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UNFAIR WORK WAGES
FOR THE FAIR GENDER

WORLD 8

DEADLOCK DEEPENS OVER FILING OF
FIR OVER ATTACK ON IMRAN KHAN

MONEY 10

SUGAR EXPORT CALL AFTER
YIELD REVIEW: CENTRE

NEW DELHI, MONDAY NOVEMBER 7, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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INDIA TO FACE
ENGLAND IN
T20 WC SEMIS
12 SPORT

BJP bags 4 of 7 seats in bypolls



Supporters burst firecrackers to celebrate after BJP candidate Kusum Devi won from Gopalganj Assembly constituency, during the Bihar Assembly byelection, in Patna on Sunday

PTI

Gain for BJP, loss for Cong, setback for Mahagathbandhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The result of the seven bypolls across six States on Sunday saw continued ascendancy of the BJP, marginalisation of the Congress, and a setback for the newly-stitched

Mahagathbandhan in Bihar. Among the seven seats where bypolls were held, the BJP earlier held three seats and the Congress two, while the Shiv Sena and the RJD had one each.

The BJP retained its three seats and wrested one from the Congress, which lost both the seats it contested — Adampur in Haryana and Mudugode in Telangana.

The Congress had won

both the seats in the last Assembly polls and the elections were necessitated there due to the defection of its winning candidates to the BJP.

While the BJP won the Adampur seat, the TRS captured the Mudugode seat after a keen contest with the BJP. The Congress finished distant third. The result will boost the morale of the BJP which had won just one seat in the 2018 Assembly polls in the State. The poor performance of the Congress shows that Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, which passed through the State, did nothing to arrest the decline of the Congress.

For the BJP, winning the Gopalganj seat will also be seen as a great success since its candidates was pitted against the might of seven-party Grand Alliance. The BJP candidate capitalised on the sympathy factor and also gained from damage inflicted on the RJD nominee by the BSP and AIMIM. The BSP had fielded Indra Devi, wife of RJD supremo Lalu Prasad's brother-in-law Sadhu Yadav, who wielded considerable sway at the home turf of the Lalu's family.

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Suryakumar Yadav bats during the T20 World Cup cricket match between India and Zimbabwe in Melbourne, Australia, on Sunday. Suryakumar reaffirmed his status as a short-format magician with another magnificent effort as India crushed Zimbabwe by 71 runs to set up a T20 World Cup semifinal date with the mighty England. Surya, who has matched the peerless Virat Kohli stroke-for-stroke in this World Cup, smashed an unbeaten 61 off 25 balls in India's imposing total of 186 for 5. Zimbabwe's batting depth was never enough to surpass that score and they were shot out for 115 in 17.2 overs with Ravichandran Ashwin (3/22) enjoying a good day at the office

PTI

Govt mulling restoration of J&K's State tag, hints FM

New Delhi: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday dropped a hint that Centre is considering restoring State status to Jammu and Kashmir, reported ANI.

During the event of Centre-State relations — Cooperative Federalism: The Path Towards Atma Nirbhar Bharat, the Finance Minister said, "Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi fully accepted the Finance Commission (report) and that is why today States get 42 per cent of the amount (tax collected) — now reduced by 41 per cent because J&K is no longer a State. It will soon become... may be some time."

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CAPSULE

I&B OFFICER & WRITER EXPOSING JEHAAD KILLED

Mysuru: RN Kulkarni, a retired IB officer and writer of books exposing jihad, died after being a numberplate-less car ran over him on purpose in Mysuru.

PDP LEADER ABDUL HAQ KHAN QUILTS PARTY

Srinagar: Senior PDP leader Abdul Haq Khan on Sunday resigned from the party.

Curbs on diesel cars lifted as wind improves Delhi air to 'very poor'

Gzb shuts schools as pollution spikes

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Sunday directed authorities to lift the ban on plying of non-BS VI diesel-run light motor vehicles in Delhi-NCR and entry of trucks into the Capital under the final stage of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). The restrictions were imposed three days ago.

The decision has come after the Delhi's air pollution levels improved marginally and hovered around the lower end of the "very poor" category on Sunday primarily due to favourable wind speed and a drop in the contribution of stubble burning.

However, the Ghaziabad administration ordered to ban all private construction activities and close schools due to worsening air pollution.



A fuzzy sight of India Gate amid heavy smog in New Delhi on Sunday

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

In Delhi, the 24-hour average air quality index stood at 339 at 4 pm, dropping from 381 a day ago. It was 447 on Friday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board. It had jumped to 450 on Thursday, just a notch short of the "severe plus" category, prompting authorities to invoke the final stage of anti-

pollution curbs, including a ban on non-BS VI diesel LMVs.

The areas in the national Capital which recorded an air quality index in the "very poor" category included Alipur with its AQI at 357, Shadipur at 321, NSIT Dwarka at 348, DTU Delhi at 306, ITO at 335, Sirifort at 351, Mandir Marg at

333, RK Puram at 365 and Aya Nagar at 333.

"As the present Air Quality Index (AQI) level of Delhi is around 339 which is about 111 AQI points below the threshold for invoking the GRAP Stage-IV actions (Delhi AQI > 450) and preventive/mitigative/ restrictive actions under all stages up to Stage-IV are underway, there is a likelihood of sustaining the improvement in AQI. The forecast by IMD/ IITM also does not indicate any steep degradation further," the CAQM said after a review meeting.

"The sub-committee, accordingly, hereby decides to revoke the order, issued vide dated November 3, 2022, for actions under Stage-IV of GRAP with immediate effect. The sub-Committee shall be keeping a close watch on the air quality scenario and may take appropriate decisions depending on the air quality, as recorded from time to time, and the forecasts made by IMD/IITM to this effect," it added.

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Parties spreading hatred, defaming Guj will be swept out of State: Modi

PTI ■ NANA PONDHA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the forces that are indulged in spreading hatred and defaming Gujarat will be swept out of the State again in the next month's Assembly polls which he said BJP would win with a record margin.

Addressing his first election rally in his home State after the announcement of the poll schedule, Modi came up with a new slogan in Gujarati — "Aa Gujarat, mai banavyu chhe" (I have made this Gujarat) — and also made people chant it several times during his 25-minute-long speech.

"Those divisive forces that have indulged in spreading hatred, those who have tried to defame and insult Gujarat have been swept out of Gujarat. The people of Gujarat never accept those who spread hate.

"Whoever had tried to defame and insult Gujarat in the past have been wiped out of Gujarat by the people. In this election too, such people will



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses during a BJP election campaign rally for Gujarat Assembly elections, in Valsad on Sunday

PTI

meet the same fate," the Prime Minister said while launching the Bharatiya Janata Party's poll campaign from tribal-dominated Nana Pondha village in Kaprada taluka in Valsad district.

Without taking any names,

Modi said the people of Gujarat have identified a "gang" working against Gujarat which always tries to defame the State.

He added that though such people have been trying hard for the last two decades, the

people of Gujarat never believed them.

"Those who try to defame Gujarat are surprised why people of Gujarat are not believing their false propaganda. This is because the people of this State have made Gujarat with hard work and they will never allow someone to harm the State," said Modi.

Modi said he was getting inputs that the BJP will win the elections in Gujarat with a record margin.

Gujarat will vote in two phases on December 1 and 5. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 8.

"Sitting in Delhi, I am getting inputs that BJP will win Gujarat with a record margin this time. I have come here to beat my past records. I have told Gujarat BJP that I am ready to give as much time as possible to you (for campaigning)," said Modi, who had served as the Chief Minister of the State before he became the Prime Minister for the first time in 2014.

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Centre slams Raj, Punjab for failing to check farm fires

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over Delhi's air quality remaining in the "very poor" category for the fifth day in a row, the Centre on Sunday accused Rajasthan and Punjab Governments for not doing enough to curb air pollution related stubble burning cases which, it alleged, have risen by 160 per cent in Rajasthan and 20 per cent in Punjab.

Union Minister of Science

and Technology Jitendra Singh said, "The Governments in the two States are not doing enough to check stubble burning and are, on the contrary, increasingly contributing to the deteriorating air quality in Delhi-NCR."

The Minister, who is also in-charge of the IMD, Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, said unlike Punjab and Rajasthan, Haryana and UP have recorded progressive decline in stubble fire cases.

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Cong will keep promises, save Guj from deceit of BJP: Rahul

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/AHEMDABAD

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said his party will fulfil the promises it has made to the people of Gujarat and save them from the "deceit" of the BJP's "double engine."

The party also released a 22-point "chargesheet" against the State BJP Government ahead of the upcoming Assembly polls, accusing it of being anti-people.

All that an average Gujarati got was "hunger, fear and tyranny," it claimed.

The Opposition party also highlighted in the "chargesheet" the recent Morbi bridge collapse incident which claimed 135 lives, and dubbed as "unconstitutional" the release of 11 convicts in the Bilkis Bano gangrape case.

Elections to the 182-member Gujarat Assembly will be held in two phases on December 1 and 5 and the



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with lawyer Prashant Bhushan and activist Yogendra Yadav during the party's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Medak district on Sunday

PTI

counting of votes will be held on December 8.

The last three decades of Gujarat have been marred by "continuous anti-people governance and mismanagement," the Congress said in the

"chargesheet."

The Opposition party appealed to the public to vote it to power to make the "Gujarat of Mahatma Gandhi and Sardar Patel proud again".

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UCC, 8L jobs, curb on Waqf assets' misuse in BJP's HP Sankalp Patra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday promised to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Himachal Pradesh and create massive job opportunities and five medical colleges in the State.

Releasing the party's manifesto, BJP national president JP Nadda, along with Union Minister Anurag Thakur, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur Nadda, announced, "Waqf properties will be investigated as per law under a judicial commission and their illegal usages will be stopped."

The BJP's 11-point "Sankalp Patra" promised the creation of 8 lakh job opportunities amid criticism over unemployment and inflation by the Congress, the main Opposition in the State.

For girl students from Class 6 to Class 12, a bicycle will be given to each to go to school. In every district, two girls' hostels would be set up.



BJP national president JP Nadda, along with Union Minister Anurag Thakur, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur and others, releases BJP's manifesto for the upcoming Himachal Pradesh Assembly elections, in Shimla on Sunday

PTI

Besides, the BJP manifesto said Himachal would be getting five new medical colleges if the BJP returns to power.

Nadda, who has been campaigning in his State extensively, appealed to the people to break the trend and elect the party again to power. "Riwaaj todo, Raj nahin...", he urged the voters of Himachal.

The BJP sought to empha-

sise women's empowerment in its manifesto a day after the Congress announced 10 poll "guarantees", assuring ₹1,500 a month to every woman and to implement the old pension scheme in the State.

Announcing the poll promises, Nadda said women's empowerment remains a key focus for the party.

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FARM FIRES	OCTOBER 2021	OCTOBER 2022
PUNJAB	13,269	16,004
HARYANA	2,914	1,995
UP	1,060	768
RAJASTHAN	124	318

India hopes for fair negotiations in COP27

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The United Nations’ climate change summit opened in Egypt on Sunday with the inclusion of “loss and damage” finance in the official agenda and India hoping that fair negotiations on it would follow.

Loss and damage is a term used to refer to the consequences of climate change that go beyond what people can adapt to, or when options exist but a community doesn’t have the resources to access or utilise them.

Financing or a new fund for addressing loss and damage -- for example money needed for relocating people displaced by floods -- has been a long-pending demand of poor and developing countries, including India. But rich countries have avoided discussions on it for over a decade.

“With the inclusion of this agenda item, India will be engaging constructively and actively on the subject during the course of discussions at COP27 and hoping that fair negotiations on loss and damage follow,” read a blog post written by Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav.

“India welcomes adoption of agenda item ‘Loss and



Damage’ at COP27,” the minister said.

He said financial mechanisms under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as Global Environment Facility, Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund, are under-funded and are not able to mobilise or deliver funds for loss and damage due to climate change.

