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G-20 LEADERSHIP IS
GODSEND FOR INDIA

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UNCLEAR AFTER 'CLOSURE' COMMENT

MONEY 10

SERVICES SECTOR OUTPUT GROWTH
HITS 3-MONTH HIGH IN NOV

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LEAD INDIA IN
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12 SPORT

BJP set to retain Guj; Himachal cliffhanger

Exit polls predict AAP won't live up to hype in both the States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Multiple exit poll results released on Monday predicted that the BJP will return for a seventh straight term in Gujarat with a big majority. However, another BJP-ruled state Himachal Pradesh is likely to see a tough contest with one of the pollsters giving the Congress the edge to form the next Government and a couple of others showing BJP retaining the power.

The AAP is not living up to the hype it created, as per the exit polls, which showed it faring badly in both the States.

About half-a-dozen exit polls were unanimous on the BJP sweep in Gujarat, with seats in the range of 117-151.

Except one, other exit polls projected that the long-held tradition of Himachal Pradesh not repeating a party twice in the State will break as they showed the ruling BJP returning to power. However, the India-Today-Axis exit poll predicted that the Congress will gain a majority by bagging a maximum of 40 seats.

The AAP, which had

GUJARAT			
Seats : 182; Majority : 92			
SOURCE	BJP	CONG+NCP	AAP
AAJ TAK-AXIS MY INDIA	129-151	16-30	9-21
NEWS X- JAN KI BAAT	117-140	34-51	6-13
TIMES NOW-ETG	135-145	24-34	6-16
ZEE NEWS-BARC	110-125	45-60	1-5
POLL OF EXIT POLLS	132 (+33)	38 (-40)	8 (+8)

HIMACHAL PRADESH			
Seats : 68; Majority : 35			
SOURCE	BJP	CONG	AAP
AAJ TAK-AXIS MY INDIA	24-34	30-40	0
NEWS X- JAN KI BAAT	32-40	27-34	0
TIMES NOW-ETG	34-42	24-32	0
ZEE NEWS-BARC	35-40	20-25	0-3
POLL OF EXIT POLLS	35 (-9)	30 (+9)	0

indulged in a high-voltage campaign and projected itself as the principal challenger to the BJP, was shown to bag a maximum of 13 seats in Gujarat and just 1 seat in Himachal Pradesh by different pollsters.

The counting of votes in both States will take place on December 8. Elections for the Himachal Pradesh Assembly took place on November 12, while polling in Gujarat happened in two phases on December 1 and 5.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed over 31 rallies and led three big road shows in Gujarat wrapping up on Friday his hectic campaign for the BJP in the Assembly polls.

The BJP sees the outcome

of the Gujarat poll in the PM's home State a curtain raiser to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls which are barely 16 months away.

The party looks to maintain its uninterrupted winning streak there since 1995 in a triangular contest involving the Congress and the AAP.

One of the roadshows of Modi was cancelled on October 31 in the State due to the Morbi Bridge collapse that claimed 130 lives.

The keenly contested Gujarat poll witnessed Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge throwing "Ravan jibe" at Modi with the latter asking voters to "teach a lesson" to the party which "insulted" Gujarat.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who did not cam-

paign in Himachal addressed two public rallies in Gujarat, breaking away from his "Bharat jodo yatra".

Most exit polls predicted a big mandate for the BJP in Gujarat in the range of 117-148 seats in the 182-member Assembly, while the Congress was predicted to bag seats in the range of 30-51 seats.

India Today-Axis My India predicted a landslide victory for the BJP in Gujarat, with the saffron party likely to win from 129-151 seats.

It gives the Congress only 16 to 30 and the AAP 9 to 21 seats in Gujarat.

According to the News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll on Gujarat elections, the BJP was likely to get 117-140 seats, the Congress-NCP 34-51, the AAP 6-13 and others 1-2.

Republic TV P-MARQ predicted 128-148 seats for the BJP, 30-42 for the Congress-NCP, 2-10 for the AAP and 0-3 for others.

TV9 Gujarati forecast that the BJP would get 125-130 seats, the Congress-NCP 40-50, the AAP 3-5 and others 3-7.

For Himachal Pradesh, Aaj Tak-Axis My India predicted a close contest between the Congress and the BJP. It said the BJP would get 24-34 seats and the Congress 30-40 seats.

India TV predicted that the BJP would bag 35-40 seats, the Congress 26-31 and the AAP zero.

Exit BJP! AAP likely to sweep MCD polls

BJP, Cong reject polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is set to sweep the MCD (Municipal Corporation of Delhi) polls, according to multiple exit polls.

The exit poll findings are in tune with AAP supremo and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's oft-repeated claims that the voters in the national Capital are going to turf out the ruling BJP from the seat of power in one of the largest municipal bodies in the world providing civic services to an estimated population of more than 1.46 crore people.

Without exception every single exit poll predicted a thumping win for the AAP in the MCD polls held on Sunday.

An exit poll done by Aaj Tak-Axis My India gave the AAP between 149 and 171 wards and BJP 69-91 wards. Another exit poll by Times Now-ETG predicted that Kejriwal's party getting anywhere between 146 and 156 wards and the BJP between 89-94 seats. News X-Jan Ki Baat exit poll gives the AAP 159-175 wards and the BJP 70-92. All the three channels' exit polls have the Congress getting 10 or less wards.

Both the BJP and the Congress, however, rejected the projections of the exit polls. "We will wait for the final results, and we will accept the decision taken by the people of

MCD EXIT POLLS			
SOURCE	BJP	CONG	AAP
AAJ TAK-AXIS MY INDIA	69-91	3-7	149-171
NEWS X- JAN KI BAAT	70-92	04-07	159-175
TIMES NOW-ETG	84-94	6-10	146-156
ZEE NEWS-BARC	82-94	8-14	134-146
POLL OF EXIT POLLS	84 (-84)	6 (-22)	154 (+11)

the Capital. According to us, it is a very tough fight and we should wait till the final outcome," said BJP MP Manoj Tiwari. Congress leader Surendra Rajput said the party conducted a silent campaign and the same is likely to pay dividends.

The Congress has been projected to shrink to just three to seven seats, less than even independent candidates who may walk away with five to nine seats, as per the exit polls. AAP leader Jasmine Shah said his party's Government in the national Capital is supported by the people of the country everywhere.

Buoyed by the exit polls findings, Shah asserted the slated win of the party is victory of the Government that works to make the lives of the citizens better.

The AAP's performance — if the exit polls turn out correct on results day — would be a big setback for the BJP, which has been controlling the MCD for the past 15 years and which had mobilised dozens of Chief Ministers, Union Ministers and MPs for campaigning in Delhi.

On the other hand, the AAP found itself overstretched finding manpower and resources to simultaneously

contest polls in Gujarat and Delhi.

The MCD polls will also take the sting out of BJP's aggressive corruption pitch against the Kejriwal Government and alleged involvement of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the scam. The BJP had also devoted a great deal of time targeting Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain, who is incarcerated in the Tihar jail in a money-laundering case.

A decisive victory in the MCD polls will give better bargaining chips to Kejriwal in his dealings with Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena. The AAP and the Delhi LG are engaged in a day-to-day war of words, and Saxena has ordered a series of inquiries in several crucial decisions taken by the Delhi Government.

The BJP's strategy of connecting the Delhi local election with national issues and bringing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "development for all" message to the doorsteps of Delhi residents has seemingly failed to counter the AAP's narrative that the "corrupt MCD" has destroyed Delhi's civic amenities and turned the national capital into a garbage heap.

Lalu's kidney transplant successful



PTI ■ PATNA

RJD president Lalu Prasad, who underwent a "successful" kidney transplant surgery at Singapore on Monday, is conscious and responding, from his hospital bed, to greetings of near and dear ones, family members said.

Lalu went under the knife along with daughter Rohini Acharya, who donated one of her kidneys to her septuagenarian father.

Will never be caught alive: Goldy Brar

PNS/AGENCIES ■ CHANDIGARH

Goldy Brar, who has claimed responsibility for the murder of Sidhu Moosewala on May 29, appeared in an interview and refuted reports of his detention in the US as "fake" days after Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann made this claim.

Brar told a YouTube channel that he had long left Canada and USA and was "currently in Europe". He said he will "never be caught alive" and that in case he lands in a situation where he could be arrested, he always carries a weapon and would "shoot self dead".

CAPSULE

COURT: UMAR, SAIFI FACE BIG CONSPIRACY CHARGE

New Delhi: The charges against Umar Khalid and United Against Hate founder Khalid Saifi pertained to the "umbrella conspiracy" or the larger conspiracy of the 2020 northeast Delhi riots, a court here has said while discharging them in case linked to riots.

MUSLIMS BOYCOTT POLLS IN GUJ VILLAGE

Kheda: 1,400 Muslim voters from Undhela village in Gujarat's Kheda district on Monday boycotted voting during the second phase of Assembly polls in protest against the public flogging of some men from the community by police two months ago, community leaders said. Cops denied the claim.

J'KHAND MAN BEHEADS COUSIN OVER LAND ROW

Khunti (Jharkhand): A 20-year-old tribal man beheaded his 24-year-old cousin over a land dispute and the accused's friends took a selfie with the severed head in Khunti district, police said on Monday.

Chhawla rape-murder victim's family seeks review of SC acquittal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The parents of the 19-year-old Uttarakhand girl who was gangraped and killed in Delhi's Chhawla area ten years ago filed a review petition on Monday in the Supreme Court against its judgment that acquitted all the three accused persons. Their petition was also backed by the Uttarakhand Bachao Movement.

Delhi LG VK Saxena had cleared the files for filing review petition by the Delhi Police against the gruesome murder of the girl, whose body was found at Chhawla in 2012.

"This Hon'ble Court erred in holding that the entire prosecution case falls flat because the accused were neither identified in the depositions nor any Test Identification Parade was conducted on the accused.

"It is submitted that the instant is a case of circumstantial evidence and not direct evidence, and the circumstances in the instant case conclusively prove that the offences of kidnapping, rape and murder of the victim were done by the accused only," said the review petition filed by advocate Pranav Sachdev.

"The court erred in coming to the conclusion that the non-examination of the beat constables created serious doubts about circumstances under which the accused were arrested and the car was seized," the petition said.

The trial court and the High Court had convicted the accused with the death sentence. But the Supreme Court acquitted them citing lack of evidence and glaring faults from prosecution and investigation.

Modi chairs all-party meet, seeks suggestions for G-20 summit

Mamata, Naveen Shinde, Kejriwal, Stalin among CMs attend meeting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday chaired an all-party meeting at the Rashtrapati Bhavan with Central Ministers, Chief Ministers of several States and other leaders to solicit suggestions for the G-20 Summit scheduled for September 9 and 10 next year in New Delhi.

Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamata Banerjee, Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik, Sikkim's Prem Singh Tamang, Maharashtra's Eknath Shinde, and Delhi's Arvind Kejriwal attended the meeting.

Other Chief Ministers who attended the meeting were Andhra Pradesh's Jagan Mohan



Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the all-party meeting on G20 summit in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

Reddy and Tamil Nadu's MK Stalin.

BJP president JP Nadda, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, CPI general secretary D Raja and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief Chandrababu Naidu too were in attendance at the high level meet at the Rashtrapati Bhavan here.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, External

City of Joy creator dies

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The winter sun had just set on Sunday when Asha Bhavan Centre got to know about the demise of celebrated French author Dominique Lapierre, who had donated much of the royalties he received from his 1985 novel "City of Joy" to establish the Howrah NGO and fund several other humanitarian causes in Bengal.

Mourning the loss, John Mary Barui, the director of the centre, said a prayer meet was arranged as soon as its members came to know about his death.

Asha Bhavan Centre, with the support of Lapierre, set up multiple schools in Bengal over



30.7.1931 – 4.12.2022

the years, stated Barui. Lapierre would often say India was his second home, he recalled.

The French author, who was honoured with Padma Bhushan in 2008, breathed his last on December 4. "At 91, he died of old age," his wife Dominique Conchon-Lapierre told French newspaper Var-Matin.

Centre to set up 500 theaters to spread word on governance

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

In a mega push for infotainment infrastructure for rural India, the Centre would open 500 cinema halls by the end of March 2023 with each having a seating capacity of around 150 audience.

To be initiated by the Ministry of Information Technology's digital arm Common Service Centre (CSC), the CSC Rural Cinema will be for the entertainment of villagers in remote areas and has a target of opening about one lakh cinema theatres across the villages of the country, said the sources. The sources also said that the platform will also be used to "propagate" the governance, development and several awareness programmes.



The CSC on Monday announced that it would open 500 cinema halls in rural areas by March 2023 and 1,500 by December 2023 and by the fiscal end of 2024 it would be able to develop 10,000 such CSC Rural Cinema.

In this regard, CSC e-Governance Services India Limited signed an MoU with October Cinemas to take the entertainment through CSC Rural Cinema to rural areas.

The MoU was signed between CSC, an SPV under the Ministry of Electronics and IT and October Cinemas aiming to open around one lakh small movie theatres in rural areas during the next couple of years.

"India is the world's largest entertainment market in terms of movie consumption. Our venture will have features to control piracy of films. We will provide all hardware and software equipment to Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) who run the CSC. An investment of around ₹15 lakh is needed to run these cinema halls which will have video parlour cinema licence. We have already got over 5,000 expressions of interest," said CSC Managing Director Sanjay Kumar Rakesh.

England, Croatia reach World Cup quarterfinals

AP ■ QATAR

England captain Harry Kane scored his first goal of this year's World Cup, helping his team beat Senegal 3-0 Sunday and setting up a match against France in the quarterfinals.

While Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic saved three penalty kicks in his team's 3-1 win over Japan in a shootout at the World Cup on Monday, securing a return to the quarterfinals for the runner-up in the 2018 tournament, Mario Pasalic converted the clinching penalty for Croatia after the teams were tied at 1-1 after extra time.

England's Kane scored for the 52nd time for his country to move within one of Wayne Rooney's England record. He



Japan players are dejected after Croatia's win in the World Cup round of 16 soccer match between Japan and Croatia on Monday

AP

also overtook Gary Lineker as his country's leading scorer in major tournaments with 11 goals.

"The ball just sat up nicely and the connection was perfect," Kane said. "I had one just before that I should have done

better with so it was nice to see that one go in."

Jordan Henderson and Bukayo Saka also scored at Al Bayt Stadium while Jude Bellingham played a key role in the opening two goals and Phil Foden had two assists.

JD(U) demands Ratna for Bijubabu

Urges BJD to join unity against BJP Seeks SCS tag for Odisha, WB, Bihar, Jharkhand

SUDARSHAN CHHOTORAY
BHUBANESWAR

The Bihar ruling Janata Dal (United) on Monday urged the Union Government to confer Bharat Ratna to legendary political figure of Eastern India late Biju Patnaik without any further delay.

Addressing a Press conference here, party secretary general and former MP KC Tyagi along with former Union Minister Srikanth Jena strongly favoured Bijubabu's name for the coveted highest civilian award of the country.

While describing Eastern India as most backward and poor region of the country, Tyagi argued that



all the States in the region Odisha, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal should be given special category State status where Union Government would spend 90% of the development contribution and individual State's contribution would be 10%. Otherwise, the region would be left only as colonies of the Central Government, they said.

He urged BJD supremo Naveen Patnaik to revisit Janata Dal history and rejoin nation's opposition mainstream to provide one-to-one

fight against BJP in 2024 elections as has been proposed by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

Putting 'social justice' as the main issue for 2024 general elections, Tyagi said unless States including Odisha go for caste based census, there would be no social justice and proportionate reservations. He appealed the Naveen Patnaik-led BJD Government to go for caste based census as it started in Bihar.

While elaborating JD (U)'s bitter experience in sharing power with the BJP in Bihar, the veteran Bihar

politician said because of their secret strategy to ruin JD (U) and Nitish Kumar, they walked out of the alliance. Since then, Nitish Kumar is concentrating on Opposition unity including the Congress and the Left.

Speaking at the meet, former Union Minister Srikanth Jena while nodded Tyagi and JD(U)'s stand on Bijubabu, Naveenbabu and BJD, he expressed concern over the injustice meted out to 94% people of the State who barely need reservation, including 54% OBC and around 40% SC, ST, both in job and education.

Both leaders stated that the recent Supreme Court judgment favouring 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) has changed the reservation paradigm and arithmetic in the country as the SC has re-defined its own judgment cap of not exceeding 50% cap.

Interview of the week

Future generation of civil engineers should be divers



SUGYAN CHOUDHURY



RATNAKAR DALAI

Two things fill the human mind with increasingly wonder and awe. They are the starry horizons above us and the vast expanses of water called the ocean enveloping round the good old mother earth. It is the vivid intimations of immortality from the sea, the rivers that arrests the attention of scuba divers who plunge into it both recreationally and professionally to gauge it.

