

OPINION 6

RETRIEVE POJK FOR
ITS PEOPLE'S SAKE

WORLD 8

UKRAINE: RUSSIAN SHELLING
DAMAGED N-PLANT POWER LINES

MONEY 10

INDIA'S SERVICES SECTOR
SEES UPTURN IN OCTOBER

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 4, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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PAKISTAN BEAT
PROTEAS IN T20
WORLD CUP
12 SPORT

Diesel cars can't ply in gasping Delhi-NCR

Ban on entry of trucks in Delhi; classes may go online in NCR

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With Delhi's air quality index (AQI) being just a notch short of "severe plus" category, the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) on Thursday ordered the Delhi and State Governments to implement a ban on entry of trucks into Delhi and the plying of four-wheeled diesel light motor vehicles in the national Capital and adjoining NCR districts as part of anti-pollution steps.

The order further stated that the State Government may take a call on the closure of educational institutions, non-emergency commercial activities and plying of vehicles on odd-even basis. Noida among NCR districts ordered online classes. Central and State Governments may decide on permitting work from home.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting of the CAQM Sub-Committee for invoking actions under GRAP held an emergency meeting in wake of unfavourable meteorological conditions deteriorating the air quality of NCR on Thursday. Reacting to the CAQM's order, the Delhi Government officials said they are examining it.



A farm labourer burns paddy stubble in a field on Thursday even as pollution levels breach the 'severe' category mark in Delhi-NCR

rating the air quality of NCR on Thursday. Reacting to the CAQM's order, the Delhi Government officials said they are examining it.

"Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai will convene a high-level meeting on Friday to discuss the implementation of curbs on polluting activities under the final stage of the Graded Response Action Plan," Delhi Government officials said.

Exceptions have been given

for trucks carrying essential commodities, providing essential services, and all CNG and electric trucks. The ban is part of a list of actions under "stage 4" of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP), that the CAQM has ordered State Governments in the NCR to take "with immediate effect".

"Ban on plying of 4-wheeler diesel LMVs in NCT of Delhi and Districts of NCR bordering Delhi, except BS-VI vehicles and vehicles used for

essential/emergency services," the order read.

The CAQM also ordered a ban on Delhi-registered diesel-run medium and heavy goods vehicles in the Capital.

"Those carrying essential commodities and providing essential services are exempted. The entry of trucks other than electric and CNG ones in Delhi is banned too. Those carrying essential commodities are exempted," it said.

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Gujarat elections on Dec 1, 5; counting with HP on Dec 8

Cong flays delay in announcement of Guj poll schedule while counting on same date with HP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Gujarat Assembly polls will be held in two phases — on December 1 and 5 — and the counting of votes will take place on December 8 along with that of Himachal Pradesh polls.

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday finally announced the schedule for the polls after its neutrality was repeatedly questioned by the Opposition parties for not announcing the Gujarat dates when the EC declared the schedules for the Himachal Pradesh polls three weeks ago.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said voting for 89 seats will be held on December 1 and the balance 93 seats on December 5. "The counting will be held on December 8 along with Himachal Pradesh. There are over 4.9 crore electors eligible to vote this year. There will be more than 51,000 polling stations set up, including more than 34,000 in rural areas," Kumar added. The term of the 182-member Gujarat Assembly ends on February 18, 2023.

The Congress sought explanation from the poll body as to why the poll schedule for



Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar with Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey (right) during a press conference for the announcement of Assembly elections in Gujarat, in New Delhi on Thursday

Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat on separate dates even though counting of votes would be held on the same day.

Congress's Gujarat in-charge Raghu Sharma alleged that the BJP got time to hold several rallies on official expense and misused public resources to the hilt in Gujarat.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here, he said, "Want to thank the Election Commission for announcing Gujarat polls finally despite the BJP-led Government's pressure." "The EC should give an explanation as a constitutional body that while counting of votes for elections in both States will be on the same day, why elections were announced on different dates," Sharma said.

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25 seats to watch out for

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Following are the 25 seats to watch out for as Gujarat goes to the polls over two phases on December 1 and 5:

1. MANINAGAR: This urban constituency in Ahmedabad city has been a BJP bastion since the 1990s thanks to high concentration of urban Hindu voters. Narendra Modi won from Maninagar in 2002, 2007 and 2014 when he was Gujarat chief minister. The seat is currently held by BJP's Suresh Patel.

2. GHATLODIA: Another urban seat in Ahmedabad city. It has a sizable number of Patidar voters and has given two CMs to the State — the current chief Bhupendra Patel

and Anandiben Patel. The BJP gave the ticket to Bhupendra Patel in 2017 after she quit active politics. He won with a margin of 1.17 lakh votes despite the anger among Patidar voters following the Hardik Patel-led quota stir.

3. MORBI: The recent bridge collapse in which 135 people were killed has put the spotlight on this Patidar-dominated constituency. Thanks to the Patidar quota agitation, BJP's Kanti Amrutia, a five-time M.L.A. lost to Congress' Brijesh Merja in 2017. Merja then switched sides and won on BJP ticket in the 2020 bypoll. He is now a Minister. It will be interesting to see how people will vote after the tragedy.

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Arrest if you can, Soren dares ED, seeks 3-week time for summons

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/RANCHI

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Thursday skipped summons issued by the Enforcement Directorate to face questioning in connection with a case of illegal mining and dared the agency to arrest him if he has committed any crime instead of sending summonses.

Soren has sought three weeks time to appear before the agency for questioning in the money laundering case. The ED may issue him a fresh date.

Soren expressed his inability to appear before the agency on Thursday citing official commitments, they said. Later in the day, Soren left for Chhattisgarh to attend a "pre-scheduled" tribal programme.

The ED had asked Soren, also the executive president of the ruling JMM, to appear for



Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM working president Hemant Soren addresses party workers outside his residence in Ranchi on Thursday

questioning at its regional office in Ranchi at 11 am but he did not obey the summons. Addressing party supporters later near his residence, Soren said, "The ED has summoned me following a conspiracy. Come and arrest me if I have committed a crime instead of sending summonses for ques-

tioning. I am neither afraid nor worried. Rather I am emerging stronger. If people of Jharkhand wish, opponents will not find a place to hide," he said. Wondering why security at the offices of ED and BJP was increased, he asked if they were scared of Jharkhandis.

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Imran shot at, 1 killed

Pakistan ex-PM gets bullet injury in leg during protest march

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD/LAHORE

Imran Khan on Thursday sustained bullet injury on his leg when a gunman opened fire on the container-mounted truck carrying him during his protest march, killing one person, but the former Pakistan prime minister was out of danger in what his party claimed was an "assassination attempt".

The incident occurred near Allahwala Chowk of Wazirabad town in Punjab when 70-year-old Khan was leading the long march to Islamabad demanding early elections.

In a statement, the Punjab police said that seven people were injured and one person was killed during the attack on Khan. It added that a suspect has been taken into custody.

Asad Umar, the senior

leader of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, told the media that a bullet hit Khan's leg. He, however, didn't blame anyone for the attack.

Khan underwent surgery at Shaukat Khanum Hospital in Lahore, his party leader Omar Ayub Khan said.

Senior party leader Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that Khan is out of danger now. He added that the "attack was not just on Imran Khan but on the Pakistani nation".

Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry said that the attack on Khan was a "well-planned assassination attempt". "It was not 9mm [pistol], it was burst from an automatic weapon, no two opinions about that it was a narrow escape," he tweeted.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack on the cricketer-turned politician. His close aide Senator Faisal Javed was injured when a bullet grazed his face.



Members of the media and police officers gather at the main entrance of the hospital where former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan is being treated, in Lahore on Thursday

According to eyewitnesses, a gunman fired on the campaign truck carrying Khan from a close range. They said one person has been arrested from the spot. "Imran Khan was shot in the leg but was stable while being taken to hospital. He waved at supporters too," his party said in a tweet.

Geo TV reported that the

attacker was identified as Naved. The attacker, in his early 20s and wearing salwar-kameez, had been walking along the container and fired from the left side, the channel said. The suspect caught by police has said that he wanted to kill Khan because "he was misleading the public."

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CAPSULE

2 FRIENDS RAPE TEEN, UPLOAD VIDEO ON FB

Gurugram: A man was sent to judicial custody and a minor to a correction home on Thursday for allegedly sexually assaulting their 14-year-old friend, filming the act and uploading the video on Facebook, police said on Thursday.

JAISHANKAR TO VISIT RUSSIA ON NOV 7, 8

New Delhi: Economic cooperation between India and Russia in various domains is set to figure prominently during External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Moscow on November 7 and 8 which is taking place amid the conflict in Ukraine.

CBI ARRESTS 3 MES OFFICIALS IN GRAFT CASE

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested three officials of Military Engineer Services (MES), Bhopal, in an alleged bribery case of ₹1.10 lakh, officials said on Thursday.

CPM forces its own CM to take U-turn on retirement age

PNS ■ KOCHI

The CPI(M) on Thursday forced Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to withdraw the Government's decision to freeze the order to raise the superannuation age in public sector units in the State.

"It was a decision made in haste and there was no discussion in the party forum about the move to enact such a law. Hence the Government rescinded it," said MV Govindan, the newly-appointed secretary of the Kerala CPI(M), after a meeting with Vijayan.

This is the first incident of its kind in recent times in the CPI(M). Usually the party secretary and the Chief Minister function in unison but Govindan, who looked tense and upset over the decision to increase the pension age to 60 did not hide his displeasure.

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Develop ecosystem for zero tolerance to corruption: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday stressed that no corrupt person should get political and social support and asked institutions like the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) not to be "defensive" while acting against the corrupt and the corruption.

"Many times the corrupt people are glorified in spite of being jailed even after being proven to be corrupt. This situation is not good for Indian society," Modi said, adding, "even today, some people give arguments in favour of the corrupt who have been found guilty. It is very necessary for such people, such forces to be made aware of their duty by society. In this also concrete action taken by your department has a big role".

The PM was addressing "Vigilance Awareness Week" programme of the CVC in



Prime Minister Narendra Modi presents a prize of an essay writing competition to a student during the launch of 'Complaint Management System' portal of Central Vigilance Commission amid Vigilance Awareness Week 2022 in New Delhi on Thursday

Vigyan Bhawan. On the occasion, he also launched the new Complaint Management System portal of the CVC.

The Prime Minister said that the campaign of "Vigilance Awareness Week" that began with the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel is taking place to realise the dreams and aspirations of a corruption-free India and underlined its importance in the lives of every citizen.

"For a developed India, we have to develop such an administrative ecosystem with zero tolerance on corruption", said Modi.

Principal Secretary, Dr. PK. Mishra, Minister of State for Personnel & Parliamentary Affairs, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Cabinet Secretary, Central Vigilance Commissioner Suresh N Patel and Vigilance Commissioners PK Srivastava and Arvind Kumar were those present on the occasion.

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SC 'no' to plea against death for Red Fort attack convict

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday dismissed the plea of Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) terrorist Mohammad Arif, alias Ashfaq, seeking review of its judgment awarding death penalty to him in the 2000 Red Fort attack case that left three people, including two Army jawans, dead.

A bench comprising Chief Justice UU Lalit and Justice Bela M Trivedi said that it has accepted the prayers that electronic records be considered. "We have accepted the prayers that electronic records must be placed in consideration. His guilt is proved. We affirm the view taken by this court and reject the review petition," the bench said.

Arif was one of the accused, who had entered the Red Fort on December 22, 2000, and had opened indiscriminate firing leading to the death of three.



On Dec 26, Pakistani terrorist Mohammed Arif, alias Ashfaq, along with his wife Rehmana Yousuf Farooqui were arrested following an encounter in Jamia Nagar, Delhi, by Special Cell of the Delhi Police.

In the encounter one terrorist was eliminated. Police chargesheeted Ashfaq and 21 others. Eight persons were declared absconders.

In October 2005, trial court convicted Ashfaq with death penalty. His wife and five others were also convicted. Four were acquitted.

In September 2007, Delhi High Court upheld the death sentence to Ashfaq and acquitted the other

accused. The Supreme Court in 2014 also upheld the death sentence.

LeT terrorist Bilal Ahmed Kawa, who planned the terror attack, was arrested in a joint operation by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police and the Gujarat ATS from Delhi Airport on January 10, 2018, and is facing trial.

It was widely reported that the Red Fort attack was planned by LeT to derail the ongoing India-Pak peace talks in 2000.

India rejects references to J&K in China-Pak joint statement

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday strongly rejected references made to Jammu and Kashmir in the China-Pakistan joint statement issued during Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent visit to Beijing, and asserted that the Union Territory as well as Ladakh "are and will always" be "integral and inalienable" parts of India.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi, referring to the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said New Delhi has consistently conveyed its "protests and concerns" to Beijing and Islamabad over the CPEC as it includes projects on the sovereign territory of India.

Bagchi said India "resolutely rejects" any attempts to utilise such projects to change the status quo in the area and

that any attempts to involve third parties in such activities are "inherently illegal, illegitimate and unacceptable".

The joint statement was issued on Wednesday following talks between Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Bagchi said India noted the joint statement that contained several "unwarranted references" to the Indian Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and also mentioned projects under the so-called CPEC and its extension to third countries.

"We have consistently rejected such statements and all parties concerned are well aware of our clear position on these matters. The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union Territory of Ladakh are and always will be integral and inalienable parts of India. No other country has locus standi



to comment on the same," he added.

"As regards the so-called China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, we have consistently conveyed our protest and our concerns to China and Pakistan. CPEC includes projects on the sovereign territory of India under forcible and illegal external occupation."

In his talks with President Xi, Sharif reaffirmed his government's willingness to "commit to high quality develop-

ment" of the Belt and Road Initiative(BRI) and highlighted the salience of the CPEC to Pakistan's economic and social development, according to the joint statement.

The statement said the Chinese side reiterated that the Kashmir issue was a "dispute left from history" that should be properly and peacefully resolved based on the UN Charter, relevant UN Security Council resolutions and bilateral agreements".

MHA seeks report from Delhi Chief Secy over special treatment to Jain in Tihar

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has sought a detailed report from the Delhi Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar over the special treatment given to Satyendra Jain in Tihar Jail.

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has complaint to the MHA about the VIP treatments being given to Jain in Delhi prison. Jain is in jail in connection with money laundering case in Tihar.

In its affidavit to the court, the ED has alleged that Satyendar Jain is getting massages and is also regularly meeting the co-accused in the case.

The ED said that Jain is getting all facilities including massage in Tihar jail. It accused Jain, who is also the prisons minister, of taking unfair advantage of his position. "As per the footage, the jail super-

intendent meets Jain every day, which is against the rules," said ED, adding that home-made food is provided to him in jail, defying the court order.

The ED further alleged that Jain's wife Poonam Jain comes to meet him often in the cell, which is against the jail manual and he often meets with other accused, Ankush Jain and Vaibhav Jain, who are also locked up in Tihar Jail, it said.Denying all the claims made by the ED, the Tihar jail administration, said that no one from outside visited Jain's cell.

"However, during the headcount in the morning, all the prisoners present in the ward can talk to each other. The co-accused that is being talked about is also in the same ward in which Mr Jain is, so they can talk among themselves, it said. "After the head count, when everyone goes to their own cell, they cannot go to each other's cell," it said.

NCST gives nod for inclusion of Pahari community in ST

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Almost one month after the Union Home Minister Amit Shah had promised the Scheduled Tribe status to the Pahari community, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has formally given its nod to the proposal of including "Pahari" community in the Scheduled Tribes list of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Currently, Jammu and Kashmir has 12 communities that have been notified as STs. "The commission has examined the proposal received from the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.The commission supports the proposal on the basis of the recommendation of the Office of the Registrar General of India " the NCST communicated. The recommendations for the inclusion had come from the commission headed



by Justice (Retd.) G.D. Sharma in Jammu and Kashmir.

The decision is set to impact the poll arithmetic in the frontier districts of Rajouri and Poonch. Out of nine Assembly seats reserved by the Delimitation Commission for the Scheduled Tribes six fall in these two districts.

The members of the Pahari community are mostly located in Rajouri, Poonch, Uri, Keran, Karnah, Pahalgam and Shopian. Rajouri and Poonch comprise eight assembly seats. The Paharis hold the key in Nowshera and Sunderbani while the remaining six seats are inhabited by 40 percent of the Gujar community, who can effectively tilt the scales during elections.

Gujarat elections on Dec 1...

From Page 1
But BJP president J P Nadda also welcomed the announcement of the Gujarat Assembly polls and claimed that his party will again form a "double engine" Government in the State with a big majority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

At the press conference, CEC Kumar brushed aside Opposition criticism of bias in delaying the poll announcement for Gujarat, contending that the Commission had to balance many things including weather, last date of the term of the Assembly and the number of days the model code of conduct should be in force.

"There is a tradition of counting the results together, there is weather and there is a difference between the last days when the Assemblies of both the States will expire and also a difference between the date of the model code of conduct. Still we announced the election dates 110 days ahead of the expiry of the Gujarat Assembly. And there

will be a 72 days' gap between the counting of the result and the expiry of the Assembly in Gujarat. We are quite in advance," Kumar said.

On the question of fairness arising out of this alleged delay, brought by the Opposition, Kumar said action and outcome speak louder than words. "If we say that our results are not correct, then it will be an insult to the people of this democracy. We have to balance lots of thing before the announcement of dates. Several factors, including availability of forces, whether conditions among several other factors must be considered before poll dates are announced," he said.

"Many parties write long letters to us complaining about the EVM machines. And then their candidates win, those complaints stop. And the results get accepted," he added. He indicated that the elections could have been announced a couple of days earlier, but for the tragedy that took place in the State.

Arrest if you can, Soren dares ED, seeks...

From Page 1
He told the gathering that he will fly to Raipur, the capital of neighbouring Chhattisgarh, to attend a "Tribal Mahotsav" during the day, for which he had received an invitation earlier. The Chief Minister reached th venue in the evening.

During his address to party workers here, the CM alleged that the BJP is making attempts to destabilise his democratically elected Government by misusing Central agencies ever since it was voted to power. "We have identified outsider gangs operating in the State, who are not letting the State's Adivasis stand on their feet. This State will be ruled by Jharkhandis and not

by external forces," Soren said.

He appealed to the tribal voters in poll-bound Gujarat to abstain from voting for the BJP. Launching a scathing attack on the BJP, he claimed that the saffron party was not able to digest the people's mandate given to a party dominated by tribals and locals, and resorted to "politics of terror" by unleashing Central agencies. "They (BJP) possess a feudal mentality and cannot see tribals, Dalits and oppressed (people) growing," the JMM leader said. Soren alleged that the present dispensation at the Centre was of traders who believed only in taking, not giving. Claiming that whenever the State demanded its dues from

the Centre, it got ED, CBI and court cases in return, he warned of severe consequences if his democratically elected Government is toppled. Soren exuded confidence that his Government will complete its five-year term. The CM also took a jibe at Governor Ramesh Bais for not making public the content of the Election Commission's letter to Raj Bhavan on an office-of-profit case against him. Soren faces the threat of losing his membership of the Assembly in the case. He alleged that the Governor is possessing envelope for over two months creating a state of confusion.

In a tweet, he said, "The time has come to give a befit-

ting reply to the political conspiracy of the Opposition."

Soren on Thursday termed the Enforcement Directorate's summons to him as a "weapon" used by the BJP to target him and said if he has committed a serious offence then he should be directly arrested.

Queried about his no-show before the ED, Soren said, "Do you think we are 'chor-uchakke' (thief-miscreants) or 'hatyare' (murderer)? They issued the summons yesterday (Wednesday) and asked me to appear today (Thursday). Don't we have our engagements? I got an invitation to attend the tribal dance festival (in Raipur) a month ago and my programme was already fixed."

Imran shot...

From Page 1
"He (Khan) was misleading the people and I could not bear watching it so I... attempted to kill him," he said in a video confession.

PTI leader Imran Ismail said that he was standing with Khan when he was attacked. "It was a straight fire... The bullet was meant to kill, not to scare," he claimed.

Senior PTI leader Shabbaz Gill said that "Imran Khan is our red line and an attempt has been made to cross that red line." He said that Khan will fight till his last breath.

Pakistan's top leadership, political leaders and the military strongly condemned the attack on Khan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack and directed the Interior Minister for an immediate report on the incident.

"I pray for the recovery and health of PTI chairman & other injured people. Federal government will extend all support necessary to Punjab govt for security & investigation. Violence should have no place in our country's politics," Sharif tweeted.

He has instructed Interior Minister Rana Sanaulлах to seek an immediate report on the incident from the police.

Prime Minister Sharif also postponed a press conference on his recent trip to China after the firing incident, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb tweeted.

President Arif Alvi termed the attack on Khan as "heinous assassination attempt."

"I thank Allah that he is safe but injured with few bullets in his leg & hopefully non-critical. This attack is shocking, alarming, disgraceful, deceitful & cowardly. May Allah give him health & to all those injured," tweeted Alvi, who belonged to Khan's party before assuming presidency.

The Pakistan Army has issued a statement condemning the attack on Khan. "Firing incident during Long March near Gujranwala is highly condemnable. Sincere prayers for precious life lost and speedy recovery and well being of Chairman PTI Mr Imran Khan and all those injured in this unfortunate incident," it said.

25 seats to watch out...

From Page 1
4. RAJKOT WEST: Narendra Modi won from this seat in February 2002 after becoming chief minister for the first time in October 2001. BJP veteran Vajubhai Vala represented this seat for six terms between 1980 and 2007. He vacated it for Modi in 2002. The 2017 contest turned interesting after Indranil Rajguru, then Congress MLA from Rajkot-East, announced he would take on Vijay Rupani instead of contesting from his 'safe seat'. Rajguru lost and recently joined the Aam Aadmi Party.

5. GANDHINAGAR NORTH: Gandhinagar city, the capital of Gujarat, does not have any specific caste equation as most of its residents are state government employees and their family members. Gandhinagar North constituency was carved out in 2008. In 2012, BJP's Ashok Patel won with a thin margin of over 4,000 votes. In 2017, Congress leader C J Chavda defeated Patel with nearly 4,700 votes.

6. AMRELI: Gujarat's first chief minister Jivraj Mehta was elected from Amreli in Saurashtra region in 1962. BJP candidates won from Amreli from 1985 to 2002. In a major upset, Congress's Paresh Dhanani snatched it from BJP in 2002. He was defeated in 2007 by BJP's Dileep Sanghani, but Dhanani wrested it back in 2012 and again won in 2017.

7. PORBANDAR: This constituency, dominated by Mer and Koli voters, has long witnessed rivalry between BJP's Babu Bokhiria and Congress' Arjun Modhwadia. In 2017, Bokhiria defeated Modhwadia, former leader of opposition and former state Congress chief, with a thin margin of 1,855 votes.

8. KUTIYANA: This is the only seat held by Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party in Gujarat. Kandhal Jadeja, son of alleged gangster late Santokben Jadeja, defeated the BJP in 2012 and 2017. He voted for BJP candidates during the Rajya Sabha polls and was later served a notice by the NCP leadership.