Accessing funding from these mechanisms is complex and time taking. Adaptation funding is highly inadequate and loss and damage funding has been almost negligible. Taking note of the situation, India along with other countries had been pursuing the adoption of an agenda item on loss and damage finance, the minister said. India also expected action from rich countries in terms of climate finance,

technology transfer and strengthening the capacity of poor and developing countries to combat climate change.

“India believes COP27, themed ‘Together for Implementation’, should turn out to be the ‘COP for Action’ in terms of climate finance, technology transfer and capacity building.

“The scale of the problem facing the world is huge. Action cannot be delayed and hence concrete solutions must come up and implementation must start with COP27,” Yadav said.

The 27th edition of the Conference of Parties (COP) to UNFCCC will also see the country seeking clarity on the definition of climate finance.

The absence of a definition of climate finance allows developed countries to greenwash their finances and pass off loans as climate-related aid.

SNC-Lavalin case against Vijayan not tenable: BJP leader

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI



A top leader of the BJP in Kerala has told that the decision of the CBI to continue with the SNC Lavalin case in which Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is included as an accused is sheer waste of time. The case dates back to 1997 when Vijayan was the Minister for Power in the E K Nayanar-headed Government. The charge against Vijayan was that the exchequer lost Rs 87 crore in the contract signed between Kerala State Electricity Board and the Canada based SNC-Lavalin for the renovation and modernisation of Pallivasal, Chengulam and Panniar hydroelectric projects in Idukki district of Kerala.

Though a Special CBI court had discharged Vijayan from the case which was upheld by the Kerala High Court. But three senior staff of the KSEB who were asked to stand trial approached the Supreme Court for parity of treatment and questioned the discharge of Vijayan from the case.

The Supreme Court had adjourned the case for more than 30 times since the CBI could not furnish the details of the evidences against Vijayan

that linked him to the “deal”.

“The BJP Government at the Centre has nothing to do with this case as it was a balance sheet of the UPA era,” said Narayanan Nampoothiri, spokesman of the Kerala BJP.

The Centre’s failure to link Vijayan to the Gold Smuggling through diplomatic channel in Thiruvananthapuram International Airport and to find any evidence against the chief minister in the LIFE MISSION case has resulted in the probes hitting a dead end.

The State is agog with reports linking a union minister and Kerala BJP leader K Surendran and a prominent Eezhava community leader forging a cartel with the BJP’s central leadership to freeze the probes against the Chief Minister. The Congress leaders K Sudhakaran and Leader of the Opposition V D Satheeshan have alleged that this is part of a CPI(M)-BJP deal for the “Congress-Mukth Bharat”.

UP CM Yogi warns against laxity in public welfare works

PNS ■ GORAKHPUR/LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, during the Janata Darshan organised in Gorakhpur on Sunday, gave directions for speedy and satisfactory resolution of all grievances and said that there should be no laxity in carrying out works of public welfare.

After hearing the grievances of thousands of people during the Janata Darshan, Yogi Adityanath said, “Ration cards should be made available to the needy. Those suffering from serious illnesses should be provided free treatment, medicines and examination facilities in government hospitals. HE said in case of serious illnesses, the government would immediately provide funds to the needy upon receiving estimates.”

The chief minister, during his two and a half hours interaction with the complainants, himself reached the people sitting on chairs. After hearing their problems, he assured them that their problems would be resolved.

In the Janata Darshan, a large number of the complainants were women, especially from the minority community.

NCR-PULSE

AUTO DRIVER DIES TRYING TO ESCAPE FROM POLICE
New Delhi: An autorickshaw driver, who was allegedly trying to escape from the police, died in a road accident in North Delhi’s Civil Lines on Saturday night where he was brought for allegedly harassing a woman. According to police, the deceased was identified as Rahul, 22, a resident of Majnu Ka Tila area. Rahul was called to the police station after a woman alleged that she was harassed by him. He tried to escape, but was hit by a light motor vehicle (LMV) and succumbed to the injuries later, the police said. A case of causing death by negligence and rash driving has also been registered against the driver of the LMV who is yet to be caught.At around 11:15 pm on Saturday, a 40-year-old woman came to Civil Lines police station and alleged that an autorickshaw driver misbehaved with her at a metro station, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said.

KEY CONSPIRATOR IN TRIPLE MURDER HELD IN BIHAR
New Delhi: Almost a week since three members of a family were killed in West Delhi’s Hari Nagar, a man alleged to be the key conspirator in the murders and his two other accomplices were arrested from Bihar on Sunday.According to police, Amit Mehto, 18, and his accomplices - Ramjaan, 19, and Saurabh, 20 – were nabbed from their relatives’ house in Bihar. Police recovered Rs 3.95 lakh in cash, three expensive watches, four high-end mobile phones, including 3 purchased from robbed money, jewellery, and other articles from their possession. Sameer Ahuja, 38, his wife Shalu, 35, and their maid, Sapna, 33, were found dead in their house in Hari Nagar on Tuesday. The women were found with their throats slit at a salon, run by Shalu Ahuja on the ground floor of the house. Sameer Ahuja’s body was found on the first floor with several wounds on his face and head. The couple’s minor daughter, who was sleeping in the first floor hall, was unharmed.

MAN COUGHT ON CAM URINATING ON METRO PLATFORM
New Delhi: A video of an extremely embarrassing incident that took place at a Delhi metro station is now going viral on Twitter. A guy could be seen here urinating on the subway track while waiting for the train. The station in question is supposedly the Malviya Nagar metro. A young person has reported the video to Delhi Metro by labelling it. ‘Maybe this happened first time in Delhi Metro. Just received a video on Whatsapp. Sharing with you,’ the man wrote in the caption.The embarrassing incident involving the young guy who urinated on the metro train track at the Malviya Nagar Metro Station reportedly occurred a week ago. Despite the fact that the accused’s face is being exposed in the video, he has not been apprehended as of yet. The person recording the video can be heard asking, ‘Where are you urinating? Why are you urinating here’. He replied, ‘Ho gaya, zyada ho gaya (I drank a little too much)’.

Cong will keep promises, save Guj from deceit...

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“At a time when the BJP is working to divert the attention of the public from main issues affecting them, this charge sheet has been released to draw their attention back to these issues,” former Union minister and senior Congress leader Bharatsinh Solanki said at a press conference.

The ‘charge sheet’ also claimed the Morbi bridge collapse incident of October 30 was a “BJP-created disaster” and that the ruling party and its cronies were directly responsible for it.

“The Morbi tragedy is the direct outcome of BJP’s corruption where human life holds no value,” it further claimed.

On the remission granted to 11 convicts in the Bilkis

Bano case, the Congress said the government ignored established rules and convention to release them. The decision has unmasked the BJP and its concern for the safety and security of women,” the charge sheet said.

It also claimed there was an effort to encroach upon the Gujarat Vidyapith founded by Mahatma Gandhi by “dubious means” after Governor Acharya Devvrat was appointed its chancellor.

In scathing remarks, the Congress ‘charge sheet’ said the ‘achievements’ of the BJP government include enriching a few pro-regime industrialists at the cost of government exchequer, destroying the state’s economy, widespread increase in poverty and rampant rise in

prices of essential commodities.

The rise in unemployment, commercialisation of education, lack of safety for women, mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic, communal politics, and continuous maltreatment and neglect of citizens belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are the other “achievements” of the ruling party, it added.

“The BJP talks about GDP (Gross Domestic Product), development and ‘double-engine’ government, but it changed the entire government due to failure of the single engine of the Vijay Rupani government,” Solanki claimed.

“The GDP rose 18-23 per cent in the previous government of the Congress. The

state recorded a negative growth of 1.35 per cent under the BJP government,” he further claimed.

The ‘charge sheet’ also referred to inflation, rising poverty, loss of confidence among investors, debt trap, unemployment crisis, ignored healthcare with reduction of health budget, rampant malnutrition and 90 per cent shortage of total specialists.

The opposition party also claimed that Gujarat lagged behind other states in educational indices.

“In the last five-six years, there have been 22 cases of leak of exam papers. I would like to appeal to the youth that when they go to vote, they should remember how the BJP government played with their

future,” state Congress spokesperson Alok Sharma briefed the media.

The Congress also claimed that farmers were cheated in the BJP rule with the lowest farm wages, low minimum support price (MSP) and high indebtedness.

In 2021, there were nine suicides per day by daily wage earners and those engaged in farm labour, it claimed.

The ‘charge sheet’ also raised the issues of crony capitalism, scams, rampant corruption, electricity supply issues, ignorance of tribal welfare, lack of security among Dalits, law and order situation, exploitation of workers, mistreatment of government employees and ‘demolition’ of the Panchayati Raj system.

Centre slams Raj, Punjab for failing to check farm...

From Page 1
He said, such inferences indicate that either the Governments in Rajasthan and Punjab are not serious about air quality or they have not properly utilised the funds which were provided by the Narendra Modi Government to purchase machines for stubble management.

“Punjab registered over 13,396 fire counts in the first five days of November, compared to 16,004 fires in entire October 2022, thus plunging the air quality into severe category,” he added.

Singh pointed out that since 2018-19, on the instructions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Centre

has provided ₹3,138 crore to States for stubble management, out of which nearly ₹1,500 crore was provided to Punjab alone.

In the first five days of the current month of November ending last evening, the number of fire counts was much higher in Punjab than Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. For example, on November 5, the number of fire counts in Punjab was 2817 and in Rajasthan 91 respectively, compared to 90 in Haryana and 24 in Uttar Pradesh respectively.

The highest fire count on any single day was recorded on November 2, when Punjab topped with 3,634 farm fire

incidents and the number in Rajasthan recorded up to 63.

Singh said the abnormal rise in cases of stubble burning in Punjab in the first five days of November is solely responsible for plunging the air quality into severe category. He said, Punjab registered 13,396 fire counts from 1st to November 5, while it was 16,004 for the entire month of October.

The contribution of stubble fire to the pollution level of PM2.5 is estimated by AQEWS. The contribution is estimated at 9.7 per cent on November 1, 7.4 per cent on November,2, 32 per cent on November,3 and 17.8 per cent on November,4.

Curbs on diesel cars lifted as...

From Page 1
Actions under stages I to III of GRAP will, however, remain invoked and be implemented, monitored and reviewed by all agencies concerned in the entire NCR to ensure that the AQI levels do not slip further to the “severe” category.

GRAP stage IV is a stage of disruptive restrictions that impacts a large number of stakeholders and the public at large. There are no stricter measures, than as laid in GRAP Stage-IV, that could be taken to improve upon the air quality scenario, the commission said.

The CAQM had also

directed the closure of all industries running on non-clean flues in the region, “even in areas which do not have PNG infrastructure and supply”. The number of farm fires in Punjab dropped sharply to 599 from 2817 a day ago, data from the Indian Agricultural Research Organisation (IARI) showed.

According to Safar, a forecasting agency under the Ministry of Earth and Sciences, the share of stubble burning in Delhi’s PM2.5 pollution also declined to 18 per cent from 21 per cent on Saturday.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his

Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann owned responsibility on Friday for paddy straw burning in the border State and promised to curb the practice by next winter. The number of stubble-burning incidents in Punjab rose by 12.59 per cent year-on-year to 26,583 in the last 50 days with a spurt in such cases after Diwali, according to the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.

The hazardous pollution levels prompted the Delhi Government to announce on Friday that primary schools would remain shut from Saturday and 50 per cent of its staff will work from home,

while private offices have been advised to follow suit. A six-member panel chaired by the special commissioner of transport has been set up to monitor the implementation of curbs on anti-polluting activities. Revenue commissioners have been asked to prepare a plan for staggered timings of markets and offices.

To reduce vehicular emissions, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai also appealed to the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana Chief Ministers to take measures to divert trucks carrying non-essential goods on peripheral expressways to avoid traffic jams at the Capital’s borders.