Chartered Engineer **Ratnakar Dalai** is one such species of humanity who has displayed his acts of daredevilry through his unique mode of underwater diving bringing laurels for Odisha. He is the number one engineer diver of the county and probably the 20th of the world. He was the chosen one to make a survey on the Mullaperiyar Dam in Tamil Nadu after a direction of Supreme Court while settling the dispute between Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 2009.

After having his BTech from the Utkal University in 1990, he had a stint in the police department from 1995 to 2004. In 2004, he joined as an Assistant Engineer in the Odisha Water Resources Department. He was Principal of the Crew Training College and trained internees for vessels. It was at this point of time when he authored four books, 'Sea Man', 'Ship and Navigation', 'Boat Building & Maintenance' and 'Fishing Technology & Engine Theory' for trainees. Currently, he is working as Superintending Engineer at the Puri Irrigation Division. The Government has specially permitted him to act as a diver and undertake activities like rescue operations during emergencies and investigate the health of the reservoirs as and when required. The Home Department has empowered him to impart training to police and Fire Service personnel when needed. In an interview to The Pioneer, Dalai spoke to **Sugyan Choudhury** about his underwater mission.

You are acclaimed as an

international engineer scuba diver. What made you to be interested in this endeavour?

When I was working in the dam safety organisation under the Water Resources Department, I noticed that divers from Thailand and other places are coming to investigate the dams like Hirakud and Rengali of Odisha. I thought why should not I become a diver and do the same in my State and the nation.

Who was your mentor?

When in the dam safety organisation in 2009, I chanced to meet in Andaman a lady instructor, Gayatri Jayaraman from Tamil Nadu. She was then the scuba diving instructor there. She advised me to opt for a Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI) diving course to give me an added advantage in my career.

When did you have your diving training?

I was initiated into this training in 2009. It was at Andaman. The training is a continuous process. Now that new technology is coming into this venture, I am to get myself updated every month.

What are your major works as an engineer scuba diver?

There are many scuba divers, but I am the only one engineer scuba diver in the country and probably the 20th one in the international level. I used to investigate the dams with full technical data with the support of the associated logistics. That is how an engineer diver stands apart from other divers. My essential job is to investigate the health status of the dams. In Odisha alone, there are 204 dams and in the whole country there are 600 approximately. Each year, two routine in-depth surveys of the health status of the dams are carried on, before and after the monsoon. The checkup of the dams by engineer divers provides antidotes to possible devastations due to breaches in reservoirs.

One has to determine the longevity of the structures, whether the gates of the dams are in full operation and such other minute

details.

What are the new technologies you adopt doing the survey?

With the new technologies coming in, we scan the health status of the dams under water by using remote operated vehicles, eco-scanners, eco-image, eco-sounder in order to carry out our mission through non-destructive tests.

You have been lauded for your survey of the Mullaperiyar Dam at the behest of the Supreme Court. Could you please tell us about your achievement there?

There was a longstanding dispute between Tamil Nadu and Kerala. The dam is situated at the confluence of two rivers, Mulla and Periyar. It is situated within the jurisdiction of Kerala while the water for irrigation for two lakh hectares of land is utilised by Karnataka. The Supreme Court directed for a report on the status of the dam under the Chairmanship of Technical Committee headed by noted engineer G Subramaniam. The upper structure of the dam was studied by scientists from the National Soil Rock Institute of India. For underwater survey, I was chosen. The Karnataka Government accorded me a Cabinet status and protocol. The underwater survey of the dam took me for four days along with my team. It was an arduous task completed for which the Karnataka Government profusely thanked our Odisha Government.

Any other memorable experience during your underwater expedition?

Yes, of course. Once, I was asked to make a survey of the Sathnur Dam of Karnataka. After going under water, I and my team discovered to our dismay that there were huge numbers of crocodiles both upstream and downstream. My team was disappointed. I did not lose my composure and soon established contact with my instructor and international expert Mr Allen Border from Australia, who readily suggested me, "Mr Dalai, you go down after netting 50 feet underneath as crocodiles do not go below after 20 feet in water." That fortified me with courage and conviction. We all went below being covered in nets and successfully completed the mission. My hairs stand on edge when I reminisce this blood-curdling experience.

What's your message to the future generation of youths?

I would like to urge the future generation of civil engineers to be divers since it has a huge potential for employability with rich bonanza.

Veterans Club holds 52nd Navy Day



PNS ■ **BHUBANESWAR**

The 52nd Navy Day was celebrated by the Veterans Club Odisha (VCO) on Monday. A large number of veterans of the three services (Army, Navy and Air Force) and their families participated in the event. At the opening of the programme, a patriotic ambience was created by recital of 'Jay Bharati'. Guest of honour Gyana Hota, renowned Odia comic poet, paid his tribute to the martyrs who laid their lives in the line of duty and recited some poems in his unique style that was highly appreciated by the gathering.

VCO president Bidyadhar Nayak emphasised the need of one more indigenously-built aircraft carrier like INS Vikrant in the Indian Navy to counter China's aggressive policy in the current global scenario.

There is also a need to increase the production capacity at an accelerated pace in India by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Space Research Organisation, he said.

He also said that in order to motivate the serving soldiers, every State Government should create ample opportunities for the Servicemen to live with dignity.

60 yrs of Customs Act celebrated



PNS ■ **BHUBANESWAR**

Celebrations of 60 years of the Customs Act, 1962 were held by the Customs (Preventive) Commissionerate, Bhubaneswar in the Institute of Life Sciences Auditorium here on Monday.

East Coast Railway General Manager Roop Narayan Sunker was chief guest and Chief Post Master General, Bhubaneswar Suvendu Kumar Swain and Commissioner of Police, Bhubaneswar SK Priyadarshi, were guests of honour.

Commissioner of Customs (Preventive) Bhubaneswar Madhab Mishra highlighted the initiatives taken by the department for Ease

of Doing Business and Trade Facilitation in line with the guidelines of WTO (World Trade Organisation). He expressed confidence that with concerted efforts of the department, India would further improve its position in trade facilitations.

Chief Commissioner of GST & Central Excise, Bhubaneswar Bijoy Kumar Kar spoke about the role of Customs in securing the international borders. He said the Indian Customs has risen to the challenge of effectively manning land, sea and air economic frontiers of the country with the objective of furthering legitimate trade across borders and deterring economic offenders.

Prafulla Ghadai turns 82

Book 'Biswakarma' released

PNS ■ **JAJPUR**

BJD leader and former Odisha Finance Minister Prafulla Chandra Ghadai's 82nd birth anniversary was observed at Kaliapani and many other places in Jajpur district on Monday.

A book titled 'Biswakarma' was released by Ghadai. The book chronicled articles by eminent persons on the contributions of Ghadai to Sukinda, Jajpur and Odisha.

Poor people were given away winter clothes like blankets and sweaters. "Sukinda is very dear to



my heart. I love the people of this area very much. I will work for these people all my life," said Ghadai.

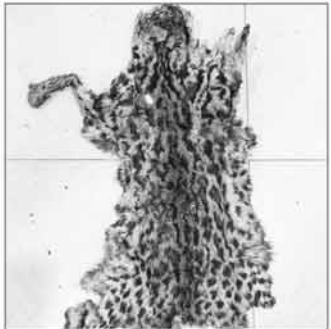
"Prafulla Ghadai always stands with us," said Hari Mahant, a local tribal.

In Khordha Rare leopard skin seized; 1 held

PNS ■ **BHUBANESWAR**

The Special Task Force of the Crime Branch on Sunday night in a raid near Haja village under the Jankia police station in Khordha district arrested a wildlife criminal and seized a Felis Bengalensis leopard cat skin for the first time in the State. The accused was identified as Umesh Rath of village Baladhadi under the Jankia PS in the district.

A team of STF conducted the raid with the help of forest officials and nabbed the accused. During search, the leopard skin and other incriminating items were recovered



from his possession. He was arrested and forwarded to the Khordha SDJM Court.

The skin would be send to Director WII, Dehradun for CE Examination.

ASHA Workers demand pay hike, security



PNS ■ **BHUBANESWAR**

Thousands of ASHA Workers under the banner of Sanjukta Morcha of ASHA Karmi Union affiliated to All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC) on Monday staged demonstration at PMG Square demanding increased allowance and social security.

The union alleged though in Odisha ASHA Workers serve in difficult situations reaching out to

villages in inaccessible areas and hilly tracks to provide health services for safe motherhood, they are being deprived of minimum facilities.

While the World Health Organisation (WHO) termed ASHA Workers in India as Global Health Leaders for their selfless services during the Covid-19 pandemic, both the State and Central Governments are ignoring their just demands, said union

general secretary Namita Sahu.

The organisation demanded a minimum of Rs 21,000 allowance per month, all perks, retirement age of 65 years, retirement benefit of Rs 5 lakh, reservation in Nursing College seats for training, allowance for private hospital deliveries, besides implementation of Parliamentary Committee recommendations for promoting ASHA Workers of ten years experience to the post of ANM.

Youth, lover found hanging

PNS ■ **BHUBANESWAR**

A youth along with his minor lover were found dead in a house at Saliasahi here on Monday.

The deceased were identified as Chitrasen Gouda of Vijayawada and P Barsha, daughter of Madhaba Reddy of Salia Sahi.

Madhaba and his wife had gone for work leaving Barsha alone at home. After returning, they found Barsha and Chitrasen hanging at their home.

After the couple informed police, cops seized the bodies and sent them for postmortem after a preliminary investigation. The family members couldn't reveal the reason for the duo taking the extreme step. "An investigation is on and things would become clear once the postmortem report is availed," police said.

Konark Festival finale Show-stopper Odishi, Kuchipudi performed

PNS ■ **KONARK**

The finale of the 33rd Konark Festival 2022 filled the winter air with energetic classical dance showcases of Odishi and Kuchipudi.

The first set of performances saw Pravat Kumar Swain and Group of Nrutya Naivedya from Bhubaneswar performing three Odishi dance recitals of Surya Bandana, Pallavi and Sada Ripu, choreographed by Guru Pravat Kumar Swain. The performances were based on Hindu mythology and Vedic scriptures.

The second half witnessed two Kuchipudi performances by Jaikishore Mosalikanti and Group of Shivamohanam from Chennai. The troupe performed Tarangam depicted on Hindu deity Krishna and Thillana that is usually performed for the finale of most



South Indian classical dance repertoires. The performances were based on Raag Kalyani and Adi Talam and were choreographed by Jaikishore Mosalikanti.

During the finale of the 12th International Sand Art Festival held in the Chandrabhaga beach, the

participating sand artists were felicitated. The theme of the day was 'World Peace' and 'Tribal Culture' based on which captivating sand sculptures were created.

Orissa High Court Judge Pradip Kumar Mohanty was among the dignitaries who attended the event.

Bhanupratappur by-poll peaceful, turnout stands at 71.74 percent

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Bhanupratappur Assembly constituency in Chhattisgarh on Monday recorded 71.44 percent polling in a by-election which pitted the ruling Congress against the main opposition BJP.

Chief Electoral Officer Reena Babasaheb Kangale said the polling was by and large peaceful. There were no interruptions in the 256 polling booths of the constituency though there were some glitches in some voting machines.

She congratulated all the polling personnel for the smooth election.

The Returning Officer



said when the polling ended by 3 pm, the polling percentage stood at 71.74. The male voters recorded 73.25 percent while it was 70.31 percent for females. The total eligible voters were

1,95,822.

After two hours of polling, the polling percent at 9.00 am was 9.89 percent. It rose to 31.27 percent by 11 am. A ballot unit, a control unit and seven Voter

Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) machines were replaced due to technical glitches during the mock-poll conducted by the polling parties ahead of polling.

Chief Electoral Officer Reena Babasaheb Kangale said the polling was by and large peaceful. There were no interruptions in the 256 polling booths of the constituency though there were some glitches in some voting machines.

During the actual polling, three VVPAT machines were replaced due to technical glitches.

BJP candidate Brahmanand Netam gets relief

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate in the Bhanupratappur assembly by-election in Chhattisgarh, Brahmanand Netam, on Monday got relief from the High Court of Jharkhand which said no coercive action must be taken against him.

An hour before the polling was to end in Bhanupratappur, a Jharkhand police team reached the Kilepal polling and tried to take Netam to Kanker.

But BJP party workers protested. As the news



spread, BJP by-election in-charge Brijmohan Agrawal and MLA Shivratna Sharma took Netam in their custody, stating he had got relief from the High Court.

Kanker Superintendent of Police Shalabh Kumar Sinha told The Pioneer that Netam was being taken into custody for interrogation. He

was to be brought to Kanker for questioning.

The Jharkhand Police urged Netam to cooperate to complete the legal formalities. But as the protests continued, the police had to complete the formalities at the spot, Sinha said.

Netam's counsel Kumar Harsh said a petition was filed in the High Court of Jharkhand. Justice Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi gave relief to Netam. The next date of hearing is on January 16, 2023. Leader of Opposition Narayan Chandel said the relief given to Netam is a moral defeat for the Congress.

Paddy procurement crosses 30L tonne mark in C'garh



STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Paddy procurement in Chhattisgarh has crossed the 30 lakh tonne mark. A total of 30.37 lakh tonnes of paddy have been procured till Monday.

The procurement began on November 1 and will continue till January 31, 2023, an official statement said.

A total of 2,568 procurement centers have been set up and Rs 6,365 crore have been released to the 8.20 lakh farmers, it said.

The government has to procure about 110 lakh tonnes of paddy for the kharif marketing year 2022-23.

The rice millers have lifted 17.18 lakh tonnes of paddy for custom milling.

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Four newborns died at the Special Neonatal Care Unit (SNCU) of the Government Medical College Hospital in Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh's Surguja district on Monday. The government ordered a probe and sought a report within 48 hours.

A government communiqué quoted the Dean of the Medical College Hospital, Dr Ramesh Murthy, as saying that the deaths occurred between 5.30 and 8.30 am.

While the kin of the deceased claimed that the babies, two of whom were on

ventilator support, died due to power outage, the hospital administration said the deaths cannot be linked to the power cut.

"The four babies were in critical condition and were admitted in the Special Neonatal Care Unit (SNCU). Of them, two were on ventilator support," Murthy said.

As per preliminary information, there was a fluctuation in the power supply between 1 and 1.30 am, which was rectified. However, such a fluctuation does not affect the SNCU as it has alternate power supply which was functioning, he said.

At least 30 to 35 children are undergoing treatment in the SNCU, the official said.



Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo reached the Medical College Hospital in Ambikapur on Monday afternoon and was briefed about the tragedy. He ordered a probe into the incident.

A detailed investigation into the matter is underway, following which the exact cause of deaths will be known, he said, adding that

the medical report of the four infants will soon be released by the hospital.

Meanwhile, Health

Minister TS Singh Deo told the Health Secretary to constitute a team to probe the incident.

"After learning about the

deaths, I have asked the Health Secretary to constitute a probe team and send it for an enquiry. I have also apprised Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel," Singh Deo said in a video statement.

The Minister flew to Ambikapur by helicopter on Monday afternoon and visited the hospital. He told reporters that stern action will be taken in case any laxity was found.

Meanwhile, parents of the deceased alleged that the power supply in the hospital was disrupted for more than three hours at night, and accused the hospital staff of negligence. Governor Anusuiya UIkey and Chief Minister Baghel expressed grief over the deaths.

Will empower persons with disabilities: Minister



STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government is committed to empowering persons with disabilities, Social Welfare Minister Anila Bhedia said on Monday.

She spoke at a function

of the Social Welfare Department to mark the International Day for Persons with Disability, an official communiqué said. The meeting was chaired by Urban Administration Minister Shiv Kumar Daharia.

On this occasion, state

level awards were conferred in eight categories and artificial limbs were given away to 20 persons. Durg was judged the best performing district for 2022 in the welfare of the disabled. A Helpline center was also inaugurated for elderly persons, the disabled and transgenders.

Man arrested for killing wife



STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Police on Monday arrested a 32-year-old man for killing his wife after a fight.

Raipur Additional Superintendent of Police Abhishek Maheshwari identified him as Sanjay Adil of Sarona locality here.

He beat Rekha on Sunday and she succumbed to her injuries in a hospital on Monday.

Ensure better healthcare facilities to patients: Director

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

The Director of Health Services in Chhattisgarh, Bhim Singh, on Monday underlined the need to provide better treatment to each and every patient coming to hospitals.

Conducting a surprise inspection of the District Hospital Pandri in Raipur, he said there should be no compromise with the quality of the services. Providing better health facilities to the patients is the first priority of the department.

He inspected all the wards, operation theatres, intensive unit room, avail-



ability of medicines and the medicines given to patients. He examined the Hamar Lab in the hospital. Singh also interacted with admitted patients.

Dr. P K Gupta, Civil

Surgeon at the hospital, said Bhim Singh reviewed all the health services given in the hospital. The Lab was asked to increase sample collection even from nearby government

health institutions.

