, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Monday, emphasising that they want to use this relationship to shape the changing world.

A defining decision of this transformation is the signing of the bilateral trade pact which led to such effective results and speaks volumes for the bilateral relationship, he said.

"The fact that we were able to conclude the comprehensive economic cooperation agreement so quickly and has led to such effective results thereafter, speaks really volumes for the relationship. We're now moving into new areas," he said while delivering the keynote address at India Global Forum and panel discussion — India-UAE: Partners for Global Impact.

India and the UAE signed UAE-India Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February this year. "Today, our discussions are about space, education, artificial intelligence, health and startups. The old, traditional energy trade investments continue, but a new agenda is also coming into being," he said.



"...India-UAE cooperation is particularly significant. We have known each other for a long, but have rediscovered each other only in 2016. With CEPA, ties have really taken off. India-UAE cooperation is not about surviving change but shaping it positively," Jaishankar tweeted.

The UAE is today India's 3rd largest trade partner. It is India's 2nd largest export market. "More Indian citizens live in the UAE than in any other country abroad. So whether we are talking people, or whether we are talking business, the UAE has a particular salience in our perspectives," he said during the keynote address.

"After Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's visit in 2015, a visit which took place after more than four decades, we've actually seen a veritable transformation in our ties. As I pointed out, certainly our trade and investment have gone up," he said.

"If we were to speak about the return of history in this part of the world, a very natural example of that is the India-UAE relationship. There are times when we may occasionally have a different perspective. Even that is often expressed quite subtly between us," he said.

"So when I look at the return of history and the relationships which will go forward in the coming days, I cer-

tainly would rank the India-UAE relationship very high in that," he said.

"India and the UAE are two countries very comfortable, who've known each other for a long time and who want to use this relationship today in a changing world, not just to survive in a changing world, but to shape a changing world," he said.

Jaishankar also highlighted the ability to expand this relationship with other partners as another aspect of this relationship.

"The obvious example of that is France. We have just this year taken the trilateral with France to a ministerial level, and we certainly want to expand

that," he said.

India and the UAE are also doing more things together, he said.

He also said that India and the UAE are together exploring the possibility of health cooperation in Africa.

He also mentioned the establishment of the I2US (India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States) mechanism which is "yet another example of how our changed relationship is now beginning to have a broader ripple impact."

"So it is in many ways a very ambitious relationship because it's not limited really by its bilateral possibilities. I'm very confident that as we get deeper into the relationship, it will also make itself felt at the global level," he said.

"The traditional energy-trade relations continue but a new agenda is also coming into being. To my mind, that is something that would really redefine this relationship, and help it go to a higher orbit," he said.

"Brought out the relationship between globalisation, rebalancing and multi-polarity. But underlined that more perennial competitive forces are also at work. Far from witnessing an end of history, we are seeing a return of history," Jaishankar tweeted.

Assailants attack hotel frequented by foreigners in Kabul: Taliban

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

A hotel catering to foreign visitors in Afghanistan's capital of Kabul was attacked Monday and three of the assailants were killed, a Taliban official said.

Two foreign residents were injured when they jumped out of windows to escape, said Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban government's spokesman. Residents reported explosions and gunfire and photos and video posted on social media showed smoke from the building.

Khalid Zadran, the Taliban-appointed spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said the attack lasted several hours. He said a "clean-up" operation was ongoing.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but the regional affiliate of the Islamic State group — known as the Islamic State in Khorasan Province and a rival of Afghanistan's ruling Taliban — has increased its attacks since the Taliban takeover of the country last year.

A resident of the Shar-e Naw neighbourhood where the attack happened told The Associated Press that he heard explosions and then several gunshots.

India, Sri Lanka resume Chennai-Jaffna flight



Passengers happy about ease of travel

PTI ■ COLOMBO/CHENNAI

India and Sri Lanka on Monday resumed flight services between Chennai and Jaffna, three years after the island nation discontinued the services due to Covid, and the passengers expressed happiness about the hassle-free journey.

The first flight on resumption of services landed this morning at the Jaffna International Airport, Upul Dhamadasa, the Chairman of the Airport and Aviation Services told reporters.

Jaffna airport officials said the Alliance Air service landed at Jaffna at 11.25 am local time. A small ceremony was conducted to welcome the flight which had 14 selected passengers, mostly officials, on board.

The flight returned to Chennai at 2.35 pm local time, a delay of an hour and 20 min-

utes. On arrival here, Jaffna resident Danakshan told PTI that the flight to Chennai made his 'Tamil Nadu visit 'easy and convenient'. He was here to visit his relatives in the state. Previously, the passenger said he had to go to Colombo to get a connecting flight to Chennai. Akileswaran, another native of Jaffna, said the resumption has proved to be timely for him as his pilgrimage to Sabarimala in Kerala has become hassle-free. "Otherwise, I have to go to Colombo to catch a flight or board a ship. The direct Chennai flight from Jaffna is pretty useful," he said.

Sekar, an Indian Tamil, and his wife Mrutula, a native of Jaffna, expressed similar views. The couple, who now live in the USA, said their proposal to go on a vacation to Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka is 'quicker now,' thanks to the direct flight.

The Jaffna-Chennai flight duration is one and a half hours. The Alliance Air flights would operate four times a week between the two cities.



Iran execution: Man hung from crane in public amid protests

AP ■ DUBAI

Iran executed a second prisoner on Monday convicted over crimes committed during the nationwide protests challenging the country's theocracy, publicly hanging him from a construction crane as a gruesome warning to others.

The execution of Majidreza Rahnavard came less than a month after he allegedly fatally stabbed two members of a paramilitary force after purportedly becoming angry about security forces killing of protesters.

The development underscores the speed at which Iran now carries out death sentences handed down for those detained in the demonstrations that the government hopes to put down.

Activists warn that at least a dozen people already have been sentenced to death in closed-door hearings. At least 488 people have been killed since the demonstrations began in mid-September, according to Human Rights Activists in Iran, a group that's been monitoring the protests. Another 18,200 people have been detained by authorities.