UCC, 8L jobs, curb on Waqf assets’ misuse in BJP’s HP Sankalp...

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“Whatever was promised was delivered, whatever was not promised has also been delivered,” he said further.

The UCC implementation promise has been announced in Himachal as the Gujarat Government has also recently set up a panel to review the execution of the UCC in the poll-bound State.

Uttarakhand was the first BJP-ruled State to announce the implementation of the UCC.

The BJP manifesto announced 11 “commitments” which include “Him Startup”

scheme where a fund of ₹900 crore will be arranged to promote and encourage the new entrepreneurs of the State.

It also announced the creation of 8 lakh job opportunities and five new medical colleges in the State if the BJP return to power.

The BJP president, who had been a Central Health Minister, said, “In a bid to further strengthen primary health, the number of mobile clinics will be doubled in every Assembly constituency so that people in far-off areas can avail health benefits.”

Other promises in the BJP

manifesto include all-weather roads connecting all villages with an investment of ₹5,000 crore.

Under the programme “Shakti”, ₹12,000 crore will be spent over 10 years duration to develop infrastructure and transportation around religious places and temples.

“They’ll be connected to the ‘Himteerth’ circuit,” said the BJP president.

An additional amount of ₹3,000 annually would be given under PM-Kisan Nidhi Yojana, and 10 lakh farmers would be added to the pro-

gramme.

Discrepancies in the disbursement of salaries of Government workers would be removed.

The manifesto promised increased compensation to the families of the soldiers who lost their lives in the line of duty.

It said the Goods and Services Tax would be limited to 12 per cent for apple growers.

Himachal will go to polls on November 12 as the ruling party hopes to buck the trend of the hill State not repeating a party a second time.

BJP bags 4 of 7 seats in bypolls

From Page 1
The BJP will also feel satisfied with its performance in Gola Gokranmath in Lakhimpur Kheri which was in the news last year after Union Minister Ajay Teni’s son was involved in an accident-related killing of four farmers. Incidentally, the BJP candidate won the seat by a bigger margin this time around.

The outcome shows that the efforts put up by the BJP leaders paid off. While BJP fielded its top leaders -Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in UP and Manohar Lal Khattar in Haryana- SP chief Akhilesh Yadav did not campaign at Gola Gokranmath and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar kept away from campaigning at both Mokama and Gopalganj.

The result also underlines that fact that sympathy factors influenced the outcome in a big way. Four of the winners- Rutuja Latke (Shiv Sena,

Andheri East), Anand Giri (BJP,Gola Gokranmath),Kusum Devi (BJP, Gopalganj) and Suryabanshi Suraj (BJP,Dhamnagar, Odisha)were contesting on seats which fell vacant due to the demise of their kins.

In Telangana,TRS candidate Kusukuntla Prabhakar Reddy won Munugode Assembly seat by a margin of over 10,000 votes over the BJP candidate K Rajagopal Reddy.

The Munugode by-election result reflected continued hold of the TRS on its turf vis-à-vis the BJP, which is trying hard to upstage the TRS in Telangana, due for next year’s Assembly polls.

The Congress had won the Munugode seat in 2018, and the by-election was necessitated as its MLA K Rajagopal Reddy resigned from the party and joined the BJP as its candidate in the bypoll.

Reddy conceded defeat

and accepted the verdict even when two more rounds of counting were left

RashtriyaJanata Dal (RJD)’s Neelam Devi retained Mokama seat in Bihar defeating the BJP candidate by 16,000 votes.

BJP’s Kusum Devi retained Gopalganj seat in Bihar against the RJD but with a slender margin of 1,794 votes.

BJP candidate Bhavya Bishnoi, the grandson of former Haryana Chief Minister Bhajanal, emerged victorious in the Adampur Assembly by-election with a significant margin of 16,606 votes defeating Congress candidate Jai Prakash.

The bypoll was necessitated after former Haryana chief minister Bhajan Lal’s younger son Kuldeep Bishnoi resigned as MLA and switched from the Congress to the BJP in August.

In Gola Gokranmath, BJP candidate Aman Giri won by

defeating his nearest rival and Samajwadi Party candidate by over 34,000 votes.

Rutuja Latke, the candidate of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), won the bypoll to Andheri (East) Assembly seat in Mumbai.

BJP and Shiv Sena (Eknath Shinde faction) had withdrawn from the contest in ‘deference’ to Rutuja Latke,the widow contestant of former Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Latke .

BJP’s Suryabanshi Suraj won Dhamnagar constituency in Odisha against the BJD candidate. The poll was necessitated due to the death of BJP MLA Bishnu Charan Sethi. The saffron party fielded Sethi’s son Suryabanshi Suraj as its candidate. He got 80,090 votes as against 70, 288 polled by BJD’s Abanti Das, the lone woman among the total of five candidates in Dhamnagar.

Barring Andheri East in Mumbai, all other seats wit-

nessed a keen contest between the BJP and regional parties TRS, SP, RJD and the BJD.

Among the seven seats where bypolls were held, the BJP earlier held three seats and the Congress two, while the Shiv Sena and the RJD had one each.

The Mokama seat, in Bihar, fell vacant after Anant Singh, the sitting MLA, was dismissed due to a conviction in a criminal case. The contest in Gopalganj, also in Bihar, was necessitated due to the death of sitting BJP MLA Subhash Singh.

The bypoll was necessitated in Gola Gokranmath Assembly seat of Lakhimpur Kheri district following the death of sitting MLA Arvind Giri.

The Assembly by elections of November 3 included “three political turncoats” -- two in Haryana and one in Telangana.

RAI TO DISCUSS AIR PANEL’S NEW DIRECTIONS

Delhi Govt to decide on reopening of primary schools, revocation of 50% cap on Govt offices

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai will chair a high-level meeting Monday to discuss the new directions by the Centre's air quality panel about revoking curbs imposed under the final stage of Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). Sources in the Government said that a decision on reopening primary schools and revocation of order asking 50 per cent of the Government staff to work from home is likely to be taken at the meeting. Sources further added that as the curbs have been lifted now the government may allow to run diesel cars that are not BS VI compliant on Delhi roads again, trucks carrying non-essential items can enter the city and commercial goods vehicles carrying non-essentials items can run inside the city. As Delhi's air quality index spiralled to 450, just a notch short of the 'severe plus' category, on Thursday, the Commission of Air Quality Management had directed authorities to ban the plying of non-BS VI diesel light motor vehicles in the city and adjoining NCR districts and the entry of trucks into the national capital as part of anti-pollution measures under stage IV of GRAP. The restrictions were imposed three days ago. The



A person rides a scooter on a road amid low visibility due to a thick layer of smog, in Gurugram on Sunday

PTI Photo

hazardous pollution levels prompted the Delhi government to announce on Friday that primary schools would remain shut from Saturday and 50 per cent of its staff will work from home, while private offices have been advised to follow suit. A six-member panel chaired by the special commissioner of transport has been set up to monitor the implementation of curbs on anti-polluting activities. Revenue commissioners have been asked to prepare a

plan for staggered timings of markets and offices. In a bid to ramp up public transport, the government will also launch 'Paryavaran Bus Service', which will include 500 privately-run CNG buses. To reduce vehicular emissions, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai also appealed to the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana chief ministers to take measures to divert trucks carrying non-essential goods on peripheral expressways to avoid traffic jams at the capital's borders.

Ghaziabad bans construction, to fine ₹15 lakh for violations

STAFF REPORTER ■ GHAZIABAD/NEW DELHI

After the national Capital, the Ghaziabad administration has banned private construction activities with fines up to Rs.15 lakh levied on offenders and directed schools to remain shut and instructed people not to come out of their houses unless it is necessary. The Ghaziabad district's air quality index (AQI) rose to 450 on Sunday, which prompted the administration to take measures. The AQI will get better in the coming two days, but will remain in the 'very poor' category, according to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR). "Post implementation of GRAP (Graded Response Action Plan)-3 in NCR (National Capital Region), pri-



wherein residents and officials have stated that even after the order of the district administration, work is still going on at the construction sites. "Looking at the condition of the weather, there are three paper mills which have been kept closed on Saturday and Sunday and there are around 70-80 paper mills which are closed on Wednesday and Thursday," said Vipin Kumar, ADM Ghaziabad. The ADM also said that challan will also be imposed on the sites, which have been running despite the notice. "The administration officers have said that continuous action is being taken against such works and fine will also be imposed on whichever construction site is running, if any site is going on, then that work will be stopped," said the ADM. However, violation of the directives have been reported

Transport body opposes ban on vehicles' entry

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Motor Transport Congress has opposed the Delhi Government's decision to ban certain vehicles from entering the Capital in a bid to control pollution, saying it will severely impact businesses in the season of festivals and weddings. The AIMTC alleged that

the Delhi government has since 2015 charged over Rs 1,350 crore as 'green tax' from trucks entering Delhi, but only spent less than one-fourth of it to reduce pollution in the capital. The organisation said it will consider launching an agitation against the Delhi government if it does not revoke the order. The AIMTC statement comes after the Delhi

government decided to implement anti-pollution curbs as recommended by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM). The restrictions include a ban on non-BS VI diesel-run light motor vehicles and diesel medium and heavy goods vehicles, except those carrying essential commodities and providing essential services.

However, all CNG and electric trucks will be allowed to enter Delhi, according to an order by the transport department. According to AIMTC chairman KS Atwal, the Delhi government has collected Rs 1,355 crore as green tax in seven years in a bid to curb pollution. "However, it has used only around 290 crore (21 per cent), and that too in non-productive

activities," he alleged. Atwal claimed that ban has hit transport sector hard and around 150 trucks loaded with goods are found parked at borders. "This number will increase manifold in coming days as around 1,000 trucks from far off places like Mumbai, Kolkata and Bengaluru are en route to Delhi," he said.

BJP spent ₹35 cr against sanctioned ₹6.7cr, hosp still incomplete: Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Sunday accused the BJP-ruled MCD of conducting a scam of Rs 35 crore in the construction of Purnima Sethi Hospital. Addressing a press conference, AAP leader Atishi claimed that only the ground and the first floors of the hospital in Kalkaji were functional. Atishi said, "In 2005, Purnima Sethi Hospital was sanctioned at a cost of 6.70 crores, till date BJP has spent 35 crores on it but the hospital is still incomplete. BJP promised a multi-specialty hospital but it has completely failed at doing so. On one hand, the Kejriwal Government is building world-class hospitals and Mohalla Clinics, on the other BJP is failing at even building one hospital. "For the last 15 years, the BJP has been in power at the



Corporation and has done just two things - corruption and misgovernance. One of the biggest examples that highlight both these things is the Purnima Sethi Hospital in Kalkaji. It was in 2005 that the MCD started the construction of this hospital. This was meant to be a multi-specialty hospital with 100 beds. The total cost of constructing this hospital was to be Rs 6.70 crores. It is 2022 now and yet the construction of this hospital has not yet been completed," She alleged. "Just look at the works of the Delhi

Government in contrast to this. We have been able to create a Mohalla Clinic in nearly all the areas of the city. We have also been able to provide free medicines and tests to the people of the state. We recently also started the Mahila Mohalla Clinics which will specially cater to the needs of the women. We have also started multi-specialty hospitals including the Indira Gandhi Hospital in Dwarka or the hospitals in Burari and Ambedkar Nagar," she said while informing about the work done by the AAP in the health sector.

MCD refutes charges over Purnima Sethi hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The MCD on Sunday denied the charges made by AAP leader Atishi on Purnima Sethi hospital saying the completion of the Multi-specialty Hospital Rs 13 crore is pending with the Delhi Government. "Kalkaji Colony Hospital (subsequently named as Purnima Sethi Multi-specialty Hospital) was originally envisaged to be constructed as five storied with one basement (floor area 9371 sqm). With implementation of Master Plan 2021, it was decided to avail the relaxed norms of FAR and height of the building," it said.