A detailed discussion on the services provided in the hospital including OPD, operation theatre, blood bank and other facilities was held, said Gupta.

Donate hay to protect cattle: CM

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Making an appeal to farmers to donate hay, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Monday said this will ultimately help the cattle.

Interacting with villagers of Chhurma as part of public interaction (Bhent Mulaqat), Baghel briefed on his government's farmer friendly schemes and decisions.

He highlighted the Farmers Loan Waiver Scheme, Godhan Nyaya, Suraji Gaon Yojana, Narva, Garwa, Ghuruva, Bari Yojana and others. He urged them to donate hay for the cattle at Gauthans.

He announced the opening of a Registrar Office



in Chhurma, upgrading it as subdivision, lighting arrangements at the stadium, construction of Swami Atmanand Hindi Medium

School, an Industrial Training Institute, upgrading village Panduka as sub-tehsil, beautification of Sargabundia pond and

construction of a 33/11 KV sub-station in village Rowan in Chhurma.

Baghel also distributed cheques as assistance and

equipment to beneficiaries under different schemes.

Villager Gaukrana Ghrithalhare said he received free treatment under the Haat Bazar Clinic Scheme.

Farmer Awadh Ram said that with the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana, he could save money and utilize it to buy modern agricultural equipment and also marry off his children without taking loan.

Sakshi Sahu, a student of Swami Atmanand School, thanked the Chief Minister for providing free education in English. Baghel said that Sanskrit and Chhattisgarhi will also be taught in the schools. Baghel extended Rs 1 lakh financial help to Manisha Yadav for higher studies.

Modi, BJP brass deliberate upon State, LS polls strategy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Highlighting India's presidency of the G-20 as a matter of "pride" for all citizens and an opportunity to establish global Indianness and its culture, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday deliberated with BJP leaders the strategies and planning for coming Assembly polls and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections barely 16 months away.

The PM arrived in the national capital after casting his vote in the Assembly elections of Gujarat and was welcomed by party president JP Nadda at the BJP headquarters where he inaugurated the party's national office-bearers meeting. Addressing a key closed-door meeting of BJP leaders from across the country, Modi asked party members to maintain a direct connect with border villagers and said they should be developed as places that draw visitors.

Besides its national office-bearers, presidents and general secretaries (organisation) of the BJP's state units are also part of the meeting chaired by the party's national president J P Nadda.

Former Chhattisgarh chief minister Raman Singh briefed reporters on the meeting and Modi's address in the meeting which would conclude on Tuesday.



Photo: Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

The prime minister said there is an acknowledgement worldwide of the country's emergence as an economic power amid global challenges like the Ukraine war and the Covid pandemic. He spoke about G-20 meet which India is hosting for the first time saying the event gives India an opportunity to project itself in the world community.

According to sources, the meeting took up the slew of State elections lined-up next year including Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, besides Tripura and Chhattisgarh ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, and detailed preparations for the big challenge of 2024 Lok Sabha poll.

Modi lauded the "Kashi Tamil Sangamam", a month-long event going on in Varanasi that celebrates ancient cultural ties between the two places. Modi said "sneh milan"

programmes, an idea he had first voiced during the party's national executive meeting in Hyderabad, should be promoted for cultural exchanges as being seen in Kashi, an ancient name of Varanasi.

Singh said the two-day meeting will be discussing various topical issues and also upcoming state elections. Party leaders are deliberating on further strengthening its presence at booths.

Besides its national office-bearers, presidents and general secretaries (organisation) of the BJP's state units are also part of the meeting chaired by the party's national president J P N

Various groups of leaders, including Union ministers, have also been roped in to strengthen the party's presence, especially in places where it lost in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and is eyeing victory in 2024.

G-20: India pitches for hope, healing, harmony to deal with global issues

Accelerating progress on health, edu, climate finance, tech transformation, digital public infrastructure on the plate

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

With India assuming G-20 presidency earlier this month, its G-20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant on Monday made a strong pitch for working together through hope, harmony and healing to deal with the global challenges, with a focus on developing countries and the Global South whose voice is often unheard.

Kickstarting the first meeting of the G-20 Sherpas in Udaipur, Kant also highlighted India's initiatives such as Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and direct benefit transfer that have helped lift a vast population above the poverty line.

Kant said the issue notes on 13 working groups have already been circulated among the participants. The notes address concerns such as accelerated, inclusive and resilient growth; accelerating progress on sustainable development goals, particularly health and educa-

tion, climate finance, technological transformation and digital public infrastructure. "We will be in the listening mode as you guide us and as we get your perspective," he said.

On Sunday, he had flagged rising global debt, inflation and slowdown in growth, sharp differences over the Ukraine conflict as key challenges facing the world.

Kant stressed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said India's Presidency would like to be inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented and decisive.

"The challenges that we face today can be solved only by working together through hope, harmony and healing and our first concern should be towards those whose need is greatest," he said at the opening session of the deliberations focusing on technological transformation in the digital economy.

Kant said India's G-20 Presidency will seek to advocate the priorities of the developing countries and the Global

South in addition to that of the G-20 partners.

"Our perspective is that we should have a win-win collaboration between all of us, developing countries, Global South, and advanced economies. We need to build new approaches, this is a unique form of both the developed world and emerging economies. We need to build approaches to benefit the world on key global issues," he said.

The first session of discussions on Monday focussed on technological transformation in the digital economy, health and education, while the second will be on green development and India's Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) initiative.

There will be three more sessions on Tuesday that will focus on accelerated, inclusive and resilient growth, multilateralism and food, fuel and fertilisers, women-led development, tourism and culture.

India formally assumed the G-20 Presidency on December 1.

Govt to set agenda for Parl Winter Session, all-party meet today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has convened an all-party meet of floor leaders on Tuesday to discuss the legislative agenda and important issues likely to be discussed in the Winter Session of Parliament beginning December 7.

For his part, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will also on Tuesday chair a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee ahead of the session. This time, he has decided to call a BAC meet instead of the customary all-party meet on the eve of the session, sources said.

The BAC discusses the legislative agenda of the House as well as issues on which parties would like to have discussion. Last week, the government had listed 16 new bills for introduction in the Winter Session.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had recently sent out invites to floor leaders of various parties to attend the all-party meet.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to be present.

The session begins a day before the votes of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly elections, along with those of six assembly and one Lok Sabha bypolls, are counted. The government has also sought the cooperation of party leaders to ensure smooth functioning of both the Houses. The Winter Session of Parliament will commence on December 7 and continue till December 29, having 17 sittings spread over 23 days.

IN SHORT

AKHILESH PRASAD BIHAR CONG COMMITTEE PREZ

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Prasad Singh was on Monday appointed president of the Bihar Congress Committee with immediate effect. Singh has been a part of the G23 grouping which has been critical of the party leadership in the past.

SC QUASHES TAJ MAHAL RELATED HISTORY PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea seeking removal of alleged wrong historical facts related to the construction of the Taj Mahal from history books and find the age of the monument. The 17th century monument is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

SC TO HEAR CBI REPORT ON MULAYAM, AKHILESH PLEA

New Delhi: The Supreme Court said on Monday it will hear the submissions on whether the petitioner can be given the copy of a CBI report on closure of its preliminary enquiry into allegations of amassing disproportionate assets against former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister late Mulayam Singh Yadav and his son Akhilesh Yadav.

31% FALL IN CROP BURNING IN PUNJAB, HARYANA

New Delhi: The total number of paddy crop residue burning events during September 15-October 30 period in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and NCR districts of UP and Rajasthan have come down to 53,792 this year, a reduction of over 31 per cent, compared to the corresponding period in 2021, according to data shared by authorities on Monday. The total active fire counts (for 'kharif' season) in Punjab, Haryana, and NCR districts of UP and Rajasthan, and Delhi for 2021 had stood at 78,550 in 2021.

REPORT ON ASHAs, ANMs' ROLE IN COVID RELEASED

New Delhi: Union Health Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya and Melinda French Gates, Co-Chair, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on Monday jointly released a report "Grassroot Soldiers: Role of ASHAs and ANMs in the Covid-19 Pandemic Management in India," here detailing the key role of ASHAs and ANMs in India's pandemic response strategy.

'Oil import from Russia driven by market forces'

India reiterates its stand on Ukraine with Germany, says EU bought more oil

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday strongly defended importing oil from Russia during the ongoing Ukraine conflict and said it is largely driven by market forces. Moreover, European Union (EU) has bought more oil from Russia than India during the last few months, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said.

This assertion in the backdrop of some European nations and the US criticizing India for procuring fuel from Russia came during talks here with his visiting German counterpart Annalena Baerbock. She arrived on Monday for a two-day visit to India.

Enunciating New Delhi's position on the war, Jaishankar also said India's position on the Ukraine issue is clear that this is not an era of war and that the conflict should be resolved through dialogue.

As regards the issue of oil, he said, "The European Union from February to November has imported more fossil fuel from Russia than the next 10 countries combined. The oil import in European Union is six times what India has imported, gas is infinite times because we don't



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar with Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Annalena Baerbock during a meeting, in New Delhi on Monday

PTI

import it"

Addressing a joint press meet with the German minister after talks, Jaishankar also said "I would urge you to look at these figures. There is a website called 'Russia Fossil Fuel Tracker' it would give you country-by-country data of who is really importing what and I suspect that might be very very helpful." Russian war in Ukraine brought difficulty for Indian energy supply, the German Minister said.

Jaishankar said there is a finite amount of energy resources and Europe cannot make choices to prioritise its energy needs while asking India to do something else. Jaishankar said the situation in Afghanistan and cross-border terrorism emanating from Pakistan figured in talks with his German counterpart. He said there cannot be talks with Pakistan if it continues cross-border terrorism.

On the signing of the mobility pact between India and Germany, he said it is a strong signal of basis for a more contemporary bilateral partnership. The agreement will make it easier for people to study, do research and work in each other's country. On trade ties, Jaishankar said Germany is India's largest partner in the EU. India also flagged the issue of delay in visas by Germany.

The visiting German minister described India as a role model for many countries and noted that Berlin wants to bolster its security cooperation with New Delhi. Asked about challenges facing the region from China, Baerbock said there is a need to assess the threats while describing Beijing as a competitor and rival in many ways.

Report: People living near traffic hotspots at higher cardiovascular, respiratory, mental disorder risk

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

If you are an adult and happen to live near traffic areas emitting high air-pollution—fine particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO2) – then most chances are that you face the higher risk of having at least neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular and common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety.

Published in journal Frontiers in Public Health, a largest study worldwide said that those participants exposed to higher concentrations (above 10µg/m3) of fine particulate matter had a 21 per cent increased risk of two or more co-occurring conditions compared to those exposed to concentrations below 10µg/m3.

For participants exposed to



above 30µg/m3 of NO2 the research showed a 20 per cent increased risk of having two or more co-occurring conditions compared to those participants that were exposed to concentrations of NO2 below 20µg/m3.

The study was conducted on more than 364,000 people. "The strongest associations were observed for co-occurring neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular and common mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety," said the study led by researchers from Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience (IoPPN), King's College London.

SC asks Centre to draw uniform rules for cadaveric organ transplant in States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre to consider as representation a plea which has sought uniformity of rules governing cadaveric organ transplant in all the States. A bench comprising Chief Justice DY Chandrachud and Justice PS Narasimha, which was hearing a PIL filed by an organisation named 'Gift of Life Adventure Foundation', was apprised about the lack of uniformity in rules relating to organ transplantation.

The plea said the imposition of the mandate of producing a domicile certificate for getting registered as an organ recipient in a state in case of cadaveric organ transplant was "arbitrary". Due to the lack of uniformity, some states imposed conditions such as a recipient will have to produce a domicile certificate of a period of 10 to 15 years to be eligible for cadaver organ transplant. The bench, which refused to entertain the PIL, however, agreed to ask the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to consider examining the plea as a representation on the issue of lack of uniform rules.

Fix responsibility for illicit liquor, drug menace in Punjab: Apex court orders State Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The youth will be finished," an anguished Supreme Court said on Monday voicing concern over the burgeoning illicit liquor trade and drug menace in Punjab, and asked the State Government to fix responsibility on the local police for failing to keep vigil. A bench of justices MR Shah and CT Ravikumar asked the Punjab government to spell out specific steps taken to curb the production and sale of illegal liquor.

Senior advocate Ajit Kumar Sinha, appearing for the Punjab Government, assured the court that the State is taking action and has already destroyed over 13,000 illegal liquor 'bhat-tis' (distilleries).

"We are not concerned with government A or government B. So far as Punjab is concerned, the drugs problem is increasing. The youth will be finished. It is very unfortunate that this is happening. Who is the sufferer? The poor people. Illegal manufacture and transportation has to stop because it ultimately affects the health and the society", the apex court said.

Indian Navy to don new Prez standard, colour, crest, do away with colonial design

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy will now have a new design of the President's Standard and Colour and the Indian Navy crest. It was unveiled at Visakhapatnam on Navy Day on December 4. It is a change from the colonial past.

Giving details here on Monday, navy officials said President Droupadi Murmu has approved the introduction of a new design for the President's Standard and Colour and Indian Navy Crest.

Resonant to the ongoing national endeavour to move away from the colonial past, the Naval Ensign was amended to a new Design that draws inspiration from our history wherein the Red Horizontal and Vertical Lines on the White Ensign were replaced with an Blue Octagon with Twin Golden Borders encompassing the National Emblem atop

a clear anchor and 'National Emblem 'Satyamev Jayate' inscribed on the stock of the Anchor. Further, the National Flag was retained on the upper left canton.

The erstwhile design of the President's Standard and Colour for the Indian Navy was instituted on September 6, 2017. The design comprised one each horizontal and vertical red bands intersecting at the centre and the National Emblem inserted at their intersection.

The National Flag was at the upper left canton adjacent to the staff and a Golden Elephant was at the lower right canton on the fly side. This design was inspired from the erstwhile Naval Ensign.

The Indian Navy adopted a new Naval Ensign on September 2022 this year and the new design of the President's Standard and President's Colour awarded to the Indian Navy incorporates this change.

The new design of the President's



Standard and Colour comprises three main constituents - the National Flag in the upper left canton adjacent to the staff, the State Emblem underscribed with 'Satyamev Jayate' in Golden Colour on the upper right canton on the fly side, and a Navy Blue - Gold Octagon below the Golden State Emblem.

The Octagon has twin golden octagonal borders, encompassing the golden National Emblem (Lion Capital of Ashoka - underscribed with 'Satyamev Jayate' in blue Devnagri script) resting atop an anchor; and superimposed on a shield.

Below the shield, within the octagon, in a golden bordered ribbon, on a Navy Blue background, is inscribed the motto of the Indian Navy 'Sam No Varunah' in golden Devnagri script.

The Golden State Emblem signifies 'Power, Courage, Confidence and Pride' whilst the Navy Blue - Golden Octagon

shape draws inspiration from Shivaji Maharaj Rajmudra or the Seal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and represents the eight directions (four cardinal and four inter cardinal), symbolising the Indian Navy's maritime outreach.

The new design of President's Standard and Colour highlights India's glorious maritime heritage and also symbolises a powerful, courageous, confident and proud Indian Navy. The Indian Navy Crest has been amended to replace the fowl anchor with a Clear Anchor. The clear anchor depicts steadfastness of the Indian Navy to deter any challenge in maritime domain, and represents clarity in vision, mission and aspirations of its sailors.

The Clear Anchor also depicts Indian Navy's commitment towards securing the Coast and Maritime Interest of India. The change would imply removal of the symbolic nautical rope in the Crest Designs.

The New Naval Crest has a traditional naval clear anchor below the Ashoka Lion Head with an invocation from the Vedas meaning 'May the Ocean God be Auspicious unto us'.

The phrase was adopted as the motto of the Indian Navy on the suggestion of Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari, the first Indian Governor General of Independent India. The National Motto 'Satyamev Jayate' meaning 'Truth Always Triumphs' is inscribed on the Stock of the Clear Anchor.

The President's Standard and President's Colour are awarded to static and mobile formations of the Indian Navy respectively, to acknowledge their distinguished and meritorious service to the Nation. The Indian Navy was the first among the three Services to be awarded the President's Colour on 27 May 1951 by then President Rajendra Prasad.

J&K’s secessionist groups congratulate Pak’s Gen Munir

RAKESH K SINGH ■
NEW DELHI

Post the change of guard in Pakistan Army with Gen Syed Asim Munir taking charge of the top post from outgoing chief Gen Qamar Jawed Bajwa on Tuesday, the secessionist groups from Jammu and Kashmir have started congratulating him in their bid to project their loyalties and in return get financial help from the ISI.

The desperation to show loyalty to the new army chief is such that notorious terrorist and separatist leader, Masarat Alam Butt, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail here, organized a meeting in the prison premises with fellow Kashmiri inmates and congratulated Munir for being appointed as Army chief.