Iran's Mizan news agency, which falls under the country's judiciary, published a collage of images of Rahnavard hanging from the crane, his hands and feet bound, a black bag over his head. Masked security force members stood guard in front of concrete and metal barriers that held back a gathered crowd early Monday morning in the Iranian city of Mashhad.

Mizan alleged Rahnavard had stabbed two security force members to death Nov 17 in Mashhad and wounded four others.

Footage aired on state TV showed a man chasing another around a street corner, then standing over him and stabbing him after he fell against a parked motorbike. Another showed the same man stabbing another immediately after. The assailant, which state TV alleged was Rahnavard, then fled.

The Mizan report identified the dead as "student" Basij, paramilitary volunteers under Iran's Revolutionary Guard. The Basij have deployed in major cities, attacking and detaining protesters, who in many cases have fought back.

A heavily edited state television report aired after Rahnavard's execution showed clips of him in the courtroom. In the video, he says he came to hate the Basijis after seeing video clips on social media of the forces beating and killing protesters.

The Mizan report accused Rahnavard of trying to flee to a foreign country when he was arrested.

Mashhad, a Shiite holy city, is located some 740 km (460 miles) east of the Iranian capital, Tehran. Activists say it has seen strikes, shops closed and demonstrations amid the unrest that began over the Sept 16 death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old woman who had been detained by Iran's morality police.

China to drop some travel tracking as it relaxes Covid rules

AP ■ BEIJING

China planned to stop tracking some travel on Monday, potentially reducing the likelihood people will be forced into quarantine for visiting COVID-19 hot spots, as part of an uncertain exit from the strict pandemic policies that helped fuel widespread protests.

At midnight, the smart phone app that recorded a person's travel between cities and provinces will be disabled. Another app used to restrict the movement of those who test positive or enter an area with a recent outbreak remains in effect. They're part of a package of pandemic apps, some of which have also been used by local governments to suppress protests.

The move follows the government's dramatic announcement last week that it was ending many of the strictest measures, following three years during which it enforced some of the world's tightest virus restrictions. That included near-constant testing, open-ended lock-



downs and requirements that a clean bill of health be shown to access public areas.

Last month in Beijing and several other cities, protests over the restrictions grew into calls for leader Xi Jinping and the Communist Party to step down — a level of public dissent not seen in decades.

While met with relief, the relaxation has also sparked concerns about a new wave of infections potentially overwhelming health care resources in some areas.

The easing of measures means a sharp drop in testing, but cases still appear to be ris-

ing rapidly. China reported 8,500 new infections on Monday, bringing the nation's total to 365,312 — more than double the level on Oct 1. It has recorded 5,235 deaths — compared to 1.1 million in the United States.

China's government-supplied figures have not been independently verified and questions have been raised about whether the ruling Communist Party has sought to minimise numbers of cases and deaths.

Fever clinics at hospitals in Beijing received 22,000 patients on Sunday — 16 times higher than previous week.

Palestinians: Israeli army kills teen girl in West Bank raid

AP ■ RAMALLAH

A Palestinian hospital announced Israeli forces killed a teenage girl during an army operation in the occupied West Bank early on Monday. Khalil Suleiman Government Hospital in the northern city of Jenin said Jana Zakaran, 16, was hit with a gunshot in the head and pronounced dead.

The official Palestinian news agency reported that Zakaran was on her house roof and found dead after the Israeli troops withdrew from Jenin.

The Israeli military said it was aware of the teenager's death and that an investigation was underway.

It added that troops entered the city and arrested three Palestinians wanted on suspicion of attacks against Israelis. Clashes and heavy of exchange of fire erupted between soldiers and suspects, it said.

About 150 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli-Palestinian fighting in the West Bank and east Jerusalem this year, making it the deadliest year since 2006.

The Israeli army says most of the Palestinians killed have been militants. But stone-throwing youths protesting Israeli army incursions and oth-



ers not involved in confrontations have also been killed.

Israel has been conducting daily arrest raids throughout the West Bank, in an operation prompted by a spate of Palestinian attacks against Israelis in the spring that killed 19 people.

The military says the raids are meant to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks, but the Palestinians say they entrench Israel's open-ended occupation, now in its 56th year.

At least 31 people have died in Arab attacks in Israel and the occupied West Bank this year, according to Israeli figures.

3 children die after fall into icy lake; UK gripped by storm

AP ■ LONDON

Three young boys who fell through ice covering a lake in central England have died and a fourth remains hospitalized as weather forecasters issued severe weather warnings for large parts of the United Kingdom.

Rescuers pulled the boys, aged 8, 10 and 11, from the icy waters Sunday afternoon and rushed them to the hospital in the West Midlands, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) north of London. But they could not be revived after suffering cardiac arrest.

The fourth child, who is 6, remains in critical condition. Emergency workers searched through the night for two other children who were reportedly with the group.

Rights group claims EU 'complicit' in Libya's migrants abuse

AP ■ CAIRO

Human Rights Watch on Monday accused the European Union's border and coast guard agency of being complicit in migrant abuses by Libya by allowing the North African country's coast guard to intercept migrant boats crossing the Mediterranean Sea for southern Europe.

Following a data-based investigation report released by the New York-based watchdog last Thursday, it concluded that the agency, known as Frontex, uses its aerial surveillance technology to help Libyan forces locate migrant boats — rather than other rescue organizations or merchant ships also patrolling the Mediterranean.



Every year, thousands of migrants hoping to reach Europe make their way through Libya, where a lucrative trafficking and smuggling business has flourished in a coun-

try fragmented for years between rival administrations in the east and west, each backed by different armed groups and foreign governments.

Last year, 2062 people were reported dead or missing after attempting to reach Europe by boat, according to the U.N. Agency's Missing Migrants Project.

Those who survive and are caught by the Libyan coast guard and returned to the country, face an uncertain future. Thousands of other migrants have endured torture, sexual violence and extortion at the hands of guards in detention centers across Libya.