"Accordingly the proposal was revised for eight storied building with two basements (total floor area of 24852 sqm). The original sanctioned cost was Rs. 20.17 crores and not 6.7 crore as falsely claimed and this original cost was revised to Rs 52.25 Crores as there was expansion of nearly three-time in the covered area of the building," the statement said. "The Hospital building is largely complete but final works could not be finished due to non allocation of funds under the medical (Plan) sector by Delhi Government which has stalled the execution of pending works such as internal and

external electrification, air conditioning, lifts, Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), fire fighting and fire control etc," it stated. "The proposal to take up the balance works amounting to Rs. 13 crores is ready since last two years but due to non availability of funds these essential works are yet to be taken up for making the entire building fully operational. The non completion of pending works due to non provisioning of Rs. 13 crore by Delhi Government are the stumbling block to run the Hospital as multi-specialty Hospital," the statement further added.

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday intensified its attack on Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and demanded the transfer of jailed Minister Satyendar Jain from Tihar jail to another prison after common Suresh Chandrashekhar alleged that he was forced to bring "over 30 people to contribute Rs 500 crore towards his party". Union minister Meenakshi Lekhi on Sunday demanded that jailed AAP minister Satyendar Jain be transferred to some other prison outside Delhi. Lekhi alleged that Jain was indulging in "extortion" of money from inside the jail, citing a letter by conman Suresh Chandrashekhar.



Bhatia said, "This letter exposes Arvind Kejriwal as a maha (great) thug who conned (the) common and has cheated his every friend." With the help of Chandrashekhar, "Kejriwal wanted to develop tuggery into an industry, to raise money for himself and his party and he is running a Kejriwal tuggery centre," Bhatia alleged. Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri also sought explanation from the Kejriwal. He said that Kejriwal and his ministers and MLAs deserves Bharat Ratna in corruption.

"The Delhi government and the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi should transfer Satyendar Jain to another jail. How can he continue to remain as the jail minister despite being in jail? He is influential and extorts money from inside the jail," Lekhi at a press conference in the national capital. Lekhi also asked the Kejriwal government to explain why the AAP took Rs 50 crore from "maha thug Suresh Chandrashekhar". Jain, arrested by enforcement directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case, is currently lodged in Mandoli jail in Delhi. The BJP has dubbed Kejriwal a "maha thug" and demanded his resignation. Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters on Saturday, spokesperson Gaurav

Party spokesperson Shehzad Poonawala asked Kejriwal if he had met the conman "at the farmhouse of his minister Kailash Gahlot" and sought to know what discussions were held. In his letter, Chandrashekhar has allegedly said that he was asked Rs 50 crore for Rajya Sabha seat by Jain and also to arrange 30 persons to provide Rs 500 crore for expansion of AAP in Southern India. The AAP has alleged that the BJP is using Chandrashekhar against the party as it is scared by the prospect of its defeat in Gujarat Assembly polls and MCD polls in Delhi.

Delhiites have mixed opinion on MCD's work of past 5 years

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

The Market traders Associations (MTAs) and the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) of South Delhi have mixed opinions on the work of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in the past five years and are going to vote on the issues such as sanitation and parking facilities. Nageshwar Singh, MTA president, Saket, said that in the forthcoming elections the main demand of the people from Saket will be sanitation. There is no proper sanitation arrangement made by the corporation in the last five years. "The san-

itation workers do not come to collect the waste on regular basis. After various complaints given by the people residing in the area to the civic body, there no action taken by them in the matter," Singh said. "The Dhalao of the waste is used by the MCD for storing their equipment, instead of garbage, the streets are filled with waste in front of the PVR mall, due to the mall is also not clean," he said. "The community hall made by the MCD has broken tiles in it and we have been approaching the municipal officials to get it repaired but no one addresses the grievance. We will vote by keeping in view

all the current situation," Singh added. While appreciating the work done by the BJP in the MCD, Sharda, MTA president, Greater Kailash, said that they are really satisfied with the work done by the saffron party councilors in the area. "In our area, there was a major problem for the parking, but it was also resolved as a multi-level parking is being constructed in the area by the MCD," he said. Criticising the AAP, Sharda said that they won't be handing over the reign of the corporation into the hands of the corrupt Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. We don't want the MCD to become like the other departments in

Delhi where corruption is done by the AAP. Over the remarks of Kejriwal to clean the three landfill sites, Sharda said that this was a blatant lie and that for eight years he promised the people that he will clean the Yamuna River but instead the river has become more polluted. Appreciating the work of the BJP, TP Sharma, Secretary RWA, Hauz Khaz, said that they are very much satisfied with the development done by the party in their area. "The Corporation has been very supportive and whenever we have reported any problem and have taken stern action to solve the issue," Sharma said.

MCD removes 1,20,515 illegal banners and hoardings in city

NEW DELHI: A total of 12,0515 illegal banners and hoardings were removed by the 24 teams of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in the past two days after the implementation of the model code of conduct for the civic body polls. In all the 12 administrative zones of the Corporation, the teams have removed 120515 banners out of which 49774 were taken out on Sunday and

70741 were removed on Saturday, said an MCD senior official. According to the report released by the civic body, 4609 banners and hoardings were removed in Rohini Zone, while 2501 were taken out in Civil Line Zone. "The teams have removed 8579 banners and hoarding in Najafgarh Zone which is the highest, while the City SP zone had witnessed the lowest removal of poster 1820," it stated. SR

BJP to get ground-level feedback on leaders before shortlisting for MCD polls



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In view of a narrow window to nominate candidates for MCD polls, Delhi BJP will send teams of observers in the districts on Monday to shortlist names of probable candidates on 250 wards, party leaders have said. The nominations for elections on 250 MCD wards will begin on Monday. The last date of filing nomination is November 14. In each of 14 districts, a three-member team comprising one central delegate and two Delhi unit leaders, will be sent to collect feedback on

local leaders. Many senior BJP leaders, including CT Ravi, D Purandeshwari, Vinod Tawde, Vijaya Rahatkar, Tejasvi Surya, Sunil Deodhar, and Arvind Menon, have been appointed as central delegates. All present and past Mandal (ward) unit presidents, councillors, MLAs, as well as senior leaders in those areas including party office bearers, will give names of suitable candidates for wards, said a senior Delhi BJP leader. The party is also conducting a series of surveys to obtain ground level feedback so that candidates with good rep-

utation among voters and high winnability factor could be fielded in the polls, party leaders said. As the polls inch closer, a large number of ticket seekers alongwith their supporters have started thronging Delhi BJP office at Pant Marg. The party unit has also deputed some of its senior leaders to collect the bio-data of ticket seekers. A box has also been kept at the party office to help ticket seekers deposit their applications and bio-data. Out of the 250 wards, 50 per cent are reserved for women candidates.

BJP touring slum dwellers to newly-built flats in Kalkaji

NEW DELHI: Ahead of MCD polls, Delhi BJP is taking slum dwellers from different parts of the city for a tour of 3,024 economically-weaker-section flats in Kalkaji area recently handed over to the allottees by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Keys of the flats built to rehabilitate slum dwellers under 'In-Situ Slum Rehabilitation' Project were handed over to the allottees under 'Jahan Jhuggi Wahin Makan' scheme. "We are taking people from slum clusters to watch how the Modi government is bringing change to their lives through its welfare schemes," said Delhi BJP vice president Sunil Yadav. "There are at least 2-3 slum clusters in each of 270 wards in Delhi. We have deployed buses to take people there and see the well-built flats and other amenities at Kalkaji," Yadav said. SR

EC proposes ₹2K cash cap on poll campaign

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

To ensure greater transparency, the Election Commission (EC) has proposed reducing the amount a candidate contesting polls can pay in cash for campaign-related expenditure from the existing Rs 10,000 to Rs 2,000.

In the proposal submitted to the government recently, the poll panel recommended that the Conduct of Election Rules should be amended to ensure that all cash payments in excess of Rs 2,000 made to a person or entity for election-related expenses are made either through account payee cheques or online and digital means.

This, the sources said, is part of efforts to bring greater transparency in the expenditure by individual candidates contesting polls and to remove "fungibility".

As of now, the candidates have to ensure that all payments in excess of Rs 10,000 are made by cheque, draft or bank transfer through a bank account opened exclusively for the purpose of election expen-



diture. According to the EC's instructions, candidates have to open a separate bank account exclusively for election expenditure purposes, at least one day before the filing of the nomination.

Candidates also have to maintain day-to-day accounts, cash book, and bank book from the date of filing of nomination to the date of declaration of results (both dates inclusive). They have to include all expenses incurred on the date of filing of nomination as well.

A candidate has to submit the election expenditure account to the District Election

Officer (DEO) within 30 days of the declaration of the poll results.

While announcing the schedule for the Gujarat Assembly polls last week, the EC had said that for the purpose of maintaining the purity of elections, it has issued a Standard Operating Procedure for flying squads and static surveillance teams constituted for checking excessive campaign expenses, distribution of items of bribe in cash or in kind, movement of illegal arms, ammunition, liquor, or antisocial elements in the constituencies during the election process.

PM Modi undermining constituency-based Parl democracy: Chidambaram

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of "undermining" the basis of a constituency-based Parliamentary democracy and claimed that a presidential form of Government which the RSS wants to usher in will entrench "majoritarianism".

His attack came over Modi's remarks at a poll rally in Himachal Pradesh's Solan where he exhorted people to support the "lotus" (BJP's election symbol), saying their votes to it will be their "blessings" to him and that they should keep in mind not the candidates but "kamal ka phool".

"Hon'ble PM said that the voters need not remember the name of the candidate in the constituency. Hon'ble PM also said 'vote for the lotus, it is a vote for Modi,'" Chidambaram said. "Having shunned Parliamentary debates and press conferences, the Hon'ble PM is now undermining the very basis of a constituency-



based Parliamentary democracy," the former Union minister alleged on Twitter.

"We know that the RSS and its bhakts have nursed for a long time the desire to usher in a Presidential form of government," Chidambaram said.

A presidential form of government will entrench "majoritarianism" in the country and pluralism will be killed, he said. Addressing a rally in Solan, Modi had said people don't need to keep in mind who is the candidate.

"You only remember lotus. I have come to you with lotus. When you go to vote and see lotus, you should know that the BJP and Modi have come to you. Your every vote to lotus, will be your blessings to Modi," he had said.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with supporters during "Bharat Jodo Yatra" in Medak district

PTI Photo

Is Pak on brink of disintegration, wonder leaders

RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the continuing turmoil on both the political and economic fronts and the Army choosing to remain neutral in the face of social divisions and protests, Pakistan could be on the brink of disintegration into separate parts.

While Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, during a visit to Jammu and Kashmir on October 27 said Pakistan will soon face rebellion, former Pakistan PM Imran Khan has been on record stating that Pakistan could be Balkanised into many States and deprived of the nuclear assets in the wake of the all-round failure of the present Government.

Notwithstanding the political turmoil, Pak Army Chief General Qamar Jawed Bajwa is staying in Washington for last fortnight to lobby for taking over as the political executive of Pakistan like Pervez Musharraf did in the past. Bajwa was supposed to fly back at 2 PM IST but his return was cancelled, top sources privy to the developments said.

Bajwa has been on record saying that the Army will stay apolitical (read neutral) in the face of ongoing unrest in that country and the US authorities are said to have reminded him to stick to his promise on



this count. In further indications trickling in from Pakistan, the separatist leaders from Sindh and Balochistan have shifted their bases to third countries due to the ongoing political and economic uncertainty back home. Meanwhile, even as Bajwa is away in the United States (US), the Pakistan Army circles are abuzz with the theory that the current Army chief revealed the location of Al Qaeda top boss Al Zawahiri leading to his targeted killing in Kabul by the US precision missile strike.