Tihar jail has recently been embroiled in unsavoury controversy for alleged ‘facilitation’ to Delhi Minister Satyender



Jain, also an inmate, with massage facility in the prison premises. Officials have not ruled out Jain’s role in facilitating Alam for conducting a meeting inside the jail and releasing his congratulatory statement through an emissary.

Alam’s statement was released by the Kashmir Media Service, a media outlet and a channel partner of Kashmiri terrorist groups, in Secunderabad of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Other groups from the Valley have expressed similar sentiments in congratulating Munir.

Butt welcomed the appointment of Munir as the Pak army chief.

Likewise, the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Political Party welcomed Munir’s appointment and demanded resolution of the Kashmir issue through relevant UN resolutions.

APHC Chief of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, Mehmood Ahmed Saghar in a statement in Islamabad denounced the Modi government for “confiscating” hundreds of properties of Jamat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre has banned the JeI Jammu and Kashmir for involvement in terrorist activities. The outfit is also facing cases for terrorism and is being probed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Another outfit Pasban-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir also congratulated Munir. These outfits are lobbying

at the international level to show relevance so that the media reports reach the new Pak army chief and he directs the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) boss under him to transfer money to them for fomenting trouble in the Valley.

In a letter to the European Union (EU), Chairman of the Kashmir Council Ali Raza Sayyad urged the European body to press for release of thousands of Kashmiris arrested by India before the G-20 meeting.

While the US considers Jammu and Kashmir to be a disputed territory, a number of AAP leaders are close to the American embassy here.

The separatist groups in Jammu and Kashmir are organized into two groups, one that seeks to project allegiance to the Pak army and the other seeks to portray proximity to the ruling democratic political parties.

Farooq re-elected NC chief

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Dr Farooq Abdullah was ‘unanimously’ re-elected the president of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference for another term on Monday.

The 85-year-old sitting Parliamentarian from Srinagar and former J&k Chief Minister is set to lead the party’s aggressive poll campaign in the coming months. No other party leader had filed papers to contest the elections paving way for the ‘unanimous’ election of Dr Abdullah without facing any contest.

“Dr. Farooq Abdullah has been re-elected as JKNC President in today’s delegate session at Dargah Hazratbal (in Srinagar). The party delegates from both the provinces of Jammu and Kashmir unani-

mously nominated only one name, Dr. Farooq Sb, to continue as party president,” NC spokesman Imran Nabi Dar said.

Dr Abdullah had earlier created a flutter by suddenly announcing his decision to step down from the post of party president on November 18.

Soon after getting reelected at the special delegate session at Hazratbal, marking the 117th birth anniversary of Sheikh Mohd Abdullah, Dr Abdullah directed his own son and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah to join the poll arena.

Dr Abdullah said, “As party president, I am telling you (Omar Abdullah) that you have to contest the election.”. “Because if we have to fight



them then we all have to jump into the fray and contest elections,” he added.

The former Union minister said the BJP “will do anything, even make attempts to buy your loyalties, but God will fail all their designs”. Omar has been consistently saying for a long time that he will not contest the Assembly election until J&K’s statehood is restored.

Referring to the 2018 Panchayat polls Dr Abdullah publicly admitted boycotting the panchayat polls in 2018 was “a huge mistake” and the party must contest every future election in Jammu and Kashmir.

“I want to tell the party that boycotting the panchayat elections (in 2018) was a huge mistake. Remember this, we will not boycott any coming election. Instead (we will) contest and win them.”

Recruitment to 21,000 posts rigged: CBI to HC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■
KOLKATA

In a major revelation the Central Bureau of Investigation on Monday told the Calcutta High Court how large scale rigging took place in the appointment to Group D posts in the State.

The revelations further smear the face of the Mamata Banerjee Government which has seen a number of senior ruling Trinamool Congress politicians including Ministers, MLAs and top officials including a sitting Vice-Chancellor going to jail in connection with the school level recruitment tests conducted by the School Services Commission. The CBI which is also investigating the SSC scam —involving the recruitment of teachers and Group C employees — told the High Court how a massive rigging had taken place in the appointments to 21,000 posts.

The central Agency has found in its investigation that the recruiters had tampered with 9,000 OMR sheets most of which have been destroyed.

The CBI also told that there was imprint of large-scale bungling in the entire appointment process --- from appointment panel to waiting



list to the merit list, lawyers present in the court said adding the single Bench of Justice V Basu told the CBI to go ahead with its work and the Court would see that no single culprit in the scam was spared.

The Agency informed the Court that in order to hide the massive irregularities the hard disk of the original computer of the SSC through which the appointments were made had been kept hidden at Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh. The recovery and analysis of the hidden data had revealed many shocking information about the scam, the Agency told the Court.

In a related development the CBI is likely to submit a second chargesheet in the teacher recruitment scam, sources said adding the chargesheet would contain more explosive information about the scam.

72 hours on, SP forensic team yet to visit blast site



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
KOLKATA

Almost 72 hours have elapsed since a massive explosion on Friday night took down a partly built two-storey house and caused three deaths and several injuries at Bhupatinagar village in East Midnapore district but neither the Superintendent of Police nor the district forensic team have visited the area, locals on Monday rued.

This even after the Bengal Opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari on Sunday wrote a letter to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to order an NIA investigation into the case.

With the incident giving further impetus to the raging controversy over the deteriorating law and order situation in the State that has seen more than a dozen people including chil-



dren falling to bomb blasts and gun fights in the past one month the BJP and the ruling Trinamool cadres clashed in the village after the former went to register their protests in the area.

“Neither the SP has come nor a forensic team has been sent to the area ... this shows complacency of the administration ... the men who died in the blast were all TMC men who were manufacturing bombs,” said a local BJP leader adding the local people have been forced to keep their mouths shut.

The impact of the blas was so much that the entire housed caved in and two craters were created on the floor, sources said adding a big stockpile of bombs that had been kept in the house of local TMC leader Rafkumar Manna had gone off leading to

his death. Two more persons allegedly making bombs too perished in the blast.

Curiously however the dead bodies of the victims were recovered in a paddy field next morning about a mile away from the spot leading to strong suggestions that their colleagues were trying to remove the corpses in order to escape political embarrassment.

The BJP workers who went to Bhupatinagar on Monday were literally beaten away by the alleged TMC goons and the police present at the site had a hard time to rescue the saffron men to safety, sources said.

“We will wait for some more time and then start a massive campaign if the police do not take action and arrest the other culprites in the case,” said Adhikari.

ITBP concludes 60th Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear course

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The 60th “Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear” Course at “National Institute for Training in Search, Rescue and Disaster Response”, Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force, Ramgarh, Panchkula (Haryana) concluded on Monday.

Inspector General, Basic Training Centre, Indo-Tibetan Border Police, Ishwar Singh Duhan, who was the chief guest for the closing ceremony said a total of 30 officers from different units of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force participated in this course which was conducted from November 9 to December 5.

NITSRDR is an important national level disaster training institute in North India, which trains not only IAF but also NDRF, SDRF, Army, NCC and IAF Academy trainees in the domain of disaster.

The purpose of this course is to impart an insight to the force personnel to recognize the injured person in disasters like chemical, nuclear, biological and nuclear.

SP sure of Dimple’s victory in Mainpuri



PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party claimed that party candidate Dimple Yadav would win the Mainpuri bypoll with “three times more votes” than what Mulayam Singh Yadav had garnered.

SP MP Ram Gopal Yadav, after casting his vote at Saifai in Etawah, said Dimple Yadav would win with three times more votes than what Netaji (Mulayam Singh Yadav) used to get.

Ram Gopal Yadav alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party “goons” intimidated the voters and SP workers at various places in Mainpuri.

“In Mainpuri, they were not allowing SP agents at several booths. We have lodged a complaint with the returning officer. Similarly, BJP goons came to a polling station of

Mainpuri in an inebriated state and pushed our polling agent out. The police and administration were of no help,” Ram Gopal Yadav alleged.

“Police and administration are manipulating. The Election Commission had directed that security forces’ deployment for election duties should be randomised. But when polling parties arrived, around 2,000 of the staff were stopped and held back as reserves as they had Yadav surname. They forget that not only Yadavs but everyone votes for SP,” Yadav further alleged.

“They did not allow SP workers and supporters to cast votes in Rampur. The beating of people started on Sunday. There is nobody to listen but the public is supreme,” the SP leader said.

Raj leg of Bharat Jodo Yatra begins



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
JAIPUR/NEW DELHI

Amidst the factionalism in Rajasthan Congress, the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by former party chief Rahul Gandhi began its State sojourn from Jhalawar district on Monday, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his arch rival, former deputy Sachin Pilot, in attendance. The 89th day of the yatra started from Kali Talai in Jhalrapatan, a rural area on the Rajasthan-Madhya Pradesh

border. But this started not before some fireworks between the Gehlot and Pilot supporters with their respective cadre scrambling to put posters across and section defacing Pilot’s posters in the Congress ruled state. The other notable leaders who accompanied Rahul Gandhi were AICC general secretary (organisation) KC Venugopal, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee chief Govind Singh Dotasra, senior leader Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, and Food and Civil

Supplies Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas.

Addressing a Press conference, Gehlot lashed out at the mainstream national media, claiming they have “boycotted” the yatra as editors and owners were under pressure. Gehlot claimed the media has completely failed to fulfil their responsibility as the fourth pillar of democracy, and history will not forgive them for that.

“Kaan khol kar sun lo...national media wale bhi. state media wale bhi. Itihas aapko maaf nahi karega!” he said. (“Listen carefully...national and state media, history will not forgive you.”)

As the Rajasthan chief minister launched his tirade against the media, AICC general secretary (Communication) Jairam Ramesh intervened to defend the journalists present there, saying they should not be blamed as they have been doing their job properly. However, he also lamented the coverage of the yatra in the mainstream was not as per their expectations.

Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ramesh charged that the possibility of India’s division has increased due to his policies and that “political dictatorship” is becoming a reality.

“There are three challenges before the country which need to be fought. The possibility of division of India has increased due to the intention and policies of the prime minister. Economic disparity is rising and divisive ideology are the two other challenges,” Ramesh said.

Ramesh said the Bharat Jodo Yatra was planned to raise various issues facing the people. He further said the yatra is not for winning elections and it is expected that it will activate and strengthen the party organisation.

On the BJP accusing the Congress of dividing India, he said the BJP doesn’t deserve to raise such allegations as those who follow the ideology never played a role in the freedom struggle and in the making of the Constitution. He said the RSS has a divisive ideology and

the BJP is expert in giving slogans, event management.

The Rajasthan chief minister further said the Bharat Jodo Yatra was attracting the attention of “the whole world” and the youth associated with it would prove to be an asset for Rahul Gandhi. He was referring to the 10 yatriis who have accompanied Rahul Gandhi from the beginning of the yatra on September 7.

While Gehlot shared pictures on Twitter, Pilot took to the micro-blogging platform to convey that the yatra in the state started with a resolve to fulfil hopes and expectations of the youth.

Rajasthan is the only Congress-ruled state where the yatra has entered and will cover about 500 km passing through Jhalawar, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Dausa and Alwar districts over 17 days before entering Haryana on December 21. Rahul is scheduled to interact with farmers at Lalsot in Dausa on December 15 and address a public meeting at Malakheda in Alwar on December 19.

TN educationists praise Yogi’s good governance, development

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

During the Kashi Tamil Sangamam taking place in Varanasi, a group of Tamil Nadu educationists praised Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s model of good governance and development.

When asked to rate Yogi Adityanath on a scale of 1 to 10, some gave him a perfect score, some gave him a score of 9, and some responded that the work of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath could not be measured in numbers as the development of UP was “unprecedented.”

The visitors from Tamil Nadu described Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath as a “role model” for other states.

During the ongoing one-month Kashi Tamil Sangamam



in Varanasi, a group of more than 200 teachers travelled to Varanasi, Prayagraj and Ayodhya.

Professor D Subbaiah from Chennai Presidency College said, “Yogi Adityanath, the chief minister of Uttar Pradesh, has done a lot for the state and is continuing to do so. Other states should also take inspiration from his work and consider him as a role model.”

V Krishnamurthy said that Yogi Adityanath was doing excellent work in UP and

deserved 10 out of 10 when compared to the chief ministers of other states.

Babu, who is from Annamalai University, stated that ‘Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat’ was a fantastic idea. Babu expressed his appreciation for the show by saying that Yogiji’s efforts merited a score of 10.

Mariyappan, assistant professor of engineering college, said that despite the large population of the state, Yogi Adityanath had done a wonderful job in maintaining peace and order in Uttar Pradesh.

“Yogi believes that the state’s citizens are all members of one big family. If measured by numbers, Yogi is the nation’s top-scoring chief minister but I’ll give him 9 out of 10, as there is always space for development.”

PM roadshow during polling violated MCC; EC afraid: Cong

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of violating the model code by taking out a roadshow before casting his vote in the second phase of polling in Gujarat and alleged that the Election Commission is “afraid” and is “under pressure” not to act against him.

Congress head of media and publicity Pawan Khera said the Congress has seen that over the last several weeks, inaction on the part of the Election Commission is evident from the watchdog of our democracy, the watchdog of our elections.

“We have been making representations to the Election Commission at various levels. Every second or third day we have made some representations or the other in Gujarat, in Delhi, but, I am afraid the Election Commission looks like it is willingly under pressure,” he told reporters. The Congress leader said the party is deliberating on taking necessary legal measures on the issue. Khera said the value of the vote



of the prime minister or that of any common man is the same. “But how is it that the PM holds a roadshow fo 2.5 hours when he goes to vote,” he said.

“What are the compulsions of the Election Commission that it cannot see any violations by the prime minister,” he said.

He said in the second and the last round of polling in Gujarat, Prime Minister Modi while voting in Ahmedabad decided to do a roadshow of two and half

hours which was covered live by all channels free of cost.

“Is this not an advertisement? Shouldn’t you be charging the BJP, why you are doing it for free,” he asked.

“We will take necessary steps, and prevail upon the Election Commission of India through whatever means possible, legal means possible, to ensure that such publicity comes under the purview of election expenditure of the party, which undertakes this publicity, which forces you to run these roadshows live, especially when the election is under way,” he also said.

The Congress leader also alleged that its tribal candidate and sitting MLA of Danta in Gujarat, Kantibhai Kharadi, wrote to the Election Commission seeking additional security as he apprehended a threat to his life.

By the evening he was attacked by 24 people, who he alleged were ‘goons’ of the BJP and he had to take cover of the forest at night, where we finally rescued him at 2.33 AM.



A boy, riding a bicycle, silhouetted against the setting sun, on the outskirts of Agartala on Monday. (PTI)

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Iran waking up

The notorious morality police, which was crushing the anti-hijab protests, have been disbanded

Have the Ayatollahs blinked on hijab in Iran? Perhaps, if Attorney General Mohammad Javad Montazeri's statement is anything to go by. The morality police, he said, "was abolished by the same authorities who installed it." State media reports suggest that he said this on Saturday during a meeting at which officials were discussing the anti-hijab unrest; the morality police have been violently trying to suppress for months. The theocratic Government, however, has neither confirmed nor denied the abolition. In fact, there are conflicting signals from the powers that be. The state-owned Arabic television channel, Al Alam, has claimed that Montazeri's statement has been taken out of context; other state channels also maintain that the Government remains firm on mandatory hijab law. Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian, however, says something else. At a press conference in Belgrade, Serbia, when asked about the morality police, he did not deny the abolition. He said, "In Iran, everything is moving forward well in the framework of democracy and freedom." Not very unequivocal, but the allusion was for all to notice. Even if the morality police have not been removed, it is indubitable that the protests, which began months ago after a young woman was beaten to death by moral cops for not wearing the hijab properly, have rattled the top authorities in Tehran. Around 450 people, including children, have died in the demonstrations across the country, and yet there are few signs of the movement subsiding.

As in the case of protests in China over Beijing's stupid zero-Covid policy which have exhibited anti-Xi Jinping feelings, the campaign against the Islamic headscarf too may be becoming anti-theocracy. The people of Iran have suffered a lot of depredations at the hands of Islamist hotheads who, Amnesty's 2021 report says, "heavily suppress the rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly. They banned independent political parties, trade unions and civil society organisations, censored the media and jammed satellite television channels." Security and intelligence officials arbitrarily arrest those whose social media postings they find "counter-revolutionary" or "un-Islamic"—which could be practically anything. For instance, women not covering their heads are un-Islamic, as also are men who wear ties with suits. Several thousand men, women and children were interrogated, unfairly prosecuted and/or arbitrarily detained solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association and assembly, the human rights body reported. Protesters, journalists, dissidents, artists, writers, teachers and dual nationals were among them. Also among them were human rights activists, women's rights defenders, votaries of LGBTI people's rights, labour rights and minority rights, environmentalists, etc. Hopefully, the anti-hijab movement becomes a watershed moment in Iran's history—between an Orwellian state with Islamist characteristics and a liberal democracy.



Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany Annalena Baerbock visits Kinari Bazaar, at Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi

Rail Project scrapped

Kerala Govt bowing to the people's pressure scraps the rail project averting an environmental disaster

The Rs 1.2 lakh crore Silver Line Semi Speed Rail project linking Kasaragod with Thiruvananthapuram has been scrapped by the Government of Kerala following widespread agitation by the people who would have been thrown to the streets and lost their precious lands. Though experts like E Sreedharan, the legendary Railway Engineer and Alok Kumar Verma, former chief engineer of Indian Railways warned the Kerala Government about the environmental and ecological damages the stand-alone project would inflict on the State in addition to the thousands who would be displaced as a result of land acquisition, an intransigent CPI(M)-led administration went ahead with installing survey stones along the proposed path. A hitherto unseen mass agitation forced the government to do a vault face and call off the project.

This is not the first time Kerala is seeing such a protest. Way back in the 1980s, the then Rajiv Gandhi led Congress Government had decided to set up a nuclear power plant to be built in the High Ranges of eastern Kerala with technical and financial aid offered by the then Soviet Union. This would have resulted in the destruction of hundreds of hectares of lush, verdant rain forests and wild lives. The protests launched under the leadership of M A Varghese, a frail looking professor and his battle cry that the reactor could be built only over his dead body made the Centre see the writing on the wall and spiked the project. Latest developments show that the CPI(M) Government has not learnt anything from these two incidents. The new ill-conceived project is the Sabari Rail to facilitate pilgrims from reaching the holy shrine of Lord Ayyappa atop the Western Ghats. The fact that Sabarimala shrine is opened only for three months every year has not been taken seriously by the proponents of the project. Pilgrims themselves have not demanded for such a rail connectivity because their trip to Sabarimala would not be complete without paying obeisance at more than a dozen temples along the route. This will be better served by the existing road network in the State. The claim by a section of politicians that the rail route would help transporting hill-produce from Idukki district to Cochin Port is nothing but bunkum as plantations that yield tea, coffee, cardamom are getting shut down by the day. Kerala should get its existing rail tracks doubled so that travel time could be brought down to less than half of the present journey. Another separate rail line means more agitations and bloodshed.

G-20 leadership is godsend for India

The India's leadership of G20 can catapult the country to prominence but more importantly give it a chance to work for lasting world peace

India is now the chairman of the G-20, which was formally handed to it at Bali by the previous incumbent Indonesia. The presidency of the G-20 has the potential to catapult India to the degree of prominence the country has not experienced before. However, G-20 leadership would be for only one year. Thereafter, the dividend earned from the capital gained during this one year should accrue. Would not the most handsome divide be an ongoing world peace?

The spontaneous conviction of most countries might well be that the peace will be, let us say, eternal. The "non-era of war" would endure indefinitely, to borrow somewhat from Prime Minister Modi's statement to Russian President Vladimir Putin. Thereafter, whether India becomes the world's number one power or not would be less important; the country would enjoy diplomatic dominance at least as long as the peace lasts.

Every thinking person in the world today would be aware that the use of a thermonuclear weapon means widespread death and destruction. Yet, weaker or less responsible nations with nuclear weapons in their hands do not hesitate to threaten those countries of whom they are afraid, have ongoing issues or simply have scores to settle. It is not impossible that irresponsible leaders of such nations could well be tempted to use this weapon of mass destruction. Criminals realize their folly only after they are punished; otherwise, they are incorrigible.

One hears much that is spoken and written in favour of diplomacy and statesmanship. However, it is essential that one recognizes the historical fact that neither diplomacy nor strategy has prevented war. The proud Maginot Line of France failed to even obstruct the German invasion in the summer of 1940. The only factor that defeated but did not deter either the Swedish army in 1708, Napoleon's invading army nor Hitler in 1941—the invasion of Russia—nature's intervention in the form of snow-fall on the Russian steppes. What



else then can prevent war in the absolute?

Something reminiscent of dharma, its inspiration as well as its deterrence could perhaps help to keep nations away from thinking of war and destruction and in this age, thinking nuclear. That the use of nuclear weapons is not merely destructive but also an evil, needs to be driven into the vast masses of people all over the world. How Hiroshima and Nagasaki were rendered burning hells in 1945 needs to be captured in record and displayed to all coming generations, especially in countries boasting of their nuclear arsenals. How murdering innocent human beings in such a manner is the worst dushkarma (misdeed) anyone, group or nation can perpetrate, must be driven into the minds of people. How effective this conviction can be, has been demonstrated through history in India.

The subcontinent was invaded via the Hindu Kush down the Khyber Pass and across the seas for no less than a millennium. There have been innumerable episodes of retaliation in justifiable defence by the Hindus. Yet, they suffered enormously in these invasions by an alien ideology and way of life, bled badly;

SOMETHING REMINISCENT OF DHARMA, ITS INSPIRATION AS WELL AS ITS DETERRENCE COULD PERHAPS HELP TO KEEP NATIONS AWAY FROM THINKING OF WAR AND DESTRUCTION AND IN THIS AGE, THINKING NUCLEAR

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILO WARNING ON WAGES

Sir — All is not well and is bad news as the warning by the Global Wage Report 2022-23 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) of rising inflation that has caused a striking decline in real monthly wages highlighting the urgent need for policies to prevent further poverty, inequality, and social unrest, and the November data by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data, which shows a rise in unemployment in India for the third consecutive month since September 2022 that reached 8 per cent.

The CMIE data of December 2, 2022, shows an even higher unemployment rate of 8.1 per cent in the county. The urban unemployment rate was 9 per cent while the rural unemployment rate was 7.7 per cent, showing comparatively more hardship for the urban unemployed compared to the rural areas. The ILO global report on wages across the world said that the global monthly wages fell in real terms to -0.9 per cent in the first half of the year marking the first instance of negative growth this century. As a result, the purchasing power of middle-class families has been reduced, while low-income households have been hit particularly hard.

The jobless growth is indeed a worrisome trend. We cannot be happy as a nation which is high on GDP but low on per capita income. The per capita income is of course directly related to the employment the people get in the country at all levels. Besides, the fear of recession is also very real as no income in the hands of the people means low demand and thus goes the vicious cycle of lesser and lesser jobs. Hope the government is mindful of this.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

INDIA AT HELM OF AFFAIRS

Sir — Excellent that India, a peace loving suave nation, assumes the presidency of G20 (from Dec 1st for a year) and of UNSC (by rotation on December month). India has all-round goodwill. It has grown tremendously on all fronts in

Save our soil



Once you take the life out of the soil, it will become an inert sand - Sadhguru. Every year December 5th is witnessed as World Soil Day to raise awareness about the importance of soil and our lives and its campaign

"Soils: Where food begins" aims to raise awareness of the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems. Like us, soils need a balanced and varied supply of nutrients in appropriate amounts to be healthy. Agricultural systems lose nutrients with each harvest, and if soils are not managed sustainably, fertility is progressively lost, and soils will produce nutrient-deficient plants. Over the past years the nutrients and vitamins in plants have gradually decreased. Almost 74 Nations around the world have pledged concrete actions to save soil in their countries. It is high time we understand the importance of saving soil and saving climate.

Tashi Baheti | Ujjain

spite of hiccups of overpopulation (140 crore), regular weather catastrophes wrecking havoc on its economy and unpredictable weather hitting agriculture, its main occupation.

India should make excellent coordination by involving as many relevant members as possible on the given subject. To tread the path of realistic approaches, optimal choices, latest technology usage, suitability, realistic solutions and realistic peaceful coordination. While dealing with G20 members, it should realise that Small scale industries are apron strings of big industries. Any sudden major changes will adversely affect both large scale and small scale units too. Hence India should be in touch with international "expertised Scientists communities". It should help the smaller and poorer nations financially to achieve 100% clean inexpensive energy as they are victims of rapid industrialization of big nations. At the UN Security Council, India can achieve realistic peaceful coordination between Russia and Ukraine by involving as many common friends of both nations. After all, war is pyrrhic. All involved and many others too will be losers. No winners in a war.

Madhu PV | Secunderabad

NAGARJUNA SAGAR LIES IN A LIMBO

Sir — As bifurcation differences over water sharing between the two Telugu states simmer after the earlier meetings failed to break the deadlock, the latest meeting called by KRMB to address the issues relating to water sharing after the two states giving their consent for rule curve relating only to Srisaillam reservoir is heartening but at the same time remaining elusive on Sagar rule curve and Nagarjunasagar is surprising.

Notwithstanding the bone of contention existing for long over the water sharing between the two states, one hopes, Central Water Commission intervenes and resolves Sagar rule curve amicably because time is ripe for both the states to come to a reasonable understanding and resolve the differences in a give and take policy by prioritizing growth and development instead of bickering and prolonging the matter because water been an elixir of life need to be shared and not allowed to be flown down to join the sea.

KR Srinivasan | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



PRAFULL GORADIA

to influence geopolitics and geoeconomics by proactively promoting the interests of the regions these blocs represent. Global peace is ostensibly sought to be achieved through trade and economics.

The G-20 being essentially an economic forum, it would be its primary duty to also awaken, as many nations as possible, to the crime of destruction and not merely killing. For example, the Cathedral of Notre Dame, which was destroyed in a fire in 2020; the magnificent Temple of Somnath of the era of Bhimdev Solanki can never be brought back, as are many a rare factories or centres of manufacturing, which are irreplaceable. India under its current Prime Minister has a truly unprecedented opportunity to lead the world towards a lasting if not perennial peace. The country has already become the world's fifth largest economy and is one of the world's leading powers, though India does not seek to dominate others. Unless the hearts and minds of people are metamorphosed, the darkest chapters of history would be written again and again.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

SOUND BITE

The moment I raised the question of land and the moment I started to defend the right of poor people on their land, is when this whole media tamasha starts.



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi



Iran's parliament and judiciary are reviewing the country's mandatory hijab law.

Iran's Attorney General — Mohammad Jafar Montazeri



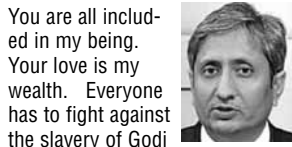
Actor — Akshay Kumar



He (Shakhb Al Hasan) is definitely one of the best (all-rounders). It's just so unfortunate that he plays for Bangladesh and

doesn't get the same kind of recognition.

Indian cricketer — Wasim Jaffer



You are all included in my being. Your love is my wealth. Everyone has to fight against the slavery of Godi media.

Journalist/anchor — Ravish Kumar

FIRST COLUMN

CREATING A ROBUST FUTURE FOR PLANET

Euro-centric view of human evolution needs a revisit




VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

In modern times, there are certain critical points of change that get flagged. The French Revolution, the American War of Independence, and the Bolshevik Revolution stand out. Each of these defines a critical point in human history. Whether the list of the important events is complete or not is a matter of perception. That it espouses a euro-centric view of human evolution is obvious. There is nothing wrong in such a narrative, except for its incompleteness.

There are substantial parts of the world across which the European races spread. This covered the world from Latin America to Australia. The approach from the African world, Western Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, Australia – all went by default. Australia for example has had human habitation running into multiple centuries, almost from the Palaeolithic age onwards. Yet very little connected narrative is available about Australia before the Europeans arrived there.

The present dominance of the euro-centric view of learning perpetuates this approach. It has been institutionalised through the curriculum of educational institutions. The trouble is deeper, as there is little or no institutional attempt to modify and evolve this perspective to completeness. The current international bodies of the United Nations and more only perpetuate this bias.



Newly emergent nations follow the Euro American pattern of curriculum planning and seek eminence through conformity. Through a serious study of anthropology and an extension of its approach much of this can be countered. Also, studying human evolution from the vantage point of identification and utilisation of energy resources may serve a purpose. The human evolution from using human muscle power for energy purposes to the present status of using atomic energy may help in settling right many of the aberrations in the periodization of human history. India has a narrative, of its present level of evolution, generally taken to be of about 15,000 years of antiquity. Evidence exists of human presence on this subcontinent even prior to those 15,000 years or so. It is just that the history of the times before that is not amenable to the tools used for writing the narrative of what is termed as ‘history’ in the current values of the academic world.

A gradualist approach would help. A general awareness has to emerge about recognition of the assumptions, governing action of the people whose history is being written. In India, for example, thinking about the so-called other world of spirituality and ‘abstraction’ is central from the Rig Vedic times. This kind of orientation is not present in many parts of the world such as Europe, Americas, etc.

What could work is talking of ‘alternate approach’ to human evolution and history. This ‘alternate approach’ need not require a negation of the present attempts of history writing. It would require emphasis on the elements which emphasise a spiritual or a more than material approach to human evolution.

The Indian approach is about the conventional mind that looks at plants, animals, nature and more. A cursory recall of the riches of Rig Veda or the writings of Kalidas reveal sensitivity in depiction of plants and animals, which is missing in the writing of the text of those times in European languages.

Steps need to be taken towards understanding the alternate assumptions of human actions in different parts of the globe for real understanding of the evolution of human species, which may set a more realistic direction to compass human development. It will be real, rooted in local traditions and helping to create a robust global future.

(The author is an internationally acclaimed management consultant)

Twitter can benefit from Musk’s ideas



SIDHARRTH SHANKAR

Musk will be the star in the history of social media platforms, especially in moments of change

What started as a data-heavy world wide web is no more just about the internet and data. Since Twitter’s launch in 2006, social media platforms have been on a roller-coaster ride.

No more sense is palpable in data content and how much it is. Instead, the focus is on privacy and security shackles entangled in data transmission. It is the Web3 era where the fundamental right of equality also has a digital interpretation. Users on the internet seek democracy in the digital world with their share of rights and duties.

While content and publishing were the triggers for a long time, the platform’s health and hygiene are much more critical than any other aspect. Today, it is more about building sustainable digital and social media platforms than the age-old aggression-driven conversation platforms. While excitement and real-time content pull from the users still prevail, the time now is for social media barons to pause and look at the NexGen Social Verse.

A scrutiny of the rules for social media players reveals a great deal. Social media episodes are presently rife with controversies, harassment, fake information, privacy attacks, and other disturbing trends. This infiltration of the mischief-oriented environment has led to an excessive loss of trust by users from diverse platforms. It is time that the backend innovators restore this trust by bringing in content moderation and AI-driven default rules that debar users from crossing the line.

Given that what’s visible on the platform defines the level and quality of the information being perused, whether or not it’s used, platforms must consider all possible solutions to flush out junk, spam, bots, and other secondary data points. This will keep the focus on first-hand data, which can lead to impressive engagement levels for users and advertisers to rely on and spend more time on the platform.

Platforms now need to move towards more innovation-driven monetisation models, which are economically more viable than the current ones. Elon Musk’s announcement addressing a new high for advertising on Twitter is an effort in the right direction to monetise better. Setting standards being his goal, he says: “Twitter aspires to be the most respected advertising platform in the world that strengthens your brand and grows your enterprise”.

While the bird app’s fall after a series of failures has been criticized worldwide, it must be appreciated that both Musk and Twitter have joined hands to take on the challenge ahead, which is a reboot of all operating mechanisms: from its workforce to policies, product environment, revenue models, and so on. Elon Musk will be the star in the history of social media platforms, especially in moments of change.



“

WHETHER THE FEVERISH SALE OF EACH OFFICIAL BLUE TICK AT \$8 OR MANY OTHER SUCH TOOLS IN THE MAKING, MUSK IS ALL OUT TO CREATE CASH-RINGING MODELS FOR THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM TO REGISTER PROFITS

His takeover of Twitter may prove to be one of the most important benchmarks for the social media champions of the future. Hence, it is befitting to embrace this chaos-driven journey that Elon has started and hope to see online more stable, sustainable, human, and socially-driven media platforms.

Musk’s competence for being an efficient change agent but not the right fit for leadership has been the topic of speculation. However, enough examples from the past prove that the owner-cum-CEO formats of running entities are barely successful.

Notwithstanding the constructive criticism that Musk has been facing for his failed leadership and unreliable management decisions, his ideas on the kind of innovation and change that would benefit Twitter have received support and appreciation. These innovative ideas can create a historical transition point for the bird app if coupled with the appointment of inspired leadership officers.

Elon Musk is a lawyer’s nightmare is a proven fact. Tesla’s turning three legal heads within two years speaks volumes about Musk’s penchant for an experiment. Keeping aside Musk’s dramatic brushes with the law, it is relevant to look at how the legal battery was at work for Elon Musk to make the Twitter deal happen the way he wanted it and how he continues to grapple with the issues arising out of layoffs.

Then, in July 2022, Musk and his legal team got another jolt when Twitter sued him as he tried to escape the deal. He was pushed to adhere to the contract he had signed and follow through along with Twitter.