9. GONDAL: Famous for the political rivalry between the Patel and Rajput communities, the seat is currently held by

BJP's Geetaben Jadeja, a Rajput and the wife of former MLA and local strongman Jayrajsinh Jadeja who is out on bail in a murder case.

10. MEHSANA: A Patidar dominated seat and a BJP bastion since 1990. BJP leader and former deputy CM Nitin Patel won from here in 2012 and 2017. Mehsana city saw violent protests during the Patidar quota agitation. As a result, Patel's winning margin was just a little over 7,100 last time.

11. VARACHHA: A Patidar-dominated seat in Surat city. Saw violence during the Patidar quota agitation ahead of 2017 polls. Former Gujarat minister Kishor Kanani won on the BJP ticket from here in 2012 and managed to retain it in 2017.

12. JHAGADIA: Bharatiya Tribal Party founder Chhotu Vasava has been winning from this tribal-dominated seat since 1990. He recently severed ties with AAP. The other seat held by the party is Dediapada.

13. ANAND: Anand has a mix of Patel and OBC voters. Currently held by Congress' Kanti Sodha Parmar who lost to the BJP candidates in 2012 and in a 2014 bypoll but emerged victorious in 2017.

14. PAVI JETPUR (ST): This reserved seat in Chhotaudapur district is held by Leader of Opposition Sukhram Rathva of the Congress.

15. JASDAN: Currently held by BJP's Kunvarji Bavalia, one of the tallest Koli leaders in the state. Bavalia was a five-time Congress MLA but switched sides after winning in 2017 on a Congress ticket.

16. DARIAPUR: A Muslim-dominated seat in Ahmedabad city that came into existence in 2012. Congress' Gyasuddin Shaikh has been winning since. With AIMIM entering the fray, it will be a four cornered battle between the BJP, Congress, AAP and AIMIM.

17. JAMALPUR-KHADIA: A Muslim-dominated seat in Ahmedabad formed in 2012 when the BJP won due to a division of Muslim votes between Congress and independent candidate Sabir Kabliwala, who is now AIMIM's Gujarat president. In 2017, Congress won the seat. This time, AIMIM is like-

ly to field Kabliwala, a sign of trouble for the Congress.

18. CHHOTA UDAIPUR (ST): Congress veteran and 11-time MLA Mohansinh Rathva has been winning from here since 2012. Now Rathva has announced his retirement and is seeking a ticket for his son. Congress' Rajya Sabha MP Naran Rathva is also pitching for his son.

19. BHARUCH: A seat with a high concentration of Muslim voters. BJP has been winning from here since 1990.

20. GODHRA: Another seat with sizable Muslim population. Senior Congress leader C K Raulji won in 2007 and 2012 from here. He then switched to the BJP and won against the Congress in 2017 but with a wafer-thin margin of 258 votes.

21. BHAVNAGAR RURAL: BJP strongman and Koli leader Purshottam Solanki has been winning from here since 2012. He may be dropped this time due to deteriorating health.

22. VADGAM (SC): Young Dalit leader Jignesh Mevani won as an Independent from here in 2017 with Congress support.

23. UNJHA: Modi's hometown Vadnagar in Mehsana district falls under this constituency. Unjha is famous for Uniyadham, temple of Kadva-Patidar community's patron deity Maa Umiya. In a major upset in 2017, Congress' Asha Patel defeated BJP's Narayan Patel. She switched to the BJP and won the by-poll in 2019. The seat fell vacant in December 2021 after her death due to dengue.

24. RADHANPUR: OBC leader Alpesh Thakor won on a Congress ticket in 2017 but resigned in 2019 to join BJP. He lost to Congress' Raghu Desai in the bypoll. Local BJP leaders are reportedly opposed to his candidature.

25. LIMBAYAT: BJP's Sangita Patil has been winning from here since 2012. The seat falls under Gujarat BJP chief CR Paatli's Navsari Lok Sabha constituency. It has a sizable Muslim population and Sangita Patil demanded the imposition of Disturbed Areas Act in Limbayat to prevent ghettoization.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of **Mr. Kamal Gupta** who is owner of the Plot area measuring 240 sq. yds x 10 sq. yds total 250 sq. yds. out of 1 Bigha, Khasra No. 619/6, situated in extended abadi of Lal Dora at Durga Ashram Road, in the revenue estate of Village Chhatrapur, Tehsil Saket (M.B Road), New Delhi; vide two separate Sale Deed dated 02.06.2016 (vide Document No.3118, registered with the office of the Sub-Registrar-VA) and Sale Deed dated 14.07.2016 (vide Document No.3968, registered with the office of the Sub-Registrar-VA) and intend to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited**, that: 1) Agreement to sell & WILL (3 Nos.) in favour of Mr. Baia Ram; 2) Death Certificate & Surviving Member Certificate (SMC) of Late Mr. Baia Ram & 3) Original/Photocopy of Letter from Patwaris are not available/misplaced. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 7 days at below address:
Lucem Legal LLP
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Moth, Opp. Uday Park, South Ext. II, New Delhi-49
Contact@ 011-40046316

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given on behalf of **Mr. Kamal Gupta** who is owner of the Plot No. 10a measuring 250 sq. yds out of 1 Bigha, Khasra No.619/6, situated in extended abadi of Lal Dora at Durga Ashram Road, in the revenue estate of Village Chhatrapur, Tehsil Saket (M.B Road), New Delhi; vide two separate Sale Deed dated 02.06.2016 (vide Document No.12067, registered with the office of the Sub-Registrar-VA) and intend to mortgage the same against the financial assistance from **Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Limited**, that: 1) CTC/ Photocopy of Jamabandi (1990-1991) in favour of Mr. Vijay Kumar, Om Prakash (4/9), Kishan Devi (1/9) and Mr. Balaram (4/9); 2) Original General Power of Attorney, Agreement to sell & WILL in favour of Mr. Sanceep Gupta & 3) Original General Power of Attorney, Agreement to sell & WILL in favour of Mr. Mukesh Rathni are/are not available/misplaced. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate in writing to the undersigned within 7 days at below address:
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Contact@ 011-40046316

MEYER APPAREL LIMITED
CIN: L1810HR1993PLC032010
Regd. Office: No.3 & 4, Mustil N-19, Killa No.- 5 Opposite Tata Consultancy N.H.-8, Village Narsinghpur, Gurugram- 122004, Haryana, India
NOTICE
Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 that the meeting of Board of Directors of Meyer Apparel Limited to be held on Saturday, 12th November, 2022 at 10:00 AM at Regd. Office (Virtual Office), arrangement will also be made for participation of Board Members electronically through video conferencing facility, inter-alia to consider and approve, the Un-Audited Financial Results for the quarter/ half-year ended 30th September, 2022 and amongst other items. This notice is also available on the website of the company <https://www.meyerapparel.com> and on the website of BSE Ltd. <https://www.bseindia.com>, where the company's shares are listed.
For Meyer Apparel Limited
Sd/-
Place : Gurugram Charu Sharma
Date : 3rd November, 2022 Company Secretary



A thick layer of smog covers Delhi as the concentration of pollutants increased on Thursday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

Share of stubble burning in pollution jumps to 38%

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution jumped to 38 per cent on Thursday, which, experts said was the reason behind the thick layer of pungent smog over the national Capital.

The satellites detected 3,212 residue burning events in the six States on Thursday. The Ministry of Agriculture data showed that 2,666 cases detected in Punjab, 128 in Haryana, 40 in UP, one in Delhi, 54 in Rajasthan and 323 in MP.

Gufuran Beig, founder project director, National Capital Region, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR), a forecasting agency under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said, "The share of stubble burning in Delhi's pollution has increased to around 38 per cent which is quite significant."

The air pollution situation is the worst in Noida, Uttar

Pradesh which falls into the path of emissions being transported from stubble burning, he said.

"Gurugram and Lodhi Road areas which do not fall into this path are the least affected," Beig said.

Delhi-NCR's air quality slipped back into the 'severe' zone Thursday morning amid raging farm fires and stagnant conditions at night. The overall Air Quality Index stood at 419 at 9 AM in Delhi, Noida and Greater Noida.

"The overall air quality in Delhi will continue to remain in the severe category till Friday morning. There will be slight improvement afterwards."

A major relief is likely on Saturday due to predicted improvement in meteorological conditions — wind speed and direction," Beig said.

An AQI (air quality index) of above 400 is considered "severe" and can affect healthy people and seriously impact those with existing illnesses.

According to the Energy

Policy Institute at the University of Chicago's (EPIC) Air Quality Life Index (AQLI) released in June, the residents of Delhi stand to lose 10 years of life expectancy due to poor air quality.

Punjab had on Wednesday reported 3,634 farm fires, the highest this season so far, though their share in Delhi PM2.5 pollution stood at just 12 per cent due to unfavourable transport-level wind speed.

The number of farm fires stood at 1,842 on Tuesday, 2,131 on Monday, 1,761 on Sunday, 1,898 on Saturday and 2,067 on Friday.

SAFAR said the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution was "moderate" at 12 per cent due to unfavourable transport-level wind speed.

Transport-level winds blow in the lowest two layers of the atmosphere — the troposphere and stratosphere— and carry smoke from farm fires to the national capital region.

Farm fires accounted for 14

per cent of the PM2.5 pollution in the national capital on Tuesday, 22 per cent on Monday, 26 per cent on Sunday and 21 per cent on Saturday, according to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR).

PM2.5 are fine particles that are 2.5 microns or less in diameter and can travel deep into the respiratory tract, reaching the lungs and entering the bloodstream.

The Commission for Air Quality Management had last week said the increased incidents of stubble burning in Punjab this year "is a matter of serious concern".

According to the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), Punjab reported 71,304 farm fires between September 15 and November 30 last year and 83,002 farm fires in the corresponding period in 2020.

Last year, the share of farm fires in Delhi's PM 2.5 pollution peaked to 48 per cent on November 7.

53% of residents identify stubble burning as 'primary cause' of pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A survey conducted by LocalCircles found that around 53 per cent of the Delhi-NCR residents identify stubble burning in neighbouring states as the 'primary cause' of rising levels of air pollution. The survey report is based on responses from 20,000 citizens.

Around 10,037 respondents identified stubble burning by farmers in adjoining states as the root cause of bad air quality in the national capital, it said. Delhi's air quality continued to be in the 'severe' category on Thursday with its Air Quality Index (AQI) dipping at 426 at 9.10 am, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data showed.

The data breakup shows that a much smaller percentage or 13 per cent believe the primary cause is "motor vehicle emissions", while 7 per cent of the respondents blamed it on "garbage burning in the city".

Around 7 per cent respondents held "industrial emissions" responsible and 7 per cent blamed "construction activity", the survey said.

Wear masks as protection against pollution: Doctors

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hospitals in Delhi are teeming with people suffering from cough, nasal congestion, shortness of breath and even asthma attacks as an eye-stinging smog blankets Delhi-NCR. Hospitals are also seeing patients with no previous history of respiratory ailments coming for treatment. With Delhi's air quality remaining 'severe', doctors advised a return to wearing masks to guard against pollution.

At Holy Family Hospital in Okhla, there has been a 30 per cent increase in such patients coming to out-patient departments, said Dr Sumit Ray, head of department of critical care.

Last year, the hospital had started writing "pollution-related" in diagnosis in what was probably a first for a medical facility here.

"There were two ICU (intensive care unit) patients for whom we wrote that diagnosis. For writing that diagnosis, you have to rule out several probable factors that could have triggered the illness. For the patients who are currently admitted, we will need a few more days to arrive at that diagnosis," Ray said.

Shedding light on the problems faced by patients, Dr Ashish Kumar Prakash, consultant (respiratory and sleep medicine) at Medanta in Gurugram, said they had been attending to patients complaining of cough, nasal congestion and breathing difficulty since Diwali.

"Currently, I have 25 to 30 patients in my OPD with such conditions and the entire unit/department has approximately 50-75 cases in total. Patients suffering from respiratory illnesses such as COPD, asthma, and others are reporting acute exacerbations, an increase in symptoms such as coughing, dyspnea and acute nasal problems," he said.

"As the weather transitions to cold and breezy, the cold, dry air and sudden shifts in the weather can irritate the airways, causing one to produce more mucus and leading to exacerbations if the patients are not taking their medications properly," he said.

Dr Suresh Singh Naruka, senior consultant (ENT) at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals in Delhi, said there has been a "significant jump" in the number of patients visiting

him in his OPD post Diwali due to rising pollution levels.

When the respiratory system is affected, it can lead to persistent cough, said Dr Ravi Shekhar Jha, director (pulmonology) at Fortis Escorts Hospital in Faridabad. Nowadays, even patients with no previous history of respiratory illnesses are coming with severe intractable cough and breathing difficulty.

"Those patients who have respiratory history like asthma are getting more frequent attacks and even inside the hospital, patients are taking more than usual to recover from asthma and COPD attacks. Viral infection is fairly common in this weather but even those who did not have any evidence of viral infection are taking longer and higher doses of medicines for recovery," he told.

Dr Hemant Kalra, a chest specialist at Maharaja Agrasen Hospital in New Delhi, concurred with Jha and said the rise in pollution along with the cold and dry air due to the changing season could irritate the airways and cause symptoms such as shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing and asthma attacks.

Delhiites can apply for power subsidy till Nov 15

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With just over 60 per cent of around 57 lakh power consumers in the national Capital applying for power subsidy till October end, the Delhi Government has extended the last date for application submission up to November 15. Those consumers applying for the subsidy after November 15 will have to pay their electricity bill for the month of October, the Delhi government said in a statement.

The consumers, who apply for the subsidy after November 15, will have to pay the bill for the month of October and

they will get a subsidy on electricity from the month of November, it said. Those applying for subsidy in December will have to pay electricity bills for the months of October and November and they will get a subsidy from December, it said.

After November 15, the month in which the electricity consumers will apply for the subsidy, they will get the subsidy from that month itself and they will have to pay the bill for the previous month before filling the form, it said. The last date to submit the applications, both online and offline, for subsidy on electricity provided

by the government was originally set at October 31. Around 35 lakh consumers had applied for the subsidy by that date.

"The last date to register (apply) for free electricity scheme in Delhi has been extended up to November 15. Delhiites who will register till November 15, will continue to get the benefit of free electricity scheme."

So far 35 lakh families have registered for this," Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted. The Delhi government has decided to provide subsidies to only those consumers who apply for concession. Consumers receive a full

subsidy on electricity consumption up to 200 units a month. Those consuming up to 400 units receive a 50 per cent subsidy.

Applicants who opt-in for the subsidy by November 15 can avail the benefit from October 1 onwards, the statement said. The application window had closed on October 31 but in view of requests of the people who missed the last date, the Delhi government decided to extend the time period, it said.

The statement said earlier 47 lakh electricity consumers availed subsidy without any need to apply for it.

AS PUNJAB LEADS STATES IN FARM FIRES...

Kejriwal, green Min lock horns over usage of bio-decomposer

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi-NCR gasp for clean air to breathe amid extreme air pollution, thanks to stubble burning in the neighbouring States of Punjab, Haryana, UP, Rajasthan and MP, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav on Thursday said Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had "officially refused" to use bio-decomposer to prevent stubble burning in Punjab.

Kejriwal had on Wednesday blamed the Central Government for rising incidents of stubble burning in Punjab ruled by his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), saying it had "declined" requests to provide cash incentive to farmers for not burning crop residue.

"The Delhi CM had earlier written a letter to the Centre, saying the implementation of Pusa bio-decomposer had been successful in Delhi. But he himself officially refused to use it in Punjab," the Union Minister said. Prepared by scientists at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) here, the Pusa bio-decomposer is a microbial solution which can turn paddy



straw into manure in 15-20 days.

Earlier in a tweet, pointing towards rise in stubble (parali) burning in Punjab, state governed by AAP, Yadav accused the party of 'scam'. "Sample this: As of today, Punjab, a state run by the AAP government, has seen an over 19 per cent rise in farm fires over 2021. While, Haryana has seen a 30.6 per cent drop. Just today, Punjab saw 3,634 fires. There is no doubt over who has turned Delhi into a gas chamber," the Minister had said in a tweet. An official said the ministry had repeatedly asked the Punjab government to scale up the use of bio-decomposer but "they are only doing it on an experimental basis on 5,000 acres of land". Asked why Punjab is not using it, the official said: "The state has said it is not effective." Farmers in Punjab say paddy stubble can be decomposed in around 20 days without using bio-decomposer.



The Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) had conducted trials on several bio-decomposers, including the one prepared by the IARI, in 2020 and 2021 and had submitted a report to the state government, saying "there is no considerable reduction in the time taken to decompose the stubble and the impact on the yield is non-significant".

The official quoted above said the bio-decomposer is being used in five lakh acres of land in the NCR districts of Haryana and four lakh acres in Uttar Pradesh. "The experience of

Haryana and UP shows it should be implemented. As of now, we have no reason to discard it without making a sincere effort," he said. In Delhi, the solution is being used on 5,000 acres of basmati and non-basmati fields this year.

It was used on 4,300 acres of land belonging to 844 farmers in Delhi last year. In 2020, 310 farmers had used it on 1,935 acres of land. According to officials, spraying of bio-decomposer costs just Rs 30 per acre.

In 2021, a third-party audit conducted to ascertain the impact of the microbial solution in Delhi showed that it was 95 per cent effective, following which Kejriwal had requested the Centre to distribute it free in neighbouring states.

On Wednesday, Kejriwal had also accused the BJP of abusing the AAP and farmers for crop stubble burning, saying the governments of Delhi and Punjab were doing everything possible to control the pollution. According to Punjab government officials, the Centre rejected a proposal to provide financial incentive to farmers to stop them from burning crop stubble.

Doctors against open-air 'Dili ki Yogshala'

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

With Delhi-NCR becoming a gas chamber due to the steep spike in pollution levels, doctors have warned that the resumption of yoga in the open parks by the AAP-led Delhi Government under its 'Dili ki Yogshala' program will have adverse health impacts.

On Thursday, the State Government, without waiting for approval from Lieutenant-Governor VK Saxena kicked off the second phase of the Yogshala which, it said, has become popular among the Delhiites.

However, health experts feel otherwise. They pointed out that PM-2.5 laden weather will do more harm than ensuring yoga benefits. The Air Quality Index (AQI) in the city on Thursday slipped to 450, under the 'severe' category, as per the bulletin released by the Central Pollution Control

Board (CPCB). Dr. Jugal Kishore, Head of the Community Medicine Department, Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi, said that people should avoid activities like yoga and running in the morning till the pollution level in the Capital becomes breathable.

"These activities will prove very harmful for the health in the morning, as the air pollution level is at its peak during the period," Dr Kishore said.

"The people who want to do yoga can perform it indoors as the pollution level is less compared to the outdoor, and Yoga such as anulom-vilom (breathing exercise) should strictly avoid it, when indoors also," Dr Kishore added.

The pollution is also like a poison to those suffering with asthma, children and pregnant women, he said. However, on the first day of the yoga classes, many citizens even aged above 50 years, claimed that the



classes have helped them in several ways to stay fit. Hemant Gupta, age 62, performing Yoga at the park in Mayur Vihar phase I, said that they started doing yoga the past month, and to learn the asana's (exercises) they have joined the classes.

"The classes are helping us learn the exercises properly from the trained professionals as yoga is a very important aspect for a person in order to maintain physical and mental fitness," Gupta said. Bharti

Garg, (52), another yoga enthusiast, said that the "classes are really helping me to improve my health."

After the COVID-19 pandemic, I have started facing several health complications such as diabetes, and BP problem, due to which I started coming to attend classes and my health condition is now improving." "I think that as food is necessary for life, in the same way yoga is also necessary for a person to lead a healthy and fit life," Garg added.

Amit Malviya hits out at Kejriwal on rising cases of farm fires in AAP States

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the Air Quality Index (AQI) turned to severe in Delhi-NCR, the BJP on Thursday intensified its attack the Arvind Kejriwal whose AAP is in power in Delhi and Punjab, over stubble burning, which is considered one of the reasons for the bad AQI.

BJP IT-cell head Amit Malviya also hit out at Kejriwal by sharing an old video of the Delhi Chief Minister on stubble burning. In the video, Kejriwal can be seen saying the bio-composing solution developed by the Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Pusa and referred to as the "Pusa Decomposer" has proved to be a success in addressing all the problem of stubble burning.

He also urged other states like Punjab and Haryana to implement it and hoped that "this is the last year when we have to suffer from (air) pollution".



In a series of tweets, Malviya said, "When will Mann give a timeline to Kejriwal? Farm fires in Punjab have shot up by 33%. Sangrur has seen 139% jump. Center's 492 crore to Punjab remains unutilised, over 11,000 machines have gone missing. Haryana, at the same time, reduced fires by 33%. What is Kejriwal's excuse?"

In another tweet, the BJP leader said that Kejriwal had all the solutions to fight pollution when his party was not in power in Punjab. "Why hasn't he done even 1 per cent of what he was preaching from the pulpit?"

Noida-Gr Noida schools go online; Delhi nixes outdoor activities for kids

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi-NCR reels under a thick layer of smog, schools have taken several measures to protect children, including suspension of outdoor activities and introduction of breathing exercises in classes. All schools in Noida and Greater Noida were on Thursday asked to hold classes online for students up to Class 8 till Tuesday amid alarming levels of pollution in Delhi-NCR, according to an official order.

The schools have also been told to hold classes for students of Class 9 to 12 online as far as possible, said the order issued by Gautam Buddh Nagar's District Inspector of Schools (DIOS) Dharmveer Singh.

However, in Delhi, many schools have ruled out shutdown, saying it will disturb the pace of academic learning. But

several parents in Delhi-NCR have supported the proposal to shut down schools while others have opposed the idea fearing another hit to studies already impacted by the Covid pandemic.

Some parents have also urged the Delhi Government to extend the school timings in view of the pollution.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) had Wednesday asked the Delhi government to shut schools till air quality in the capital improves.

Delhi-NCR's air quality continued to be in the 'severe' category on Thursday, according to Central Pollution Control Board data. Sangeeta Hajela, Principal, DPS Indirapuram, said, "Shutting down schools would disturb the pace of students' academic learning, especially as Board exams are just 5 months away."

AAP Min Anand takes oath of office

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party MLA Raaj Kumar Anand was on Thursday administered oath as a Minister in the Delhi Government by Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena in a ceremony at Raj Niwas. Anand took the oath in presence of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar.

"Administered the oath of office and secrecy to Raaj Kumar Anand as minister in GNCTD. I convey my best wishes to him and hope that he will work for the betterment of Delhi and its People," Saxena

tweeted after the oath ceremony. Congratulating the newly-elected minister, Kejriwal tweeted, "Many congratulations and best wishes for the new responsibility Raaj Kumar ji. Serve the Delhi people with complete hard work and honesty."

Anand took charge of his office at Delhi secretariat and thanked the chief minister for being given the responsibility. The Patel Nagar MLA was inducted into his Council of Ministers by Kejriwal after Rajendra Pal Gautam's resignation. Gautam who held charge of social welfare minister resigned last month from



the post after he was embroiled in a controversy over his presence in a religious conversion programme.