Highly placed sources said the US has also ramped up consultations with the countries in the region to fine-tune its strategy of containing chaos in a nuclear armed country as also safeguard the region from the possibility of nukes getting into the hands of terrorist groups like Al Qaeda, Islamic State, the Haqqani Network, Lashkar-e-Tayabba and Jaishe-



e-Mohammad among others. Just ahead of the midterm polls back home on Tuesday, the US has also begun hectic consultations with India at the highest level, the sources said.

The sources further said India is keen to take control of the Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir and back the US' bid to grant independence to Balochistan and hold a referendum in Sindh.

On its part China has expressed that it will take a stand on the possible new developments in Pakistan in consultation with the regional neighbours once such an eventuality arises.

While the Pakistan Army alone is capable to wrest the country out of the multifaceted turmoil, the US has already rejected Bajwa's bid to head or control the government. Apart from himself

helping the country, Bajwa who has the backing of terror masterminds LeT boss Hafiz Sayeed and JeM chief Masood Azhar, has also sought to put in place a sham democracy in Pakistan.

Pakistan is facing severe insurgency in Sindh and Balochistan provinces. In October alone, as many as 135 Pak army personnel were killed and 2,000 AK 47 assault rifles were looted by the Tahreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) insurgents.

The situation is further compounded by the balance of payment crisis staring at Pakistan in the midst of skyrocketing inflation and burgeoning price rise besides the assassination bid on former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan whose protests have galvanized the public against the current regime of Shahbaz Sharif perceived to be

failing on all the fronts and leading the country into chaos.

"Our country is watching and feeling the pain of the citizens of POK, where Pakistan is unleashing torture and harassment. Very soon there will be a rebellion in the PoK by the citizens against the atrocities.

Our country is committed to implementing the resolution passed in the Parliament about retrieving Kashmir under illegal occupation of Pakistan," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had said in Jammu and Kashmir on October 27.

"If the right decision is not taken, Pakistan will lose its nuclear deterrence ... and then it will be fragmented into three pieces," former Pakistan PM Imran Khan had said on June 6.

He had said Balkanisation of Pakistan is a thought that Pakistanis shudder to even entertain, bringing back memories of 1971—the year East Pakistan became the sovereign nation of Bangladesh.

Imran Khan who is the Chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had further warned that once the country's economy is destroyed, it would go into default, and the world would ask Pakistan to move towards denuclearization—as was done to Ukraine in the 1990s.

NIA arrests absconding accused for ambush on convoy of Assam Rifles

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday said it has arrested one absconding accused for ambush on the convoy of Commandant of Assam Rifles.

The NIA NIA late on Saturday arrested absconding accused Machukring Zamshim Shimray alias Ningkhram of New Canaan Village, Ukhrul in Manipur district.

The case relates to the attack on the convoy of 46th Battalion of Assam Rifles on November 13, 2021 by a group of armed militants near Sialsih village of Churachandpur District, Manipur.

As a result of the attack, seven persons, including CO Colonel Viplav Tripathi, his wife and minor son and four other Assam Rifles personnel were killed and six other personnel were injured.

A case was registered on November 13 last year under various Sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), provisions of Arms Act and Sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosive Substances Act was registered at Singnat Police Station,

Churachandpur District, Manipur. The NIA re-registered the case on November 27, 2021 and started investigations. "On 05.11.2022, based on secret information, a joint team of NIA, Assam Rifles and Assam Police conducted a special operation and arrested Machukring Zamshim Shimray alias Ningkhram from Yaingangkopki, Imphal East District, Manipur against whom NIA had declared a cash reward of Rs 4 lakhs," the NIA said in a statement.

The arrested accused was an active cadre of MNPF and was directly involved in the ambush. The accused will be produced before the NIA Special Court and taken on police remand. Further investigations in the case are in progress, it added.



BJP-led Centre not serious about restoration of J-K's Statehood, holding polls: JKPC chief

Jammu: Congress leader Vikar Rasool Wani on Sunday claimed that the BJP-led Centre is neither serious about holding assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir nor restoring its statehood.

The J-K Pradesh Congress Committee president also sought support from the people for the 'Bharat Jodo Padyatra' launched by party leader Rahul Gandhi to defeat "politics of hate and division" in the country. "The Centre is not serious about fulfilling the

commitment of early restoration of statehood and holding assembly elections (in Jammu and Kashmir), and only hoodwinking people by issuing vague statements from time to time for the last three and half years," Wani said, addressing a workers' convention in Samba district.

He said the vague statements by some central ministers from time to time about restoration of statehood and assembly elections do not inspire confidence and trust

among people as the promises were never fulfilled by the BJP government. The Congress leader questioned the BJP, saying the people want to know benefits of abrogation of special status guaranteed to them under Article 370 of the Constitution.

"People had not voted for BJP to divide and downgrade our historical state into Union Territory and snatch our rights over lands and jobs, guaranteed to people by last Dogra ruler through state subject laws.

NGT refuses plea for basic amenities in 10 villages outside Rajaji

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has refused to entertain a plea seeking direction to the Centre and the Uttarakhand government to provide basic facilities such as road, electricity, water, school and health centres in 10 villages situated on the periphery of the Rajaji National Park.

A bench of NGT chairperson Adarsh Goel, judicial member Sudhir Agarwal and expert member A Senthil Vel said the application has been filed in a matter which



was disposed of on August 27, 2018, with the observation that the grievance was not within the purview of this tribunal.

"In the application now filed, it is stated that authorities are not looking into the grievances of the applicant. In view of the earlier order

referred to above, the application cannot be entertained and will stand disposed accordingly without prejudice to any other remedy in accordance with law," the green panel said in a recent order.

During the hearing, advocate Dushyant Prashar, appearing for Madan Singh Bisht, a resident of one of the 10 villages, said on August 27, 2018, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had granted liberty to the petitioner to make the representation to authorities concerned.

He submitted that

Bisht made the representation to the secretary of the state government, chief conservator of forest (wildlife), Dehradun and director of the Rajaji National Park but till now no response has been received.

With regard to Bisht's village, which is situated just outside the Rajaji National Park, authorities must provide all basic facilities to people to lead a normal life or in the alternative, in view of rehabilitation schemes and guidelines framed for relocation of people residing in forest areas by the National Tiger

Conservation Authority (NTCA), the applicant may be rehabilitated or compensation be awarded, Prashar submitted.

"The fate of the applicant is in the lurch in as much as the applicant and his family members are leading their life under serious fear of death, in as much as the residence and the human habitation area of the applicant is being frequently visited by the ferocious animals like elephant, lion, python during peak afternoon or in the night making the life of the inhabitants of the village difficult..." the plea said.

2015 to 2022 likely to be 8 warmest years: WMO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The global mean temperature in 2022 is estimated to be 1.15 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial (1850-1900) average, likely making the eight years from 2015 the warmest on record, the World Meteorological Organisation said in a report on Sunday. The report titled "WMO Provisional

State of the Global Climate 2022" released at the 27th Conference of Parties to the UNFCCC on Sunday stated that the rate of sea level rise has doubled since 1993 and has risen by nearly 10 mm since January 2020 to a new record high this year.

The past two-and-a-half years account for 10 per cent of the overall rise in sea level

since satellite measurements started nearly 30 years ago, the report stated. The figures used in the provisional 2022 report are till the end of September this year. The final version will be issued next April.

"The global mean temperature so far in 2022 has been 1.15 degree Celsius above the 1850-1900 average. If the current anomaly continues to the end of the year, the analysis would place 2022 as either the fifth or sixth warmest year on record (from 1850), and in each case marginally warmer than 2021. The eight years -- 2015 to 2022 -- are likely to be the eight warmest years on record," the report read.

Despite La Niña conditions keeping the global temperature low for the second consecutive year, 2022 is still most like-

ly to be the fifth or sixth warmest year on record, the WMO said. The 10-year average for the period 2013-2022 is estimated to be 1.14 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial baseline. This compares with 1.09 degrees Celsius from 2011 to 2020, as estimated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment report.

The pre-monsoon period was exceptionally hot in India and Pakistan. Pakistan had its hottest March and April on record. The heat caused a decline in crop yields.

This combined with banning of wheat exports and restrictions on rice exports in India are threatening the international food markets and posing risks to countries already hit by shortages of staple foods.

Through 'LiFE movement' PM Modi has given simple solution to climate change, says Minister at COP 27

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav Sunday said India believes that climate action starts at the individual level and Prime Minister Narendra Modi through 'LiFE movement' has provided a simple solution to the complex problem of climate change.

LiFE stands for 'Lifestyle for Environment', a pro-people and pro-planet effort that seeks to shift the world from mindless and wasteful consumption to mindful and deliberate utilisation of natural resources.

Yadav inaugurated the India Pavilion at the 27th Session of the Conference of

Parties (COP) of the UNFCCC (COP 27) at Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt on Sunday.

COP27 is scheduled from November 6 to 18. Welcoming delegates from all countries to India Pavilion, Yadav said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has provided a simple solution to the complex problem of climate change.

He said India believes that climate action starts from the grassroots, individual level and hence the India Pavilion has been designed with the theme of "LiFE - Lifestyle for Environment".

Yadav said India Pavilion will continue to remind the delegates that simple lifestyle and individual practices that are sus-



tainable in nature can help protect mother earth. The minister said India looks forward to substantial progress in the discussions related to climate finance. "We also look forward to the introduction of new technologies and new collabora-

tions to facilitate technology transfers," the Union Environment Ministry quoted him as saying in a statement.

Yadav also attended the ceremonial opening of COP 27 where Egypt took over the COP Presidency from the UK.



All eyes now on Mainpuri LS, Rampur Assembly bypolls

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

All eyes will now be on the bypolls to Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat and Rampur Assembly constituency as the Samajwadi Party faces the challenging task of retaining both the seats.

Both the constituencies will go to polls on December 5. During the last five months, the SP has lost by-elections to two Lok Sabha seats and one assembly seat. The SP failed to retain the Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha seats where bypolls were held in June. The Bharatiya Janata Party wrested both the seats from the SP.

The BJP on Sunday retained the Gola Gokarannath assembly seat also defeating its SP rival.

Moreover, the SP faces the challenging task of choosing a candidate for the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat which fell vacant after the death of party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav on October 10 after prolonged illness.

While the Mainpuri par-

liamentary seat fell vacant following the demise of Mulayam Singh Yadav, the Rampur assembly seat fell vacant because of the disqualification of SP MLA Mohammad Azam Khan following the three-year jail term awarded to him by the Rampur MP/MLA court in a 2019 hate speech case.

On both seats, the SP is likely to field family members - a Yadav in Mainpuri and a Khan in Rampur. On both seats, the SP has the advantage of sympathy factor -- the death of political icon Mulayam Singh Yadav and "injustice" at the hands of ruling BJP meted out to Azam Khan, but the challenge from the belligerent BJP is big.

Both Rampur assembly seat and Mainpuri Lok Sabha seats are bastions of the SP. The BJP could not win the Mainpuri seat in 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections despite the Modi wave. The BJP also failed to make a dent in Rampur assembly seat in 2017 and 2022 UP Assembly polls and Azam Khan had won both the elections. Azam Khan, who



had won the Rampur seat 10 times, lost the assembly elections only once in 1996.

SP spokesman Rajendra Chaudhary, when asked whom the party would field from the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat, said, "The party president will sit with the party top leaders and decide. But irrespective of whom the party fields, it will win both the seats."

The Election Commission of India announced the elections on both seats on Saturday, but the name of Tej Pratap Singh Yadav, the grandnephew of Mulayam Singh Yadav and son-in-law of the Bihar former chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav, has been doing the



rounds in the party circles since the day after Mulayam Singh Yadav passed away on October 10.

Tej Pratap Singh Yadav, 34, had won the same seat in 2014 Lok Sabha bypolls (when Mulayam vacated it to retain Azamgarh seat) during the time when Akhilesh Yadav was the UP Chief Minister. When Mulayam contested and won the Mainpuri seat in 2019, Tej Pratap was his election in-charge.