Musk was never short of options. While the Twitter Board struggled to stop the deal, Musk and his advisors always held the trump card. Upon the Board’s denial, Musk approached the shareholders. It made an offer sweet enough for the Board to consider it seriously in the interests of the shareholders, given that Musk had made it clear that if the Board denied it, he would strive to remain a shareholder with the power to harm the tank further. During this contentious period, Musk was engaged in arranging funds that he was short of.

Buyback, stock repurchase, and sale of assets are other powerful options that could have made Musk’s hostile bid less lucrative, ultimately dealing a death blow to the takeover.

After the bloodbath of strategies to take over the bird app, Elon Musk is not enjoying a beach side vacation. Having laid off nearly half of the company staff, he faces many challenges in turning a socially-free platform into a profitable one. But his taste for haste has not gone down well with critical stakeholders – advertisers, regulators, and of course, the tweeters.

Whether the feverish sale of

each official blue tick at \$8 or many other such tools in the making, Musk is all out to create cash-ring-ing models for the social media platform to register profits.

Regardless of the diatribe around the Twitter-Elon Musk saga, it’s time to look at essential numbers and stop relating everything to Musk’s takeover of Twitter. As per Sensor Tower’s data, during the days Musk announced his plan to terminate the agreement to buy Twitter amidst spambot and fake account debates, the mean average weekly advertising spending in the US had touched \$945,800. Come September, this dropped to \$944,200, when tensions were building up further over Twitter’s deposition in the lawsuit filed in Delaware Court of Chancery. Despite the looming law, the deal seal was expected to be postponed for a while.

By October, before the deal went through, the mean dropped to \$877,200 and plunged to \$589,100 a week after Musk’s takeover. Such figures beg further scrutiny.

As much as social media users may criticise the entire Twitter takeover, the sheer number of installs on App Store and Google Play Store is testimony to the world’s choice of Tweeting on the app. The 6.3 million worldwide installs through October 15-26 jumped to a staggering 7.6 million between October 27 and November 7, which is when the takeover saga started.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

A MASSIVE FRAUD OF THIS TYPE AND MAGNITUDE ALLOWS FOR THE TERMINATION OF ALL RULES, REGULATIONS, AND ARTICLES, EVEN THOSE FOUND IN THE CONSTITUTION. — FORMER US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



ATTACKING THE CONSTITUTION AND ALL IT STANDS FOR IS ANATHEMA TO THE SOUL OF OUR NATION. YOU CANNOT ONLY LOVE AMERICA WHEN YOU WIN. — WHITE HOUSE DEPUTY PRESS SECRETARY ANDREW BATES

We must think differently for the differently abled

From Agatha Christie to Steven Spielberg, from John Lennon to Boman Irani, dyslexics have powered our imagination



NOOPUR JHUNJHUNWALA

Let’s begin with a quick game of ‘Take a Step Forward.’ So, take a step forward if you have helped someone with a disability. Another step ahead if you have donated to support a disability. One more step forward if you have liked an awareness campaign for a disability. Another step if you believe that inclusion of a person with a disability is important.

And the last step forward if a person with a disability has made life easier for you. Taken aback? Can’t think of anything? How about electricity? Maybe cars? What about telephones and computers? Relaxing seeing animated cartoons? Well, this entire list of inventors—from Benjamin Franklin, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, Steve

(The author is Co-Founder, ChangeInkk Foundation, a nonprofit committed to breaking the stigma surrounding specific learning disabilities)

Jobs to Walt Disney—is mapped to persons with dyslexia, a learning disability. Sounds impossible, right? How can our lives revolve around inventions of the differently abled? Aren’t dyslexics the ones who are not able to read, who confuse their b’s and d’s, have terrible spellings and are not able to do math? Yes, that’s right! Dyslexia is a learning disability that impacts processing language.

So, how is it possible that someone who struggles with basic language and math skills, is able to change the world? The simple answer is that the narrative around disabilities and inclusion is so focused on things the differently abled cannot do, and how we need to uplift them because of their inabilities, that somewhere

amidst pushing them forward, we have pushed them away from owning their strengths. In doing so, we often cease to think of the flipside—the magical potential and strengths of these people.

In this case we forget that individuals with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence but their brain functions, processes and grasps information differently. This ability to think differently has been coined as dyslexic thinking.

Global studies indicate that the strengths associated with dyslexic thinking are critical skills of the future.

Dyslexia is more common than we realise. While official figures are not available, research indicates that between 15 and 20 crore Indians have

a learning disability, of which 3.5 crore are students.

There is no way to determine whether a person has a specific learning disability by merely looking at them.

Let’s rewind a bit. Let’s try a quick activity to help you understand a dyslexic individual’s experience with language and text. Read this, as quickly as you have read the piece so far. I am flipping the sand clock now: ‘I way out de adle to reag, dut I snre cau thiuk bifently.’

Lost and frustrated? This is how a person with Dyslexia struggles with reading simple texts like,

‘I may not be able to read, but I sure can think differently.’ Beyond language, learning disabilities impact executive functioning. So it’s common

for them to also confuse left from right, mix up instructions, struggle with time management and be forgetful. This disability, nonetheless, is the reason behind the world’s most indispensable inventions. And that’s not where it stops.

Dyslexics—from Agatha Christie to Steven Spielberg, from John Lennon to Cher, from Boman Irani to Whoopi Goldberg—are powering our imagination. They are also driving employment and growth. In fact, 40 per cent of self-made millionaires are dyslexics. While the list is endless, I am hoping that you are catching on with the importance of what disabilities offer our civilisation. And yet, all their journeys started as a child who was dismissed as being a “duffer”, not good

enough to succeed in anything.

In India, we find success stories of dyslexics that have transcended barriers and emerged as educators, civil servants, leading investors, tech leaders, artists and CEOs. The Government has made significant strides in creating an ecosystem of support for people with specific learning disabilities. The first critical step was the 2016 amendment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act to recognise it as a disability .

Next is the emphasis that the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020, lays on inclusion of children with special needs as one of its goals, calling out inclusion of those with learning disabilities in the classroom. The higher education regulatory bodies like All India

Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and University Grants Commission (UGC) have both worked on comprehensive guidelines on provisions to include students with special learning disabilities. But policies alone can’t make it happen. Strong efforts are needed to accelerate screening for early identification of children. We need to strengthen the capacities of our educators to teach inclusive classrooms, especially with the focus on improving learning outcomes. Beyond educational institutions, workplaces need to provide inclusive and enabling environments. Lastly, but most importantly, we need to work together to break the social stigma, look beyond the disabilities and celebrate their abilities.

Russian media report blasts at 2 military bases

AP ■ KYIV

Explosions rocked two air bases in Russia on Monday, Russian media reported. One of the explosions reportedly happened at a base that houses nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes against Ukraine.

Neither Ukrainian nor Russian authorities immediately commented on the possible cause of the blasts.

Russian state RIA Novosti news agency said three servicemen were killed and six others injured, and a plane was damaged, early Monday when a fuel truck exploded at an air base in Ryazan, in western Russia. The base houses long-range flight tankers that serve to refuel bombers in the air.

Separately, authorities in the Saratov region along the Volga River said they were checking reports about an explosion in the area of the Engels air base, which houses Tu-95 and Tu-160 strategic bombers that have been involved in launching

strikes on Ukraine. Those bombers are capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Saratov regional governor Roman Busargin said there was no damage to civilian facilities and added that the authorities are checking whether there have been any incidents at military facilities.

Regional media reported sounds of a powerful explosion near the Engels base, and some residents were quoted as saying they saw a flash of light coming from the area.

Asked whether Russian President Vladimir Putin had been briefed about the Engels base explosion, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said simply that the president was being regularly informed about ongoing developments.

In Ukraine on Monday, the office of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said three rocket strikes hit his hometown of Kryvyi Rih in south-central Ukraine, killing a factory worker and injuring three others. In the northeastern region of Kharkiv, a person was killed in



strikes by S-300 missiles on civilian infrastructure in the town of Kupyansk, it said.

The war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb 24 has displaced millions from their homes, killed and injured an untold number of civilians, and shaken the world economy — notably through the fall-out on the prices and availability of foodstuffs, fertiliser and fuel that are key exports from Ukraine and Russia.

Western countries on Monday began imposing a \$60-per-barrel price cap and a ban on some types of Russian oil, part of new measures aimed at stepping up pressure against Moscow over the war.

The move has prompted a rejection from the Kremlin and also criticism from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — whose government wants the cap to be half as high.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who is in charge of energy issues, warned in televised comments on Sunday that Russia

won't sell its oil to countries that try to apply the price cap.

"We will only sell oil and oil products to the countries that will work with us on market terms, even if we have to reduce output to some extent," Novak said in televised remarks hours before the price cap came into effect.

The 27-country European bloc also imposed an embargo on Russian oil shipped by sea.

Russia, the world's No.2 oil producer, relies on the sale of oil and gas to underpin its economy, which has already come under sweeping international sanctions over President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine.

In recent weeks, Russia has been pounding Ukrainian infrastructure — including power plants — with military strikes and keeping an offensive going in the east, notably in and around the town of Bakhmut.

Russian forces have also been digging in near the southern city of Kherson, which was recaptured by Ukrainian forces last month after an 8-month occupation.

Ukrainians hid orphaned kids from Russian deportation

AP ■ KHERSON

Hours after Russia invaded Ukraine in February, health staff at a children's hospital in the south started secretly planning how to save the babies.

Russians were suspected of seizing orphan children and sending them to Russia, so staff at the children's regional hospital in Kherson city began fabricating orphans' medical records to make it appear like they were too ill to move.

"We deliberately wrote false information that the children were sick and could not be transported," said Dr. Olga Pilyarska, head of intensive care. "We were scared that (the Russians) would find out ... (but) we decided that we would save the children at any cost."

Throughout the war Russians have been accused of deporting Ukrainian children to Russia or Russian-held territories to raise them as their own. At least 1,000 children were seized from schools and orphanages in the Kherson region during Russia's eight-month occupation of the area, say local authorities. Their whereabouts are still unknown.

But residents say even more children would have gone missing had it not been for the efforts of some in the community who risked their lives to hide as many children as they could.

At the hospital in Kherson, staff invented diseases for 11 abandoned babies under their care, so they wouldn't have to give them to the orphanage where they knew they'd be given Russian documents and potentially taken away. One baby had "pulmonary bleeding," another "uncontrollable convulsions" and another needed "artificial ventilation," said Pilyarska of the fake records.

On the outskirts of Kherson



in the village of Stepanivka, Volodymyr Sahaidak the director of a center for social and psychological rehabilitation, was also falsifying paperwork to hide 52 orphaned and vulnerable children.

The 61-year-old placed some of the children with seven of his staff, others were taken to distant relatives and some of the older ones remained with him, he said. "It seemed that if I did not hide my children they would simply be taken away from me," he said.

But moving them around wasn't easy. After Russia occupied Kherson and much of the region in March, they started separating orphans at checkpoints, forcing Sahaidak to get creative about how to transport them. In one instance he faked records saying that a group of kids had received treatment in the hospital and were being taken by their aunt to be reunited with their mother who was nine months pregnant and waiting for them on the other side of the river, he said.

While Sahaidak managed to stave off the Russians, not all children were as lucky. In the

orphanage in Kherson — where the hospital would have sent the 11 babies — some 50 children were evacuated in October and allegedly taken to Crimea, which Russia illegally annexed in 2014, a security guard at the institution and neighbors told The Associated Press.

"A bus came with the inscription Z (a symbol painted on Russian vehicles) and they were taken away," said Anastasiia Kovalenko, who lives nearby.

At the start of the invasion, a local aid group tried to hide the children in a church but the Russians found them several months later, returned them to the orphanage and then evacuated them, said locals.

Earlier this year, The Associated Press reported that Russia is trying to give thousands of Ukrainian children to Russian families for foster care or adoption. The AP found that officials have deported Ukrainian children to Russia or Russian-held territories without consent, lied to them that they weren't wanted by their parents, used them for propaganda, and given them Russian families and citizenship.

The Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, says Russian officials are conducting a deliberate depopulation campaign in occupied parts of Ukraine and deporting children under the guise of medical rehabilitation schemes and adoption programs.

Russian authorities have repeatedly said that moving children to Russia is intended to protect them from hostilities. The Russian Foreign Ministry has rejected the claims that the country is seizing and deporting the children. It has noted that the authorities are searching for relatives of parentless children left in Ukraine to find opportunities to send them home when possible.

Russian children's rights ombudswoman Maria Lvova-Belova personally oversaw moving hundreds of orphans from Russian-controlled regions of Ukraine for adoption by Russian families. She has claimed that some of the children were offered an opportunity to return to Ukraine but refused to do so. Her statement couldn't be independently verified.

Ukraine reports new barrage of widespread Russian strikes

AP ■ KYIV, UKRAINE

Ukrainian officials reported a new barrage of Russian missile strikes across the country Monday, an attack that was anticipated as Russia seeks to disable Ukraine's energy supplies and infrastructure with the approach of winter.

Media reports referred to explosions in several parts of the country, including the cities of Odesa, Cherkasy and Kryvyi Rih. In Odesa, the local water supply company said a missile strike cut power to pumping stations, leaving the entire city without water.

"The enemy is again attacking the territory of Ukraine with missiles!" Kyrylo Tymoshenko, the deputy head of the Ukrainian president's office, wrote on Telegram.

Air raid alerts sounded across the country, and authorities urged people to take shelter.

A spokesman for the Ukrainian Air Force, Yuriy Ihnat, said Russia launched land-based missiles from southern Russia and shipborne missiles from the Caspian and Black seas. Russian strategic bombers also launched missiles, he said.

Ihnat warned the Russians could attack in several waves to make it more difficult for the Ukrainian air defenses to shoot down the missiles.



Earlier Monday, Russian media reported that explosions rocked two air bases in Russia. One reportedly happened at a base that houses nuclear-capable strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes against Ukraine.

Neither Ukrainian nor Russian authorities immediately commented on the possible cause of the blasts.

Russian state RIA Novosti news agency said three servicemen were killed and six others injured, and a plane was damaged, early Monday when a fuel truck exploded at an air base in Ryazan, in western Russia. The base houses long-range flight tankers that serve to refuel bombers in the air.

Separately, authorities in the Saratov region along the Volga River said they were checking reports about an explosion in the area of the Engels air base, which houses Tu-95 and Tu-160 strategic bombers that have been involved in launching strikes on Ukraine. Those

bombers are capable of carrying nuclear weapons.

Saratov regional governor Roman Busargin said there was no damage to civilian facilities and added that the authorities are checking whether there have been any incidents at military facilities.

Regional media reported sounds of a powerful explosion near the Engels base, and some residents were quoted as saying they saw a flash of light coming from the area.

Asked whether Russian President Vladimir Putin had been briefed about the Engels base explosion, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said simply that the president was being regularly informed about ongoing developments.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's adviser, Mykhailo Podolyak, trolled the Russians over the drone attack on Engels, stopping short of claiming responsibility:

"The Earth is round — discovery made by Galileo.

Astronomy was not studied in Kremlin, giving preference to court astrologers. If it was, they would know: if something is launched into other countries' airspace, sooner or later unknown flying objects will return to departure point," Podolyak tweeted.

Zelenskyy's office said three rocket strikes hit the president's hometown of Kryvyi Rih in south-central Ukraine, killing a factory worker and injuring three others. In the northeastern region of Kharkiv, a person was killed in strikes by S-300 missiles on civilian infrastructure in the town of Kupyansk, it said.

The war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 has displaced millions from their homes, killed and injured an untold number of civilians, and shaken the world economy — notably through the fallout on the prices and availability of foodstuffs, fertilizer and fuel that are key exports from Ukraine and Russia.

Western countries on Monday began imposing a \$60-per-barrel price cap and a ban on some types of Russian oil, part of new measures aimed at stepping up pressure against Moscow over the war.

The move has prompted a rejection from the Kremlin and also criticism from Zelenskyy — whose government wants the cap to be half as high.

Russian oil cap begins, trying to pressure Putin on Ukraine



AP ■ KYIV

Western countries on Monday began imposing a \$60-per-barrel price cap and a ban on some types of Russian oil, part of new measures aimed at stepping up pressure against Moscow over its war on Ukraine.

The European Union, along with Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan and the United States agreed to the price cap on Friday.

The move has prompted a rejection from Kremlin and also criticism from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — whose government wants the cap to be half as high.

The 27-country European bloc also imposed an embargo on Russian oil shipped by sea. Questions have arisen about just how the Western measures will affect market prices.

On Monday, U.S. Benchmark crude traded up 90 cents to \$80.88.

Many other factors, includ-

ing COVID-19 prevention measures in China that have crimped its manufacturing, are also having an impact on demand for crude and thus prices.

They are far down from a peak earlier during the war.

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who is in charge of energy issues, warned in televised comments on Sunday that Russia won't sell its oil to countries that would try to use the cap.

"We will only sell oil and oil products to the countries that will work with us on market terms, even if we have to reduce output to some extent," Novak said in televised remarks hours before the price cap came into effect.