The detention centers are supposed to be run by Libya's interim authorities but notorious militia groups remain in control.

Pak PM condemns 'unprovoked' firing by Afghan Taliban forces

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday condemned the "unprovoked" firing by Afghan Taliban forces in the border area of Chaman in the restive Balochistan province that killed seven people and said that the interim government in Kabul must ensure that such incidents were not repeated in the future.

The Pakistani Army's media wing initially said six died in Sunday's shelling, but the death toll later rose to seven. Sixteen others were wounded, the army said, blaming the casualties on

the "unprovoked and indiscriminate fire" of heavy weapons by Afghan forces on civilians.

The firing in Chaman, the main border crossing for trade between the two countries, follows a series of deadly incidents and attacks that have skyrocketed tensions between Islamabad and Afghanistan's Taliban rulers.

Condemning the incident, PM Sharif tweeted that the interim Govt in Kabul must ensure that such incidents are not repeated in the future. "It was unprovoked and indiscriminate gunfire which continued for a while and this included artillery shelling by Af Border forces."

NORTHERN RAILWAY			
TENDER NOTICE			
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)			
S. No.	N.I.T. No.	30-2022-23-W-V	
1.	Name of work with its location	Civil work in connection with provision of additional FOB 6.10 mtr. wide at Palwal and Ballabgarh Railway station between JNC-PWL under ADEN/TKD Similar nature of work: Fabrication, supply, assembly, erection and launching/regarding of girders through girder plat, girders FOB's etc in running track	
2.	Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 40692407.44	
3.	Earnest Money Deposit	(It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway Only. Note: FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter no. 201025/CE-1/CT/51 dated 31.08.2016) Rs. 3,53,500/-	
4.	Completion period of Work	8 Months	
5.	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15:00 hrs on 03.01.2023 Opening of tender at 15:00 hrs. On 03.01.2023	
6.	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in	
			
No- 128-W/280/OET/2022-23-W-V/NT-30-2022-23-W-V			
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NORTHERN RAILWAY			
TENDER NOTICE			
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)			
	N.I.T. No.	S.N. 25-B, C, D, E & F-2022-23-W-V	
1	Name of work with its location: B) Provision of toilets, Ramps and other facilities to Divyangjans on various stations between DEE-RE section under ADEN/DEE		
	Similar nature of work: Any Civil work other than track work.		
	C) Reconstruction of inspection pits of mail section alongwith VDC flooring in traction motor section at Diesel Shed TKD in the section of SSE/W/MTKD under ADEN/HNZM.		
	Similar nature of work: Any Civil work involving concreting work.		
	D) Bridge Repair Zone on DE-RE section For the period 2022-23 in the section SSE/IGG under ADEN/DEE.		
	Similar nature of work: Any Civil work other than track work.		
	E) Development of green belt at Delhi area under S/DEN/VIDLI.		
	F) Development of parcel cargo complex at Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway station under ADEN/HNZM.		
	Similar nature of work: Any work of steel fabrication or fabrication and erection of FOB or PF shelter or industrial shed or steel/composite girder bridge or Microwave/HT tower of Channel Sleepers.		
2	Approx. Cost of work: B) Rs. 2,20,26,726.28, C) Rs. 83,06,390.71, D) Rs. 54,99,900.90, E) Rs. 27,11,741.54, F) Rs. 2,16,90,457.47		
3	Earnest Money Deposit: (It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway Only. Note:- FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS as per Railway Boards letter no. 201025/CE-1/CT/51 dated 31.08.2016) B) Rs. 2,60,100.00, C) Rs. 1,66,100.00, D) Rs. 1,10,000.00, E) Rs. 54,200.00, F) Rs. 2,58,500.00		
4	Completion period of Work: B) 6 Months, C) 5 Months, D) 6 Months, E) 4 Months, F) 6 Months		
5	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender: Upto 15:00 hrs. on 06.01.2023. Opening of tender at 15:00 hrs. On 06.01.2023		
6	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.: Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in		
No.- 128-W/280/OET/2022-23-W-V/NT-25-B, C, D, E & F-2022-23-W-V Date: 12.12.2022 3303/22			
Serving Customers with a Smile			

APPENDIX IV A	
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]	
Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property	
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.	
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 16.01.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 49,71,821/- (Rupees Forty Nine Lakh Seventy One Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty One only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLDMT00472982, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 07.12.2022 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 08.12.2022 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Pankaj Mittal and Neetu Mittal.	
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 46,00,000/- (Rupees Forty Six Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 4,60,000/- (Rupees Four Lakh Sixty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY	
Property No. 1:	
Entire Ground Floor, without rooftop/terrace rights of Property built-up on Plot bearing No. 3, with area measuring 32 Sq. Mtrs. Pocket-2, Sector-25, situated in the Layout Plan of Rohini Residential Scheme, Rohini, New Delhi-110085, alongwith the proportionate free-hold rights of the Land underneath the said Property, which is bounded as follows:-	
East by : Plot No.04	West by : Plot No.02
North by : Plot No.50	South by : Entry
Property No. 2:	
Entire Ground Floor, without rooftop/terrace rights of Property built-up bearing Plot No. 4, with area measuring 32 Sq. Mtrs. in Pocket-2, Sector-25, situated in the Layout Plan of Rohini Residential Scheme, Rohini, New Delhi-110085, alongwith the proportionate free-hold rights of the Land underneath the said Property, which is bounded as follows:-	
East by : Plot No.05	West by : Plot No.03
North by : Plot No.49	South by : Entry
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com . For bidding log on to www.auctionfocus.in	
Date : 08.12.2022	Sd/
Place : NEW DELHI	Authorized Officer
INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED	

IIP contracts 4% in Oct, at 26-month low

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial production contracted by 4 per cent in October, the sharpest fall in 26 months, mainly due to decline in output of manufacturing and subdued performance of mining and power generation sectors, according to official data released on Monday.

The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) had grown 4.2 per cent in October 2021. The previous low was (-) 7.1 per cent in August 2020.