"This time the electoral battle in Mainpuri is going to be tough for the SP as the BJP is not only united it is also ruthless while the Yadav family is divided," said a SP leader.

Centre trying to destroy higher education in Kerala using Guv: CPM

Alleges it's intention is to stop implementation of welfare schemes too

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The ruling CPI(M) in Kerala on Sunday attacked the Central government by accusing it of trying to prevent implementation of welfare schemes and destroy higher education in the state using the Governor, as the BJP wants to control everything.

CPI(M) state secretary M V Govindan alleged that the Central government's intention to prevent implementation of welfare measures like minimum guaranteed employment was revealed from the speech of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman a day ago.

Sitharaman, while delivering the second P Parameshwarji Memorial Lecture on "Cooperative Federalism: The Path Towards Atma Nirbhar Bharat" here on Saturday, had said indiscriminate borrowing and spending by certain states on non-merit goods and expenditure is a matter of concern.

Govindan contended that the Centre wants to control everything and prevent states from implementing welfare

schemes within their own financial limitations.

"The LDF and CPI(M) cannot accept this stand of the Central government," he told reporters here at a press conference which was held subsequent to a state secretariat meeting of CPI(M).

Govindan further said that the Centre was using Governors in non-BJP ruled states to interfere in higher education and implement the RSS and Sangh Parivar agendas in universities and this was happening in Kerala also, an allegation which the Left front has been levelling ever since it has been at loggerheads with Governor Arif Mohammed Khan over functioning of var-sities in the state.

He indicated that the Kerala government has decided to take all necessary steps and go to any extent, including moving the Supreme Court, according to the Constitution.

"The BJP is using the Governor to destroy higher education in Kerala at a time when the state government was taking steps to improve it



and raise it to global standards. The Governor was given the Chancellor position by the state and now things have reached a stage where we may have to discuss whether he should continue in that position".

"As the Governor has taken a stand that he will go to any extent, the party has decided to oppose him by going to any extent but in accordance with the law and the Constitution," he said.

On being asked whether the government would bring any ordinance to remove the Governor from the position of Chancellor, the CPI(M) state secretary reiterated -- "we will do whatever is necessary and go to any extent but in accor-



dance with the law and the Constitution".

Regarding the issue of Khan holding on to some bills, including the University Laws Amendment Bill, passed by the state legislature, Govindan said the Governor was doing something which was not permitted under the law.

He indicated that the state government was examining what action, including legal, can be taken against the same.

"We are examining how to handle it both according to the Constitution and the law. He cannot hold on to the bills indefinitely," Govindan said.

He said that various courts have held that the Governor cannot hold on to the bills indefinitely.

Cong's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' to arrive in Maha's Nanded tonight

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Congress party's "Bharat Jodo Yatra" led by Rahul Gandhi will arrive in Maharashtra's Nanded district around 9 pm on November 7 from neighbouring Telangana, the party said on Sunday.

The yatra, the grand old party's mass contact initiative, will pass through 15 Assembly and six parliamentary constituencies in Maharashtra during its 14-day sojourn, and Rahul Gandhi is scheduled to address two rallies in the state, one each on November 10 and 18.

The yatra that began on September 7 from Kanyakumari, will enter its 61st day on Monday. It will enter Maharashtra around 9 pm from Kamareddy in Telangana and reach Deglur in Nanded district, the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) said.

The party's state unit has planned to hold a welcome ceremony for the yatra participants at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj statue at Kalamandir in Deglur, it said.

After the welcome ceremony, the yatra will resume at 10.10 pm, in which the participants will carry 'Ekta Marshals' (Unity Torches). Post mid-night, the marchers will take a break at a gurdwara in Deglur and later, they will take a night



halt at the Chidravar Mill there. The yatra will resume on November 8 at 8.30 am, the party said.

Rahul Gandhi will address two rallies during the yatra in the state. The first rally will be held on November 10 in Nanded district and the second one on November 18 at Shegaon in Buldhana district.

The yatra will cover a distance of 382 kms across five districts of the state before entering Madhya Pradesh on November 20. In Maharashtra, it will proceed through Nanded district for five days and enter Hingoli district on November 11, Washim district on November 15, Akola district on November 16 and Buldhana district on November 18.

Addressing a press conference in Nanded on Sunday, Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said the yatra's aim was to protect the Constitution and democratic values.

"In the last eight years, the country has seen corruption, fear and hunger," he alleged, and demanded a face-to-face debate between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi on the issues plaguing the country.

"Ours is not a political yatra. It is aimed at highlighting the issues plaguing the country. Many prominent personalities we contacted said they support the yatra, but would not come in the open," he said.

When asked about the participation of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray, he said the Congress has invited the two leaders and added that they would take part in the yatra at some point.

A senior Congress leader earlier said that more than 100 prominent personalities from different walks of life will participate in the yatra.

BJP igniting separatism in North Bengal: TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

A day after the Greater Coochbehar People's Association leader Anant Maharaj said that a separate "State in North Bengal is just a matter of time" the Trinamool Congress has accused the BJP of fomenting "separatism" in the northern part of the State.

"The BJP is trying to foment trouble in northern Bengal ... they want to derive political mileage by keeping separatist issues alive ..they want to partition Bengal but that will not be allowed," TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said.

His statement came barely a week after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee too said that "there will be no division of Bengal ... we will thwart any such move to divide our State."

Earlier Anant Maharaj alias Anant Roy of Coochbehar said "a separate state in North Bengal is just a matter of time." His statement came soon after his meeting with Union Home Minister of State Nisith Pramanik.

When asked to clarify whether he was privy to any move regarding another partition of Bengal, Pramanik came out with an evasive reply saying, "everything will be clear when appropriate time comes."



When asked as to what transpired between him and Maharaj, the Union Minister said "we dwelt on a whole range of issues ... a lot of positive things came out of our discussion ... everything will be clear when the time comes."

Subsequently when the GCPA leader was asked as to whether he had any discussion over the formation of a possible Union Territory in North Bengal he said "it is already a declared policy of the central Government ... there is nothing new in it ... things will be clear when appropriate time comes."

Manoj Tigga a senior BJP MLA from North Bengal too came out with a cryptic reply saying, "if a Union Territory is formed out of this region then that will be done after discussion."

Incidentally, Mamata Banerjee and Maharaj had a meeting recently in North

Bengal when the Chief Minister was visiting that part of the State. Subsequently the Chief Minister also send him some gifts and good wishes on the occasion of Bhai Dooj (a ceremony where the siste prays for the bother).

North Bengal has been subject to several contradicting demands for ages. While the local Kamptapuri population have been demanding separate Kamtapur State the Gorkhas of Darjeeling had been asking for a separate Gorkhaland. The militant Kamtapur Liberation Organisation led by Jiban Singh too has been active in the forests of neighbouring countries in support of a Kamptapur State. On the other hand leaders like Maharaj has been asking for the creation of Greater Coochbehar State comprising parts of Coochbehar district and some parts of Assam.

Tirupati temple richer than Wipro, Nestle, ONGC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tirupati's world famous Lord Venkateswara temple's net worth of over Rs 2.5 lakh crore (about USD 30 billion) is more than the market capitalisation of IT services firm Wipro, food and beverage company Nestle and state-owned oil giants ONGC and IOC.

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, keeper of the temple dedicated to Tirupati's presiding deity, for the first time since its founding in 1933 declared its net worth.

Its assets include 10.25 tonnes of gold deposits in banks, 2.5 tonnes of gold jewellery, about Rs 16,000 crore of deposits in banks, and 960 properties across India. All these total to over Rs 2.5 lakh crore.

At current trading price, the network of Tirupati temple is more than several blue-chip Indian firms, according to stock exchange data.

Bengaluru-based Wipro had a market cap of Rs 2.14 lakh crore at close of trading on Friday, while UltraTech Cement had a market value of Rs 1.99 lakh crore.

Swiss multinational food and drink major Nestle's India unit, with a market cap of Rs 1.96 lakh crore, too was valued below it.



State-owned oil behemoths Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) too were valued less than the temple trust and so was power giant NTPC Ltd, auto makers Mahindra and Mahindra and Tata Motors, world's largest coal producer Coal India Ltd, mining conglomerate Vedanta, real estate firm DLF and several others.

Only about two dozen companies have market valuation larger than the temple trust's network.

These include billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd (Rs 17.53 lakh crore), Tata Consultancy Services (Rs 11.76 lakh crore), HDFC Bank (Rs 8.34 lakh crore), Infosys (Rs 6.37 lakh crore), ICICI Bank (Rs 6.31 lakh crore), Hindustan Unilever Ltd (Rs 5.92 lakh crore), State Bank of India (Rs 5.29 lakh crore), Bharti Airtel (Rs 4.54 lakh crore) and ITC (Rs 4.38 lakh crore).

Uddhav-led Shiv Sena wins Andheri(East) bypoll

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In its first major electoral victory after the parent party split vertically in the wake of an Eknath Shinde-triggered rebellion in June this year, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena won the Andheri (East) Assembly by-poll on Sunday, when its candidate Rutuja Latke trounced her farthest rival by a margin of 65,000 votes in the polling held on November 3.

Given that the ruling BJP had withdrawn its candidate Murji Patel and all other major parties --including the NCP, Congress and Raj Thackeray-led MNS had extended their support to her, Rutuja's win in the by-poll had become a foregone conclusion.

Rutuja of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) polled 66,530 (76.95 per cent) votes, while her rival Bala Venkatesh Vinayak Nadar secured 1,515 (1.5 per cent) votes.

In a poll where there were in all seven candidates, NOTA (None Of The Above) secured 12,776 (14.79) per cent votes.

The Andheri (East) by-poll had been necessitated by sitting Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Late's death. Rutuja Latke is the widow of Ramesh Latke who

passed away on May 11, 2022. Latke was a Shiv Sena MLA before the party split in June this year in the wake of rebellion by the MLAs led by current chief minister Eknath Shinde.

Sunday's is the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena's first electoral success after the Uddhav Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government collapsed in June this year, following a rebellion by 40-odd Shiv Sena MLAs led by Eknath Shinde, who went onto become the chief minister of the state.

After the Election Commission froze the parent party's symbol of 'bow and arrow' in the light of its pending dispute with the Sena-led by Eknath Shinde, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena fought the election with the new name Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) and new symbol of "Mashal".

Rutuja's victory in the by-poll comes as a big boost to the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena in the run-up to the crucial Brihan Municipal Corporation elections which in all likelihood will be held at the end of 2022 or early 2023.

The ruling BJP, which had put up Murji Patel as its candidate for the November 3 Assembly by-poll withdrew



its nominee after MNS chief Raj Thackeray appealed to Maharashtra's deputy chief minister and senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis to withdraw from the contest as a mark of "reverence" to the Sena MLA and facilitate "unopposed" election of his wife Rutuja Latke.

Two other factors that contributed to the BJP's decision to withdraw its candidate from the Assembly by-poll were: NCP chief Sharad Pawar had also suggested that Rutuja be elected unopposed in the by-poll as such a development would send a message to political parties across the country.

The Opposition NCP and Congress, which are part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), had earlier extended their support to Uddhav-led Shiv Sena's candidate Rutuja.

Expressing his happiness over Rutuja's victory in the

Assembly by-poll, Shiv Sena (UBT) president Uddhav Thackeray said that the electoral outcome reflected the people's faith in his party.

Talking to media persons at his Bandra residence "Matoshree" in north-west Mumbai, Uddhav said: "This is just the beginning of a fight. The party symbol is important but people look for our character as well.. The by-poll results show people have faith in us."

"I appeal to Shiv Sainiks to fight all future battles in a united manner as we did in the Assembly-poll. Our party's name and symbol were frozen for this election but those who wanted this are nowhere near the electoral ring," Uddhav said, alluding to the fact that the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena did not contest the by-poll despite fighting for a symbol with it before the Election Commission.