20,000 schools shut in India during 2020-21: MoE report

Gross enrolment ratio saw an increase in 2021-22 as compared to 2020-21, reveals report of Ministry of Education

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Despite the Centre making all round efforts for augmentation of primary and secondary education, more than 20,000 schools were shut down across the country during 2020-21 while the number of teachers too declined by 1.95 per cent in comparison to the previous year.

But, simultaneously, according to the new report by the Ministry of Education, the gross enrolment ratio across primary, upper primary and higher secondary school education levels in the country saw an increase in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21 despite a



drop in admissions in pre-primary sections due to Covid-19. The ratio compares the enrolment at a specific level of education to the population of the age-group that is most age-appropriate for that level.

The number of schools in 2021-22 was 14.89 lakh as compared to 15.09 lakh in

2020-21. The decline is mainly due to closure of private and other management schools and grouping and clustering of schools by various states, the report stated. According to the MoE commissioned Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE+) report In 2021-22, enrolment of

students in school education from primary to higher secondary was around 25.57 crore. This is higher by 19.36 lakh as compared to the enrolment of students in 2020-21, the report said.

Detailing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on enrolment, the report said, "Although the impact of Covid-19 is cross-cutting, this is particularly noticed in the enrolment of young and vulnerable kids like pre-primary classes. This decline may be attributed to postponement of admissions due to Covid-19".

According to the report, the total number of teachers also declined by 1.95 per cent in 2021-22 compared to 2020-21. The total number of teachers in 2021-22 was 95.07 lakh, decreasing from 97.87 lakh in 2020-21, it said. "The percentage of teachers teaching only primary (34.4 pc in 2021-22 from 35.4m pc in 2020-21) and

only upper primary (18.9 pc in 2021-22 from 21.5 pc in 2020-21) has reduced. The decrease in teachers during 2021-22 as against previous year was 0.9 pc in government schools, 1.45 pc in government aided schools, 2.94 pc in private schools and 8.3 pc in other schools, it said.

In UDISE+ 2021-22, additional data on important indicators such as digital library, peer learning, hard spot identification, number of books available in school library, etc have been collected for the first time to align with the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020 initiatives.

The UDISE+ report 22 also pointed out that only 44.85 per cent schools had computer facilities while nearly 34 per cent had internet connection. "Total number of schools in 2021-22 stood at 14.89 lakhs as compared to 15.09 lakhs in 2020-21. The decline in total schools is main-

ly due to closure of schools under private and other management," said the report launched on Thursday.

While only 27 per cent schools have special toilets for children with special needs (CSWN), over 49 per cent of them have ramps with handrails, it said.

The report further highlighted six states and one Union territory have attained the best rating of Level 2 (L2) in the Union education ministry's Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2020-21, a unique index for evidence-based comprehensive analysis of the school education system.

No state, however, has been able to attain the highest level of L1 so far. The seven states/UTs which have received L2 are Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Chandigarh, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Gujarat, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh are the

new entrants to L2 level.

The newly formed UT, Ladakh has made significant improvement in PGI from Level 8 to Level 4 in 2020-21 or improved its score by 299 points in 2020-21 as compared to 2019-20, resulting in highest ever improvement in a single year. The UDISE+ stated that the total students enrolled in schools from primary to higher secondary was 25.57 crore as compared to 25.38 crore in 2020-21.

The enrolment of students in pre-primary to higher secondary increased by 7.85 lakh in 2021-22 as compared to 2020-21, it stated, adding that enrolment, however, in pre-primary sections of schools dropped by 11.5 lakh.

Though the impact of the pandemic is at all levels, "this is particularly noticed in the enrolment of young and vulnerable kids like pre-primary classes may be attributed to

postponement of admissions due to Covid-19", the report stated. "Notably, GER (gross enrolment ratio) in higher secondary has made significant improvement from 53.8 per cent in 2021-21 to 57.6 per cent in 2021-22," it stated.

Enrolment of children with special needs in 2021-22 was 22.67 lakh as compared to 21.91 lakh in 2020-21, an improvement of 3.45 per cent. The report also stated that 95.07 lakh teachers were engaged in school education in 2021-22, out of which over 51 per cent were women.

"In 2021-22, the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) was 26 for primary, 19 for upper primary, 18 for secondary and 27 for higher secondary, showing an improvement since 2018-19. The PTR for primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary was 28, 19, 21 and 30, respectively, during 2018-19," the report stated.

Karan Singh's article irks Cong

This is the same Nehru without whose support Dr Karan Singh wouldn't have achieved much, retorts Jairam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



grand old party, Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh on Thursday criticized his senior for 'sidestepping' Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's 'hit job' on Jawaharlal Nehru's role in Jammu and Kashmir's accession to India.

Ramesh said Singh had defended his father and erstwhile ruler Hari Singh. "There is not a single scholarly and

serious work on J&K that portrays Maharaja Hari Singh in good light. Even this authoritative work by VP Menon doesn't make Hari Singh a wronged man. It is hence natural that his son Dr. Karan Singh defends him in the article," Ramesh said, sharing the screenshot of the cover of a book by Menon, on social media.

"What I find surprising though is that Dr. Karan Singh has sidestepped Rijiju's hit job on Nehru. This is the same Nehru without whose support Dr. Karan Singh wouldn't have achieved much, as he acknowledges in his 2006 book with 216 letters exchanged between them during 1948-64," he said.

This is the same Nehru to whom Karan Singh dedicated his book on Aurobindo in May

1962, and for which the country's first PM wrote a wonderful foreword, he added.

Jammu and Kashmir's accession came into focus with Rijiju writing an article for a portal citing 'five Nehruvian blunders', including floating the idea of a plebiscite and terming Jammu and Kashmir's accession provisional.

The minister had said it was important to realise past mistakes to build a new future and added he has not tweaked history but stated facts to set the record straight.

The Congress had demanded an apology from Rijiju over his criticism of Nehru's handling of the Kashmir issue and asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to rein in ministers from making "irresponsible statements".

Health Min sets up panel for 'National Drugs Database'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry is all set to prepare a comprehensive 'National Drugs Database' of drug formulations manufactured and marketed in the country. The aim is to enhance regulatory oversight of medical products to ensure their quality and bring uniformity to drug regulatory mechanisms across the country.

In this regard, the Ministry has set up a seven-member panel comprising Dr HG Koshia, Commissioner, Food and Drugs Control Administration, Gujarat; AK Pradhan, Joint Drugs Controller, CDSCO; Dr Pooja

Gupta, Additional Professor, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi; Dr Jerian Jose, Scientist D, Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi; DR Gahane, Joint Commissioner, Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra; BT Khanapure, State Drugs Controller, Karnataka and Navneet Marwaha, State Drugs Controller, Himachal Pradesh.

Pradhan will be the convener of the panel, said an official from the Ministry. The panel will submit its recommendation including the 'National Drugs Database' of the drug formulations in three months to the Ministry. The committee will examine the existing database available with various authorities like

state/Union territory drug control departments, Central Drugs Standard Control Organization, various manufacturers, marketers, importers.

Further, the committee will give recommendations and come out with a comprehensive "National Drugs Database" of drug formulations produced and marketed in the country.

The database will provide detailed information on the drug, its dosage form, strength, details of manufacturer, marketer, importer etc. which is crucial for not only empowering consumers but also for improving the monitoring mechanism for quality of drugs in circulation, across the country and uniform administration of the regulatory system, etc.

Neither Govts nor people serious about air pollution, tweets Varun Gandhi



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Describing the pollution situation in the National Capital Region of Delhi as "turning diabolical", BJP MP Varun Gandhi on Thursday said "neither the government nor the people" are "serious" about a resolution to the issue.

"Delhi NCR dhua-dhua hain...." said the MP from Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh, in his tweet in Hindi maintaining that most of the families he knew reported some one or the else suffering from the problems of "breathing, lung, cough and a kind of seizure".

"Kahin parali, kahin patakhe, apno ko hi zeher parosana band kariye..", he said, asking the two governments in Delhi not to "serve poison to your own loved-ones".

With the air quality deteriorating, the BJP and the AAP, which is in power in Delhi and Punjab where incidents of stubble burning have shot up, have blamed each other for the annual crisis.

Varun questioned the lack of "concern and coordination" among multiple government agencies in tackling the crisis.

Neither government nor people are serious about this monstrous problem, he said in tweets, saying that hospitals are full of patients with breathing, heart and lung problems.

"Eight out of 10 children in Delhi-NCR have respiratory problems. After years of discussions, why is there a continuing lack of concern/coordination between multiple government entities," the BJP MP asked.

Varun wondered if the cost of solving the problem is higher than lifetime respiratory care for 46 million people.

IN SHORTS

SC CALLS 2020 PLEA AS INFRACTUOUS

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday termed as "infructuous" a 2020 plea that had sought uniform education policy for children of migrant workers to avoid discrimination and digital divide during the coronavirus pandemic.

SC ASKS AIIMS TO EXAMINE DHFL CMD

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the director of the AIIMS Delhi to constitute a team of doctors and carry out health evaluation of former Dewan Housing Finance Ltd (DHFL) CMD Kapil Wadhawan, who has been accused of money laundering in the multi-crore Yes Bank fraud case. The top court said it will hear the matter on November 10.

ARMY GIFTS 4 SNIFFER DOGS TO CAMBODIA

New Delhi: The Indian Army has gifted four explosive detection dogs to the Royal Cambodia Armed Forces (RCAF) in reflection of growing cooperation between the two sides, military officials said on Thursday. The dogs were transported from New Delhi to Phnom Penh in a civilian flight on October 24.

3 OFFICERS ARRESTED IN BRIBERY IN MP

New Delhi: The CBI on Thursday said it has arrested two assistant garrison engineers (AGE) and a Junior Administrative Assistant working in the office of Garrison Engineer (MES), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) in an alleged bribery of Rs 1,10,000.

INDIA VOICES CONCERN OVER KHALISTAN 'REFERENDUM'

New Delhi: India on Thursday reiterated its concern over certain forces planning a so-called referendum in Canada on their demand for Khalistan and called upon that country to prevent anti-India activities by individuals and groups based there. It also urged Canada to designate as terrorists under its laws those individuals and entities who have been declared as terrorists under Indian laws.

INDIA MAKING EFFORTS TO REPATRIATE OFFICERS

New Delhi: Amid reports that eight former Indian Navy officers have been detained in Qatar, the Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday said the Indian embassy there is making all possible efforts for the early release and repatriation of the detained nationals.

CBI raids 16 locations in connection with APPSC paper leak case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Thursday conducted searches at around 16 different places in Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh in an ongoing investigation of a case related to alleged leakage of question paper of the examination for post of Assistant Engineer (Civil) conducted by Arunachal Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC) on August 26 and 27.

"The searches resulted in recovery of incriminating documents/articles including fake/counterfeit stamps of executive magistrate of Arunachal Pradesh, Executive Engineer, State Bank of India, hard discs, pen drive etc.," the CBI said in a statement.

The CBI had registered a case on October 26 on the request of Arunachal Pradesh government and further notification from the Centre transferring the investigation of FIR No: 11/2022 dated September 27 (Vigilance) Police Station



corresponding to Itanagar Police Station Case No. 229 dated September 10.

The said case was registered against Akhilesh Yadav, a private person of Jeju Institute, Itanagar, Papum Pare City, Arunachal Pradesh and unknown officials of APPSC on complaint related to the allegations of leakage of question paper before written examination for recruitment to the post of Assistant Engineer (Civil).

The Complainant (a candidate) had alleged that the accused (a teacher of the institute) was in possession of questions for the said examination disclosing leakage of paper by him in connivance with unknown officials of APPSC.

Mallya's lawyer says he can't establish contact with Vijay; SC grants discharge from case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The lawyer of Vijay Mallya on Thursday told the Supreme Court that he was not receiving any communication from the fugitive businessman and sought to be discharged from the case as a counsel.

A Bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli allowed the discharge of advocate EC Agrawala from the case and asked him to furnish the e-mail ID of the liquor baron along with his present residential address in the United Kingdom to the apex court registry.

"Counsel seeking discharge the case because in spite of communication from his end, no instruction is forthcoming," the bench said and asked the lawyer to follow the process of discharge.

Agrawala told the top court, "I want to be discharged from this matter as I am not receiving any instructions from my client. I am not able to establish contact with him. He is incommunicado for a long time." The top court discharged



the lawyer from the two petitions filed by Mallya against the October 5, 2018 and September 13, 2019 orders of the Karnataka High Court directing him to pay Rs 3,101 crore to a consortium of banks.

In a separate case, on July 11, the top court had sentenced Mallya to four months in jail for contempt of court, and directed the Centre to secure the presence of the fugitive businessman who has been in the UK since 2016 to undergo the imprisonment.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with a young supporter during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', in Hyderabad on Wednesday PTI Photo

Security ensured for Swamy at pvt home, Centre tells Delhi HC

New Delhi: The Centre on Thursday told the Delhi High Court that adequate security arrangements have been made to ensure the safety of former BJP MP Subramanian Swamy at his private residence considering that he is a 'Z category' protectee.

Taking note of the Central Government's submission, Justice Yashwant Varma closed the proceedings in the application filed by Swamy in which he claimed that in spite of an earlier assurance, the Centre was yet to make adequate security arrangements at his private accommodation.

On Monday, the HC directed Government to submit a comprehensive affidavit on security provided. Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, representing the Centre, submitted that security agencies are satisfied that adequate arrangements have been made to safety of Swamy, considering that he is a 'Z category' protectee. **PNS**

Centre allocates four MBBS seats to kin of terror victims

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has allocated four MBBS seats to the wards of terror victims under the central pool for the academic year 2022-23. However, the wards have to clear the NEET-UG 2022 examination before claiming for the seat.

Under the scheme, one seat each in AN Magadh Medical College, Gaya in Bihar and Grant Medical College, Mumbai in Maharashtra and two seats in PT JNM Medical College, Raipur in Chhattisgarh has been kept aside for such potential beneficiaries.

In a letter written to the Chief Secretaries of the States, the Union Home Ministry, attaching the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has clarified that the selection will be made only on the basis of the NEET-UG 2022. The Ministry had made



similar request seeking application from the potential beneficiaries in 2021 also.

"No separate examination will be conducted and selection will be made only on the basis of marks obtained by the students in NEET and those possessing necessary educational qualifications," said an official from the Union Home Ministry.

Under this scheme, first priority will be given to those children whose both parents have been killed by the terrorists followed by children of the families whose sole bread earners has been killed by the ter-

rorists. The third priority will be given to wards of victims with permanently disability and serious injury caused by terrorist operations, said an official from the Ministry. The centre asked all Chief Secretaries of states and UT to give wide publicity while inviting applications from the eligible candidates for the academic session 2022-23.

The Ministry also directed the state governments to send the scan copies of application and other necessary documents, duly attested by the Home Department of the concerned state or UT to the CTCR division of the MHA latest by 15 November.

In 2020 too, the Union Home Ministry had sought applications from the spouses and children of victims of terror attacks who sought to pursue MBBS and BDS courses in medical and dental colleges under the central pool.

'Indians-Japanese have much in common, can work on SDGs'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As Japanese fans in India eagerly await the launch of the "Japan Music & Film Festival—the World of RAD-WIMPS and renowned filmmaker Makoto Shinkai" from Friday, Koji Sato, Director General, The Japan Foundation, Delhi, said that apart from music and films, the young generation from the two countries shares a lot in common and can work together in a more actual field of global interests such as Social Development Goals (SDGs) and social issues.

Talking to *The Pioneer* on the eve of the launch of the mega entertainment event, Sato said that beyond intellectual discourse, business trade and diplomatic ties, Japanese contemporary music and films, particularly anime and tradition, are finding huge popu-



Koji Sato, Director General, The Japan Foundation, Delhi

larity in India, especially among urbanites and youth who consider it 'exciting' and 'trendy'.

"India-Japan ties go back to the 6th century when Buddhism was first introduced in Japan and since then, the two countries have shared a close deep relationship, encompassing not just trade and economic ties but also cultural exchange. Leading Indian intellectuals such as the Nobel-laureate

writer Rabindranath Tagore maintained extensive contacts with Japanese intellectuals. This year, as we celebrate the 70th year of friendship between India and Japan, a string of cultural events and meetings has been organized," he said.

The PVRs in the four metros of Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Bengaluru from November 4 to December 11 will host the fest. The DG said that apart from music and films, more areas in the field of creativity can be explored where the young generation can work together. IT skills and startups too could be other areas of collaboration, he added.

"Back home, there has been growing interest in Indian culture, particularly films. We hope for more such productive production in the near future," he said referring to the recent release of Ram Charan and Jr NTR starrer RRR which has received rave reviews.

Bypolls in 7 Assembly seats in 6 States peaceful

Voter turnout ranged from 32% in Andheri, to 77.55% in T's Munugode seat

PTI/PNS ■ NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

By-elections to seven Assembly constituencies spread across six States were held on Thursday with the voter turnout ranging from 31.74 per cent in Andheri (East) of Maharashtra to 77.55 per cent in Telangana's Munugode seat. Till last reports came in, the polling percentages in the five other seats were Mokama (53.45) and Gopalganj (51.48) of Bihar, Adampur (75.25) of Haryana, Gola Gokarannath (55.68) of Uttar Pradesh, and Dhamnagar (66.63) of Odisha. These figures are likely to change. Officials said the bypolls were by and large peaceful barring some minor incidents.

Among the seven seats where bypolls are being held, the BJP held three seats and the Congress two, while the Shiv Sena and the RJD had one each. The contest is symbolic of the fierce turf war between the BJP and the regional parties.

For the bypolls in Bihar, the main contest is between the BJP and the RJD, and the saffron party's main contenders in Haryana are the Congress,



INLD and the AAP. In Telangana, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha, the main contests are between the BJP and the TRS, SP and the BJD respectively.

The Munugode assembly bypoll recorded the highest turnout till 3 pm of 59.92 per cent, followed by Adampur with 55.12 per cent, Dhamnagar 52.13 per cent, Gola Gokarannath 44.05 per cent, Mokama 42.44 per cent, Gopalganj 42.65 per cent and the Andheri (East) seat with 22.85 per cent.

While a victory in the bypolls will be inconsequential to their position in the assemblies, the parties have not taken the contest lightly and carried out a high-pitched campaign.

The counting of votes will take place on November 6.

The BJP is seeking to retain the Gola Gokarannath seat in Uttar Pradesh and Dhamnagar in the BJD-ruled Odisha, banking on sympathy votes as it has fielded the sons of sitting MLAs whose death necessitated the bypolls.

The BJP and the ruling TRS had been campaigning aggressively in Munugode in

Telangana, where the Congress MLA had resigned and is fighting on the saffron party's ticket.

In Adampur, Haryana, the by-election was necessitated after former chief minister Bhajan Lal's younger son Kuldeep Bishnoi resigned as MLA from the seat and switched from the Congress to the BJP in August. Bishnoi's son Bhavya is now contesting as the BJP candidate.

The Congress, Indian National Lok Dal, and Aam Aadmi Party are among the key parties contesting the bypolls. The Congress has fielded former Union minister Jai Prakash, a three-time MP from Hisar and two-time MLA, as well.

The INLD picked Congress rebel Kurda Ram Nambardar as its candidate. The AAP has fielded Satender Singh, who switched over from the BJP.

Bihar will see the first electoral test for the Nitish Kumar-led 'Mahagathbandhan' government, formed less than three months ago after the JD(U) parted ways with the BJP.

Bypolls are being held in Mokama and Gopalganj seats in Bihar, earlier held by the RJD and the BJP respectively.

The BJP is contesting from the Mokama constituency for the first time as the saffron party had, on previous occasions, left the seat to its allies. Both the BJP and the RJD have fielded the wives of local musclemen in the bypolls.

BJP nominee Sonam Devi

is up against RJD's Neelam Devi, whose husband Anant Singh's disqualification has necessitated the by-election.

Mokama is the stronghold of Anant Singh since 2005. He won the seat twice on JD(U) tickets and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has appealed to voters to support him.

In Gopalganj, BJP has fielded Kusum Devi, the wife of deceased party MLA Subhash Singh. The RJD has fielded Mohan Gupta, while Indira Yadav, wife of Lalu Yadav's brother-in-law Sadhu Yadav, is contesting as Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) candidate.

Shiv Sena's Rutuja Latke is expected to comfortably win Andheri East Assembly constituency in Mumbai after the BJP withdrew from the contest which is the first after the recent split in the Shiv Sena following a rebellion by Eknath Shinde, who replaced Thackeray as the Maharashtra chief minister.

The NCP and Congress have supported her candidature.

The by-election was necessitated due to the death of Rutuja Latke's husband and Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Latke in May this year.

The Gola Gokarannath seat in Uttar Pradesh fell vacant after the death of BJP MLA Arvind Giri on September 6. With the BSP and the Congress keeping away from the bypolls, there seems to be a direct fight between the BJP and the Samajwadi Party.

EC makes provision for islanders to cast vote in shipping container in Guj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure maximum voter participation in the upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections, the Election Commission has made a provision for over 200 electors of an island off the State's coast to cast their vote in a shipping container, saving them a long journey to the nearest polling station in Bharuch district, Gujarat.

Similarly, a polling station will be set up for Baharatdas Darshandas at Banej, in Gir forest and a team will travel by boat to reach the polling station in Shiyabet on the island as it has no alternative connectivity to the mainland.

Addressing a press conference while announcing the Gujarat assembly poll dates, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said that the shipping container as a makeshift polling station will be set up at Aliabet in the Vagra assembly constituency of the district. The polling station will have basic facilities such as drinking water.

There was no government or semi-government facility available in the village which apparently made it difficult to set up a polling centre. "Our teams trek difficult terrains and

forests and travel by boat to reach polling stations set up in remote areas to ensure that no voter is left behind," Kumar said. Gujarat will go to polls in two phases on December 1 and 5 with the counting of votes on December 8 along with that of Himachal Pradesh.

For Shiyabet, a team will travel by boat to reach the polling station on the island as it has no alternative connectivity to the mainland. The nearest town is Jafrabad, around 15 kilometres away from the island, which has 4,757 voters.

In the Gir forest, a polling station will be set up for Baharatdas Darshandas at Banej. The polling station was set up for the lone voter there in the past too. Three polling stations are also being set up by Election Commission (EC) in Madhupur Jambur in Gir Somnath district for the Siddis.

Siddis, the EC said, are descendants of East African people who came to India during the 14th and 17th centuries and now reside here. Kumar said they are our proud voters. Out of 3,481 voters there, 90 per cent are from the Siddhi community. In a first, special observers are being deployed for accessibility and inclusion in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh.

MAMATA FEARS SAFFRON MISCHIEF POST BJP DEC DEADLINE

Wary of Nov-Dec mischief, Didi advises Mins, babus

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Bengal Government has gone on high alert close on the heels of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee warning her Cabinet Ministers and the State administration against some alleged "mischief" that Opposition BJP could carry out in the months of November and December.

Accordingly the Bengal Police have heightened vigilance throughout the State conducting among other things "Naka Checkings" for illegal entry of arms.