As per the IIP data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output declined by 5.6 per cent in October 2022 as against a growth of 3.3 per cent recorded in the year-ago month.

The mining output rose by a meagre 2.5 per cent and power generation increased by 1.2 per cent during the month.

The data further revealed that capital goods output declined by 2.3 per cent in October as against a contraction of 1.6 per cent in the same month last year.

The production of consumer durables too shrank by 15.3 per cent and for consumer non-durables, the decline was 13.4 per cent.

There was also a decline of 2.8 per cent in the output of intermediate goods.

The primary goods and infrastructure/construction goods segments showed growth at 2 per cent and 1 per cent, respectively.

During the April-October period of the fiscal, the overall IIP growth decelerated to 5.3 per cent from 20.5 per cent in the year-ago period.

Commenting on the data, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist of ICRA, said while the IIP posted a deeper-than-expected contraction, mirroring the anemic performance of exports, this chiefly reflects holidays during the festive period.

The year-on-year (YoY) growth of most available high frequency indicators improved in November relative to October 2022, partly reflecting the subdued base owing to the relatively late onset of the festive season in 2021 vis-a-vis 2022.

"Given that the YoY growth in both these months is impacted by base effects, we believe that an average performance of October and November 2022 would provide a better gauge of the actual growth momentum and demand dynamics," Nayar said.

Top 5 cos, few others selected to invest under PLI scheme for specialty steel

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The top five steel companies — Tata Steel, JSW Steel, JSPL, AMNS India and SAIL — dominate the list of qualifiers under the PLI scheme for specialty steel.

Besides, there are Gallant Metalliks, Shyam Metallics Flat Products, and Sunflag Iron and Steel who have been selected to invest under the production linked incentive scheme.

On Friday, the government announced shortlisting 67 out of 79 applications, with an investment potential of ₹42,500 crore, under the PLI scheme for specialty steel. The proposed investments are expected to generate 70,000 job opportunities and add 26 million tonnes of specialty steel capacity in the country.

As per an official document, Tata Steel has submitted applications to manufacture seven types of specialty steel products, while JSW Steel submitted for six categories.

Jindal Steel Odisha, a subsidiary of Jindal Steel and Power Limited, has submitted the highest number of entries to manufacture eight types of specialty steel products.

ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel (AMNS) India submitted four entries, while state-owned Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) has submitted the least number of applications for just two specialty steel categories.

Sensex declines 51 points, Nifty settles flat amid dull global market

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex ended over 51 points lower on Monday while the Nifty settled flat amid a weak trend in global markets and continuous foreign fund outflows.

Investors remained on the sidelines ahead of industrial production and retail inflation data scheduled to be announced post-market hours, traders said.

After tumbling over 500 points in opening trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex recouped most of the losses to end 51.10 points or 0.08 per cent lower at 62,130.57.

The broader NSE Nifty closed at 18,497.15, marginally higher by 0.55 points.

Asian Paints was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, shedding 1.94 per cent, followed by Infosys, Titan, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid, SBI and Bajaj Finserv.

In contrast, Tata Steel, Nestle India, Dr Reddy's, Wipro, UltraTech Cement, HDFC Bank and ITC were among the winners, spurring as much as 1.18 per cent.

The market breadth was negative, with 16 of the 30 Sensex components closing in the red.

"After retreating sharply in early trades, both benchmark indices recouped most of their losses but traded range-bound



in a listless trading for almost the entire trading session, as investors mostly stayed on the side lines ahead of inflation data and the US Fed meeting later this week.

"More clarity will emerge post the US Fed meeting, which would determine the trend in the near term," said Shrikant chouhan, Head of Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities Ltd.

Ajit Mishra, VP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said, "Markets are currently dancing to the global tunes and we expect the same trend to continue, in absence of any major domestic event. Traders should focus on sectors that are showing resilience viz. Banking, FMCG and metal for the long trades while the IT and pharma may continue to trade subdued."

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge gained 0.36 per cent and midcap index went higher by 0.30 per cent.

Retail inflation falls to eleven months' low of 5.88% in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation fell to an 11-month low of 5.88 per cent in November, mainly due to softening prices of food items, official data showed on Monday.

This is the first time in 11 months that the retail inflation print has come within the RBI's tolerance band of 4 (+/-) 2 per cent.

The consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation was 6.77 per cent in October 2022, and 4.91 per cent in November last year.

As per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), inflation in the food basket was 4.67 per cent in November, against 7.01 per cent in the previous month.

After remaining above the Reserve Bank's upper tolerance threshold of 6 per cent since January, retail inflation has declined to its lowest level



in 11 months. In December 2021, the retail inflation stood at 5.66 per cent.

The Reserve Bank had last week said the worst of inflation is behind us, but there is no room for complacency in the fight against price rise. The central bank also said it will keep 'Arjuna's eye' (keen focus)

on the evolving inflation dynamics and projected inflation to remain above 4 per cent for the next 12 months.

The RBI's interest rate-setting panel last week hiked the benchmark rate by 35 basis points to 6.25 per cent, taking the cumulative rate hikes to 2.25 per cent since May 2022.

Govt says taking all required steps to boost coal production

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Monday said it is taking all required steps as well as coordinating with state and central agencies to start new coal mines and increase output from the operational mines.

The country's coal production target is 900 million tonnes and the contribution of captives/ commercial mines will be significant, according to Coal secretary Amrit Lal Meena. The production of dry-fuel from coal blocks during April-November period of FY'23 was reviewed by the coal secretary with project proponents of operational coal blocks, as per a coal ministry statement.

Coal output from captive/commercial coal mines went up to 67.16 million tonnes in April-November period of the current fiscal from 50.49 million tonnes during the same period of FY'22

Rupee falls 23 paise to 82.51 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Snapping a three-day rising streak, the rupee declined 23 paise to close at 82.51 against the US dollar on Monday, pressured by a lacklustre trend in the domestic equity markets and foreign capital outflows.