The Ukrainian government demanded over the weekend a lower price cap, to \$30 per barrel, insisting that at the \$60 level Russia would still reap annual oil revenues of \$100 billion — money that can be used to finance its war machine.

Russia, the world's No.2 oil producer, relies on the sale of oil and gas to underpin its economy, which has already come under sweeping international sanctions over President Vladimir Putin's war in Ukraine.

In recent weeks, Russia has been pounding Ukrainian infrastructure — including power plants — with military strikes and keeping an offensive going in the east, notably in and around the town of Bakhmut.

Russian forces have also been digging in near the southern city of Kherson, which was recaptured by Ukrainian forces last month after an 8-month occupation.

The war that began with Russia's invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24 has displaced millions from their homes, killed and injured an untold number of civilians, and shaken the world economy — notably through the fallout on the prices and availability of foodstuffs, fertiliser and fuel that are key exports from Ukraine and Russia.

Scheduled power cuts in Kiev, 3 other regions from today

IAN5 ■ KIEV

Scheduled power cuts will take place in Kiev and the three other regions of Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk and Odesa from Monday onwards as authorities are trying to stabilise power outages across Ukraine.

In a social media post on Sunday, DTEK, the largest energy company in Ukraine, said: "From December 5, we are returning to scheduled power outages. However, the situation with the energy system remains dire.

"For this reason, we kindly ask everyone to treat the possible deviations from the schedule that might occur in order to stabilise the energy system with understanding. We are doing everything in our power to make sure that those happen as little as possible."

The development comes as millions of Ukrainians have been experiencing power cuts after repeated Russian strikes on the country's critical energy infrastructure.

According to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, about 6 million households across the war-torn nation are without electricity as of December 1.

The latest large-scale Russian missile attack on November 23 resulted in temporary power outages at all nuclear power plants and most thermal and hydroelectric power plants, while power transmission facilities were also damaged.

Due to the widespread power outage, water and heat supply to households was also interrupted.

'Ukraine war ups arms sales but challenges lie ahead'

AP ■ STOCKHOLM

Global arms sales increased by nearly 2% in 2021, the seventh consecutive year of increases, an international arms sales watchdog noted Monday.

It added that the war in Ukraine had increased demand for weapons this year, but the conflict may also lead to a supply challenge, not least because Russia is a major supplier of raw materials used in arms production.

That could hamper efforts in the United States and Europe to strengthen their armed forces and replenish their stockpiles after sending billions of dollars' worth of ammunition and other equipment to Ukraine, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, or SIPRI, said.

"Increasing output takes time" said Diego Lopes da Silva, a senior researcher with SIPRI, adding that if the supply chain disruptions continue, "it may take several years for some of the main arms producers to meet the new demand created by the Ukraine war."

SIPRI noted that some reports indicate that Russian companies are increasing production because of the war but



have had difficulty accessing semiconductors and are also being impacted by war-related sanctions.

It gave the example of a company that said that it has not been able to receive payments for some of its arms export deliveries.

Arms sales in 2021 reached \$592 billion and was up 1.9% which was higher than the previous period but still below the average for the four years leading up to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In its report published Monday, SIPRI said that "many parts of the arms industry were still affected by pandemic-related disruptions in global supply chains in 2021, which included delays in global shipping and shortages of vital components."

We might have expected even greater growth in arms sales in 2021 without persistent supply chain issues," said Dr Lucie Béraud-Sudreau, head of the SIPRI Military Expenditure and Arms Production Programme.

She singled out companies, such as Airbus and General Dynamics, which also reported labour shortages.

The institute compiled a list of the world's 100 largest arms-producing and military services companies. Although U.S. Companies dominate arms sales — 40 US companies appeared on that list and totalled \$299 billion in 2021 — the North America region was the only one to see a 0.9% drop in arms sales compared with 2020.

Putin better informed now about Ukraine war, says US

IAN5 ■ KIEV

The head of US intelligence has said Russian President Vladimir Putin has "become better informed" about the difficulties facing his invading forces in Ukraine, as the Kremlin suggested the Russian president could visit the occupied Donbas region at a future unspecified date.

Speaking at a defence forum, Avril Haines, the US Director of National Intelligence, indicated Putin was no longer as insulated from bad news about the conditions facing his invasion of Ukraine as he was earlier in the campaign, The Guardian reported.

Alluding to past assessments that Putin's advisers could be shielding him from bad news, Haines said he was "becoming more informed of the challenges that the military faces".

"But it's still not clear to us that he has a full picture of at this stage of just how challenged they are," she said, addressing an audience at the Reagan National Defense Forum in California.

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 09.01.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M. , for recovery of Rs. 28.03,189/- (Rupees Twenty Eight Lakh Three Thousand one Hundred Eighty Nine only) pending towards Loan Account No. DDHDLDP000489267 (Earlier LAN Code 00000557 of DHFL) , by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 28.11.2022 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 29.11.2022 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Dharam Singh, Varun Kaushik and Babita .	
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 20,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 2,00,000/- (Rupees Two Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.	
DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY	
All that piece and parcel of Plot No B-72 measuring area 100 Sq Yard out of Kharsa No 367, situated in the Revenue Estate of Village Bindapur, Colony known as Subhash Park Extn, B Block, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, bounded as under	
East : Plot No. 71	West :Portion of Plot No. 72
North : Road	South :Gali
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 : 29.11.2022	
Place : NEW DELHI	
Sd/ Authorized Officer INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LTD.	

Sensex slips nearly 34 pts on profit taking in oil, auto stocks



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark BSE Sensex fell for the second straight session on Monday in a volatile trade due to profit taking in oil, IT and auto stocks ahead of the RBI policy announcement on December 7.

The 30-share BSE benchmark dipped 33.9 points or 0.05 per cent to settle at 62,834.60. During the day, it fell 360.62 points or 0.57 per cent to 62,507.88.

The broader NSE Nifty eked out marginal gains and ended 4.95 points or 0.03 per cent higher at 18,701.05.

Among the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, UltraTech Cement, Dr Reddy's, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, Bajaj Finserv and Mahindra & Mahindra were the major laggards.

Tata Steel, NTPC, State Bank of India, IndusInd Bank and Power Grid were among the winners.

"Market continued its profit-taking trend from the record high as they exercised prudence ahead of the RBI policy announcement on 7th December. Partially, it was also due to increase in crude prices due to OPEC decision not to cut output target, and ease in China's

Covid policy," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

"Markets made a muted start to the week and ended almost unchanged. After the flat start, the Nifty index oscillated in a narrow range and finally settled at the 18,701 level," said Ajit Mishra, VP — Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

In the broader market, BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.25 per cent and midcap index advanced 0.10 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, metal jumped 2.37 per cent, commodities realty (0.74 per cent), bankex (0.46 per cent) and financial services (0.35 per cent).

FMCG, IT, telecommunication, oil & gas and teck were the laggards.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong settled higher, while Seoul ended lower.

Equity exchanges in Europe were trading mostly lower in the afternoon trade. Wall Street had ended on a mixed note on Friday.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.73 per cent higher at USD 87.05 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought shares worth Rs 214.76 crore on Friday, as per exchange data.

RBI starts deliberations amid expectations of moderate rate hike

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting panel on Monday started brainstorming for the next round of monetary policy amid expectations of a moderate interest rate hike of 25-35 basis points as inflation has started showing signs of easing and economic growth tapering.

The RBI has hiked key benchmark lending rate by 50 basis points (bps) thrice since June over and above an off-cycle 40 bps increase in repo in May.

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das would be announcing the bi-monthly monetary policy on Wednesday (December 7) on the conclusion of the three-day of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meet.

India's largest lender State Bank of India in a research report authored by Group Chief Economic Adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh on Monday said: "We expect the RBI to hike rates in smaller magnitude in December policy attuned to emerging market central banks and the overall rate setting tone. A 35-bps repo rate hike looks imminent. We believe at 6.25 per cent, it could be the terminal rate for now".

The current policy repo



rate is 5.9 per cent.

Several other experts too expect the rate hike to be in the range of 25-35 basis points on Wednesday.

On September 30, the RBI had hiked the key policy rate (repo) by 50 basis points with an aim to check inflation.

It was the third successive hike of 50 bps. Before the September hike, the central bank had raised the repo rate by 50 bps each in June and August, and 40 bps in May.

Consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation, which the RBI mainly factors in while arriving at its monetary policy, is showing signs of moderation but still remains above the central bank's upper tolerance level of 6 per cent since January this year.

The inflation dropped to

6.77 per cent in October from 7.41 per cent in the preceding month, mainly due to easing prices in the food basket, though it remained above Reserve Bank's comfort level for the 10th month in a row.

The GDP growth in the second quarter of the fiscal slowed to 6.3 per cent as against a growth of 13.5 per cent in the preceding three months.

The RBI has been tasked by the government to ensure the retail inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent. However, it failed to keep the inflation rate below six per cent for three consecutive quarters beginning January 2022. So it had to submit a report to the government detailing reasons for the failure to contain prices and remedial steps to rein in the price rise.



Meta to jointly invest with Airtel in telecom infrastructure

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Social media giant Meta Platforms and Bharti Airtel on Monday announced a collaboration to jointly invest in telecom infrastructure to cater to the rising demand of high speed data and digital services in India.

The announcement comes on the back of telecom operators' demand to share revenue with service providers to build networks.

"Airtel and Meta will jointly invest in global connectivity infrastructure and CPaaS (communications platform as a service) based new-age digital solutions to support the emerging requirements of customers and enterprises in India," the statement said.

As part of the collaboration, Airtel will partner with Meta and STC (Saudi Telecom Company), to extend the world's longest subsea cable system, 2Africa Pearls, to India.

The plan to extend 2Africa Pearls to India was announced by Meta in September 2021.

Under the collaboration, Airtel and Meta will extend the cable to Airtel's landing station in Mumbai and also pick up dedicated capacity to further strengthen its submarine network portfolio.

"The 2Africa cable will significantly boost India's cable capacity and empower global hyper-scalers and businesses to build new integrated solutions and provide a high-quality seamless experience to customers," the statement said.

Airtel will also integrate Meta's WhatsApp within its CPaaS platform. With this integration, businesses will now be able to use WhatsApp and reach to provide omnichannel customer engagement to enterprises.

"We, at Airtel, are delighted to deepen our partnership with Meta to serve India's digitally connected economy by leveraging the technology and infrastructure strengths of both companies. With our contributions to the 2Africa cable and Open RAN, we are investing in crucial and progressive connectivity infrastructure which is needed to support the increasing demand for high-speed data in India," Bharti Airtel, CEO for Global Business, Vani Venkatesh said.

Airtel and Meta are members of the Telecom Infra Project (TIP) Open RAN project group.

PAN number likely to be used as unique identifier for businesses for single-window clearance

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering to allow businesses to use Permanent Account Number (PAN) instead of other data as a unique identifier for entering into national single window system to seek different clearances and approvals of the central and state departments.

At present there are over 13 different business IDs like EPFO, ESIC, GSTN, TIN, TAN and PAN, which are being used to apply for various government approvals.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said that his ministry has already approached the department of revenue on the matter.

"We are moving towards using one of the existing databases as the entry point, which is already available with the government...And most probably that will be the PAN number. So with the PAN, a lot of the basic data about the company, its directors, addresses, and a lot of common data is already avail-



able in the PAN database," Goyal told reporters here.

The national single window system (NSWS) is aimed at reducing duplicity of information submission to different ministries, reduce compliance burden, cut gestation period of projects, and promote ease of starting and doing business.

NSWS enables the identification, applying and subsequent tracking of approvals for all integrated states and central departments.

He said that use of PAN number will help auto-populate

other application forms that will be received in the system and will help speed up the approval process and encourage more companies to apply on the system. The system currently accepts applications for 248 government-to-business clearance and approvals from 26 central ministries and departments, including states.

So far 19 states/Union Territories, including Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, and Karnataka, and 27 central government departments

are already onboarded the system, which was started in September last year and is under beta testing phase.

The minister also informed that at present businesses are taking approvals for different policies including vehicle scrapage policy, ethanol policy, hall-marking of jewellery and Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) approvals.

"We will be moving towards newer areas like all inspection approvals, country of origin approvals, export promotion council applications. At the next stage, these will come on the system," he said, adding that all applicants of the production linked incentive scheme are being encouraged to use the system.

He was addressing the media after a review meeting on the National Single Window System in New Delhi on Monday. The meeting witnessed participation from 32 central ministries/departments, 36 states/UTs and industry associations.

India's services sector output growth hits 3-month high in Nov on strong demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's services sector output growth touched a three-month high in November as business inflows rose markedly amid accommodative demand conditions, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose from 55.1 in October to 56.4 in November, indicating a sharp increase in output that was the quickest in three months even amid higher operating expenses.

Survey participants linked the latest expansion to demand strength, successful marketing and a sustained upturn in sales.

For the 16th straight month, the headline figure was above the neutral 50 threshold. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"Indian service providers continued to reap the benefits of strong domestic demand, with PMI data for the penultimate



month of 2022 showing faster increase in new business and output," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

On the jobs front, sustained expansions in new work intakes and demand buoyancy continued to promote job creation in the service economy.

"Employment rose at a solid pace that was among the quickest in over three years," the survey said.

On the prices front, services companies across India reported higher operating expenses. In addition to greater transportation costs, firms reported higher prices for energy, food, packaging, paper, plastic and electrical products.

"Whilst on the whole the latest results are encouraging, the trend for inflation is somewhat concerning. Strong demand for services again boosted firms' pricing power, with more companies transferring cost increase to their customers," Lima said.

The overall upturn in input costs was sharp and little-changed from October, while output charges rose at the quickest rate in over five years, Lima said.

"Evidence of stubborn inflation may prompt further hikes to the policy rate at a time when global economic challenges could negatively impact India's growth," Lima added.

The RBI will come out with its next bi-monthly policy review on December 7 at the end of a three-day meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) beginning Monday.

According to experts, the Reserve Bank may opt for a lower rate increase of 25-35 basis points in lending rates amid retail inflation showing signs of moderation and the need to push growth.

Tata Motors mulling price hike for passenger vehicles from next month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Motors is looking to increase passenger vehicle prices from next month in order to make its model range compliant with stricter emission norms which kick in from April 1 next year, according to a top company official.

In an interaction with PTI, Tata Motors Managing Director - Passenger Vehicle and Electric Vehicles Shailesh Chandra said the price revision would also offset the impact of commodity prices, which have remained high for the most part of the year.

"The regulatory change will have its impact on the cost. Even the real impact of softening of



commodity prices is only going to come from next quarter and we still have the residual impact of the commodity escalation that we have seen during the year," Chandra said.

He noted that even the battery prices have gone up and the same has not been passed on to the market.

"So we are evaluating a price increase basis some of the residual effect that is left as far as the commodity prices are concerned. Battery prices and new regulations have also impacted the EV side," Chandra said.

Besides, there is a cost involved in making the model range transition to conform to new emission norms, he added.

"We are exploring potential price increase next month because of these factors for both ICE and EVs," Chandra said.

Tata Motors sells a range of models like Punch, Nexon, Harrier, and Safari in the domestic market. It leads the electric vehicle segment with products like Tiago EV and Nexon EV.

Govt taking steps to make Indian MSMEs stronger, globally competitive: Minister

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Micro, small and medium enterprises are among the most important pillars of India's economy and the government is working to make the sector stronger and more developed, Minister of State for MSME Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma said on Monday.

"We will also work to ensure that interrelationship between the MSME sector and other important pillars of the Indian economy are further strengthened as India grows," the minister said.

Addressing FICCI's Annual MSME Summit, Verma urged the industry and other stakeholders to work with the government to make India a USD 5 trillion economy along with becoming self-reliant.

He said there are 6.3 crore Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the country which are providing 11 crore jobs.

"MSMEs contribute around 30 per cent to our GDP and have a share of 50 per cent of the income generated from total exports," he said.

Further, the minister said that the government is taking continuous steps to strengthen Indian MSMEs and PMEGP (Prime Minister's Employment



Generation Programme), launched last financial year, was a step in this direction. Under this scheme in the year 2021-22, a total of 1.03 lakh new units have been set up in the manufacturing and services sector.

The government, Verma said, is also working to ensure that by taking advantage of the full potential of the MSMEs, there contribution to the Indian economy should be doubled.

"For this, we will ensure to remove the external barriers and provide strength to MSMEs in order to make India self-reliant.

"We are also working to develop the culture of becoming entrepreneurs in the youth, provide loans to MSMEs, improve their quality and increasing their competitiveness to increase their efficiency," he added.



Air India to lease 12 more aircraft comprising A320 neo, Boeing 777

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Air India on Monday said it will lease 12 more aircraft comprising both A320 neo and Boeing 777, which are expected to be inducted in its existing fleet in the first half of 2023.

The new planes will be deployed on the airline's short, medium and long-haul international routes, Air India said in a statement.