Banerjee had on Wednesday told her Cabinet colleagues against "BJP's nefarious designs" to create an atmosphere "conducive to untoward incidents in the months of November and December.

She reportedly told the ministers not to take the saffron outfit's warnings lightly and "keep a close eye on each and every development in your area and inform each and every suspicious development to the police."

She also asked the Chief Secretary to "heighten vigil throughout the State and conduct checkings" at police check points "to thwart any kind of



pre-planned mischief," sources said.

The Chief Minister's alert comes days after senior BJP leaders including Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari, Bengal BJP president Sukanta Majumdar and even junior Union Home Minister Nisith Pramanik iterating a similar tone that the TMC government would not survive beyond December.

"Come December and the Trinamool is Khatam (finished)," Adhikari told in a meeting. "This government has outlived its purpose ... it will not be allowed a longer lease of life ... after December this Government will not be there," he said.

Majumdar too said in a separate meeting that the cold December would see TMC shivering and would soon be relieved of all its pressures. "By the month of December when it is too cold the Trinamool

Congress will shiver ... I cannot reveal much ... wait and watch how things unfold in the coming days," the State BJP chief said.

Union Minister of State for Home Nisith Pramanik too said in a meeting that the TMC's days were numbered and that it would not survive beyond December because lot of drama would unfold by then.

Meanwhile, in a parallel development the convoy of Pramanik who is also the Member of Parliament from Coochbehar district in North Bengal was attacked by alleged TMC supporters.

The incident took place at Sitai block where the Minister had gone to join a programme. Stones were allegedly pelted on his vehicle, local police said adding the incident was soon brought under control.

Subsequently Pramanik said that some TMC supporters were trying to commit some mischief adding "the attack was instituted at the instance of Mamata Banerjee who has reportedly alerted her party men against the BJP and the TMC goons have reacted accordingly ... but they do not know the consequence of attacking me in Coochbehar."

KCR gives 'evidence' to back MLA poaching charges

Plays video footage in front of media on attempt by BJP to poach four TRS MLAs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD/NEW DELHI

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Thursday played out a five-minute video footage before the media as "evidence" to back his party MLAs charges of an alleged attempt by the BJP to poach four TRS legislators.

Claiming that he has more than an hour of footage of hidden cameras, he said the entire evidence has been sent to the Chief Justice of India for ordering a detailed investigation into the involvement of bigwigs in the covert operation to buy the TRS MLAs and the conspiracy to topple his government.

He launched a direct attack on the BJP as well as Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said that "Delhi brokers," tried to poach four of his party MLAs in October this year. He said the videos were evidence that the meeting at the farmhouse was a poaching operation as the brokers mentioned Union Home Minister Amit Shah "20 times", PM Modi "thrice" and the change in govern-



ment in Karnataka.

The evidence gathered in the case has already been submitted before the Telangana High Court and it will also be presented to all the other High Courts in the country besides the Chief Ministers of other states, he said.

The Cyberabad Police and Anti-Corruption Bureau have been probing the alleged attempt to offer bribe the MLAs to make them join the BJP, the CM said adding the Centre is conspiring to topple the TRS government.

A row erupted in Telangana last week, after four TRS MLAs Rega Kantha Rao, Guvvala Balaraju, Beeram Harshvardhan Reddy and Pilot Rohit Reddy said that the BJP tried to lure them to switch loyalties.

KCR attacked Modi and Home minister Amit Shah alleging that the saffron party was trying to pull down the

TRS government by luring its MLAs with offers of money and posts. The BJP denied the allegations and called it a drama scripted, directed and produced by KCR.

The Cyberabad police last week conducted raids at a farmhouse in Ranga Reddy district of Telangana, on the outskirts of Hyderabad, and detained three people for allegedly attempting to poach MLAs of the TRS with the promise of huge amounts of money.

Following a complaint of Rohith Reddy, an FIR was registered at the Moinabad Police Station. In the FIR, Reddy alleged that Ramachandra Bharati who came to Hyderabad from Delhi and Nanda Kumar of Hyderabad, both belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party had met him and offered him Rs 100 crore to join the BJP.

According to the FIR, Reddy also alleged that they were threatened that criminal cases will be foisted against him and raids by the Enforcement Directorate and the Central Bureau of Investigation if they did not join the BJP.

Infiltration bid foiled in Poonch

PNS ■ JAMMU

Alert troops of the Indian Army Thursday foiled an infiltration bid by neutralising an armed infiltrator along the line of control in the frontier district of Poonch.

This is the third incident

of infiltration bid in recent weeks. Two bids were earlier foiled in the North Kashmir district of Kupwara on October 26 and 31. The troops had neutralised one terrorist each while foiling both the infiltration bids.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles. VEHICLES FOR SALE

1) TATAMOTORS T1518FBGD REG. NO. HR3822646-YOM 2018 MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 793321

UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION" INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE/OFFLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 18.11.2022 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).

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Form No. 3 [See Regulation-15(1)(a)]/16(3) DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2) 1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also)

Case No.: OA/1564/2021 Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993 Exh. No.: 9067 ICICI BANK LIMITED VS. NIPUL BHARDWAJ

To, (1) NIPUL BHARDWAJ D/W/S/O. MR. SURESH BHARDWAJ, S/O. MR. SURESH BHARDWAJ, R/O. FLAT NO. WT-04-601, 6TH FLOOR, KINDCHANTS, SECTOR-112, GURGAON-122001, HARYANA. (2) MR. ACHLA BHARDWAJ W/O. MR. SURESH BHARDWAJ R/O. FLAT NO. WT 04-601, 6TH FLOOR, KINDCHANTS SECTOR 112, GURGAON, HARYANA Also At, RESPONDENT NO.1 TO 5, R/O. H. NO. C-2/7, JANAKPURI, NEW DELHI, DELHI (3) MRS. NIDHIE R/O. H NO C 2/7 JANAKPURI OPP HDFC BANK LTD., NEW DELHI, DELHI (4) M/S ABHISHEK TUBES LIMITED R/O. HOUSE NO. C-2/7, JANAKPURI, OPPOSITE HDFC BANK LIMITED, NEW DELHI - 110 058 THROUGH ITS AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY (CO APPLICANT) (5) M/S. PURE PALM LIMITED R/O. RISHI BHAVAN, 6-7, COMMUNITY CENTRE, PHASE-I, MAYAPURI, NEW DELHI- 110 064 THROUGH ITS AUTHORIZED SIGNATORY (CO APPLICANT) (6) M/S. DAKSH POWER AND INFRA PVT. LTD. R/O-A-24, SECTOR-51, NOIDA-201301 (U.P.) THROUGH ITS AUTHORIZED OFFICER. (BUILDER)

SUMMONS WHEREAS, OA/1564/2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 11.05.2022. WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs.2,33,35,681/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed). In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under: (i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted; (ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application; (iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties; (iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal; (v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 11/11/2022 at 10:30 A.M., failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date 13/05/2022. Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue Summons

Form No. 3 [See Regulation-15(1)(a)]/16(3) DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL CHANDIGARH (DRT 2) 1st Floor, SCO 33-34-35, Sector-17 A, Chandigarh (Additional space allotted on 3rd & 4th Floor also) Case No.: OA/103/2022 Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993 Exh. No.: 9459 ICICI BANK LIMITED VS. AMIT KATYAL

To, (1) AMIT KATYAL D/W/S/O. DEEPAK KATYAL, FLAT NO. F 392, GROUND FLOOR, FLORANCE RESIDENCY, SISHANT LOK II, GURUGRAM GURGAON, HARYANA- 121002 Also At, FLAT NO. 404, GODREJ WOODSMAN ESTATE, EBONY WING A, BELLARY ROAD, HEBBAL, BANGALORE, KARNATAKA Also At, VS 9, BUNGALOW NO. G GROUND FLOOR, TOWER VS 09, RISE SKY BUNGALOWS GH 02 SECTOR 41, VILLAGE SARAI KHAWAJA, FARIDABAD, HARYANA Also At, JURI MATRIX SERVICES INDIA PVT. LTD. C.4, ELM BUILDING, SELMEP HERBAL, RING ROAD, BANGALORE, KARNATAKA (2) RENU KATYAL W/O. SH. AMIT KATYAL FLAT NO. F 392, GROUND FLOOR, FLORANCE RESIDENCY, SISHANT LOK II, GURUGRAM GURGAON, HARYANA Also At, FLAT NO. 404, GODREJ WOODSMAN ESTATE, EBONY WING A, BELLARY ROAD, HEBBAL, BANGALORE, KARNATAKA Also At, VS 9, BUNGALOW NO. G GROUND FLOOR, TOWER VS 09, RISE SKY BUNGALOWS, GH 02, SECTOR 41, VILLAGE SARAI, KHAWAJA, FARIDABAD, HARYANA Also At, JURI MATRIX SERVICES INDIA PVT. LTD. C.4, ELM BUILDING, SELMEP HERBAL, RING ROAD, BANGALORE, KARNATAKA (3) M/S. RISE PROJECT PVT. LTD. REG. OFFICE AT 195, RAM VIHAR, DELHI, NEW DELHI Also At, ELEGANCE TOWER, UNIT NO. 409, 4TH FLOOR, JASOLA DISTT., CENTER NEW DELHI DELHI

SUMMONS WHEREAS, OA/103/2022 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer/Registrar on 20.05.2022. WHEREAS this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Application under section 19(4) of the Act, (OA) filed against you for recovery of debts of Rs.20694846.99/- (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed). In accordance with sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under: (i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons as to why relief prayed for should not be granted; (ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets specified by the applicant under serial number 3A of the original application; (iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties; (iv) you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/or other assets and properties specified or disclosed under serial number 3A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal; (v) you shall be liable to account for the sale proceeds realised by sale of secured assets or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposit such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets. You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before Registrar on 16/11/2022 at 10:30 A.M., failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence. Given under my hand and the seal of this Tribunal on this date 24/05/2022. Signature of the Officer Authorised to issue Summons

Kerala nixes decision to raise retirement age in PSUs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

M V Govindan, the new Secretary of the Kerala CPI(M) who was recently elevated to the elite polit bureau of the party cracked the whip on Thursday and made Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan withdraw the Government's decision to raise the superannuation age in public sector units in the State.

"It was a decision made in haste and there was no dis-

cussion in the party forum about the move to enact such a law. Hence the Government rescinded it," said Govindan to reporters at Thiruvananthapuram after a meeting with Vijayan.

This is the first incident of its kind in recent times in the CPI(M). Usually the party secretary and the Chief Minister function in unison but Govindan, who looked tense over the decision to increase the retirement age to 60 did not hide his displeasure. "We will probe how a

decision of this kind was made by the Government," said the lower primary school physical education teacher-turned-party secretary told reporters. The decision to increase the retirement age was publicized by Finance Minister K N Balagopal on October 31 based on the findings of a committee set up to rationalize the wage structure and functioning of the public sector units in the State.

There are one lakh employees in the 122 State government owned public

sector units in Kerala. But majority of them are facing severe financial crisis. It was at the intervention of the Kerala High Court the employees of the Kerala State Road Transport Corporation was paid a portion of salaries due to them.

The move was put on hold in the weekly Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday. The increase in pension age led to many organisations, especially the youth wing of the CPI(M) taking to the streets.

Director of Population First. The Function was held at the campus of Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MAANU), Hyderabad. Chief Guests of the function were Padma Shri Sunitha Krishnan, Sriram Haridas from UNFPA, Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commissioner and VC of MANUU Syed Ainul Hasan.

Laadli is a girl child campaign by Population First, a Mumbai-based NGO working on health, population and women's issues. The Laadli Media Awards is supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for their reports in the category of Gender Sensitivity.

Pioneer journalist wins Laadli Media Award

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A senior Journalist of *The Pioneer*, Biswajeet Banerjee, has won the prestigious 12th Edition of the Laadli Media Awards, supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), for his report in the category of Gender Sensitivity (Regional) 2022.

Banerjee, who is working as a Political Editor with the Lucknow edition of the *Pioneer*, won the award for best Feature in the English category for his write-up "Harvest of Hope" — which centers around Phula Devi and her band of rebels who chose to stay back in their village after corona pandemic. They started growing



vegetables and this was the beginning of their success story.

As many as 76 journalists, including bloggers, podcasters, and web-based journalists received the award. A total of 993 entries were received, marking a 14per cent rise in applications, said Dr. A L Sharda,

Rare occurrence

In Telangana’s Khammam, parents allegedly paid contract killers to get rid of their alcoholic son

Filicide,’ meaning a person who kills their child, is rarely used; for the occurrence is rare. There is even a saying in Hindi that a son can be a bad son (kapoot), but a mother cannot be bad (kumata). We are all familiar with patricide (killer of father), matricide (killer of mother), and parricide (killer of parents), but filicide rarely makes an appearance. It recently did in Telangana’s Khammam, where parents allegedly paid contract killers to get rid of their alcoholic son. A few aspects of the case make it very curious. First, it was a premeditated, carefully planned murder. A drunken person can create a lot of hell around him; they can drive everyone around them crazy. They can get violent, abusive, rude, obnoxious—and not just men. A recent video clip that went viral showed how an apparently drunk woman at Noida in Delhi’s vicinity hurled profanities at the security guards at a housing society. Even a decent person can get angry at the outbursts of a drunken person and attack them. In the instant case, however, the accused father happened to be a government school principal. In a country where teachers enjoy a reverential position (at least in theory), it is difficult to envisage a teacher hiring a hoodlum to knock off his own son. But that is what happened, according to the police. They have arrested Kshatriya Ram Singh and Rani Bai who have been remanded in judicial custody. Also in custody are four of the five alleged killers of Sai Ram.

The 26-year-old Sai Ram was a college dropout and without a job; he was strangled to death and his body dumped at Suryapet. In fact, it was his mother’s brother, Satyanarayana, who organised the murder. While more details of the case are awaited, it is quite clear that Sai Ram’s alcoholism and attendant issues transmogrified them to such an extent that his own parents decided to get rid of him—this despite the fact that he was their only son. What his parents and others allegedly did is unpardonable, but this case does make us ponder over the problems alcoholism can occasion. Unfortunately, it is not discussed as much as it deserves to be. Social and religious reform movements died in the last century with the advent of nationalism. The great leaders of the freedom movement assumed that national independence would take care of all the ills plaguing the nation; but that was not to be. From contemporary politicians, you are unlikely to expect anything other than the ‘remedy’ of prohibition—a remedy that is worse than the malady. The fact, however, is that addiction to alcohol, drugs, etc., is a complex issue; one cannot address it without involving a multi-pronged approach; the response has to be social, cultural, and political. But our political leaders are rarely interested in such real issues, busy as they are with peddling sentimentalism and populism.



Mamata Banerjee during 'Chenda Melam' performance at a function of Bengal Governor La Ganesan, in Chennai PTI

Delhi choking

As slugfest over Delhi pollution continues, Delhi’s toxic air is suffocating despite tall claims of AAP

Come November and Delhi’s air becomes toxic to a point that is not suited for humans to breathe. On Thursday Delhiites woke up to thick smog that covered the capital. It is not new for Delhi to have smog and they have become rather used to this annual routine pollution. Nonetheless, it has a severe impact on the health of the people, especially the vulnerable. The Delhi hospitals saw a surge in asthma and lung-related disorders in large numbers and there seems to be no respite soon. The AQI for Delhi on Thursday has already crossed the 300 mark. After years of efforts and lip service, there is no let-up, and Air Quality Index (AQI) hovers in a hazardous zone in Delhi NCR. This time NOIDA is the worst hit where AQI touched 469, in the “severe” category. Just three weeks back the Delhi AQI was 44, but after Diwali (though mild this year) it kept going up to touch the severe category. The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) has predicted that air quality will severely decline in the Delhi-NCR region in the coming days when temperatures drop further. This is just the beginning of November and Air Quality Index (AQI) in Gurugram was 318 and 333 near Delhi Airport on Thursday. According to the authentic data collected by various organizations (SAFAR, CSE), stubble burning accounts for one-third of the total PM 2.5 pollution in the capital, followed by vehicular pollution which has a share of 17 per cent in polluting Delhi air. These are followed by various other pollution sources such as household pollution (residential) at 13 per cent, industrial pollution at 11 per cent, construction at 7 per cent, waste burning at 5 per cent each, and road dust and other sources at 4 per cent. Over the years this pattern has been consistent. Though AAP experimented with a few steps including odd-even cars on roads, closing down offices, etc that had a marginal effect on pollution. The BJP is training guns on AAP as now they have Punjab too. AAP is on the blackfoot. Kejriwal has announced a ban on construction activities in the national capital. The spray of a Bio-decomposer is by far the best way to get rid of stubble but its implementation has been rather lackluster even though there is no paucity of funds. There has to be political will to do so. Thus till bio decomposer are made available to the farmers across Haryana and Punjab and, no big change can be expected.

Retrieve PoJK for its people’s sake

Retrieving Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir(PoJK) would be a great service to its people who live in subhuman conditions

Addressing the Infantry Day function in Srinagar on 27th October, Defence Minister Raj Nath Singh said that India is committed to implementing the 1994 resolution passed by Parliament about the retrieval of Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir(PoJK) under illegal occupation of Pakistan. He pointed out that the Pakistani government is sowing seeds of hatred in PoJK and the time is not far when people will resort to mass rebellion there.

These illegally occupied areas of the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir comprise about thirty-five per cent of its total area. By virtue of the accession of the ruler of the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir Maharaja Hari Singh to India in 1947, the sovereignty of the whole erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir lies wholly and solely with India.

Steeped in abject poverty and backwardness, this illegally occupied area is still considered to be the most neglected area in the whole of South Asia. Despite violent protests by people at every stage, Pakistan has illegally, forcefully and through underhand means changed the frontiers and composition of these areas beyond recognition. After illegally occupying the areas following aggression on the then princely state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947, Pakistan established an administrative structure in the occupied area named as Azad Jammu and Kashmir government. Even with a nominal legislature, the government there continues to be under strict control of the Pakistan government.

During the late seventies of last century, Pakistan started to take steps to bifurcate the subsequently extended occupied areas into two parts, one it had already named as Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the other as Northern Areas comprising Gilgit-Baltistan, which it had deemed to be a separate geographical entity to be administered federally by Pakistan. The Northern Areas are mostly inhabited by Shia Muslims and Pakistan



also initiated steps for demographic change in the area. This resulted in violent protests by the people. Even the so-called Azad Jammu and Kashmir governments too protested tooth and nail against this bifurcation and also instituted a suit in its court. But so great was Pakistan’s urge to keep the fruits of aggression and to extend the borders of Pakistan illegally that it ignored all opposition and continued to resort to illegal means including torture to make it a federally administered area with nomenclature as Northern Areas.

Earlier too in utter disregard for the law and territorial integrity and sovereignty of India, Pakistan had ceded Shakasgam track territory in this illegally occupied Northern area to China when the Sino-Pak Frontier agreement was signed in 1963. It has also since annexed Chitral, Hunza, and Nagar and other territories in or around Northern Areas including Punial, Ishkoman, and Yasin which formed a part of the then princely State of Jammu and Kashmir or were under its suzerainty at the time of its accession to India in 1947.

Pakistan again changed the status of Northern Areas on the twenty-first of May in 2018 when it promulgated



THE NORTHERN AREAS ARE MOSTLY INHABITED BY SHIA MUSLIMS AND PAKISTAN ALSO INITIATED STEPS FOR DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE IN THE AREA. THIS RESULTED IN VIOLENT PROTESTS BY THE PEOPLE.

Gilgit Baltistan Order replacing its earlier Gilgit-Baltistan empowerment and self-government order of 2009. Under the new Order, all powers exercised by Gilgit-Baltistan Council were given to Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly. But the Council was retained as an advisory body for federal functions in the Northern Areas. Thus legislative powers on key subjects are vested in the Prime Minister of Pakistan and not in the elected Assembly. There were protests against this order not only in the area but at many places in Pakistan also. This reform package was seen as a precursor to attempts by Pakistan to make this area its fifth province as also to change its demographic composition.

This perception was confirmed when in 2020 the then-Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan announced provisional provincial status for the territory. Again in violation of international law and the sovereignty of India and amid strong protests by people in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan permitted China to run China Pakistan Economic Corridor Project which passes through this Gilgit-Baltistan territory. Even the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific in its report in May 2017 stated that the CPEC Project

could create geo-political tensions with India and lead to further instability in the region. Though reportedly prepared at the request of the Chinese government, the report also pointed out concerns about its social and environmental safeguards. The provision of proposed provincial status to Northern Areas by Pakistan appears to be an attempt to lend legal cover to the much-criticized CPEC Project which runs through Gilgit Baltistan, an Indian territory.

India has already strongly protested against this yet another severe illegality of Pakistan. The Defence Minister of India has now made it clear that India is committed to retrieving these illegally occupied areas of India. If Pakistan still chooses to continue to hold on illegally to these areas of Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh it will mean continued violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India. This will lead to more instability in the region. For overall development, India desires peace with Pakistan, but Pakistan’s action could lead to one more war over Jammu and Kashmir which could be far more dangerous.

(The writer is a former IIS officer/credited freelance journalist/producer. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VACCINATIONS A MUST FOR DOGS

Sir — Just like humans, dogs require vaccinations to keep healthy and prevent sickness. Dog vaccinations are an essential component of providing better care for one’s so-called furry pet. Therefore, it is important for every pet owner to be aware of dog vaccinations and to vaccinate their pets. Avoidance is preferable to cure. As to veterinary science, some vaccines can prevent diseases in dogs that have been tested and are readily available. Because their immune systems are still developing when the dogs are still puppies, they are more prone to infections. It is therefore advisable to begin immunizing them when they are in their infancy stage. Additional antibodies that aid in preventing disease will be produced as a result of vaccinations.


There must be a full immunization cycle. As per the Veterinarian, unvaccinated domestic dogs are more likely to infect both humans and other dogs with diseases than those who have received vaccinations. Unvaccinated dogs can infect their owners’ family members, particularly young children. Unvaccinated dogs are a major source of human disease transmission, including rabies, parvovirus, parainfluenza, giardia, hepatitis, kennel cough, and leptospirosis. Veterinarians advise that if faves aren’t vaccinated, it could lead to Fever, languor, loss of appetite, swelling around the face or paws, hives, puking, diarrhea, pain at the injection point, and in rare cases, anaphylactic shock many of the side goods. One has to look out for any of the signs that beteg concern and take a tamed canine to the veterinarian for consultation. So thus our central animal husbandry ministry should make the vaccination of tykes obligatory.