Forex traders said risk-off sentiment in global markets also weighed on the local unit.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened lower at 82.54 against the greenback and witnessed a high of 82.50 and a low of 82.74. It finally settled at 82.51, down 23 paise over its previous close of 82.28.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.02 per cent lower at 104.79.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures fell 1.02 per cent to USD 75.32 per barrel.

"Rupee traded weak... Due to some strength in dollar index as price inched towards 105. US CPI data on Tuesday evening and Fed's rate hike



decision on Thursday shall be prime data for currency traders to look out for..." said Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst at LKP Securities.

Rupee is expected to trade weak at 82.35-82.95, he added.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 51.10 points or 0.08 per cent lower at 62,130.57, while the broader NSE Nifty closed almost flat at 18,497.15.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) remained net sellers in the capital markets on Monday as they offloaded shares worth ₹138.81 crore, according to exchange data.

After investing over ₹36,200 crore last month, foreign investors continued their positive momentum and infused ₹4,500 crore in the Indian equity markets so far in December, mainly due to the decline in the dollar index.

Gold falls ₹109; silver climbs ₹934

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price fell by ₹109 to ₹54,461 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday amid weak global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at ₹54,570 per 10 gram.

Silver, however, climbed ₹934 per kg to ₹68,503 per kilo-gram.

"Gold prices traded lower on Monday amid a firmer dollar," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was quoting lower at \$1,789.4 per ounce while silver was up at \$23.48 per ounce.

"Gold prices inched lower, dragged down by a firmer dollar, with investors awaiting key US inflation data and Federal Reserve's rate-hike verdict due this week," Navneet Damani, Senior VP - Commodity Research at Motilal Oswal Financial Services said.

Net direct tax collection grows 24% to ₹8.7 L cr; nears 62% of Budget Estimates

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The net direct tax collection grew 24 per cent to ₹8.77 lakh crore in the April-November of the current fiscal, the Finance Ministry said on Monday.

This represents 61.79 per cent of the full-year Budget Estimates (BE) of direct tax collection for 2022-23 (April-March).

"Direct tax collection net of refund stands at ₹8.77 lakh crore as of November 30, which is 24.26 per cent higher than the net collection for the corresponding period last year," the ministry tweeted.

The collection accounts for 61.79 per cent of Budget Estimates for FY 2022-23.

The Budget estimated direct tax collection at Rs 14.20 lakh crore this fiscal, higher than Rs 14.10 lakh crore collected last fiscal (2021-22).

Jaypee Group exits cement biz; sells remaining plants to Dalmia Cement for ₹5,666 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL) and its group firms on Monday announced the sale of remaining cement assets to Dalmia Bharat Ltd at an enterprise value of ₹5,666 crore and exit from the sector as part of its strategy to reduce debt.

According to the deal, Dalmia Bharat Ltd will purchase 9.4 million tonnes of cement capacity along with a thermal plant from Jaypee Group flagship firm JAL and its associate company across several states.

The move would help Dalmia Bharat Ltd increase its manufacturing capacity to 45.3 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from the existing 35.9 MTPA, enabling it to expand its



presence in central India, as the company strives to become a pan-India player.

In a regulatory filing, Dalmia Bharat informed that its wholly-owned subsidiary Dalmia Cement Bharat Ltd (DCBL) has entered into a "binding framework agreement for the acquisition of

clinker, cement and power plants from Jaiprakash Associates Ltd and its associate company".

The deal includes a total cement capacity of 9.4 MTPA, along with clinker capacity of 6.7 MTPA and thermal power plants of 280 MW at an enterprise value of ₹5,666 crore, it added.

The acquisition will help Dalmia to expand its footprint into the central region, it added. JAL's assets are situated in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Besides, it will also "represent a significant step towards realisation of its vision to emerge as a pan-India cement company with a capacity of 75 MTPA by FY27 and 110-130 MTPA by FY31," it added.

ONGC to invest ₹2,150 crore on drilling 53 exploratory wells in AP

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd proposes to drill 53 exploratory wells in Andhra Pradesh- 50 in Godavari on-Land PML (Petroleum Mining Lease) Block of KG Basin and three in CD-ONHP-2020/1 (OALP-Vi) Block Of Cuddapah basin with an investment outlay of Rs 2,150 crore.

Andhra Pradesh State-Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) in a meeting held last month cleared two separate proposals put up by the ONGC for environmental clearance.

According to ONGC, it proposes to carry out the onshore exploration of 50 wells



during 2021-'28 in Godavari on-land PML block of KG basin in East and West Godavari Districts of AP based on the geological and geophysical studies.

These wells will be converted to development wells and connected to the nearest Early Production System (EPS)/ Gas Collecting Station (GCS) if proved commercially viable, it further said.

McDonald's to hire 5K people, double stores in North, East India

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Quick service restaurant McDonald's India (North and East) on Monday said it will hire around 5,000 people as it looks to double its outlets to cross 300 restaurants in the region over the next three years.

It rolled out its largest restaurant in India at Guwahati, spread across 6,700 sq ft with a capacity to feed 220 people at a time, on Monday as part of its expansion exercise.

Speaking to PTI, McDonald's India (North and East) Managing Director Rajeev Ranjan said the company is on a rapid growth path and looking to expand



its network across the states under it.

"All issues and problems are behind us and we are focussed on growing our business," he said while replying to a query if the legal matters with the McDonald's earlier partner has been settled.

In 2020, the US fast food chain selected MMG Group Chairman Sanjeev Agrawal as its new partner to operate outlets in north and east India following buy-out of 50 per cent stake from the estranged partner Vikram Bakshi, who had dragged the multinational giant into a long-drawn legal tussle.

McDonald's is present in India through two master franchisees - Sanjeev Agrawal-led MMG group for north and east India and Westlife Group led by B L Jatia for west and south.

Ranjan said the company currently operates 156 restaurants in north and east India and it is looking to double the number of outlets within the next three years.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The operator of Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) on Monday said it has taken a slew of initiatives, including introduction of a passenger footfall monitoring mechanism, to tackle congestion at the facility.