Only Cong can challenge BJP in Guj, HP: Azad

ANI ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran leader Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday said although he has quit the Congress, he would stills want the party to perform well in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh assembly elections, adding that the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) isn't capable to defeat the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"Although I have separated from the Congress, I wasn't against their policy of secularism. It was only due to the party's system getting weak-



ened. Only the Congress could challenge the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh elections, while the AAP is merely a party of UT Delhi," news agency ANI quoted Azad as saying.

Azad parted ways this year with the grand-old party after decades-long association. In

October, Azad announced his new political outfit 'Democratic Azad Party'.

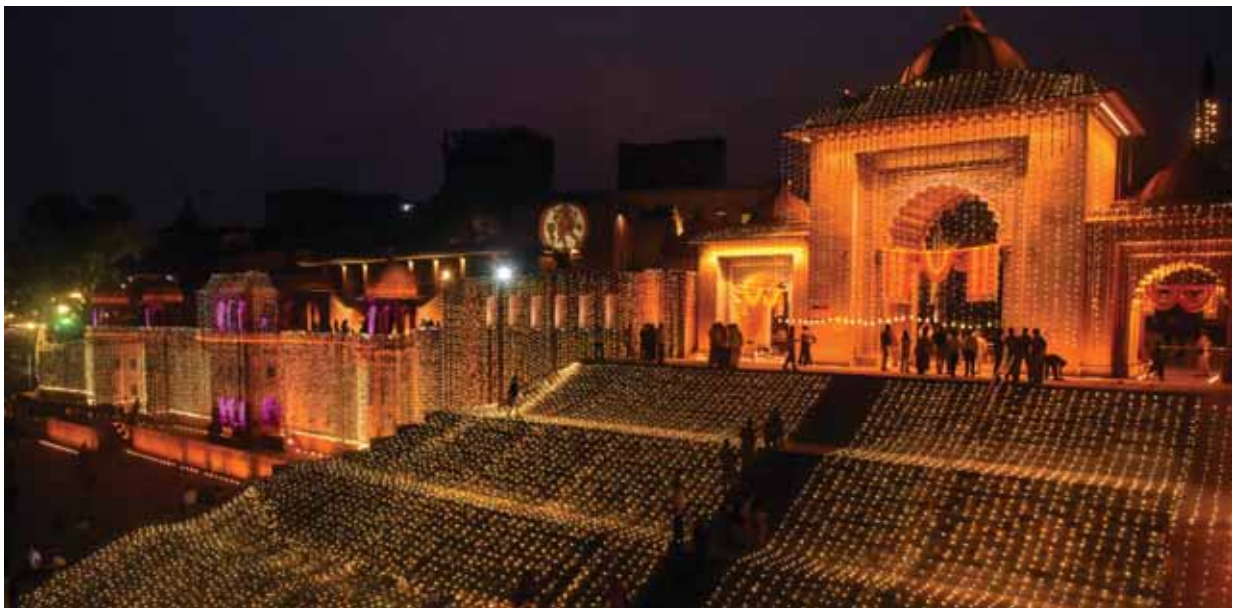
Azad also exuded confidence in his old Congress and said it takes along everybody, Hindu, and Muslim farmers. He added that the AAP can't do anything in these states, they have failed in Punjab and the people of Punjab will not vote for them again.

"The AAP is merely a party of UT Delhi. They can't run Punjab efficiently, only Congress can challenge the BJP in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh as they have an inclu-

sive policy," Azad, who is on a tour of Doda where he will be meeting many delegations and addressing many rallies in the coming days, said.

The polls in Gujarat will be held in two phases on December 1 and 5. The counting of votes will take place on December 8.

In a hard-hitting resignation letter to then Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, Azad had attacked the party leadership, particularly Rahul Gandhi, over the way the party has been run in the past nearly nine years.



Illuminated Kashi Vishwanath Temple ahead of Dev Deepawali in Varanasi on Sunday

(PTI)

BJP marches on

Bypoll results make it clear that the Congress is unable to check saffron party in any way

If anyone thought that Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra, which has evoked a good response, is rejuvenating the Congress, the results of seven byelections in different States would come as a dampener. Equally importantly, the results don't exhibit many signs that the shortcomings of the Governments under the Bharatiya Janata Party, both at the Centre and in States, are hurting the electoral prospects of the saffron party. The BJP's famed election machine — some say the party itself is such a machine — is as sturdy and efficacious as it ever was. The Congress' gradual marginalisation was evident from the nature of the contests, which were primarily between the BJP on the one hand and such regional parties as the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Biju Janata Dal. At Munugode in Telangana, for instance, the candidate representing the grand old party came third; the seat was won by TRS. In the Adampur bypoll in Haryana, the BJP's Bhavya Bishnoi defeated Congress candidate Jai Prakash by nearly 16,000 votes. Sympathy played a big role in the byelections. The BJP's Aman Giri, son of former party MLA Arvind Giri, defeated the SP candidate and former Gola Gokarannath MLA Tiwari in the Gola Gokarannath Assembly seat in Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh with a margin of over 34,000 votes. Similarly, in Gopalganj in Bihar, the BJP's Kusum Devi defeated the RJD candidate, though by a narrow margin. She is the wife of the late BJP MLA Subhash Singh.

Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav's party, however, managed to retain the Mokama Assembly seat. For Rutuja Latke, the candidate of the Shiv Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray), the byelection in Andheri (East) in Mumbai was a cakewalk as most parties did not field their candidates against her. She is the widow of Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Latke. The second highest vote getter in her constituency was NOTA or None of The Above option. In Dhamnagar in Odisha, the BJP won the seat. It would be premature to draw any conclusions from the seven bypolls scattered in several States. It may even be difficult to see any trends from the results, but they certainly strengthen the impression that the Congress is increasingly weakening, if not fading out. Rahul Gandhi's hard work may be admirable; Congress leaders' comments and barbs against BJP Governments and leaders are often smart and pointed; but in pure electoral terms, the smarts and articulation are not helping the party. At the same time, none of the faults and failings of the BJP seem to be hurting it at the poll booth. Inflation remains persistently high; jobs are not getting generated; the promised *achhe din* are nowhere on the horizon. Not much has changed at the ground level, the tall promises notwithstanding; this is evident from the Morbi tragedy. The BJP marches on nonetheless; and the Congress remains in the ICU.

PICTALK



Vehicles cross the Zojila Pass after a fresh spell of snowfall in Sonamarg, Ganderbal district

Unfair work wages for the fair gender

Unless the issue of pay disparity is resolved, there can never be gender equality. The bias against women in the workforce needs to be called out



SHREYA GARG

It doesn't involve a lot of conscious thinking and analysis to know that lack of pay parity is a systemic issue. It's rampant and present in every sector. Common sense suggests that if the output of two persons is the same, the remuneration for the work done should also be the same. Then why are women paid far less than men?

Even though the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976, provides for the payment of equal remuneration to men and women workers and prevention of discrimination on the grounds of gender, its implementation on the ground has been abysmal. The real picture, as we all know, is far from being egalitarian. Some glaring reports and rankings corroborate the argument here. For instance, as per the World Inequality Report 2022, in India, men earn 82 per cent of the labour income, whereas women earn 18 per cent of it. The chasm between the percentages is wide and provokes one to think about the sorry state of affairs.

Come to think of it, women doing physical labour are not educated. This explains why despite many of them being aware that they are paid an inferior sum as compared to their male counterparts, they hardly mull over it, let alone raise their voices against the prejudice. And when it comes to urban women facing pay discrimination across sectors, even they find themselves unable to hold forth their argument from a strong position. The reasons for the same are: It is still a deeply patriarchal society where very few women stand up for what rightly belongs to them. They lack the support of fellow women, and the where-withal needed to fight back. Besides, saying no to work until they're paid justly is not a viable option as well, for as a matter of fact there will always be another set of women who will be ready to take up their place and work on low remuneration instead.

As per gender parity rank-



ing by the World Economic Forum, India stood at 135th position out of 146 countries globally. Afghanistan predictably ranks last in the list — a country where women are not even allowed to go to schools. This underscores how women are treated as second class citizens in India and across the world.

Women across the professions of entertainment, medicine, law and sports are subjected to great discrimination. We have seen and heard female actors openly crack jokes on how their male counterparts are paid extravagant sums. But the jibes have clearly not made the cut, for they continue to be paid less. In sports, the pay gap is even wider. *Forbes* released the list of top 100 highest paid athletes in 2018 and, astonishingly, not one woman made it to the list. However, what needs to be admired is that the BCCI recently decided to compensate male and female players equally. A welcome step indeed! However, if other corporations will follow suit remains to be seen.

When it comes to the tech sector — a fast growing and high-paying industry — an entry-level salary for a man is much more than

WOMEN ACROSS THE PROFESSIONS OF ENTERTAINMENT, MEDICINE, LAW AND SPORTS ARE SUBJECTED TO GREAT DISCRIMINATION. WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD FEMALE ACTORS OPENLY CRACK JOKES ON HOW THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS ARE PAID EXTRAVAGANT SUMS

what's paid to a woman with comparable credentials. One would think that in the education sector, where women heavily dominate men in comparison, the former must be getting paid on a par with men. Unfortunately, that's not the case. In the medical profession, women are entering in record numbers and making a stellar impact, yet when it comes to remuneration, they are paid less despite putting in an equal amount of hours.

According to a review by the World Economic Forum, the pay gap amongst doctors worldwide is due to an under-representation of women in the highest-paid positions. It is also a question as to why only 15% of lawyers in India are women. The common perception is that the work environment in this field is hostile at times and the calibre of women is not taken on face value. And again, there's a huge difference in the sum paid to a male lawyer and a female lawyer for similar cases.

Most women are not hired for managerial and decision-making roles as the employer always dreads that women may not be able to dedicate themselves com-

pletely to the task at hand. Some even think that women are not on a par with men when it comes to intellectual abilities and stimulation. This assumption makes them averse to promoting women or even hiring them in the first place. Furthermore, a study by IIM Ahmedabad suggests that the more educated a woman is, the more is the pay gap with an equally educated male counterpart.

What is the way forward to put an end to this almost vicious practice that undermines the agency of women, the quality work they do, their toil and the amount of hours they put in? The solution to this is when companies learn to be all inclusive and take the baton upon themselves to ensure equal pay for equal work. They should encourage more transparency in this regard. Women too must rally for equal pay for equal work. The issue of pay gap has not gained traction, as very few talk about it. This needs to change, as without pay parity, gender equality is a far-fetched dream.

(The author writes on news pertaining to women rights, and social and environmental issues).

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A GAS CHAMBER CALLED DELHI

Sir — Ironically, the advent of an other-wise healthy season 'winter' in the national Capital and NCR is always stalked by a fatally poor quality of air even as it has earned the area its nickname of being a gas chamber for the denizens, thanks to the air quality index (AQI) here going up menacingly high during winters. Believing in the 'Jaan hai toh jahan hai' saying, nothing matters sans life as any progress and achievements in one and all departments of life do fall on the stony ground when their mainstay is under constant threat.

With the Punjab and Delhi CMs, Baghwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal, respectively, taking responsibility for this air plight syndrome stemming from the farm fires in Punjab, their 'merely six months in power' plea cuts ice with none as such a significant period for a constant burning problem brooks no argument. Worse, a matter of grave concern is being politicised instead of seeking a pragmatic strategy to cope up with this annually resurrecting predicament when they have had to fall back on their old ways of announcing the closures of primary schools, running Government offices with half the strength and plying vehicles on the 'Odd-Even' formula..

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

THE FALLOUT OF ROAD ACCIDENTS

Sir — Former Tata Sons chairman Cyrus Mistry died in a road accident two months ago. Another person sitting in the back seat of the car also perished in the accident. However, the couple in the front seat of the car, Dr Anahita Pandole and Darius Pandole, survived. On Saturday, November 5, the Maharashtra Police registered a case against Dr Pandole who was driving the car under Sections that deal with causing death by rash and negligent act, rash driving on a public road and causing death by act endangering life and personal safety of others.