Air India said it has leased 42 aircraft since its privatisation in January this year.

Of the 12 new leased planes, six are wide-body Boeing 777-300ER, while the remaining six are narrow-body Airbus A320 neo, as per the statement.

The airline had in September this year announced that it will be adding 30 leased aircraft -- 21 A320, 4 A321 and 5 B777-200LR in its fleet over a 15-months period, amid its plan

to have 30 per cent share in both domestic and international markets.

The A320 neo will be operated on the airline's domestic as well as short-to-medium haul international routes, Air India said.

The airline said the B777-300 ER will have four-class configuration -- first, business, premium economy and economy -- to connect metro cities with more international destinations.

In addition to leasing of aircraft, Air India has also brought back into operations 19 aircraft, which were grounded for a long time while nine more such planes are expected to join the fleet, it stated.

As part of the expansion, Air India is enhancing the frequency of flights between key cities on the domestic routes, besides announcing expansion of international flight services.

INBRIEF

ADANI'S NDTV OPEN OFFER CLOSES WITH 32% SUBSCRIPTION

Billionaire Gautam Adani's group open offer for NDTV ended on Monday with investors tendering nearly 32 per cent share of the media house despite a deep discount to the stock's current trading price. The Adani group firm acquired nearly 53.27 lakh share shares of NDTV from the open market at a price band of 294 by the end of trading hours on Monday, exchange data showed.

RCPSDC TO SKILL SHG WOMEN MEMBERS IN FOOTWEAR

Department of Mission Shakti, Govt of Odisha, has collaborated with Rubber, Chemical & Petrochemical Skill Development Council (RCPSDC) to improve livelihood opportunities for SHG women members through market focused skilling and entrepreneurship promotion in footwear manufacturing. Over a period of next two years, as many as 2000 women SHG members will be trained by RCPSDC in footwear (Hawai slipper) manufacturing and empowered to commence their micro manufacturing/ assembling units. An MoU to this effect was signed by Ms Mansi Nimbal IAS, State Mission Director cum CEO, Mission Shakti Department, Govt of Odisha and Saif Mohammad, CEO, RCPSDC at the Make in Odisha Conclave in the dignified presence of Chief Minister of Odisha.

The other Ronaldo subplot is that he is still trying to convince potential suitors he is worth investing in when the World Cup is over, now he is a free agent after leaving United in contentious circumstances.

‘WOMEN’S IPL WILL BRIDGE GAP B/W INT’L & DOMESTIC CRICKET’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Stars such as Harmanpreet Kaur and Smriti Mandhana feel the women's IPL could help newcomers in making a seamless transition from domestic to international cricket.

The inaugural women's IPL is set to be held in March and some of the country's top players, from national team captain Harmanpreet to senior opener Mandhana, are looking forward to the event that will also see participation from overseas stars.

Speaking on Star Sports show 'Follow the Blues', Harmanpreet said, "The IPL will be a great platform for players that are really good, but you know for them, international cricket is still something that they cannot change their approach and mind-set overnight.

"But in the IPL, when they get a chance to play against overseas players, it will give them a platform, they can play well, they can understand what is international cricket.

"So, when they are playing for the Indian team, they will not face any extra pressure, because right now, the players that are selected from the domestic teams, sometimes I can see that they are blank, they are not able to understand how to change their game plan.

"To cut that gap, the tournament will play a major role. So, the coming years, with the girls who play in the IPL, we will definitely see some major changes in their performances."

The Women in Blue have made a lot of progress in the past year, but have not been able to win championships. The team made it to the semi-finals of the ODI World Cup, beat Sri Lanka in a T20I and ODI bilateral series, won a Commonwealth Games silver medal and bagged a historic 3-0 win in England.

The, they won the Asia Cup for a record seventh time.

Talking further about the IPL, Harmanpreet said, "The IPL is a huge step forward for women's cricket,



Shafali Verma to lead India in women’s U-19 WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Talented opening batter Shafali Verma was on Monday named captain of India's 15-member squad for the ICC U-19 Women's T20 World Cup to be held in South Africa from January 14 to 29.

The All-India Women's Selection Committee picked the team for the maiden edition of the U-19 Women's T20 World Cup, as well as for the upcoming bilateral away T20 series against South Africa U-19 beginning from December 17.

The 18-year-old Shafali, who has played two Tests, 21 ODIs and 46 T20Is after making her debut in the senior national team in 2019, will also lead the 18-member Indian squad in the



five T20 matches against South Africa U-19. All the five T20 matches will be played at Tuks Oval, Pretoria on December 27, 29, 31 and January 2 and 4 respectively.

In the U-19 Women's World Cup, which will feature 16 teams, India have been placed in Group D alongside South

Africa, UAE and Scotland.

The top three teams from each group will progress to the Super Six round, where the sides will be pooled into two groups of six each.

The top two teams from each group will then progress to the semi-finals, which will be played on January 27 at JB Marks Oval in Potchefstroom. The final will take place at the same venue on January 29.

India U-19 Women's team for SA T20s: Shafali Verma (captain), Shweta Sehrawat (vice-captain), Richa Ghosh (wk), G Trisha, Soumya Tiwari, Sonia Mehdiya, Hurley Gala, Hrishita Basu (wk), Sonam Yadav, Mannat Kashyap, Archana Devi, Parshavi Chopra, Titas Sadhu, Falak Naz, Shabnam MD, Shikha, Najla CMC, Yashashree.

because before this, we have witnessed the Australia board, England board, they have looked after the WBBL and The Hundred.

"We have discussed that there's a big gap between domestic and international cricket, because even if you play well in domestic cricket and then suddenly play international games, you're not able to understand what to do and how to do it."

Mandhana compared the women's IPL with leagues such as The Hundred and the WBBL and spoke about how they have helped their domestic players.

"All of women's cricket, I won't say the Indian team or the domestic set-up. We keep talking about how it will increase the bench strength.

"But actually, the fact is that it's going to help the domestic girls massively because that sort of experience in playing in leagues like this will get a lot of things sorted for women's cricket," Mandhana said.

"Grassroot wise and we have seen how the Big Bash and The Hundred have helped Australia and England respectively in their domestic set-up as well as other things.

"So, I'm actually really happy, the Indian team will benefit a lot from the women's IPL, but it's also going to benefit a lot of domestic girls which I'm looking forward to.

Batter Jemimah Rodrigues said the women's IPL would take the game to the next level in India.

"The women's IPL is going to change a lot of things for women's cricket in India. I think this is like the best platform for us now that we as an Indian team have been doing so well in all the major events like the World Cup, the Commonwealth.

"This is just the right time for it to happen and I'm sure that we are going to get so much more talent that's going to come out from here. I am very sure that women's cricket in India is all set to go to the next level after the women's IPL," Rodrigues said.

Specialist players & split coaching make lot of sense for bigger teams: Andy Flower



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

One of the shrewdest minds in world cricket, Andy Flower, feels having different coaches and specialist players for red and white-ball cricket make a "lot of sense" for bigger teams like India, England and Australia amid a punishing international calendar.

Reigning T20 and ODI World Cup champions England are the only major side to adopt the split coaching formula and have a totally different set-up for the five-day and shorter formats.

Flower, who now coaches T20 franchises around the world after spending 12 years in English cricket set-up, feels the mental health of players and coaches is bound to be affected with so much cricket going on. "For some countries it is not needed. For bigger countries who are playing tons of cricket, players specialising makes sense. It would also make sense from a coaching point of view and a lifestyle and health point of view.

"Being on the road, living in hotels for two or three quarters in a year, that is not a healthy thing for families and relationships," the former Zimbabwe captain said.

Commenting on the roaring success of England in the shorter formats, Flower said a lot of credit must go to former captain Eoin Morgan and coach Trevor Bayliss, who engineered the side's remarkable transformation after a dismal 2015 World Cup.

"The biggest catalyst of change was Eoin Morgan and Trevor Bayliss. They encouraged an uber attacking style of play and they had freedom to do this as they had a poor World Cup in 2015," said the 54-year-old.

Flower coaches the Lucknow franchise in the IPL and has coached in T20 leagues around the world since 2019. He was with Delhi Bulls for the T10 League in Abu Dhabi.

His captain at Lucknow, K L Rahul, has copped a fair bit of criticism of late for his strike rate. Asked to comment on his recent performances, Flower said: "I don't agree with you that he has not been able to deliver.

"He has proved time and time again that he is able to deliver. He is an amazing cricketer and so beautiful to watch but also he has got an amazing record, especially in the IPL, and a ridiculously good average. I rate him very highly."



The Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Youth Affairs and Sports, Anurag Singh Thakur addressing at the International volunteer day, in New Delhi on December 05, 2022

Gill strong contender to open for India in 2023 ODI WC: Yuvi

PTI ■ GURUGRAM

The highly rated Shubman Gill is a strong contender to open for India in the 2023 ODI World Cup at home, feels World Cup winner Yuvraj Singh.

Gill is not a part of the ODI series in Bangladesh but was part of the second string India squad in New Zealand. "I think Shubman is doing very well and is performing consistently. I believe he is a strong contender to open for India in the 2023 World Cup," Yuvraj said.

Yuvraj, who retired from all forms of the game in 2019, has been mentor to some of the young cricketers from his state including Shubman.

During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Shubman stayed with Yuvraj and trained under him alongside current Punjab skipper and Sunrisers Hyderabad all rounder Abhishek Sharma.

"Shubman is very hard-working and is doing all the right things. I believe he is destined for greatness in the next 10 years," Yuvraj said.

Yuvraj declined to comment on India's show in the T20 World Cup or the sacking of national selectors.

On a different note, Yuvraj said that he is open to work as a sports/cricket administrator.

"I can't say what will happen in future but if I can help in growth of sports in the country, I wouldn't mind. But it is not just cricket but I will like to help in growth of sports in this country."



INDIAN FINED 80% OF MATCH FEE FOR SLOW OVER-RATE

PTI ■ MIRPUR

India were on Monday penalised for slow over-rate in the first ODI against Bangladesh here, with the players coughing up 80 per cent of their match fee.

India lost the opening game of the three-match series by one wicket on Sunday. ICC elite panel match referee Ranjan Madugalle imposed the sanction after India were ruled to be four overs short of the target after time allowances were taken

into consideration.

In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined 20 per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to bowl in the allotted time.

India captain Rohit Sharma pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing, the ICC said in a statement.

AP ■ RAWALPINDI

England showcased its masterful approach of aggression in Test cricket with a superb 74-run victory over Pakistan in the final session of the first Test on Sunday.

Needing 263 runs with eight wickets in hand on Day 5, Pakistan was dismissed for 268 against the reverse swing of James Anderson (4-36) and Ollie Robinson (4-50) – losing its last five wickets for just 11 runs after tea.

Jack Leach wrapped up the game by having the last wicket of Naseem Shah, trapped leg before wicket, after England delayed the second new ball for well over an hour with Anderson and Robinson doing the damage with the old ball.

Pakistan also succumbed to the relentless attacking field



settings of England captain Ben Stokes throughout the final day before Robinson and veteran Anderson sliced through the lower order with the host needing 86 runs.

"What we've had to deal with coming in makes this win

even better," Stokes said, referring to a virus that hit half of his teammates on the eve of the match before they recovered in time for England's first test in Pakistan in 17 years.

"We wanted to come here and carry on with our mantra of

exciting cricket and giving ourselves an opportunity to win. We've no interest in drawing."

The win on a docile Pindi Cricket Stadium wicket firmly underlined England's fearless aggressive approach under new coach Brendon McCullum,

which saw them win six of the seven Test matches back home this summer. Robinson exposed Pakistan's long tail soon after tea when he had Agha Salman (30) trapped leg before and then Azhar Ali (40) fell in the fielding trap when Joe Root grabbed a low two-handed catch in the leg slip.

Robinson had earlier ended the nearly four-hour defiance of one of the four Pakistan debutants – Saud Shakeel – in the second session to a brilliant diving catch by Keaton Jennings as the lefthander top-scored with 76.

Anderson broke the 87-run stand by having Mohammad Rizwan caught behind off a delivery which moved a shade outside the off stump and took the outside edge of the bat as England kept on coming hard at the Pakistan middle-order.

‘Indian team has everything to become world champion’



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan hockey captain Tahir Zaman believes India can reclaim the World Cup title after a hiatus of 47 years if they can handle the pressure of being the hosts and play consistent game. Zaman, an integral part of Pakistan's 1994 World Cup-winning team, said playing the marquee event at home has its pros and cons.

"I would say India has a good chance this time. To be honest, home ground, home crowd advantage, but they should not forget that it can also be a disadvantage. The pressure of the home crowd and local media is something they have to be careful of," Zaman said.

"Apart from that, playing disciplined hockey, and not getting emotional will help. I would say the consistency I

have noticed in the Indian team's performance shows that they have everything that can make them the world champions this time."


The FIH World Cup will be held in Bhubaneswar and Rourkela from January 13 to 29.

Zaman, a lively forward in his playing days, expects a highly competitive tournament.

"France and South Africa are the kinds of teams that can make any kind of upsets. But, on the other hand, Australia, Belgium, Germany, and perhaps Argentina are big teams to watch out for.

"I would rate Australia and the Netherlands higher than Belgium this time. But, let's see how it goes. May the best team win the World Cup," said Zaman, who has 252 international caps and 134 goals to his name.

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE



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Corporate Office: ICICI HFC Tower, JB Nagar, Andheri Kurla Road, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400059

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Whereas

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

As the borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned dates. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Home Finance Company Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Co-borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of property/ Date of Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand Notice (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Soni Devi (Borrower), Ranjit Pandey (Co-Borrower), Harihar Sharan Panday (Co-Borrower), LHRPR00001343539	498 Mouja Birgaon Khasra No 17 5 Rnm Dharsiva 1 Ward No 11 Lal Bahadur Shastra Ward Phn 101 29 Ward No 9 House No 498 Aadarsh Nagar Birgaon Birgaon 101 29 Raipur-492001. Bounded By- North: Land of Gupta Ji, South: Road, East: Land of Pandeyji, West: Remaining Lamnd of Seller. Date of Possession- 01-Dec-22	09-08-2022 Rs. 1,27,652/-	Raipur-B
2.	Soni Devi (Borrower), Ranjit Pandey (Co-Borrower), Harihar Sharan Panday (Co-Borrower), LHRPR00001343540	498 Mouja Birgaon Khasra No. 17 5 Rnm Dharsiva 1 Ward No 11 Lal Bahadur Shastri Ward Phn 101 29 Ward No 9 House No 498 Aadarsh Nagar Birgaon Birgaon 101 29 Raipur- 492001. Bounded By- North: Land of Gupta Ji, South: Road, East: Land of Pandeyji, West: Remaining Lamnd of Seller. Date of Possession- 01-Dec-22	09-08-2022 Rs. 6,81,036/-	Raipur-B
3.	Harihar Sharan Panday (Borrower), Soni Devi (Co-Borrower), Ranjit Pandey (Guarantor), LHRPR00001335149	498 Mouja Birgaon Khasra No 17 5 Rnm Dharsiva 1 Ward No 11 Lal Bahadur Shastra Ward Phn 101 29 Ward No 9 House No 498 Aadarsh Nagar Birgaon Birgaon 101 29 Raipur- 492001. Bounded By- North: Land of Gupta Ji, South: Road, East: Land of Pandeyji, West: Remaining Lamnd of Seller. Date of Possession- 01-Dec-22	09-08-2022 Rs. 21,25,004/-	Raipur-B
4.	Harihar Sharan Panday (Borrower), Soni Devi (Co-Borrower), Ranjit Pandey (Guarantor), LHRPR00001335150	498 Mouja Birgaon Khasra No 17 5 Rnm Dharsiva 1 Ward No 11 Lal Bahadur Shastri Ward Phn 101 29 Ward No 9 House No 498 Aadarsh Nagar Birgaon Birgaon 101 29 Raipur-492001. Bounded By- North: Land of Gupta Ji, South: Road, East: Land of Pandeyji, West: Remaining Lamnd of Seller. Date of Possession- 01-Dec-22	09-08-2022 Rs. 10,60,386/-	Raipur-B
5.	Harihar Sharan Panday (Borrower), Soni Devi (Co-Borrower), Ranjit Pandey (Guarantor), LHRPR00001335151	498 Mouja Birgaon Khasra No 17 5 Rnm Dharsiva 1 Ward No 11 Lal Bahadur Shastri Ward Phn 101 29 Ward No 9 House No 498 Aadarsh Nagar Birgaon Birgaon 101 29 Raipur-492001. Bounded By-north: Land of Gupta Ji, South: Road, East: Land of Pandeyji, West: Remaining Lamnd of Seller. Date of Possession- 01-Dec-22	09-08-2022 Rs. 1,18,125/-	Raipur-B

The above-mentioned borrowers(s)/ guarantors(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date : December 06, 2022

Place : Raipur

Authorized Officer

ICICI Home Finance Company Limited