Some of the airports such as GMR Group-run Delhi International Airport have been witnessing congestion, particularly during the peak hours amid surging passenger traffic.

A number of affected passengers have taken to social media to complain about serpentine queues at the airlines' check-in counters, security check points and even



at the airport entry gates.

Data from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) suggest passenger volume from four key metro airports -- Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru -- spiked 120 per cent to 8.71 crore in the April-October period of the current fiscal as compared to 3.95 crore passengers in the

same period last financial year.

CSMIA has augmented its manpower resources with the inclusion of 'passenger service executives' complemented with infrastructural facilities to meet passenger expectations, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) said in a statement.

The private airport operator also claimed that post-pandemic single-day traffic at the facility reached 1,50,988 passengers on December 10, which was the third-highest single-day passenger movement for the facility.

The highest-ever single day passenger volume for the airport has been at 1,56,329, recorded on December 21, 2018, it said.

BUSINESS BRIEF

2-DAY INT'L TECH FEST V-TAPP 2022 CONCLUDES

Amaravati: The Two-day International Tech fest V-TAPP 2022 organized by VIT-AP University, Amaravati concluded on the 11th December, 2022 to showcase the technical prowess of the student community. Chief guest KalyanMuppaneni, Chairman and CEO, Pi Data Centres, presided over the valedictory session held on Sunday evening which marked the conclusion of this successful two-day tech fest. More than 7000 enthusiastic students have participated in a series of about 100 events, workshops, activity stalls and tech shows, drone racing, conducted by the VIT-AP University's clubs, chapters and Schools covering a plethora of themes ranging from coding, business, law, entrepreneurship, innovation and invention to the physical implementation of topics like robotics and electrical engineering.



OYO ROLLS OUT FEATURES ON APP FOR LISTING HOTELS

New Delhi: Travel tech firm OYO on Monday launched a feature on its app listing hotels that provide the most consistent and high-quality customer experience based on ratings and reviews. Consumers can now see hotels marked "Super OYO" while booking through the OYO App. through the OYO App. The category called "Super OYO", constantly analyses each hotel's performance on multiple parameters such as customer ratings and reviews, keeping maximum rooms operational consistently, and smooth check-in experience.

FIFA WORLD CUP
Qatar 2022

AP ■ DOHA

After all, any sense of relief at avoiding having to play Brazil in the last four will be tempered by the prospect of facing a Croatian side who knocked out the favourites on penalties and never know when they are beaten.



Two players who will not feature for Argentina, however, are defenders Gonzalo Montiel and Marcos Acuna, both of whom are suspended.

AP ■ DOHA

At the end of each of their victories at the World Cup, after joining supporters in post-match singing, Argentina's players will repeat the line that they are playing for



Others such as Beto, a fan in his 60s

"Argentina is a complex, politically fractured country. There are few subjects that unite the country — but the Falklands and the football team do," said Edgardo Esteban, director of the Falklands Museum in Buenos Aires.

AFP ■ DOHA

"However, we want more,"

"It was quite exhausting with extra time in two matches, but we're in the semi-finals of the World Cup and we're not even discussing exhaustion," said

PRESSURE ON ARGENTINA
"That was a group stage match back then and it wasn't decisive. That match has nothing to do with tomorrow's," he said.

Mandzukic retired from international duty after the final, but Perisic remains an important player and one of four survivors from the team that started the defeat by France.

AP ■ DOHA

Bounou kept 2018 runners-up Croatia at bay in their tournament opener. He suddenly disappeared just before kick-off in a 2-0 win over

After Pablo Sarabia smacked the post with Spain's first kick, Bounou saved from Carlos Soler and Sergio Busquets as Morocco won 3-0 in the shootout to reach the quarter-finals for the very first time.



Born in Montreal, Bounou and his family returned to Morocco when he was seven. He joined the Wydad Casablanca academy and broke into

He soon dislodged Czech international Tomas Vaclik, signing a long-

"When you are part of the story, you don't grasp what's happening very quickly. Everything's good, we'll stay focused. We're happy about what we've done so far. But with time, we'll realise," said Bounou.

TO QUALIFY FOR WTC FINAL, WE HAVE TO PLAY AGGRESSIVE CRICKET: KL

PTI ■ CHATTOGRAM

A spot in the World Test Championship final at stake, a depleted Indian team has no option but to play an aggressive brand of cricket against Bangladesh in the two-match series starting Wednesday, stand-in skipper KL Rahul said on Monday.

The Indian team will be without three key players — Jasprit Bumrah, Ravindra Jadeja and regular skipper Rohit Sharma — due to injuries.

Having already lost the ODI series, the Indian team will need to win its next six Test matches (two in Bangladesh and four vs Australia at home) to remain in contention for a top-two spot in the World Test Championship points table.

As of now, Indian team is placed fourth in the table with 52.08 percentage points while Australia (75 percentage points) and South Africa (60 percentage points) are placed first and second. Sri Lanka, with 64 percentage points, is third in the list.

"There is a Test championship (final) qualification so we will also have to be aggressive. We know where we stand and what we need to do to qualify for the final," said Rahul during a media conference after the unveiling of the trophy.

"Each day, each session we will assess what is required for the team in that particular moment and give our best."

The season-ending World Test Championship will be held in June, 2023 at the Oval in London. Flexibility in mindset is the order of the hour and a key recipe for success.

"We won't go in with any set mindset. Yes, there is a certain history of a venue, you look at the numbers and take some pointers from that. At least for us we will go there and try to be aggressive and brave, try and get a result."

"The game is played over five days so it is important to break it down to smaller targets. In every session, the demands would be different but one thing is sure that you are going to see a lot of aggressive cricket from our side," the skipper assured.

A lot of this talk of aggressive intent has come watching England team's radically different ultra-aggressive approach, which has caught the imagination of cricket fans.

And skipper Rahul doesn't think English style of batsmanship characterises "recklessness".

"As cricketers, I don't think it is reckless cricket. They have certain mindset, they thought about it, they back their players and the players are doing the job for the team, so it doesn't matter how you have done it. Cricket is changing, there is no set way of how this game needs to be played," the stylish opener said.