Vijay Kumar H K | Raichur

THE BRIDGE COLLAPSE AT MORBI

Sir — Apropos, ‘Safety Abridge’ (Nov 3). More than 100 people have died after a British-era bridge in Gujarat’s Morbi collapsed last evening. Eyewitnesses say there were several women and children on the nearly 150-year-old bridge when cables supporting it snapped, sending scores of

Gujarat elections



The Election Commission has announced the voting for Assembly elections in Gujarat which will be held in two phases on December 1 and December 5 while the counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. The term of the Gujarat 182-member state Assembly ends on February 18, 2023. With the announcement of the polling schedule, the

Model Code of Conduct has come into effect in the state with immediate effect, and any violation amounts to strong legal action. Gujarat has a 182-member assembly and the BJP won 99 seats in the last polls, while the Congress put up a spirited fight by bagging 77 seats. In percentage terms, the BJP polled 49.05 per cent of the valid votes, while Congress polled 42.97 per cent. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has trained its sights on Gujarat and has already entered the election mode. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has made several trips to Gujarat in his bid to make inroads for the AAP in the state after a successful foray in Punjab. Also, these elections along with a few more in other states in 2023 are being seen as crucial in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha elections when it will be the real test for the BJP.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

people tumbling into the river below. The bridge which was capable of holding the weight of 125 people was burdened almost quadruple times its capacity. Visuals have been circulated on social media of people jumping on the bridge and trying to sway it from one way to the other. The question is who is to be blamed for the mishap. The government opened the bridge after the renovation with no proof of security or the reckless citizens who always try to misuse the facilities provided by the government. A high-level review meeting is the need of the hour to bring the corrective measures in effect.

Tashi Baheti | Ujjain

TURMOIL IN RAJASTHAN CONGRESS

Sir — On the face of it, the internal upheaval in the grand old party is far from over given that former Rajasthan Dy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot has renewed his attack on his bete noire colleague and Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot by asking the new party chief Mallikarjun Kharge to take a call on the notices served upon the three leaders who in a show of strength for Mr Gehlot had boycotted a

CLP meeting in September that could otherwise have cleared the desk for his own Chief Ministership in State. Mr Pilot’s demand in the name of disciple stands justified notwithstanding, its implementation might boomerang on the Congress’ public image amelioration flowing from its Rahul-led ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’-in view of the significant public response it has been receiving everywhere. At this crucial juncture, when the election watchdog has already announced assembly polls in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, any disciplinary action against the party leaders will simply rouse bad blood among them and thereby will hurt the party’s electoral prospects ahead of the much-hyped 2024 Lok Sabha polls and throw water on all the hopes pinned on the much-vaunted ongoing 3750 km long padayatra across 12 states and 2 UTIs spanning over 150 days. After all, the final call is the new party chief’s prerogative anyway.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I won’t comment on it as people’s lives are more important than politics. I express my condolences. Many have died and many are still missing. A judicial commission should be made under the SC to probe the Morbi incident.

Bengal CM
—Mamata Banerjee



To all complainers, please continue complaining, but (blue tick) it will cost \$8.

Tesla CEO
—Elon Musk



When it came to my brothers, I pulled all stops and in fact went overboard in launching Anil and Sanjay in the 80s and 90s respectively.

Producer
—Boney Kapoor





We asked him (Arshdeep) to do the death overs for us. For a young guy to come and do that kind of a job is not easy, we’ve prepared him.

Indian skipper
—Rohit Sharma



Construction activities have been stopped across Delhi in view of pollution. I have directed Labour Minister, Manish Sisodia, to give ₹5000 pm as financial support to each construction worker during this period

Delhi CM
—Arvind Kejriwal



FIRST COLUMN

DECOUPLING CHINA FROM THE WORLD

US is trying to do that because of China's aggressive approach



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

As India takes over the G20 Presidency for a year, its foreign policy arm is getting complimented from across the world and gaining a currency of its own. Last week Russian President Vladimir Putin praised India for pursuing an independent foreign policy despite external pressures.

This comes at a time when India has carefully negotiated the diplomatic tightrope in the face of one of the worst wars humanity has seen in recent times in Ukraine. India has been a traditional ally of Russia since the Soviet times and, therefore, depends on the Eurasian giant for its weapons and now the spares. Western allies except for France have chosen to keep India out of major arms deals, instead, focussed more on strengthening India's rival Pakistan (which also happens to be the significant ally of NATO in Asia).

However, India has chosen a unique diplomatic trope while dealing with Russia or voting in the UN on matters related to Ukraine. First it has not stopped any import of Russian oil despite facing severe criticism from US and western nations. India has stood her ground on using every multilateral, plurilateral or bilateral forum to put the need of its citizens for access to affordable energy prices first, before ganging up with a group to teach the bad guy a lesson. This steadfast attitude has finally been accepted by almost all parties (impacted, victim or aggressor), that domestic considerations are far more important than choosing sides in a war.



It is also to India's credit that it managed to state the facts in a language understood by global leaders and international press that, despite increasing import of Russian oil, (India is still not the largest consumer of energy products from Russia, but Europe is), it has spared Russia any criticism. Its criticism of Russian actions in Ukraine has grown sharper and shriller in the past 10 months of the war.

Meanwhile, the UAE and Pakistan politicians and ministers have also spoken about India's pursuit of an independent foreign policy, putting the needs of its citizens first. The reason Pakistan ex-prime minister Imran Khan chose to praise India may not be the same as the UAE, but the admission makes it abundantly clear that the India way of diplomacy has found resonance.

This also comes at a time when the US has reluctantly acknowledged that days of unilateral action in world affairs are over and it would need a credible, preferably democratic bunch of like-minded partners to pursue its regional and global interests. In comes the US' National security strategy which identifies the Indo Pacific as the central point of geo political influence. It identifies that the economic prosperity, and security architecture of the Indo Pacific have the potential of impacting the wellbeing of every American citizen.

The US is desperately trying to decouple China from the global economy due to the latter's aggressive, non-transparent, no rules-based approach to reaching the top position of being a global superpower. In its pursuit, the US knows that there could be no better ally than the world's fifth largest economy, India. This special recognition for India in Washington's power corridors means creative solutions to include India in the western alliance of nations. India is closely engaged with the US, Japan and Australia on Indo Pacific strategic affairs through the QUAD. India and the US have also partnered for a new age technology and trade agreement through the Indo-Pacific Economic framework. Unlike the binding nature of earlier economic arrangements, IPEF offers members flexibility. All this points to a world where the peculiarities and nuances of a very India-focused and citizen-first diplomacy are gaining currency.

(The author is a foreign affairs commentator)

Slavery continues in India's brick kilns

Despite strict laws, men, women and children continue to be exploited in conditions reminiscent of the days of slavery



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

My father had taken a loan of Rs 7,000 from a *bhatta maalik* (brick kiln owner) around four decades ago for my grandfather's treatment. He could not survive but our whole family started working in his brick kilns as *bandhua mazdoor* (bonded labourers). My father died 15 years ago, but I am yet to repay that loan. I do not know how much loan is left, but the maalik (owner) says I will have to work for a couple of years more," said Sukhai Ram, Village Masauli, Barabanki, 30 km south-east of Lucknow, the state capital of north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.

Slavery is illegal and banned in India. There is a strict law to protect bonded labourers, but millions of men, women and children live and work in slave-like conditions — bonded labour, sex trafficking, child labour, domestic servitude and many other forms.

A global survey report says that 18 million people, which is 1.4 per cent of India's population, work as slaves in brick kilns, the carpet industry, glassware and bangle industry, besides children who work as domestic help or at roadside eating joints. However, several civil rights activists in India believe this number is just the tip of the iceberg.

The latest figure available from the Human Rights Commission shows over 14 million children living under slavery. "If one does an honest counting, this number would surely jump to twice that — perhaps closer to 30 million," said National Convener of People's Vigilance Committee on Human Rights (PVCHR), Lenin Raghuvanshi. "Men, women and children are forced to work as bonded labourers in brick kilns and the bangle industry," he added.

Surojeet Chatterjee of 'Save the Children' said that the number of working children between the age group of five and 14 years in Uttar Pradesh is 2.1 million. "This is the number which we know of, but the number of children working in rural areas or in those sectors where the reach of civil rights activists is almost negligible must be very high. The law says children should go to school and should get time to play. But this is not happening," she said.

The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act of 1976 outlaws all debt bondage, including that of children. In addition, under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), rape, extortion, causing grievous hurt, assault, kidnapping, abduction, wrongful confinement, buying or disposing of people as slaves, and unlawful compulsory labour are criminal offences, punishable with up to 10 years imprisonment and fines.

Under the Juvenile Justice Act, 1986, cruelty to juveniles and withholding the earnings of a minor are criminal offences, punishable with up to three years of



A GLOBAL SURVEY REPORT SAYS THAT 18 MILLION PEOPLE WORK AS SLAVES IN BRICK KILNS, THE CARPET INDUSTRY, GLASSWARE AND BANGLE INDUSTRY, BESIDES CHILDREN WHO WORK AS DOMESTIC HELP OR AT ROADSIDE EATING JOINTS

(The author is a senior journalist)



imprisonment and fines. "The laws are there but these are not implemented," said convener of the PVCHR Lenin Agnivesh.

Raghuvanshi believes bonded labour is a contemporary form of slavery. "If it is still existing, it is a clear reflection of the failure of the welfare state. The Government, which is supposed to provide them basic necessities, has failed them. As they are poor, they move out to eke out a living in cities and end up as bonded labourers in brick kilns and factories," he added.

The US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations in its report in 2016 had said that India has 12 to 14 million slaves, more than any country in the world. There are 27 million slaves in the world. How does a country like this have 12 to 14 million slaves in 2016.

The majority of these bonded labourers are migrant workers who shift from impoverished regions like Bundelkhand, Bihar and Jharkhand in search of work. In brick kilns, the entire family works as a team. "These migrant workers are allotted a piece of land by the owner where the workers have to dig the earth and then wet it with water to make the mud suitable for the moulding process. Generally, for moulding, the whole family is engaged, including young children," said Convener, Voice of People, Shruti Nagvanshi.

The labourers are paid Rs 200 for making 1,000 bricks, which are then sold in the market for Rs 7,000. These labourers are recruit-

ed by agents, who ask them to take their families along. "It is an attractive prospect where one is allowed to take his family with him. The labourer is promised accommodation and is often paid an advance — which is a veiled term for debt. Once he accepts the advance, he falls into the trap," she explained.

Studies carried out by different agencies also point to the alleged sexual exploitation of women in brick kilns. Radha (name changed) was lured from her village in Jharkhand on the pretext of a job by another woman and sold as a bonded labourer in a brick kiln at Jaunpur. She told human rights activists that she was raped daily by the brick kiln owner and was beaten up when she protested.

Young children are the worst sufferers though. They do not go to schools and instead help their parents arrange bricks for drying, and collect the broken and improperly moulded bricks. Once they get older, they are drawn into this trade having been trained from a young age.

Kamla, the mother of five, revealed how her two youngest children, Medhu (5) and Rani (3), used to cry for food. With barely Rs 200 she made for making 1,000 bricks, she didn't have enough to feed her family, and her daughter died of malnutrition before she could turn four.

Workers employed in brick kilns mostly belong to the Schedule Caste (SC), Schedule Tribe (ST) and minorities, which

are usually non-literate and non-numerate. They do not easily understand the arithmetic of loan/debt/advance, and documentary evidence remains with the creditor and its contents are never made known to them.

Shamshad Khan, secretary of Centre for Rural Education and Development Action (CREDA), which works in the carpet belt of Bhadohi in Uttar Pradesh, said that child labour might not be visible on the surface, but clandestinely it is still happening.

"Migrant workers from Bihar and Jharkhand are forced to live in closed sheds operated by carpet manufacturers. They come with their families and are not allowed to mingle with others," Khan revealed.

But in the bangle industry, slavery has been given a legalised shape. "A person is allowed to give a final shape to glass bangles at his home and is paid Rs 6 for 350 bangles. The entire family works for 12-14 hours a day to prepare 30 such lots. So, after a day's hard work, the person gets only Rs 180. He employs his children in this trade so that he can earn more. Gradually, the child who should go to school is sucked into this bangle-making business," said Dilip Sevarthi, National Convener, Campaign for Women and Child Rights.

He said bonded labour is the worst form of human rights violation and a contemporary form of slavery. It is a violation of the Right to life, Right to Equality and Right to Individual Dignity.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

ARVIND KEJRIWAL CAME INTO POLITICS WITH THE SUPPORT OF A SAINT LIKE ANNA HAZARE. THESE PEOPLE ARE CHEATING EVEN A THUG.
—BJP SPOKESPERSON SAMBIT PATRA



THE CONDITION OF BJP IN GUJARAT HAS BECOME SO BAD THAT IT HAS TO TAKE HELP OF THE BIGGEST THUG OF THE COUNTRY.
—DELHI CM ARVIND KEJRIWAL

Make Green choices for sustaining planet earth

As we enter the post-Covid era, we realise that good health of the planet is a non-negotiable aspect of our existence

Tackling harmful effects on the environment has become a prerequisite for human existence. Importance of good health and environment has become a priority in everyday life. Festivals should not be an opportunity to neglect our health and the wellbeing of the planet. This is the time to switch to sustainable lifestyle choices and focus on keeping our bodies as well as surroundings cleaner, greener and healthier.

It is no secret that Indian cities are the worst on the index of air pollution and Delhi is the harshest hit by the exhaust fumes, industrial emissions, fog, stubble burning and aftermath of crackers. Delhi's air quality index (AQI) enters the



KAMAL NARAYAN OMER

(The author is CEO, IHW Council)

'severe' zone every year during this changing season. Low temperature and fog further deteriorate the situation allowing the accumulation of pollutants and choking our cities.

According to the WHO, Delhi has the worst air quality among 1,600 cities around the world and it is extremely disturbing to note that the worst sufferers because of this toxic environment are school going children, who are still in the process of physical and mental growth. According to a survey conducted to study the impact of air pollution on the health of school kids in Indian cities, more than a third of school children in four big cities of India suffer from reduced lung capac-

ity, with Delhi showing the worst results.

While the immediate aftermath of exposure to pollution can trigger coughing, eye and throat irritation, skin allergies, cold and cough, exposure over a longer period of time is strongly associated with reduced lung function, asthma, heart diseases and lung cancer, chronic obstructive pulmonary. India also has the world's highest rate of death from respiratory disease, according to the World Health Organisation, with 159 deaths per 100,000 people in 2012, about five times that of the UK and twice that of China.

A safe and pollution free festive season will go a long way in keeping the air qual-

ity in check and will keep us away from lung disorders, asthma and allergies. Plastic items have taken the market by storm. These items are made of non-degradable plastic, which is an extensive source of land and water pollution. One should opt for bio-degradable substitutes sourced from local vendors for the sake of a greener and toxin free environment.

Gifts are the greatest gesture of showing gratitude to family members and loved ones and an inseparable part of celebrations. A thoughtful gift not only conveys our sentiments to the receiver but also makes our celebrations memorable and unforgettable. This festive year you can try to think dif-

ferent and be more imaginative as far as gifts are concerned.

Try giving the gift of good health to your near and dear ones. Indoor plants are another great gifting option as they add a positive vibe to the surroundings. Plants like Money Plant, Aloe Vera, Snake Plant, Christmas Cactus, Gerbera, Orchid, Philodendron, Peace Lily, Spider Plant, and English Ivy produce oxygen 24 hours so they will not only help one breathe easier but will also purify the air.

It is an instant era and we are tempted to buy and eat packaged - over-the-counter food and sweets. However, the truth is that packaged food may be convenient and time saving to

prepare, it can lead to several health problems. The loads of preservatives, saturated fats, added sugar and salt trigger a host of disorders like diabetes, Blood Pressure, Acid Reflux and inflammation.

According to a study involving more than 100,000 adults, eating 10 per cent more ultra-processed foods was associated with above a 10 per cent increase in the risks of cardiovascular disease, coronary heart disease, and cerebrovascular disorders.

Homemade sweets can also be a healthy gift for your friends. Better still if you have the time and inclination this season try indulging in creative customised cooking sessions

with your family and kids and instill in them a love for traditional and healthier sweets and dishes. Bonding over cooking sessions is a great way to spend quality time with your family and enjoying each other's company without the stress and hustle bustle of everyday life.

These small steps towards a healthier and sustainable lifestyle will surely do wonders for your and your family's health. The year is drawing to an end and we have seen the devastation caused by the pandemic during the last couple of years. As we enter the post-Covid era, we realise that good health of the planet is a non-negotiable aspect of our existence.

Ukraine: Russian shelling damaged nuclear plant power lines

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's nuclear operator said on Thursday that Russian shelling damaged power lines connecting Europe's largest nuclear power plant to the Ukrainian grid, leaving the plant again relying on emergency diesel generators.

As fighting in Ukraine has damaged power lines and electrical substations, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant has repeatedly operated on backup generators to cool the reactors and keep other safety systems running until regular power could be restored.

The generators have enough fuel to maintain the plant in southeastern Ukraine for just 15 days, state nuclear power company Energoatom said on its Telegram channel.

"The countdown has begun," Energoatom said, noting it had limited possibilities to

"maintain the ZNPP in a safe mode," raising fears of a potential nuclear disaster.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said on Thursday that the plant's latest switch to backup power further underlines "the extremely precarious nuclear safety and security situation at the facility and the urgent need to establish a protection zone around it."

The development "again demonstrates the plant's fragile and vulnerable situation," Rafael Grossi, the director general of the UN nuclear watchdog, said.

Relying on diesel generators "is clearly not a sustainable way to operate a major nuclear facility," Grossi added.

"Measures are needed to prevent a nuclear accident at the site. The establishment of a nuclear safety and security protection zone is urgently needed."

The plant's six reactors are not in operation during the war,



but outside electricity is needed to cool its spent fuel.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for months amid the war for shelling at and around the plant that the

International Atomic Energy Agency has warned could cause a radiation emergency.

Russian forces occupied the plant during the early days of the war that began when Russia

invaded Ukraine on February 24.

The plant is located in the Zaporizhzhia region, one of four Ukrainian provinces that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed last month.

Although Putin signed a decree transferring the nuclear plant to Russian ownership, Ukrainian workers continue to run the plant, and Ukrainian forces remain in control of parts of the the Zaporizhzhia region.

Energoatom has repeatedly called for the withdrawal of Russian forces from the plant and the creation of a demilitarised zone around it. Grossi has spent months trying to negotiate such a security zone.

The latest loss of reliable electricity overnight came when Russia shelled two power lines that were connecting the plant to the Ukrainian grid in "an attempt to reconnect the nuclear plant to the Russian power system," Energoatom alleged.

The company claimed the Russian side would try to repair the power lines in order to connect the plant to the Russian grid and therefore supply power to occupied Crimea and parts of

eastern Ukraine's Donbas region that Russia also currently controls.

Across the Dnipro River from the power plant, the city of Nikopol was also shelled, damaging residential buildings, a gas station and several private enterprises, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's office said on Thursday.

Other Ukrainian cities were also hit, with Russia using drones, missiles and heavy artillery that left six civilians dead and 16 others wounded, according to the president's office.

Energy and water infrastructure facilities were hit in Zelenskyy's native city of Kryvyi Rih, leaving several districts without electricity or water in the city that had a prewar population of 635,000 people, local Gov Oleksandr Vilkul said.

Further east in the Donetsk region, battles continued for the towns of Bakhmut and Avdiivka,

where authorities said the population was under constant shelling and living without electricity or heat.

Over the past day, six cities and villages in the region came under attack from heavy artillery, while in the northeast, three missiles hit Ukraine's second-largest city, Kharkiv, officials said.

Separately, seven ships carrying 290,000 tons of agricultural products set sail from Ukrainian seaports heading to Asia and Europe, a day after Russia agreed to rejoin a wartime agreement allowing Ukrainian grain and other commodities to be shipped to world markets.

In announcing Russia was rejoining the pact, Putin said Moscow had received assurances that Ukraine wouldn't use the humanitarian corridors to attack Russian forces.

He warned that Russia reserves the right to withdraw again if Kyiv breaks its word.

Russians try to subdue Ukrainian towns by seizing mayors

AP ■ KYIV

Not long after Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine, soldiers broke down the office door of Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov.

They put a bag over his head, bundled him into a car and drove him around the southern city for hours, threatening to kill him.

Fedorov, 34, is one of over 50 local leaders who have been held in Russian captivity since the war began on Feb. 24 in an attempt to subdue cities and towns coming under Moscow's control.

Like many others, he said he was pressured to collaborate with the invaders.

"The bullying and threats did not stop for a minute. They tried to force me to continue leading the city under the Russian flag, but I refused," Fedorov told The Associated Press by phone last month in Kyiv.

"They didn't beat me, but day and night, wild screams from the next cell would tell me what was waiting for me."

As Russians seized parts of eastern and southern Ukraine, civilian administrators and others, including nuclear power plant workers, say they have been abducted, threatened or beaten to force their cooperation — something that legal and human rights experts say may constitute a war



crime.

Ukrainian and Western historians say the tactic is used when invading forces are unable to subjugate the population.

This year, as Russian forces sought to tighten their hold on Melitopol, hundreds of residents took to the streets to demand Fedorov's release.

After six days in detention and an intervention from President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, he was exchanged for nine Russian prisoners of war and expelled from the occupied city.

A pro-Kremlin figure was installed.

"The Russians cannot govern the captured cities. They have neither the personnel nor the experience," Fedorov said.

They want to force public officials to work for them because they realise that someone has to "clean the streets and fix up the destroyed houses."

The Association of Ukrainian Cities (AUC), a group of local leaders from across Ukraine, said that of the more than 50 abducted officials, including 34 mayors, at least 10 remain captive.

Russian officials haven't commented on the allegations. Moscow-backed authorities in eastern Ukraine even launched a criminal investigation into Fedorov on charges of involvement in terrorist activities.

"Kidnapping the heads of villages, towns and cities, especially in wartime, endangers all residents of a community, because all critical management, provision of basic amenities and important decisions on which the fate of thousands of residents depends are entrusted to the community's head," said Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko, head of the AUC.

In the southern city of Kherson, one of the first seized by Russia and a key target of an unfolding counteroffensive, Mayor Ihor Kolykhaiev tried to stand his ground. He said in April that he would refuse to cooperate with its new, Kremlin-backed overseer.

Kirill Stremousov, deputy head of the Russian-installed regional administration, repeatedly denounced Kolykhaiev as a "Nazi," echoing the false Kremlin narrative that its attack on Ukraine was an attempt to "de-Nazify" the country.

Ukraine war: Boost or setback for climate efforts?

AP ■ BERLIN

Luetzerath may be 1,000 miles from Ukraine, but it is an indirect victim of Russia's invasion and some fear so is Earth's climate. The ancient hamlet in western Germany will soon be demolished along with a wind park to expand a nearby coal mine, despite protests from environmentalists who fear millions more tons of heat-trapping carbon dioxide will be released into the atmosphere.

Their concerns were echoed recently by Antonio Guterres, the United Nations Secretary-General, who warned that "the horrors of the war in Ukraine should not put climate action on the back burner."

"Doubling down on fossil fuels is not the answer," he wrote on Twitter. "The only path to energy security, stable power prices and a livable planet lies in accelerating the renewable energy transition." But Germany's centre-left government says the war in Ukraine means tough decisions need to be made on energy security and



insists the nation's climate goals will be kept. Luetzerath's days may be numbered, but the planet will be saved, officials argue.