Rahul in fact immensely enjoyed England's 2-0 series win in Pakistan with a Test match still to go.

"To watch these two matches between England and Pakistan has really been interesting. I am really enjoying watching Test cricket being played like that, a very fearless, taking the game on."

"But each team has its own way. All teams can learn a thing or two from the teams that are doing well. You can't always have



the same approach. You turn up according to the conditions," he said, providing his take on English approach.

'HOPE ROHIT CAN RECOVER'

Skipper Rohit Sharma has now missed back-to-back Test

matches — one vs England in July due to COVID-19 and now against Bangladesh due to left thumb dislocation and split webbing.

"Rohit is an important player for us. He is an experienced player and captain of our team. He is someone that the team will

really miss but we hope he can recover quickly and comeback for the second Test," Rahul said.

'DON'T KNOW THE CRITERIA'

The previous national selection committee had named Cheteshwar Pujara as vice-cap-

tain for the Bangladesh series even as chairman Chetan Sharma had said that Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah along with Rahul are being groomed as future leaders.

Pujara is just about holding onto to his spot in the Test squad and vice-captaincy will be an

absolute boost. Pujara was also named vice-captain for one Test match during the 2020-21 historic tour of Australia.

When Rahul was asked about the vice captaincy, he sidestepped the issue.

"Regarding vice-captain, at least I don't know what is the cri-

teria. Whoever is picked, you give yourself a pat on the back. It really doesn't change too many things, everybody in the team knows their roles and responsibilities."

He didn't want to distinguish between who could have been a better deputy.

"Rishabh and Pujara both have been brilliant for us in Test cricket and have done the job so many times. So we really don't think much. The team wins as eleven players and when we go down we go down as whole team. Everyone has responsibility."

'SHUBMAN HAS DONE HIS JOB'

As a skipper, it is always important to back the performers and Rahul believes that his likely opening partner Shubman Gill is one of them.

"Shubman has been a brilliant player and it is wonderful to see his transformation (in ODIs). In Tests, whenever he has got the opportunity he has done the job for the team. He has temperament for the longest format. In every format, he is exciting. What we can do is back exciting and talented players."

Rahul believes in empowering his players to make their own on-field decisions and play with a free mind.

"It is important as a leader to back your players, let them make their own decisions. At the same time, it is also important that we enjoy our cricket and not really think too much. It is about what we require to do as a team and as individuals to win the game for the country," the Bangalore man said.



Rahane, Ishant likely to lose BCCI central contracts, Surya, Shubman set for promotion

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The BCCI is likely to remove out-of-favour Test specialists Ajinkya Rahane and Ishant Sharma from its annual central contracts while Shubman Gill and Suryakumar Yadav may get promotion when the list for the 2022-23 season is finalised during the Board's Apex Council meeting on December 21.

Hardik Pandya, who is being seen as future T20 captain, is likely to get a promotion to Group B from C.

The meeting, which has 12 items on the agenda, will be held via video conference.

A review of Indian team's performance in the T20 World Cup and Bangladesh One-Day Internationals is not part of the agenda but if chairperson deems necessary, non-listed items can be considered for discussion.

In a novel gesture, the Apex Council will also ratify a one-time payment for V Jaydevan, whose rain-rule formula is being used in domestic white-ball games for more than a decade now.

At the international level, ICC uses Duckworth-Lewis-

Stern method (DLS) while VJD is used for Mushtaq Ali T20, Vijay Hazare Trophy and erstwhile Deodhar Trophy and Challenger Trophy.

CHANGES IN CENTRAL CONTRACT

One of the major items on the agenda is "Retainership Contract" of senior men and women cricketers.

It is understood that former vice-captain Rahane and speedster Ishant, who are out of India contention, will be axed from the fresh list. Stumper-batter Wriddhiman Saha will also be axed from the list as he was specifically told at the start of the year that he won't be selected for India again.

An A+ contracts offers ₹7 crore, Group A ₹5 crore, Group B ₹3 crore and ₹1 Group C offers Rs 1 crore to the cricketers.

There are multiple metrics used by the BCCI in consultation with national selectors to determine the gradation system.

A+ and A are two categories where the players are either all-format regulars or at least certainty in Tests along with one of the two white-ball formats. To be

in Group B, a cricketer has to play at least two formats while group C is primarily for single-format players.

Also, one needs to play a specific number of international games (per format) for inclusion in the list. The promotion however is performance-based and ICC ranking is also taken into consideration.

"Surya was in Group C but his performance in the last one year warrants a promotion to Group B at least, if not A. He is currently world No. 1 in T20I ICC rankings and is a serious contender in ODI team also," a senior official said. Gill, who is now a two-format regular (Tests and ODIs) can expect a promotion from Group C to B.

Someone like Ishan Kishan, who has played considerable number of international games across two formats in 2022, is likely to enter the list.

Pandya, who has now led the national team in two T20I away series, might be included in group B after a string of consistent shows. He was demoted to Group C last year after missing a major part of last season due to a back injury.

Wood fires England to series win over Pakistan



AP ■ MULTAN

Mark Wood grabbed four Pakistan wickets to give England a hard-fought 26-run win Monday in the second Test in Multan and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series.

The fast bowler finished with 4-65 as Pakistan were dismissed for 328 about 50 minutes after lunch on day four, having been set a challenging 355-run target.

Wood, who missed England's 74-run win in the first Test in Rawalpindi with a hip injury, turned the match in England's favour with the wickets of Mohammad Nawaz (45) and Saud Shakeel (94) in the space of 12 balls and one run.

Pakistan slumped to 291-7 at lunch, and after the break Agha Salman (20 not out) and Abrar Ahmed (17) tried to hit out for an unlikely win to keep the series alive.

But James Anderson had Ahmed caught, Wood dismissed Zahid

Mahmood without scoring and Ollie Robinson ended the match with the wicket of number eleven Mohammad Ali for zero, sparking celebrations in the England camp.

Anderson and Robinson took two wickets apiece.

The win gives England their eighth win in the nine Tests since Brendon McCullum took over as head coach and Ben Stokes as captain in May this year.

Those victories have been built around "Bazball", a term coined from McCullum's nickname, and describing the aggressive free-wheeling approach the New Zealander has instilled in the side since taking over.

England are now world champions in the 50-over and T20 versions of the game and rapidly ascending the Test rankings ladder.

This becomes England's third series win in Pakistan after victories 1961 and 2000 — although they haven't toured in 17 years because of security issues.

'WE MADE MISTAKES'

Shakeel, who hit eight boundaries in his 314-minute vigil, added 80 runs with Nawaz as England found wickets hard to come by on a Multan pitch that slowed considerably as the game progressed.

In a last-ditch effort, Stokes brought in Wood before lunch and was instantly rewarded with Nawaz caught by wicketkeeper Ollie Pope.

In his next over Wood forced Shakeel to play a pull shot off a short ball that caught his glove, with Pope taking a diving catch to his left.

Replays were inconclusive as to whether the ball scraped the ground before Pope caught it, but, controversially, the third umpire deemed there was not enough evidence to overturn the decision.

Resuming on 198-4, Pakistan had lost Faheem Ashraf in the sixth over of the day for 10, caught at slip for spinner Joe Root's 50th wicket.

Stokes backs Pope's catch

AP ■ MULTAN

England captain Ben Stokes believes wicketkeeper Ollie Pope grabbed a clean catch to dismiss Pakistan batter Saud Shakeel in his team's series-deciding win in the second Test on Monday.

"No doubt about that (catch) in my mind," Stokes said after Pakistan was bowled out for 328 an hour into the second session. "The only thing where you start worrying is when it gets looked at for a long period of time because that's when you start having doubt in your own head," Stokes added. "I've been part of games before where I've been on the team who's been on the receiving end of those decisions and you're always like, that's not carried."

Shakeel battled gallantly for just over 5-1/2 hours in making 94 off 213 balls against the pace and spin before Mark Wood tangled the lefthander down the legside just before the lunch interval and Pope claimed a low two-handed catch to his right and reduced Pakistan to 291-7 by lunch.

Television umpire Joel Wilson of the West Indies upheld onfield umpire Aleem Dar's soft signal of out as he took several minutes and watched the replays from various angles.

Shakeel's dismissal took the game away from Pakistan before England folded the tail after lunch for its second absorbing win in the last two weeks.

"You see a lot of lot of those decisions and those type of catches in cricket," Stokes said. "It went our way, but I've been involved in a few decisions where stuff like that has gone against us, but you can't change that."

Pakistan captain Babar Azam believed the catch cost his team the game. He felt the ball was grounded before it went into Pope's gloves, but said the teams have to follow the umpires' decisions.

Hazlewood out of 1st South Africa Test

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Injured pace spearhead Josh Hazlewood on Monday was ruled out of Australia's opening Test against South Africa in Brisbane this week, but skipper Pat Cummins "appears likely" to play.

Hazlewood, who has a side strain and missed the just-completed second Test against the West Indies in Adelaide, was the only omission in a 14-man squad. But Cummins is set to return after also sitting out the 419-run win in Adelaide with a thigh problem.

That means either Scott Boland or Michael Neser will miss out despite both impressing in their returns to the Test arena against the Caribbean side. Uncapped speedster Lance Morris remains in the 14-man squad as a wildcard option.

"Pat continues to improve, bowled with freedom on



Saturday and appears likely to play this match, although Josh will need more time," said chief selector George Bailey.

"With that in mind, we have retained Michael Neser and Lance Morris in the squad for this match."

"Michael bowled superbly in Adelaide, as did Scott," he added.

"We were impressed as always with their performances that backed up what they have achieved in the past. Lance is a very exciting prospect who will benefit from time with the squad."

Australia head into the first of three Tests against the Proteas from Friday in red-hot form,

having crushed the West Indies by 164 runs then 419 runs.

Australia squad: Pat Cummins (capt), Scott Boland, Alex Carey, Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Travis Head, Usman Khawaja, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Lance Morris, Michael Neser, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, David Warner

BUTTLER, AMEEN WIN ICC PLAYER OF THE MONTH AWARDS

PTI ■ DUBAI

England's T20 World Cup-winning captain Jos Buttler was on Monday named ICC men's Player of the Month for the first time following his stupendous show in November.

Pakistan's Sidra Ameen became the second successive winner of the women's Player of the Month award from the country, thanks to her brilliant performance in the ODI series win over Ireland.

One of the most fearsome batters in world cricket, Buttler had produced a Player of the Match performance in the dramatic 20-run victory over New Zealand in Brisbane to start the month with a bang.

Making his 100th T20I appearance, the opener smashed 73 from 47 balls to provide some much-needed momentum to England's campaign at the T20 showpiece.

After England had secured their passage to the knockout stages, Buttler demonstrated his full array of strokeplay in smashing 80 from 49 balls while chasing 169 for victory in the semifinal against India.



His record-breaking opening partnership of 170 with Alex Hales saw England claim a historic 10-wicket win in Adelaide.

In the final, Buttler made a valuable 26 against a menacing Pakistan bowling attack to lead England to their second T20 World

Cup trophy.

"I want to thank the fans for voting for me as the ICC Player of the Month for November. This award is down to the efforts of my teammates in what was the most incredible month of cricket, culminating in winning the ICC men's T20 World Cup in Australia," Buttler said.

"It is right up there amongst the best months of cricket I've been involved in, and it was pretty special to lead a group of players to the ultimate accolade of becoming world champions."

In women's category, Ameen secured the award thanks to her dominant performances against Ireland in November's ODI series.

Amassing 277 runs through the series and only being dismissed once, opening batter Ameen started the month with her highest score in ODIs, a remarkable 176 not out, as the hosts claimed a convincing 128-run victory in the first match.

She posted another unbeaten score of 91 from 93 balls in the second ODI, this time in a nine-wicket victory.