Similar scenes are playing out across the world as countries try to fend off a feared energy crunch without betraying their long-term commitments to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

The question of whether the conflict in Ukraine will hasten or hinder the shift from fossil fuels to clean energy need-

ed to keep global temperatures from reaching dangerous heights looms large ahead of next week's UN climate conference.

In Germany, Europe's biggest economy, officials point to new programs they say will massively increase sun and wind power generation.

An even bigger plan by the European Union to wean itself off Russian gas could further boost the bloc's already-ambitious emissions reduction targets this decade, said Rachel

Simon, a policy expert at campaign group CAN Europe.

In the United States, President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act has earmarked USD 375 billion for climate incentives that would slash the cost of installing renewable energy and shrink US carbon emissions by as much as two-fifths until 2030.

Climate hawks say that won't be enough. While greenhouse gas emissions are rising more slowly than before, recent reports show the trend remains upward when it needs to point sharply down. Rising fossil fuel subsidies to cushion the impact of high energy prices and efforts to tap new sources of gas, oil and coal will further drive up emissions, at least in the short term.

This means the amount of carbon dioxide that can still be released into the atmosphere before the world hits the limit of 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 Fahrenheit) warming — agreed in the 2015 Paris climate accord — is being used up rapidly, expert say.

your European path."

"The normalisation process between Serbia and Kosovo in particular must speed up, so let's get it done," he added. Serbia doesn't recognise its former province's 2008 declaration of independence.

Alongside regional reconciliation and cooperation, "the challenges of irregular migration, corruption and organised crime are crucial issues for all of us," Scholz said, adding that the Balkan countries' commitment to align visa policies with those of the EU is "essential in this context."

Germany and others have been pushing Serbia in particular to tighten its entry policies as an increasing number of migrants have tried to reach wealthier western European countries via the Balkans in recent months.

Resolve conflicts, Western Balkan leaders told

AP ■ BERLIN

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Thursday told leaders of six Balkan countries that aspire to join the European Union that "it is high time to overcome regional conflicts" and stand together as Russia wages war in Ukraine.

Scholz and the European Union's top officials joined leaders from Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Albania for a meeting at which they are expected to sign agreements on easing regional travel arrangements and mutual recognition of academic qualifications.

They are also expected to discuss energy issues.

Scholz highlighted the need to deliver on the coun-



tries' longstanding desire to join the EU, which he said "is in our interest."

But, with tension brewing again between Serbia and Kosovo this week, he said that the nations themselves need to

overcome problems that have slowed their path to the EU and pointed to "a sense of urgency."

"Russia's brutal war of aggression against Ukraine forces us to stand together to

preserve Europe's freedom and security," Scholz said.

"It is high time to overcome regional conflicts that have continued for far too long — conflicts that divide you and hold your countries back on

G7 foreign ministers set to grapple with Ukraine war, China



AP ■ MUNSTER

Top diplomats from the world's major industrialised democracies will grapple with the implications of Russia's war in Ukraine, China's growing economic clout, and aims on Taiwan and Iran's treatment of anti-government protesters when they open two days of talks in Germany this week.

Meeting in the western German city of Munster, foreign ministers from the Group of Seven nations — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — will take stock of the situation in Ukraine nearly a year after they first banded together to warn Russia of "massive consequences" if it went ahead with plans to invade the former Soviet republic that some believed were exaggerated at the time.

Since that warning was delivered — two months before the invasion was actually launched — the G-7 nations have largely followed through with their vow to punish Russia, although the sanctions have done little to deter Moscow, which has instead escalated its attacks targeting civilian infrastructure, sent more troops, claimed to have annexed areas of Ukraine and raised the possibility of using tactical nuclear weapons.

One looming crisis the ministers had expected to address at the meeting was averted Wednesday when Russia agreed to resume a wartime agreement that allowed Ukrainian grain and other commodities to reach world markets.

But, there remain other troubling aspects to the Ukraine situation, including energy supplies, Russian claims that Ukraine is preparing to use a so-called "dirty bomb" and suggestions it might respond with nukes.

Senior Biden US officials travelling with Blinken said they expected the discussions on Thursday and Friday in Munster's town hall — which local officials say was last used for an international diplomatic event in 1648 when the Treaty of Westphalia was signed ending the 30 Years War — to reaffirm G-7 "alignment and consistency" on Ukraine and a number of other issues.

Those include joint approaches to China, which has sided with Russia over Ukraine while also seeking to boost investments in critical and sensitive infrastructure in the West, and Iran, which in addition to conducting a brutal crackdown on protesters is accused of supplying Russia with armed drones and possibly other weapons for use in Ukraine.

Microsoft extends aid for Ukraine's wartime tech innovation

AP ■ LISBON

Ukraine is counting on more Western technological support as its war against Russia drags on, with Microsoft pledging on Thursday to extend its backing for Kyiv's "extraordinary" wartime innovation through the end of next year.

Microsoft's financial commitment of more than USD 400 million enables the Ukraine government and other organisations to continue using the Microsoft cloud and its public data centres across Europe, the company's president, Brad Smith, announced at the annual Web Summit tech conference in Lisbon, Portugal.

Cloud technology offers resilience and security for Ukraine operations, Smith said, after Russia targeted Ukrainian data centres with air strikes when it invaded more than eight months ago.

The invasion triggered "extraordinary innovation" by the Ukrainian military, Smith said.


Ukraine and Russia are fighting "a new type of war," with cyberweapons and other types of digital technology playing a pivotal role, he said.

Artificial intelligence deployed by Kyiv, for example, is detecting and thwarting Russian cyberattacks "in the blink of an eye," according to Smith. Microsoft is also working with the US Army on AI and image recognition.

Ukraine and Russia are engaged in "a technology war," according to Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine's Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Transformation.

Fedorov, appearing with Smith at a news conference, pointed to the Delta real-time battle management system developed by Ukraine.

The situational awareness platform integrates information about the enemy from various sensors and sources, including AI and drones, on a digital map.



THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION LTD.
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 /r/w 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) that the below described immovable property, mortgaged with THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION LTD., the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION LTD, will be sold by way of an E-Auction, on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis, on 8th Dec 2022

The said E-Auction is for the recovery of **19,00,692.20/- due** as on 26th Oct 2022 to THE HONGKONG AND SHANGHAI BANKING CORPORATION LTD. from Gaurav Panwar and Sakshi Gandas

Name of the Borrowers.	Description of Property with Sq. Ft.	Reserve Price	EMD (10% of Reserve Price)
Gaurav Panwar and Sakshi Gandas	Apartment K-801, admeasuring about 1226 Square Feet Super area alongwith open parking No. 241 in Umang Monsoon Breeze (Earlier Known as Canary Residency), Sector 78 Gurgaon, Haryana"	53,33,100/- (Fifty Three Lakh Thirty Three Thousand One Hundred only)	533310/- (Five Lakh Thirty Three Thousand Three Hundred Ten Only) EMD Date & time: 5th Dec 2022 before 4:00 PM Account Detail: A/C Number 010 909968 042 Beneficiary Name - E-Auction EMD Suspense account number IFSC Code: HSBC0400002
Inspection Date & time	Inspection Date & time: 29th Nov 2022 12:30 PM to 4:00 PM		

Notice is hereby given that the said property shall be sold by e-auction and bidding shall take place through "Online Electronic Bidding" through the website <https://www.bankeauctions.com> (E Auction house website) on **8th Dec 2022**. The detailed terms and conditions of sale are available on the E Auction house website (www.bankeauctions.com/) HSBC website (www.hsbc.co.in)

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For any details, support, help regarding the procedure of online bidding by way of the-auction, prospective bidders may contact: **Mr. Vinod Chauhan, Mobile No. 9813887931, Email Id: delhi@c1india.com**

Date: 4th Nov 2022
Place: Delhi

Authorised Officer

In campaign swing, US Prez Biden focuses on incumbent Democrats

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden's travel plan for his last big campaign swing before Tuesday's midterm elections reveals his defensive stance in the campaign's closing days: He's spending the bulk of his time trying to hang on to seats that his party already holds.

Biden is kicking off a four-state, three-day campaign swing on Thursday to support Democrats in competitive races in solidly blue California, Illinois and New Mexico as well as battleground Pennsylvania, where Biden has deep roots.

His itinerary illustrates the limited political clout of a president who has been held at arm's length by most Democrats in tough races this cycle. It also suggests that the president, whose approval rating remains underwater, has concluded that he can be most effective using the waning days before polls close to shore up support for Democratic candidates in areas that he easily won in 2020.

"Democrats are clearly on the defensive and that's bearing out as the campaign comes to a close," said Christopher Borick, director of the



Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion. "Their chances for gains don't look realistic, so now you look to what you can preserve. The president's travel schedule is reflective of where they see this cycle going."

The president's party typically faces significant losses during midterm elections. Since 1934, only Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1934, Bill Clinton in 1998, and George W. Bush in 2002 saw their parties gain seats in the midterms.

Some recent presidents saw

big losses in their first midterm races. Republicans under Donald Trump lost 40 House seats but gained two Senate seats in 2018; Democrats under Barack Obama lost 63 House seats and six Senate seats in 2010; and Democrats under Bill Clinton lost 52 House seats and eight Senate seats in 1994.

The decision to deploy Biden to areas where he won handily in 2020 is being made in part because of concern about voter energy in races that Democrats view as must-win.

Party officials are also concerned about some candidates who have seen their races tighten in the final days of the campaign, according to a Democratic official who was not authorized to comment publicly and requested anonymity.

In New Mexico, a state Biden won by nearly 11 percentage points in 2020, he'll hold an Albuquerque rally for Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham, who is facing a stout challenge from former TV meteorologist and GOP nominee Mark Ronchetti.

Fundraising by Ronchetti's campaign has surged amid visits from Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey and Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin. Ronchetti also received a social media endorsement from Trump despite his acknowledgement that Biden won in 2020.

Later Thursday, Biden will join Rep. Mike Levin for a get-out-the vote event at a community college in Oceanside, California. Levin represents a district with a slight Democratic tilt that cuts through San Diego and Orange counties and that Biden carried by double digits

in the 2020 presidential election. Republican nominee Brian Maryott has gone after Levin over inflation, gas prices and rising crime.

Biden is set to spend part of Friday and Saturday in the Chicago area, where two-term incumbent Rep. Sean Casten is facing a stiff challenge from Republican Keith Pekau as he tries to hang on to a suburban district that Biden won by a double-digit percentage in 2020. The White House has yet to announce Biden's plans for his time in Chicago.

The Congressional Leadership Fund, a super PAC aligned with House Republican leadership, this week announced an \$1.8 million ad buy to assist Pekau, the mayor of south suburban Orland Park. And Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, the House minority leader, is due to campaign with Pekau in the district on Friday.

Casten's campaign, in a fundraising email Wednesday, called the crush of super PAC money a "last-ditch effort to buy this seat" and implored his supporters to send him contributions for the campaign's final stretch.

Fuel suppliers aiding Myanmar attacks on civilians: Amnesty

AP ■ BANGKOK

Amnesty International is urging suppliers of aviation fuel to Myanmar to suspend such shipments to prevent the military from using them to conduct air attacks on civilian targets as the number of bombings has increased.

In a report released on Thursday, the London-based rights group documented diversion of aviation fuel that is supposed to be used only for civilian travel and transport to the military.

It also called on refiners, shipping companies and others in the aviation fuel supply chain to stop shipments until they can ensure they won't be diverted to military use.

The report, carried out in collaboration with the underground activist organisation Justice for Myanmar, followed news of air strikes that have killed dozens of people not engaged in fighting the military controlled government following the army's February 2021 ouster of Myanmar's elected government.

"These air strikes have devastated families, ter-



rorised civilians, killed and maimed victims. But if the planes can't fuel up, they can't fly out and wreak havoc. Today we are calling on suppliers, shipping agents, vessel owners and maritime insurers to withdraw from a supply chain that is benefiting the Myanmar Air Force," Amnesty International Secretary General Agnès Callamard said in a prepared statement.

"There can be no justification for participating in the supply of aviation fuel to a military that has a flagrant contempt for

human rights and has been repeatedly accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and other grave human rights violations."

Military air strikes killed as many as 80 people, including singers and musicians, attending an anniversary celebration last month of the Kachin ethnic minority's main political organisation.

The casualties appeared to be the most in a single air attack since the military seized power.

Civilians from the Karen ethnic minority in eastern Myanmar were also killed in air attacks earlier this year.

Ethnic minorities have been fighting for autonomy for decades, but nationwide anti-government resistance has increased markedly with the formation of an armed pro-democracy movement opposing the military takeover.

N Korea keeps up its missile barrage with launch of ICBM

AP ■ SEOUL

Alarms blared from cell-phones, radios and public loudspeakers and fishermen hurried back to shore in northern Japan on Thursday after North Korea fired an inter-continental ballistic missile above its eastern waters, adding to a recent barrage of provocative weapons demonstrations that officials say may culminate with a nuclear test in coming weeks.

The ICBM test, which was followed by two short-range ballistic launches into the sea, was swiftly condemned by North Korea's neighbours and the United States, which said it is willing to take "all necessary measures" to ensure the safety of the American homeland and allies South Korea and Japan.

The Biden administration also warned of unspecified "additional costs and consequences" if North Korea goes on to detonate a nuclear test device for the first time since September 2017.

Hours after the launches, North Korea threatened to retaliate over a decision by the South Korean and U.S. Militaries to extend large-scale joint aerial exercises in response to the North's increased testing activity.

Senior North Korean military official Pak Jong Chon said the allies would regret their "irrevocable and awful mistake," but did not specify what the North would do in response.

The launches are the latest in a series of North Korean weapons tests in recent months



that have raised tensions in the region.

They came a day after the North fired more than 20 missiles, the most it has launched in a single day ever.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs

of Staff said it detected that North Korea fired an ICBM from an area near its capital, Pyongyang, at about 7:40 am and then two short-range missiles an hour later from the nearby city of Kaechon that

flew toward its eastern waters.

The longer-range missile appeared to be fired at a high angle, possibly to avoid entering the territory of neighbours, reaching a maximum altitude of 1,920 kilometers and travelling around 760 kilometers, according to South Korea's military.

It wasn't immediately clear whether the launch was successful. Japan's military announced similar flight details.

It also said it lost track of one of the North Korean weapons, apparently the ICBM, after it "disappeared" in skies above waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. South Korea said the short-range missiles travelled about 330 kilometers, falling closer to North Korea's eastern coast.

Choi Yong Soo, a South Korean navy captain who handles public affairs for Seoul's Defence Ministry, didn't answer directly when asked about the possibility of the ICBM launch being a failure, saying that it is still being analysed.

Citing anonymous military sources, South Korea's Yonhap news agency reported that the missile possibly failed to maintain a normal flight following a stage separation.

The Japanese government initially feared North Korea fired a missile over its northern territory but later adjusted its assessment. Japanese Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno said the alerts were based on a trajectory analysis that indicated a flyover.

Netanyahu's return to power in Israel after brief break



PTI ■ JERUSALEM

With Benjamin Netanyahu, an advocate of strong bilateral ties with India, making a triumphant return to power in Israel after a brief break, Indo-Israeli strategic ties are likely to see an upward trajectory, and even witness an increased hype around it.

Netanyahu, a personal friend of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and his right wing allies secured a comfortable majority in parliament to form the next government and end the political impasse plaguing the country.

The 73-year-old Likud party leader was the second Israeli Prime Minister to visit India in January 2018. Prime Minister Modi made his historic visit to Israel, the first by an Indian Prime Minister, in July 2017 when the 'chemistry' between the two leaders became the subject of intense discussion.

Netanyahu, Israel's longest serving Prime Minister, accompanied Modi 'like a shadow' during the latter's visit to the Jewish state and extended to him the welcome reserved for the US President and the Pope.

The famous picture of the two leaders at the Olga beach, standing facing each other barefoot, had the social media buzzing with talks of 'bromance'. India and Israel elevated their bilateral relations to a strategic partnership during Modi's visit to Israel. Since then, the rela-

tionship between the two countries has focused on expanding knowledge-based partnership, which includes collaboration in innovation and research, including boosting the 'Make in India' initiative.

Netanyahu used his closeness with world leaders, including Modi, as an asset during his campaign to show that others could not match his standing and secure Israel's interests like him at the international stage.

One of the pictures his Likud party campaign used prominently was with Modi.

The longtime former Israeli prime minister has always demonstrated a soft corner for India with him and his wife, Sara, being declared Indian food lovers. The two also made sure to participate in this year's August 15 celebrations hosted by the Indian embassy, despite being in the middle of an intense election campaign.

Netanyahu also tried to visit India a few times more during the build up to his earlier campaigns but the visits got called off to address other urgent issues.

India's relations with Israel have remained steady and strong even with the incumbent leadership, showing distinct signs of further progress with I2U2 (India, Israel, the United States and the United Arab Emirates) and discussions around a Free Trade Agreement, but it has not matched the heightened hype so visible with Netanyahu in power.

Italy's new, far-right leader heads to EU HQ to break ice

AP ■ BRUSSELS

New Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni is coming to Brussels on Thursday — and it's not the ordinary kind of visit by the leader of a European Union founding nation seeking to renew unshakable bonds with the 27-nation bloc.

For some, it brings the Trojan Horse of the far right into the walls of the EU, just as the bloc faces crises on many fronts. For others, it's a case of the EU applying the dictum: keep your friends close but your enemies closer.

Meloni's Brothers of Italy party has neo-fascist roots and she has governed since Oct. 22 along with anti-migrant League leader Matteo Salvini and former Conservative Premier Silvio Berlusconi.



The latter only recently vaunted his connections to his friend Russian President Vladimir Putin, with whom he exchanged vodka and Lambrusco wine.

It's enough to send shivers down the spine of many EU legislators and officials, who fear the rule of law and revered principles of Western liberal

democracy could be hollowed out from within as yet another EU nation turns sharply to the right.

In a recent plenary speech addressing far-right surges from Sweden to Spain and from Germany to — indeed — Italy, the president of the Socialists and Democrats group of center-left European

4 Palestinians killed in separate incidents

AP ■ RAMALLAH

Israeli forces killed at least four Palestinians in separate incidents on Thursday, including one who had stabbed a police officer in east Jerusalem and three others in Israeli raids in the occupied West Bank.

Israeli troops operating in the West Bank city of Jenin, a militant stronghold, killed at least two Palestinians, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. The Palestinian militant group Islamic Jihad said one of those killed was a local commander. The Israeli military did not immediately provide details on the operation.

Earlier on Thursday, the Palestinian Health Ministry said a Palestinian man was killed by Israeli fire in the occupied West Bank. Israeli police said it happened during a raid in the ter-



ritory and alleged the man threw a firebomb at the forces.

In a separate incident on Thursday, a Palestinian stabbed a police officer in Jerusalem's Old City, police said, and officers opened fire on the attacker, killing him. The officer was lightly wounded.

"The time has come to restore security to the streets," he

tweeted. "The time has come for a terrorist who goes out to carry out an attack to be taken out!"

The violence was the latest in a wave of Israeli-Palestinian fighting in the West Bank and east Jerusalem that has killed more than 130 Palestinians this year, making 2022 the deadliest since the UN started tracking fatalities in 2005.

After 6 yrs, UN climate summit returns to Africa

AP ■ MOMBASA (KENYA)

The UN climate summit is back in Africa after six years and four consecutive Europe-based conferences.

The 27th annual Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change — better known as COP27 — will be held in the resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh in Egypt and begins next week. It's been branded as the "African COP", with officials and activists hoping the conference's location will mean the continent's interests are better represented in climate negotiations.

Hosts Egypt say the meeting represents a unique opportunity for Africa to align climate change goals with the continent's other aims.

<p>Public Notice</p> <p>This is to inform general public that Mr. Lovely Raslogi and Mrs. Ekta Raslogi have acquired the Entire Third Floor, "Sad Floor" Property Bearing No. F-9/35, area measuring 197.21 Sq. Yds., Block No. F-9, Plot No. 35, Situated in the layout Plan of Krishna Nagar, in the area of village Ghondi, Ilaga Shahdara, Delhi vide Sale Deed dated 09.07.2021, Doc no. 5462 and Now, Mr. Lovely Raslogi and Mrs. Ekta Raslogi are mortgaging the above said property with IndusInd Bank Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhwani / Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-06), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).</p>	<p>Public Notice</p> <p>This is to inform general public that Mr. Bhairav Dutt (GPA Holder) has acquired the Property bearing no. RZ-33, area measuring 59 sq. yds. out of Khirna no. 286, situated in village Naspur, in Block 'M', abadi known as west Sagarpur, New Delhi-110046 on POA basis vide Registered GPA, ATS & will dated 06.09.2002, executed by Mr. Gnanu Chand, and Now, Mr. Bhairav Dutt is intending to sell the above said property to Mr. Satyendra Kumar vide Sale Deed. Further, Mr. Anan Verma is mortgaging the above said property with Fullerton India Home Finance Co. Ltd. & in case anyone has any objection, the same may be raised within 07 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhwani / Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-06), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/9818228636 (M).</p>
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<p>Notice Inviting Tender</p> <p>SSA-15022/2/2022-ESTABLISHMENT-SSA I/65181/2022</p> <p>Mission Director, Samagra Shiksha Axom, Kahilipara, Guwahati-19, Assam invites following bids through GeM portal.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tender No GEM/2022/B/2693997 dated 01.11.2022 for supply of Teaching Learning Materials for schools. 2. Tender No GEM/2022/B/2693580 dated 01.11.2022 for supply and installation of Dual Desk and Bench. <p>Interested bidder may visit GeM portal and submit their bid on GeM portal accordingly.</p> <p>Sd/- Mission Director, Janasanyogi/CF/2815/22 Samagra Shiksha, Assam Kahilipara, Guwahati-19</p>	<p>KAMDHENU UNIVERSITY</p> <p><i>Our Motto: Welfare of all living beings</i> (Established under Gujarat Act No. 9 of 2009)</p> <p>Address: 4th Floor, Block No. 1, Karmayogi Bhavan, Sector:10 A, Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India - 382010</p> <p>Recruitment Advertisement (04/2022)</p> <p>The Kamdhenu University invites applications in the prescribed proforma for the posts of Professor, Associate Professors & Assistant Professor in various disciplines of Veterinary, Dairy & Fisheries Science faculties.</p> <p>For more details & latest update please visit website of Kamdhenu University i.e.: https://www.kamdhenuni.edu.in</p> <p>The application must reach the office of The Registrar, Kamdhenu University, 4th Floor, Block No. 1, Karmayogi Bhavan, Sector-10 A, Gandhinagar, Gujarat - 382010 by R.P.A.D. / Speed Post only on or before the last date prescribed i.e. 19/12/2022 in the advertisement.</p> <p>Date: 2/11/2022 No/INF/VPN/2022/G/1911</p> <p>sd/- (I/c) Registrar</p>
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<p>UNITED LEASING & INDUSTRIES LTD.</p> <p>Regd. Office: Plot No.66, Sector-34, EHTP, Gurugram, Haryana-122001. CIN: L17100HR1983PLC033460, Phone: 011-26258237, 49075251 Email: investorrelations@uliltd.com, website: uliltd.com.</p> <p>COMPANY NOTICE</p> <p>Regulation 29 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, notice is hereby given that 04th /2022-23 meeting of the Board of Directors of the United Leasing & Industries Ltd. will be held on Monday 14th November, 2022 at 11:30 AM. To consider and take on record inter alia, the Un-Audited financial results for the Second quarter and half year ended on 30th September, 2022. At Zoom Meeting</p> <p>Please note that vide our letter dated 30th September, 2022, we had informed the Trading Window Closure with effect from Saturday 1st October, 2022 till 48 hours of after the announcement of Financial Results to the Stock Exchange, in compliance with the amended SEBI Regulations and the Code of Conduct for prevention of Insider Trading. For United Leasing & Industries Limited.</p> <p>Sd/- Shashi Shekhar Company Secretary Membership No ACS 30145</p> <p>Place: New Delhi Date: 03th November, 2022</p>	<p>APPENDIX IV A [See proviso to Rule 8(5)]</p> <p>Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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 06.12.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 1,22,27,197/- (Rupees One Crore Twenty Two Lakh Twenty Seven Thousand One Hundred Ninety Seven only) pending towards Loan Account No. HLAPBHW00280662, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 28.10.2022 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 29.10.2022 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from Saroj Devi (Proprietor, Navdeep Art Jewellery), Meera Soni, Jitender Soni and Subhash Chand Soni.</p> <p>The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 1,62,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Sixty Two Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 16,20,000/- (Rupees Sixteen Lakh Twenty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.</p> <p>DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY</p> <p>ITEM 1</p> <p>Free-Hold Residential House bearing No. 243-L (South), admeasuring 100 Square Yards situated in Model Town, Rewari-123401, Haryana, which is bounded as follows:</p> <p>East : Plot No. 243-R West: Plot No. 243-L North : House of Balbir Singh Soni South: Road</p> <p>ITEM 2</p> <p>Free-Hold Residential House bearing No. 243-L (South), admeasuring 96 Square Yards situated in Model Town, Rewari-123401, Haryana, which is bounded as follows:</p> <p>East : House of Subhash Chand West : Gali North : Other's Property South : Road</p> <p>Total Admeasuring -100+96= 196 Square Yards.</p> <p>For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to thelink provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com and www.auctionfocus.in.</p> <p>Sd/ Date : 28.10.2022 Authorized Officer Place : REWARI INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED</p>
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INDIA'S SERVICES SECTOR SEES UPTURN IN OCTOBER

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's services sector activities witnessed an upturn in October on the back of stronger gains in new business and increased hiring amid strengthening demand, a monthly survey said on Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted S&P Global India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose from September's six-month low of 54.3 to 55.1 in October, pointing to a quicker and marked rate of growth.

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

"The October results show us that service providers had no trouble securing new work in October, despite lifting their charges again. Hence, the sector remained firmly inside expansion territory as business activity and payroll numbers were raised to support strengthening demand," Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said.

According to the survey, the domestic market was the main source of new business gains, as foreign sales decreased further at the start of the third fiscal quarter. "Monthly deteriorations in international demand have been registered since the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020," it noted.



Ongoing increases in new business and output requirements continued to support job creation in the service economy. Employment rose for the fifth month in a row and at the second-fastest pace in more than three years.

Optimistic growth projections also boosted job creation in October, with 30 per cent of survey members forecasting higher volumes of business activity by October 2023. Overall, confidence was at its highest level in just under eight years.

"Buoyed by the ongoing recovery in new work, service providers again took on extra staff, with an improvement in business confidence also supporting hiring activity," the survey said.

On the inflation front, the survey said there were mild accelerations in inflation rates for input costs and output charges.

"Many companies indicated that higher food, fuel and retail prices pushed up their overall expenses in October. With some of this additional cost burden shared with customers, prices charged for the provision of services likewise rose," Lima said.

At the sub-sector level, consumer services led growth of business activity, new orders and employment. Finance & insurance came in second place in the rankings for these three measures while transport, information & communication was at the bottom.

Meanwhile, the S&P Global India Composite PMI Output Index -- which measures combined services and manufacturing output -- rose to 55.5 in October from 55.1 in September, pointing to a marked rate of expansion that outpaced its long-run average.

Bank of England makes biggest interest rate hike in 30 years

AP ■ LONDON

The Bank of England has announced its biggest interest rate increase in three decades as it tries to beat back stubbornly high inflation fuelled by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the disastrous economic policies of former Prime Minister Liz Truss.

The central bank boosted its key rate by three-quarters of a percentage point on Thursday, to 3 per cent, after consumer price inflation returned to a 40-year high in September.

The aggressive move was expected after a more cautious half-point hike six weeks ago and comes as the bank sees a "very challenging outlook" for the UK economy.

"High energy, food and other bills are hitting people hard. Households have less to spend on other things. This has meant that the size of the UK economy has started to fall," the bank said in its November monetary policy report.

In its latest projections, the bank expects the country "to be in recession for a prolonged period" and inflation to stay above 10 per cent in the near term.

The interest rate decision is the first since Truss' government announced 45 billion pounds (USD 52 billion) of unfunded tax cuts that sparked turmoil on financial markets, pushed up mortgage costs and forced Truss from office after just six weeks.

Her successor, Rishi Sunak, has warned of spending cuts and tax increases as he seeks to undo the damage and show that Britain is committed to paying its bills.

The rate increase is the Bank of England's eighth in a row and the biggest since 1992. It comes after the US Federal Reserve on Wednesday announced a fourth consecutive three-quarter point jump as central banks worldwide combat inflation that is eroding living standards and slowing economic growth.

Central banks have struggled to contain



inflation after initially believing that price increases were being fuelled by international factors beyond their control. Their response intensified in recent months as it became clear that inflation was becoming embedded in the economy, feeding through into higher borrowing costs and demands for higher wages.

The war in Ukraine boosted food and energy prices worldwide as shipments of natural gas, grain and cooking oil were disrupted. That added to inflation that began to accelerate last year when the global economy began to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Europe has been particularly hard hit by a jump in natural gas prices as Russia responded to Western sanctions and support for Ukraine by curtailing shipments of the fuel used to heat homes, generate electricity and power industry and European nations competed for alternative supplies on global markets.

The UK also has struggled as wholesale gas prices increased fivefold in the 12 months through August. While prices have dropped more than 50 per cent since the August peak, they are likely to rise again during the winter heating season, worsening inflation.

IMF: Asia Pacific faces risks from global financial tightening, slowdown in China

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Asia Pacific region is facing three main risks, including due to global financial tightening and a slowdown in China, according to an IMF official.

Shanaka Jayanath Peiris, Division Chief of Regional Studies Division, Asia Pacific Department at the IMF, also said that currencies in the region have depreciated sharply while public debt ratios have increased.

"We have identified three main risks to the region -- global financial tightening, Ukraine-Russia war, which has raised commodity prices, but (has) also slowed external demand particularly from Europe and the slowdown in China," Peiris told PTI.

He was speaking on the sidelines of the NSE-IMF Seminar on Regional Economic Outlook for Asia-Pacific here on Wednesday.

At the seminar, he shared the IMF's views on the current risks that the Asian economies face and the implications for India.

"We have revised down the (growth) forecast but India is still relatively a bright spot in the outlook for the region... We have 6.1 per cent (growth forecast) for India for 2023, which is one of the strongest in the region. That is one aspect," he said.

The second one is of course that the global financial tightening means the dollar is strengthening and that has an impact on India also, he said. "... That can be inflationary as well, but these are the things which central banks need to take into account when they take their monetary policy stance and have a balanced inflation outlook," he noted.

According to him, fiscal policy also has a role to play in complementing monetary policy in stabilising debt while providing temporary, targeted and budget-neutral support to the vulnerable.

Markets extend losses post Fed rate hike; IT stocks top drags

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmarks stayed on the backfoot for the second session on the trot on Thursday, in tandem with a lacklustre trend overseas after the US Fed delivered the fourth straight 75-bps interest rate hike to tame scorching inflation.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 69.68 points or 0.11 per cent to settle at 60,836.41. During the day, it tanked 420.95 points or 0.69 per cent to 60,485.14.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty dipped 30.15 points or 0.17 per cent to end at 18,052.70.

Tech Mahindra was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, dropping 2.66 per cent, followed by PowerGrid, NTPC, Infosys, Wipro, M&M and TCS.

In contrast, SBI, Titan, Bharti Airtel, Tata Steel, HUL and IndusInd Bank were



among the winners, climbing up to 1.89 per cent.

"The US Fed hiked rates by 75 bps to a range of 3.75 to 4 per cent, which is at its highest level since 2008. However, it also indicated a tapering off of subsequent hikes in order to bring inflation back to around the 2 per cent target.

"This could be indicative of a similar position taken by the central bank in India to continue raising the repo rate in lower increments going forward to keep a check on inflation until global macros reach some level of stability," said Karan Desai, Founder - Interface Ventures.

The Reserve Bank's rate setting panel on Thursday met to finalise a report for the government on why it failed to keep retail inflation below the target of 6 per cent for three consecutive quarters since January this year, said sources.

"(Fed Chair Jerome Powell) cautioned that the desired Fed rate level is higher than expected, even though he indicated a rate hike of less than 75 bps in the upcoming meetings. On the back of concerns about the US recession, IT stocks led the domestic selloff, while FII support helped limit the losses," said Vinod Nair, Geojit Financial Services.

RBI's rate-setting panel meets to finalise inflation report for Govt

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank's rate setting panel on Thursday met to finalise a report for the government on why it failed to keep retail inflation below the target of 6 per cent for three consecutive quarters since January this year, said sources.

The report will be presented to the government as per the Reserve Bank of India Act, they added.

The six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is headed by Governor Shaktikanta Das.

The other members are: Shashanka Bhide, Honorary Senior Advisor at National Council of Applied Economic Research, Delhi; Ashima Goyal, Emeritus Professor at Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, Mumbai and Jayanth R Varma, Professor at Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad.

RBI Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra and RBI Executive Director Rajiv Ranjan are the other two mem-



bers.

The RBI Act requires the central bank's MPC to report to the government reasons for failure to meet the retail inflation target as well as measures to bring it at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side. The meeting was called under the provisions of Section 45ZN of the RBI Act 1934.

It was the first time since the monetary policy framework came into effect in 2016 that RBI had to give an explanation to the government.

The retail inflation based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) has remained above 6 per cent since January 2022. It was 7.41 per cent in September.

Rupee falls 10 paise to close at 82.90 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee depreciated by 10 paise to close at 82.90 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, after the US Federal Reserve raised interest rates and maintained a hawkish stance.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.87 and witnessed a high of 82.74 and a low of 82.92. It finally settled at 82.90 against the American currency, registering a fall of 10 paise over its last close of 82.80.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 1.39 per cent to 112.89.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures slipped 1.16 per cent to USD 95.04 per barrel. On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 69.68 points or 0.11 per cent to end at 60,836.41, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 30.15 points or 0.17 per cent to 18,052.70.

In a two-decade first, currency in circulation declines in Diwali week

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The currency in circulation (CIC) declined by Rs 7,600 crore in the Diwali week, making it the first such happening in two decades, a report said on Thursday.

This was made possible courtesy of a greater reliance on digital payments by people, the report by economists at SBI said, adding that the Indian economy is undergoing a structural transformation at present.

They clarified that the Diwali week in 2009 had also witnessed a marginal Rs 950 crore decline in currency in circulation, but that was purely due to the economic slowdown amid the global financial crisis.

"The innovations in technology have changed the Indian payment system. Over



the years, the Indian cash lead economy now has changed to a smart-phone lead payment economy," they said.

The economists also said that a lower currency in circulation also is akin to a cut in the cash reserve ratio for the banking system as it results in lower leakage of deposits and will have a positive impact on monetary transmission as well.

The report credited the government for the "relentless push" of digital alternatives in its attempt to formalise and digitalise the economy.

INBRIEF

MEIL BAGS PROJECT TO BUILD REFINERY IN MONGOLIA
Megha Engineering and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) has received the LOA for the Mongol Refinery Project, which entailed building Mongolia's first oil refinery. According to the EPC deal, MEIL will build this new refinery in Mongolia. MEIL will build EPC-2 (Open Art Units, Utilities and Offsites, Plant Buildings) and EPC-3 (Captive Power Plants) at a cost of USD 790 million using advanced technology in Mongolia. The project is part of the Development Partnership Administration initiative of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India. It will be built using a line of credit from the Government of India. "This downstream project is of enormous importance and marks a critical turning point in the relationship between India and Mongolia and in MEIL's expansion strategy in the hydrocarbons sector," said a MEIL in spokesman.

ACTIONAID URGES GHG EMITTERS TO SET UP DAMAGE FUND
ActionAid Association India has sought concerned people's support in demanding countries most responsible for climate change to take responsibility for damages and losses that people are facing today on account of this planetary crisis. As a first step, the organisation advocates the need to create a funding facility to address climate-induced loss and damage impacting vulnerable communities in the Global South. Sandeep Chachra, Executive Director, ActionAid, said: "What is of urgency is to develop loss and damage compensation policies and measures."

GATI INCOME UP ₹442.60 CR FROM ₹436.72 CR IN QUARTER ENDING SEPT

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Gati Limited (GATI), an Allcargo Group Company, one of India's leading premier Express Distribution and Supply Chain Management company, has reported its unaudited financial results for the quarter ended September 30, 2022.

The company has reported total income of Rs. 442.60 crores during the period ending September 30, 2022 as compared to Rs. 436.72 crores during the period ending June 30, 2022.

The company has posted net profit / (loss) of Rs. 5.82 crores for the period ending September 30, 2022 as against net profit / (loss) of Rs. 4.23 crores for the period ending June 30, 2022.

The company has reported EPS of Rs. 0.46 for the period ending September 30, 2022 as compared to Rs. 0.34 for the period ending June 30, 2022.

Commenting on the results Pirojshaw Sarkari, Chief Executive Officer of Gati Limited, said: "The performance for Q2 FY23 is as per our expectations and reflects the focus on execution across the organisation in line with our articulated strategy.

Express business revenues for H1FY23 stood at RS 734 Crores registering a growth of 29%.

The gross margin expansion remains on track. We have been able to deliver a positive bottom line for the second consecutive quarter and are optimistic of increasing the margins going forward.

Twitter 'simply the most interesting place on Internet': Elon Musk

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Twitter's new owner billionaire Elon Musk has said that his social media platform is "simply the most interesting place on the Internet", amidst outrage over his plan to charge a monthly fee of USD 8 per month for Twitter's blue tick verification.

Musk, the world's richest person, acquired Twitter in a whopping USD 44 billion deal on October 27.

Musk on Wednesday announced that the verification blue tick in front of a user's name that authenticates the account will be charged eight dollars per month, prompting outrage and disbelief among some longtime users.

"Twitter is simply the most interesting place on the Internet. That's why you're reading this tweet right now," Musk tweeted on Wednesday.

Earlier he tweeted: "Being attacked by both right and left simultaneously is a good sign" and "you get what you pay for". "Power to the people! Blue for USD 8 per month," he tweeted on Tuesday, adding that the price is adjusted by country proportionate to purchasing power parity.

With that price, he said, users will also get priority in replies, mentions, and searches, which he said is essential to defeating spam/scams, as well as the ability to post long video



and audio, half as many ads, and paywall bypass for publishers willing to work with the social media company.

Musk, 51, said the monthly payments from users for the blue tick will also give Twitter a revenue stream to reward content creators.

There will be a secondary tag below the name for someone who is a public figure, which is already the case for politicians, he further said.

A blue tick signifies that a particular account is verified because it's notable in government, news, entertainment, or another designated category.

Twitter introduced the system in 2009 after it faced a lawsuit accusing it of not doing enough to prevent imposter accounts.

However, Musk's decision to charge for blue ticks did not go down well with many longtime users, including author Stephen King, who has nearly seven million followers on the platform.

Record retail loan demand pushes HDFC net up 18% to ₹4,454 cr in Q2

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Merger-bound mortgage major HDFC on Thursday reported an 18 per cent growth in net income to Rs 4,454 crore in the September quarter, mainly driven by higher retail loan sales that hit an eight-year high of 36 per cent.

On a consolidated basis, the corporation reported a higher 24 per cent jump in net income to Rs 7,043 crore from Rs 5,670 crore, buoyed by higher dividends from the subsidiaries, which nearly doubled to 2,046 crore from Rs 1,188 crore. However, the profit from the sale of investments declined to Rs 184 crore from Rs 263



crore.

The corporation has reported a flat net interest margin of 3.4 per cent.

Its vice-chairman and chief executive Keiky Mistry explained that unlike banks, which reprice loans and deposits on a monthly basis, especially in a rising interest rate scenario, housing finance companies reprice loans with a higher lag of 1.5 months while

the cost of funds gets repriced immediately. This has had a 10-12 bps compression in the margins during this quarter.

"This lagged transmission is the only reason for the flat NIM in the reporting quarter, and the impact of the lending rate hikes, which we did during this period should be visible from the third quarter.

"As against this in the corresponding quarter last year, due to the second wave of the pandemic, there was ample liquidity in the system and consequently, overnight interest swap rates fell to very low levels, leading to expanded NII and NIM," Mistry told reporters.

UCO Bank Q2 net rises 145% at ₹ 504.52 crore

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Post-tax profit of public sector UCO Bank increased 145 per cent at Rs 504.52 crore during the second quarter of the current fiscal against Rs 205.4 crore in the similar previous similar period.

The Kolkata-based lender said in a regulatory filing that the operating profit of the bank during the quarter decreased to Rs 1,190 crore as compared to Rs 1,334.2 crore in the previous similar period.

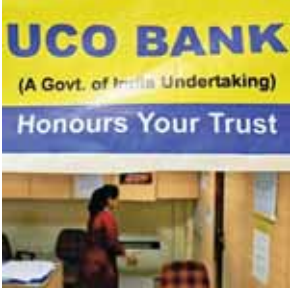
MD & CEO of UCO Bank S S Prasad said, "This is one of the best quarters of the bank in

recent times. The bank came out of the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) of the Reserve Bank of India four years after it was initiated due to high NPAs and negative returns on assets."

Prasad told reporters that the total business of the bank at the end of the second quarter stood at Rs 3,77,304 crore, with total advances at Rs 1,42,156 crore.

Domestic revenues of the bank during the second quarter stood at Rs 4,794.76 crore while international revenues stood at Rs 170.08 crore.

The capital adequacy ratio



of the bank at the end of the second quarter stood at 14.02 per cent, registering a marginal decline from 14.31 per cent in the corresponding previous period.

AC Milan, Leipzig take final last-16 places

AP ■ MILAN

AC Milan reached the Champions League knock-out stage for the first time in nine years on Wednesday with a 4-0 victory over Salzburg, while RB Leipzig also qualified by thrashing Shakhtar Donetsk.

Paris Saint-Germain will be the team group winners want to avoid in Monday's last-16 draw after missing out on top spot in Group H despite a 2-1 win at Juventus, as Benfica hammered Maccabi Haifa 6-1 to snatch first place on total away goals.

Seven-time European champions Milan knew a point would be enough to send them into the last 16 for the first time since the 2013-14 season after a group-stage exit last term.

"These kinds of nights is what we wish for," Milan coach Stefano Pioli told Sky Sport.

"We wanted to show we improved compared to last season in the Champions League. We're ambitious now, so let's see what happens next."

Pioli's side eased any nerves at the San Siro inside 14 minutes as Olivier Giroud headed home.

Milan's return to the knockouts was all but confirmed less than a minute after half-time when Giroud headed the ball across goal for Rade Krunic to nod past Philipp Kohn in the Salzburg goal.

Giroud added his second before the hour mark, allowing the home fans the opportunity to celebrate for the remainder of the match and Junior Messias added further gloss to the scoreline in added time.

Milan qualified from Group E in second place behind Chelsea, who came from behind to beat



Dinamo Zagreb 2-1 at Stamford Bridge with goals from Raheem Sterling and debutant Denis Zakaria.

Leipzig also only needed to avoid defeat to go through against Ukrainians Shakhtar in Warsaw.

Shakhtar, playing their home matches in Poland and having seen most of their foreign players leave due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, had stunned Leipzig 4-1 in their Group F opener.

But the Bundesliga side were too strong after Christopher Nkunku's early strike left Shakhtar with a mountain to climb.

Andre Silva and Dominik Szoboszlai netted in the second peri-

od and Dani Olmo's shot was deflected into his own net by Valeriy Bondar to wrap up a 4-0 win.

"I'm really proud of the team. We didn't start well in this Champions League campaign, but

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN WILL BE THE TEAM GROUP WINNERS WANT TO AVOID IN MONDAY'S LAST-16 DRAW AFTER MISSING OUT ON TOP SPOT IN GROUP H DESPITE A 2-1 WIN AT JUVENTUS

we put in a solid performance today and are really happy to be through," Leipzig forward Emil Forsberg told DAZN.

Holders Real Madrid secured first place in the group by hammering Scottish champions Celtic 5-1 at the Santiago Bernabeu.

Luka Modric and Rodrygo both scored penalties awarded for handball in the opening stages, before Real goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois saved Josip Juranovic's spot-kick.

Second-half goals from Marco Asensio, Vinicius Junior and Fede Valverde completed the rout despite Jota's late consolation for Celtic who finished bottom.

Karim Benzema also made his return from injury as a substitute to complete a good night for Carlo Ancelotti's men.

BENFICA SNATCH FIRST FROM PSG

PSG lost top spot in Group H despite Nuno Mendes' 69th-minute winner in Turin as Benfica scored five goals in the second half at

Maccabi.

Kylian Mbappe's brilliant individual effort put PSG in front, before Leonardo Bonucci dragged already-eliminated Juventus level.

Mendes scored only a minute after coming off the bench, but late drama in Israel saw PSG slip to second.

Possible last-16 opponents for the Qatari-owned club include 14-time champions Real Madrid, Manchester City, Bayern Munich, Chelsea and in-form Napoli.

"It doesn't matter, we qualified... We'll watch the draw and we'll play to win," Mbappe told RMC Sport.

Three goals in 14 minutes in the second half gave Benfica hope of matching PSG's goal difference and pipping them on away goals.

It appeared as though the Portuguese would come up two short, but Henrique Araujo scored in the 88th minute and Joao Mario struck in injury time to complete the job. "As the game progressed, we saw that it was within our reach," Goncalo Ramos, who scored Benfica's third goal, told Eleven Sports.

Juventus will drop into the Europa League after finishing third despite losing five of their six group matches.

Manchester City came from behind to round off their Group G campaign with a 3-1 win over Sevilla at the Etihad.

Rafa Mir gave the Spaniards the lead, but 17-year-old full-back Rico Lewis fired City level.

Julian Alvarez and Riyad Mahrez sealed all three points for Pep Guardiola's Premier League champions, who were still without the injured Erling Haaland.

Borussia Dortmund were held to a 1-1 draw by FC Copenhagen.

Saka fully fit for Arsenal, England



AP ■ LONDON

Bukayo Saka could feature for Arsenal as early as Thursday's Europa League clash with FC Zurich after Mikel Arteta allayed fears of a serious injury for the England winger.

Saka limped off early in the Gunners' 5-0 win over Nottingham Forest on Sunday after taking a blow to his ankle.

That sparked concern for Saka's World Cup chances with the tournament to kick off in Qatar in little over three weeks.

However, Arteta said Saka has

returned to training and is available for selection as his side aim to secure top spot in Europa League Group A and a place in the last 16.

"Bukayo just missed one or two (training sessions) and he was fine today," said Arteta at his pre-match press conference on Wednesday.

"We're using our brains and our common sense, but obviously he had a kick. "He was uncomfortable with it, we made the decision to get him off and now he's feeling fine."

But Arteta dismissed the suggestion he has a responsibility to balance

CASEMIRO IMPRESSED BY 'OBSESSED' TEN HAG

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester United boss Erik ten Hag's attention to detail and obsession to win have impressed Casemiro in his first few months at Old Trafford.

The five-time Champions League winner joined United from Real Madrid in August and has made a big impact in recent weeks as Ten Hag's project has slowly began to take shape.

"I've been in football for quite a while despite being only 30 and his obsession for winning is what surprised me the most," said Casemiro, who played under Zinedine Zidane and Carlo Ancelotti during his time at Madrid.

"I think he's got many strengths. We all know it's a process and we are growing together and we all see that he wants to win.

"But his obsession for teaching us and leaving everything perfect to the millimetre, that is key.

"His obsession for winning is something I've only seen in very few managers."



Ten Hag surprised many by not throwing Casemiro straight into the team following his £70 million move (\$81 million).

The Brazilian was left on the bench for his first four Premier League games, but has been instrumental in United's current eight-game unbeaten run.

And Ten Hag hailed the midfielder's desire to seek out a fresh challenge after a glorious era of success in Spain.

"He told me when we had the first talk he needs a new challenge because at Real Madrid he won everything," said Ten Hag.

Arsenal's interests with his players' dreams of representing their nations at the World Cup.

"Every day I feel responsibility to protect them, to guide them, to get the best out of them," added Arteta.

"But we are playing for Arsenal at the moment and that's what they have to focus on.

"When they played for England or their national teams they have to focus on the national team and on England and

this is what we have to."

Arsenal need to beat the Swiss champions to guarantee finishing ahead of PSV Eindhoven at the top of the group. But a Premier League trip to Chelsea on Sunday could come into Arteta's thinking with Arsenal involved in the title race for the first time in seven years.

Arteta's men lead defending champions Manchester City by two points at the top of the table with two more league games before the World Cup break.

Satwik-Chirag pair in Hylo Open quarters

PTI ■ SAARBRUCKEN

Top Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty advanced to the quarterfinals of the Hylo Open Super 300 badminton tournament after a hard-fought win here on Thursday.

Satwiksairaj and Chirag, seeded third in the tournament, beat the English pair of Rory Easton and Zach Russ 22-24, 21-15, 21-11 in a pre-quarter-final match that lasted one hour and two minutes.

The Indian duo, who recently won the French Open Super 750 title, will be up against the seventh-seeded English duo of Ben Lane and Sean Vandy in the quarterfinals.

In the women's singles, Aakarshi Kashyap lost 13-21, 14-21 to Line Kjaersfeld of Denmark in the round of 16.

In the women's doubles, the pair of Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand won 21-18, 21-19 against the Dutch duo of Debora Jille and Cheryl Seinen. Treesa and Gayatri face Chinese Taipei's Hsu Ya Ching and Lin Wan Ching in the quarterfinals.

However, Rutaparna Panda and Swetaparna Panda lost 16-21, 7-21 to Hu Ling Fang and Lin Xiao Min of Chinese Taipei in the women's doubles pre-quarterfinals.



Son to have facial surgery, putting WC in doubt

AP ■ LONDON

Tottenham on Wednesday said forward Son Heung-min will undergo surgery on a fracture around his left eye, putting the South Korean star's World Cup at risk.

Son was forced off during the first half of Spurs' 2-1 win over Marseille on Tuesday that secured their place in the last 16 of the Champions League.

"We can confirm that Heung-Min Son will undergo surgery to stabilise a fracture around his left eye," Tottenham said in a statement.

"Following surgery, Son will commence rehabilitation with our medical staff and we shall update supporters further in due course."

The Premier League club gave no date for his return, but he faces a race against time to

be fit for South Korea's opening match of the World Cup against Uruguay on November 24.

Son is his country's captain and a national icon thanks to his exploits for both club and country.

The 30-year-old has scored 35 goals in 106 international appearances and won Gold at the Asian Games in 2018, a medal which secured him an exemption from national service.

South Korea also face Portugal and Ghana in Group H. Son seems certain to miss Tottenham's Premier League clash with Liverpool on Sunday.

Antonio Conte's men also face Nottingham Forest in the League Cup and Leeds before club football breaks for the World Cup.

Jabeur keeps WTA Finals bid on track

AP ■ FORT WORTH

World number two Ons Jabeur of Tunisia rallied from a set down to beat Jessica Pegula 1-6, 6-3, 6-3 on Wednesday and push the American to the brink of elimination in the WTA Finals.

The round-robin defeat left Pegula's fate resting on the outcome of a later match between seventh-ranked Aryna Sabalenka and No. 5 Maria Sakkari of Greece.

Sabalenka would remain atop the Nancy Richey group with a victory, which would eliminate Pegula.

Meanwhile Jabeur, a finalist at Wimbledon and the US Open this year, has bounced back from an opening loss to Sabalenka in her first appearance in the season-ending event.

Pegula roared through the opening set, winning six straight games after dropping the first.

Jabeur responded with an early break for a 2-1 lead in the second before dropping her serve at love.



Jabeur managed to right the ship, breaking twice in a row to force the third set. The decider was tightly contested, Pegula failing to convert five early break points. Jabeur finally gained the upper hand with a break for 5-3 and polished off the win after an hour and 41 minutes.

"After the first set, she was playing really well and really fast," Jabeur said. "The balls were tough, very low. I know she likes to play the balls like that. And I just had to find that click to just change up the rhythm and impose my game."

Nadal stunned by Paul at Paris Masters

AP ■ PARIS

Rafael Nadal crashed out of the Paris Masters in the second round on Wednesday after losing in three sets to American Tommy Paul, boosting Carlos Alcaraz's hopes of finishing the year as world number one.

Nadal was playing his first singles match in two months after a short break at home in Mallorca with his wife and newborn son.

The 22-time Grand Slam champion shook off an early break in the opening set by winning five of the next six games.

But Paul recovered from dropping serve in the third game of the second set to win a tie-break, having failed to convert a set point with Nadal serving at 4-5.

The Spaniard's lack of match practice told as Paul dominated the final set, breaking three times to seal the biggest win of his career.

His reward is a meeting with Pablo Carreno Busta for a place in the quarter-finals.

Alcaraz, the reigning US Open champion, will play Grigor Dimitrov in the last 16 after defeating Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka 6-4, 6-4.

The 19-year-old smacked 30 win-



ners including nine aces despite a heavily-taped left knee, an issue he had downplayed on Monday.

"I tried to find my best level. I

think I played really well. I don't think about the pressure of being world number one," said Alcaraz.

The Spaniard was presented with

NADAL WAS PLAYING HIS FIRST SINGLES MATCH IN TWO MONTHS AFTER A SHORT BREAK AT HOME IN MALLORCA WITH HIS WIFE AND NEWBORN SON

the world number one trophy earlier in the week, having become the youngest player to top the ATP rankings in September.

"I felt number one before getting the trophy, but of course with the trophy, is amazing. It was amazing feeling when I had the trophy in my hands."

MEDVEDEV BEATEN

Nadal's early exit was preceded by that of Daniil Medvedev, the 2020 Paris champion who was knocked out by Australia's Alex de Minaur 6-4, 2-6, 7-5.

De Minaur, who had not previously beaten a top-five player, will now face US Open semi-finalist Frances Tiafoe, who eased past Jack Draper 6-3, 7-5.

Felix Auger-Aliassime qualified for the season-ending Tour finals for the first time, with Andrey Rublev

completing the eight-man field in Turin after Taylor Fritz and Hubert Hurkacz both lost.

Auger-Aliassime began his bid for a fourth title in four weeks by battling back from the brink to beat Mikael Ymer in three hours and 30 minutes.

The Canadian eighth seed scraped through 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (8/6) to extend his winning streak to 14 matches. Fritz was upset 7-5, 5-7, 6-4 by the 37-year-old Gilles Simon, who is retiring after the tournament.

Hurkacz's qualification hopes ended with his 7-5, 6-1 loss to Danish teenager Holger Rune.

Fifth-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas had no problem in seeing off Britain's Dan Evans 6-3, 6-4 to book his place in the last 16.

Italy's Lorenzo Musetti beat Nikoloz Basilashvili of Georgia 6-4, 6-2 to set up a last-16 meeting with third seed Casper Ruud.

Pakistan stay alive in T20 WC

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Shadab Khan produced a special all-round effort as Pakistan kept their semifinal hopes alive with a 33-run win over South Africa in a rain-curtailed T20 World Cup match here on Thursday.

Shadab first led Pakistan's strong batting display with a scintillating 22-ball 52, propelling them to 185 for nine after opting to bat.

Shaheen Shah Afridi (3/14) and Shadab (2/16) then blew away the South African top order as the Proteas could manage 108 for 9 in 14 overs.

As per DLS method, South Africa were set a revised target of 142 runs in 14 overs after the rain interruption.

With the win, Pakistan (4 points) moved up to the third spot in group 2 While South Africa (5 points) continued to stay second behind leaders India (6 points).

While Shaheen got rid of the dangerous Quinton de Kock (0) and Riley Rossouw (7), Shadab accounted for skipper Temba Bavuma (36) and Aiden Makram (20) before rain interrupted play.

With South Africa needing 73 off five overs after rain cut short the game by six overs, Tristan Stubbs (18) and Heinrich Klaasen (15) came all guns blazing.

Under the pump, Klaasen slapped Shadab for a four before hitting Shaheen for back-to-back boundaries through the cow corner and over mid off but couldn't keep the antics going as the left-armer forced an inside edge to claim South Africa's fifth wicket.

South Africa missed the services of their ace batter David Miller who was ruled out due to an injury as the Proteas lost wickets at regular intervals in a bid to hit boundaries and sixes.



Earlier, Iftikhar Ahmed made 51 in 35 balls and anchored the innings after they were tottering at 43/4 in the seventh over.

Shadab, who reached his half-century in 20 balls, struck four sixes and three fours in his whirlwind knock.

Opting to bat after winning the toss, Pakistan lost an early wicket in Mohammed Rizwan, who played

on after being cramped for room by a Wayne Parnell delivery that nipped back just enough to create problems for the batter.

Drafted into the squad as a reinforcement for an injured Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Harris came in at the fall of first wicket and immediately started finding the fence.

With the help of three sixes and two fours, Harris smashed 28 off 11

balls.

However, Harris was trapped in front of the wicket by Anrich Nortje after the batter shuffled across to play the ball through midwicket but failed to connect.

Harris reviewed but the decision stayed as Pakistan, from 38 for one, slipped to 43 for four in a span of two overs.

The in-form Iftikhar, along with

Haris approved as replacement for Zaman

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Pakistan on Thursday replaced injured Fakhar Zaman with batting all-rounder Mohammad Harris just hours before their crucial T20 World Cup match against South Africa here.

Harris, who can also bowl off spin, was approved as a replacement by the event's technical committee after Zaman was ruled out of the tournament with posterior cruciate ligament damage in his right knee.

"The event technical committee of the T20 World Cup has approved Mohammad Harris as a replacement for Fakhar Zaman in the Pakistan squad," the ICC said in a press release.

Harris, 21, has played only one T20 international, against England in Lahore in September.

The replacement of a player requires the approval of the event technical committee before the replacement player can be officially added to the squad.

Mohammad Nawaz (28 off 22 balls), steadied the innings with a partnership of 52 runs for the fifth wicket before the latter was out lbw to left-arm wrist spinner Tabraiz Shamsi.

Shadab joined Iftikhar and started accelerating straightway to prop up Pakistan in the back-10.

Anrich Nortje was the most successful bowler for South Africa with figures of 4/41.



My focus is always on consistency: Arshdeep

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Young India pacer Arshdeep Singh has credited his impressive run in the T20 World Cup to "consistency" in his bowling line on the hard and bouncy Australian pitches.

The 23-year-old left-arm pacer has taken nine wickets from four matches in the T20 showpiece with 3/32 against Pakistan being the best.

"My focus was always on consistency. You cannot afford to give too many loose balls at international level. I want to be good while bowling with the new ball and with the old ball. I want to pick wickets or control runs as per need," Arshdeep said.

"Paras Mhambrey (Indian team bowling coach) worked with me on my run up. He said, if I come straight, I will get more consistency with my line. You cannot afford bad lines on Australia wickets," he said on Star Sports.

"So, I am putting efforts to come straight and I am able to see the results but I hope to do better."

Arshdeep has bowled some crucial overs in the death by relying on his yorkers.

Asked how he is trying to manage his length in Australian conditions, he said, "We reached Perth around one week before and worked on our lengths because everyone had different lengths."

"So while practicing we were able to figure out the lengths with bounce. I guess with good preparation we get good results."

Having made his India debut earlier this year, Arshdeep has already produced some impactful performances in the T20 World Cup, including a three-wicket haul against Pakistan.

He returned with two wickets each in the next three matches -- against the Netherlands, South Africa and Bangladesh.

Williamson wants to hit top gear

AP ■ ADELAIDE

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson said Thursday he was staying patient and working to hit top gear as the Black Caps look to clinch a T20 World Cup semi-final berth against Ireland.

New Zealand are in pole position on net run rate in Group 1 but level on points with England and Australia with one game remaining, meaning victory against Ireland in Adelaide should guarantee a semi-final spot.

Williamson is one of the world's leading batsmen in Test cricket, but has often struggled with the demands of the shorter format where he bats at the key number three position.

He has struggled to convert starts into bigger scores or to accelerate, with his strike rate at a modest 122.51 runs per 100 balls.

He was at the crease for almost 13 overs, taking 40 balls and 57 minutes to make 40 on Tuesday as New Zealand failed to chase down 180 to beat England.

"You're always wanting to get better, and cricket is a pretty fickle game by its nature," Williamson told reporters.

"You sort of do go through different periods where there's better rhythm and then other times where you're working harder and you're trying to make sure that you're making a valuable contribution."

"So that's the focus... and staying a little bit patient with it, as well. The game forever challenges us."



Williamson's 23 in 23 balls in his team's opening win against hosts Australia contrasted with teammate Devon Conway's 92 off 58 balls as New Zealand smashed 200 in their 20 overs.

He scratched around for eight off 13 balls in the previous match against Sri Lanka.

Other New Zealand batsmen have stepped up, with Glenn Phillips hitting 104 off 64 balls against Sri Lanka in Sydney to rescue the team from 15-3 and a 36-ball 62 against England in Brisbane.

"He's been absolutely on fire in all facets of the game," Williamson said of Phillips.

"That hundred that he got in Sydney on a difficult surface was exceptional, one of the best T20 knocks that I've seen, and

he's a real power dynamic player, and we see that in the field, as well."

Ireland's semi-final hopes are all but over but they would love to put in one final giant-killing act having already beaten the West Indies and England in the tournament.

Ireland pace bowler Josh Little said they were looking for nothing less than a win against New Zealand.

"I think if you just look at the tournament so far, you've seen upsets nearly every day or every second day, if you can even call them upsets any more," he said.

"Everyone is pretty competitive. It's a World Cup. Anything can happen. Yeah, we're going out there fully confident and hoping to get a win tomorrow."

Nurul accuses Kohli of 'fake fielding'

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Bangladesh wicketkeeper-batter Nurul Hasan has accused Indian maestro Virat Kohli of "fake fielding", robbing his team of five potentially vital penalty runs in their T20 World Cup game.

Set a revised target of 151 in 16 overs after a brief spell of rain, Bangladesh fell short by five runs.

While his skipper Shakib Al Hasan conceded that they lost fair and square, Nurul, who kept Bangladesh in the game in the final over with a six and a four off Arshdeep Singh, seemed to criticise the on-field umpires after the game.

The incident went unnoticed by the match officials.

"Definitely, the wet outfield did have



an impact when we restarted the game. But there was also a fake throw which could have got us five runs but we didn't even get that," Nurul said in Bengali

at the mixed zone, indirectly accusing umpires Chris Brown and Marais Erasmus of overlooking the incident. The incident that Nurul was refer-

ring to happened in the seventh over. A video recording showed that Arshdeep threw the ball from the deep and Kohli -- at point -- feigned as if he were relaying it at the non-striker's end.

A relay throw is one where the fielder closer to the track catches the ball from deep and throws it at the stumps.

The two batters -- Litton Das and Najmul Hossain Shanto -- didn't even look at Kohli and that's why Nurul's argument raises questions.

The ICC playing conditions rule 41.5, which pertains to unfair play, prohibits fielding team from "deliberate, distraction, deception or obstruction of the batter".

If the umpire finds any one has breached the rule, he can call it a dead ball and award five penalty runs.

Kohli, Jemi, Deepti nominated for ICC 'Player of the Month'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Batting maestro Virat Kohli, Balong with the Asia Cup winning duo of Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma, were on Thursday nominated for the ICC 'Player of the Month' award in the men's and women categories, respectively.

The nominations are for the month of October.

While Kohli has been nominated for the first time, following his heroics with the bat in the T20 World Cup wins against arch-rivals Pakistan and the Netherlands, Rodrigues and Sharma were shortlisted after they played pivotal roles in the Indian women's team's Asia

Cup triumph.

Rodrigues ended the tournament as the leading run-scorer, while teammate Sharma was named Player of the Tournament and joint leading wicket-taker.

Kohli registered 205 runs in October, showing glimpses of his very best form. He looked at ease in scoring an unbeaten 62 against a dogged Netherlands.

However, the highlight was the era-defining innings played in front of a full house in Melbourne, as his side claimed a historic victory against Pakistan. South Africa's David Miller and Sikandar Raza of Zimbabwe were also nominated alongside Kohli.

HP to face Mumbai in SMAT final

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Shreyas Iyer was at his destructive best en route to a 44-ball 73 as the mighty Mumbai made short work of the 165-run target to outplay Vidarbha by five wickets and enter the final of the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 Trophy here on Thursday.

Mumbai lost their skipper Ajinkya Rahane early but the in-form Prithvi Shaw (34 off 21) and Iyer ensured their team romped home in 16.5 overs.

Vidarbha had made 164 for seven with wicketkeeper batter Jitesh Sharma smashing 46 not out off 24 balls.

Mumbai will meet Himachal Pradesh in the final on Saturday.

Iyer showed ominous touch and warmed up nicely for the limited overs tour of New Zealand later this month. His knock comprised seven fours and four sixes. Sarfaraz Khan also chipped in with 27 off 19 balls.

Shivam Dube finished the game with a couple of sixes to remain unbeaten on 13 off four balls.

"I am happy that I took it till the end. My mindset was to stay in the attacking mode. Dew factor played an important part as well. We tried to punish the loose balls. The spinners also didn't get much turn," said Iyer after the semi-final at the Eden Gardens.

He also praised Shaw for his cameo at the top of the order.

"When Prithvi was batting, you always keep getting runs. We told him to stay at least till the first six overs. Few of our good batters didn't get a start. I was connecting almost on everything."

"I missed out on a few shots in the last game. The opposition is always under



pressure in a game like this. HP have done well as well.

"You can't underestimate anyone. It is important to execute the plan on the given day," Iyer said, referring to Mumbai's opponents in the final.

HP STUN PUNJAB

A whirlwind half-century from Sumeet Verma was complemented by a three-wicket haul from Rishi Dhawan as Himachal Pradesh continued their fairytale run to enter the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy final with a 13-run win over Punjab.

Sent in to bat, Sumeet slammed three fours and as many maximums in his 25-ball 51, while Akash Vasisht scored 43 off 24 balls, laced with four hits to the fence and two sixes to steer HP to 176 for 7.

In response, Shubman Gill made a 32-ball 45 at the top while Anmol Preet Singh (30),

Mandeep Singh (29) and Ramandeep Singh (29) tried their bit but it wasn't enough as they were limited to 163-7 in their 20 overs.

Dhawan did most of the damage for Himachal as he produced the first breakthrough, dismissing opener Abhishek Sharma (1), Pukhraj Mann (10) and Ramandeep.

Mayank Dagar (2/27), Kanwar Abhinay Singh (1/27) and Akash Vasisht (1/8) were also among wickets.

Himachal, the 2021-22 Vijay Hazare Trophy winners, were 32 for 2 in the powerplay but Sumeet and Akash then put on 45 off 23 balls to take the team close to the 100-mark.

Once Sumeet fell to Sanvir Singh in the 13th over, Akash took the onus on himself and added another 47 off 27 with Pankaj Jaswal (27) to lift them to a competitive total. Jaswal clobbered two fours and a six in his 16-ball cameo.



AP ■ ADELAIDE

Australia captain Aaron Finch on Thursday said he could pull out of his team's pivotal final Super 12 match at the T20 World Cup against Afghanistan because of a hamstring injury.

Finch hit form on Monday with a 44-ball 63 in the win against Ireland but was unable to field after feeling a "twinge" during Ireland's innings.

The defending champions will probably have to beat Afghanistan on Friday by a big margin in Adelaide to have any chance of making the semi-finals as one of the two top teams in Group 1.

But opener Finch and middle-order batsman Tim David, who also has a hamstring niggle, are struggling to be fit.

"I will test out properly this afternoon to make sure that I am not hindering the side at all leading into the game," said Finch.

"Because that's the worst possible scenario that you leave the guys short out there with one play-

er fewer."

David hurt his hamstring while batting and did not take field in Ireland's chase.

"He is in exactly the same boat. We will know more during training," said Finch.

Wicketkeeper Matthew Wade will lead Australia if Finch has to sit out.

Australia began their campaign with a big loss to New Zealand which left them with a poor net run rate which could now jeopardise their semi-finals chances.

Third in Group 1, but level on five points with New Zealand and England, Australia's fate will depend on other results even if they beat Afghanistan handsomely.

"I think the reality is our first game has put us in this situation, so that's OK," said Finch.

"We knew for the rest of the tournament it's going to come down to run rate if things go well. "But there are still two (other) games to be played in the pool as

well, so first and foremost we've got to get those two points."

New Zealand play Ireland in the first match of an Adelaide double-header on Friday, while England face Sri Lanka on Saturday in Sydney in the final Group 1 encounter.

Afghanistan, who are out of the final-four race after two of their matches were washed out, have injury concerns over leading spinner Rashid Khan.

Rashid struggled with his back and a knee problem in the defeat to Sri Lanka, but assistant coach Rais Ahmadzai said Thursday he was "fine and training" and the side wanted to finish the tournament in style.

"It's really not an easy game for us, to play against Australia in Australian conditions, but we are here to give them a tough time," said Ahmadzai.

"I think Australia will be under pressure because they want to win, and we are here to finish the tournament with a high morale."