Mistry, 54, and his friend Jahangir Pandole died when their Mercedes car hit the divider in Palghar on the Mumbai-

A social reformer worth emulating



Elaben Bhatt, who devoted her life to the cause of social reforms straddling continents leading to the transformation of several lives, is no more. A lawyer by training and social reformer by choice, it was through establishing the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) in 1972 which signalled a new dawn for thousands of women who were exploited in various forms. Within a short time, this philanthropic society became a pathbreaker in

terms of how small but regular savings can be a great asset in changing several lives. With about 2.1 million members in 18 States, it has acquired legal recognition since 2014, when the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of the Street Vending) Act, protecting the rights of the unorganised sector, was promulgated.

She widened her horizons through incessant efforts and earned name, fame and acquired even higher posts by becoming a VC of Gujarat University and a member of the Planning Commission. By working selflessly at the grassroots for the welfare of society and women's empowerment, she received Padma and Magsaysay Awards for Community Leadership and France's Legion of Honor. In 1986, she was nominated to the Rajya Sabha. By following in the footsteps of Gandhiji and through cooperative social reforms to improve the conditions of women workers, she has left a rich legacy that future generations need to emulate.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

Ahmedabad highway. According to the police, while the couple sitting in the front seat was wearing seat belts, the two deceased weren't. Anahita Pandole is a Mumbai-based gynaecologist. She was driving the car. She and her husband were seriously injured in the accident. The police said the probe revealed rash and negligent driving, leading to the case against Pandole.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

VIRAT KOHLI, A LIVING LEGEND

Sir — Virat Kohli as a cricketer excels in batting and fielding. Today, Virat is celebrating his 34th birthday. His dream of playing cricket for the country took him away from studies. He plays for Delhi in domestic cricket and Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL. He made his Test debut in 2011 and reached the number one spot in the ICC rankings for ODI batsmen for the first time in 2013. He has

won Man of the Tournament twice at the ICC World Twenty20 (in 2014 and 2016). He has been named by *Times* magazine for top 100 influential people in the world.

Virat, also known as Virat 'the run machine' Kohli, has broken many records. There are only a few batters who can match his numbers. In ODIs, 26 of his 43 centuries have come in the second innings, and India have lost only seven ODIs when he made a century. As of September 2022, Virat has the most ODI centuries for an active player and he is one the hardworking athletes. Virat was awarded the ICC ODI Player of the Year in 2012, 2017 and 2018 and is being conferred with the Padma Shri in 2017 and many more.

Titithi Trivedi | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Every single vote on November 12 will define the State's development journey for the next 25 years.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

Twitter had a massive drop in revenue, due to activist groups pressuring advertisers, even though nothing has changed with content moderation and extremely messed up! They're trying to destroy free speech in America.

Testa Cusk

—Elon Musk

This was such a big responsibility (to make PSI) which I didn't know how I was going to fulfill.



Filmmaker —Mani Ratnam

I still rate the one at MCG where he hit Haris Rauf for a six back over his head, off the back foot, with a straight bat. It went 90 metres.

Australian cricketer —Mark Taylor

The rupee has seen orderly movement since the onset of the current geopolitical crisis. We must deal with the global hurricane with confidence.

RBI Governor

—Shaktikanta Das



dates also ends the political squabbling over holding the election. Friday's announcement of the municipal corporation of Delhi (MCD) election dates came after months of political drama. The elections were due in March 9. But the state election office, changed the plans last minute when the then Delhi LG Anil Baijal, moved to unify the city's three municipal bodies into one. The Aam Aadmi Party accused the center of delaying the elections on a flimsy pretext fearing its defeat in the election. While the BJP justified the indefinite postponement of the MCD elections saying it was aimed at bringing more efficiency in the functioning of the civic bodies. While the tenure of the previous House in the corporations ended in May, the MCD as of now continues as a bureaucratic setup.

FIRST COLUMN

5G CAN IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The 5G rollout may help classrooms gain tools for improved learning

AJAY GUPTA

A recent poll found that India is now the biggest market for online education after only the United States. Robust connections throughout the nation are required to enable equitable access for everyone. The 5G can open up new paths for learning and engagement in the education sector.

With the arrival of 5G technology, many different industries will be able to reach levels of innovation and productivity. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently said that the newly-introduced 5G services will completely change the country's education system. The power of 5G is being combined with that of other developing technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning to reshape the educational tools and institutions of the future. It improves the efficiency of the learning process by allowing us to tailor our educational experiences to our own needs.

A good illustration of this is the ability of AI-based learning systems to tailor their offerings to each learner. Furthermore, AI technology may be leveraged to provide more engaging and dynamic learning experiences. Some AI-based instructional games, for instance, may make picking up new information a lot of fun. In addition, AI may be utilized to evaluate the learning progress and provide feedback in real-time.



Technology is a potent instrument for enhancing the learning process. When utilised appropriately, it may engage students, save time, increase communication, and give a more global viewpoint. There are an infinite number of ways in which technology may be utilised in the classroom, and its benefits are enormous. Going forward, we are preparing for a curriculum powered by modern technology.

Technology in education offers teachers new methods for presenting information and engaging students in learning. Traditional teaching materials can be supplemented or replaced by online resources such as digital textbooks and instructional videos. Additionally, instructors may employ technology to provide interesting and interactive lessons.

Opportunities for the use of robots in the classroom are expanding because of the advent of 5G technology. For real-time robot control, this wireless standard's high-speed, low-latency connection is a must-have. Also, VR will transform education by giving students access to realistic, immersive, hands-on experiences that would be difficult or impossible to replicate in a traditional classroom setting.

As part of the Mission Schools of Excellence project, the Prime Minister also announced that the state government will build 50,000 new classrooms and convert around one lakh existing classrooms in government-run schools into smart classrooms using 5G technology. Students will be given an early head start on preparing for competitive examinations and be taught talents like design and robotics as part of this initiative.

In addition, many online applications for exam preparation provide diagnostic tools that can identify students' strengths and weaknesses. Finally, students may use internet tools to keep tabs on their own development and get constructive feedback on how they are doing.

The 5G will unquestionably usher in a brand-new age of connectivity and speed in India's academic sector. It is anticipated that the introduction of 5G services in India would significantly improve the educational experience for pupils. With the advent of 5G, classrooms will be able to provide pupils with more dynamic and interesting lessons. It will also assist in improving education by allowing schools to provide children with more individualised and adaptable learning opportunities. As a result, 5G will make higher education more affordable and available to more people. Educational institutions will rapidly adopt VR and AR software and resources. In addition, the 5G will provide new options for remote teamwork and distance learning.

(The author is founder & CEO, Bachpan Play School and AHPS & Co-Founder, Rishihood University)

Delhi's foul air affirms high cost of anarchy

The Capital is breathless, because the ruling AAP in Punjab focused on freebies, not the real solutions



SUMEEET BHASIN

Delhi is home to over two crore people, and a population in an equal number resides in the nearby satellite cities. This population of over four crore is now breathless. They cannot breathe. They cannot walk outside their homes. The children cannot go to the schools. The elders cannot sit in the parks. The youngsters cannot go to the playgrounds. The working people have to go to their workplaces by aggravating their health. People in the national capital had never been so depressed.

The national highways from Punjab show pictures of abundant farm fires. Farmers have lit their agricultural fields on fire. They have to prepare for the Rabi crops. Clearing stubble in an environmentally friendly manner will take time and effort. Easy way out is to walk with a kerosene-soaked end of cloth stuck at the end of sticks and set the whole farm fields on fire.

In November last year, there had been 20 times more incidents of farm fires. This year the incidents of farm fires in Punjab seem determined to break all records. Indeed, the farmers have traditionally been burning 'parali (stubble)'. But the national highways were also lined up with thick vegetation. The green covers in Punjab were thick enough to absorb the smoke, and the national capital never lamented the quick work of the farmers to clear their fields. Now, the people, since the onset of October, begin dreading the prospects of life full of gloom in November that also extends till December until the wind gains pace to bring reprieve to the citizens.

Access to clean air is part of the Right to Life enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. This was gained after the Supreme Court banned diesel buses, shut down polluting industries, and made the mass transport system to adopt the CNG mode. All gains made after several years of campaign have just disappeared.

The people in the national capital had made all those gains because there were collective efforts to improve the quality of life. The Centre, the city government and the municipal corporation joined hands despite different political parties being in power at one or the other place. The Atal Bihari Vajpayee led government of the National Democratic Alliance at the Centre gave the people the gift of a clean transportation system through Delhi Metro, while Madan Lal Khurana of the BJP and Sheila Dikshit of Congress were Chief Ministers of the national capital. Similar efforts in the rehabilitation of the polluting industries were taken in collaborative ways and political differences did not prove to be obstacles.

Even now the BJP-led government at the Centre had been working with a committee to curb pollution in Delhi for months. The committee had members from the Ministry of Environment of the



ACCESS TO CLEAN AIR IS PART OF THE RIGHT TO LIFE. THIS WAS GAINED AFTER THE SUPREME COURT BANNED DIESEL BUSES, SHUT DOWN POLLUTING INDUSTRIES AND MADE THE MASS TRANSPORT SYSTEM TO ADOPT THE CNG MODE

(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre)



Central government, Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab. Union Minister Bhupender Yadav worked round the clock with the stakeholders for several months to ensure that the farmers in the member states don't resort to setting their agricultural fields. The Cabinet Secretary under the direction of the Prime Minister's Office also intervened and took regular meetings. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also held marathon meetings last year to deal with the air pollution emergency in the national capital.

Haryana cut down on the incidents of farmers setting fire to their agricultural fields by 30 per cent. Similar results were seen in the districts of Uttar Pradesh which are part of the national capital region. But Punjab defied all efforts. This suggests that the governments in Delhi and Punjab were not interested in solving the challenges for the people in the national capital. This smacks of non-seriousness. It is also a case of being too casual. There is no scientific approach in governance. Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal trivialized Delhi pollution by saying last year that a chemical spray would turn all stubble into compost and the whole issue of smog in the national capital would disappear. Last year he could give the excuse that the Congress government might not have allowed him to spray that chemical in the farm fields of Punjab. But the Aam Aadmi Party came to power in Punjab in

March this year with a thumping majority.

The Bhagwant Singh Mann government should have gone the extra mile in Punjab to implement the Arvind Kejriwal model of clearing stubble from the farm field. Kejriwal had claimed that the farmers would have become rich with 'compost as gold'. But the circumstances on the ground suggest that Kejriwal and Mann both had least concerns of the issue that would make life of the people nightmarish.

Now, both Kejriwal and Mann have unabashedly claimed that pollution in Delhi is a national problem. In a way, they have thrown in the towel. They have rather sought to suggest that they will not do anything to solve the problems, and resort to the easy task of shutting down primary schools, sending the government employees to work from home and so on. There can be no parallel to such recklessness in abandoning responsibilities. The people in the national capital region sadly pay heavy prices for such reckless misgovernance.

In fact, it would be rather apt to say that the people of the national capital are paying the price for an anarchist government in the city. The head of this government promotes disregard to institutions. The Kejriwal government pushed ahead with the Yoga in park scheme for elders when Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena had not yet given the permission. Now, the city government with a complete disre-

gard to due process and in a way institutionalizing anarchy is getting the senior citizens to come to the parks to do Yoga when they can actually not breathe.

The people in the national capital are complaining of lung impairment in a large number. The asthmatic patients are much harassed. Younger people in the national capital are complaining of arthritis. The skin doctors are reporting an abnormally large number of patients. The people have sore eyes and throats. The migrant workers who cannot afford to sit out at homes since they have to earn their livelihoods are coughing their hearts out. The college students are facing disruptions in their studies. The sports persons are losing days and months in their practice sessions.

Anarchist mindsets never bring solutions. The farmers in Punjab need support from the government and the civic society that they must adopt the good practices as done by their counterparts in Haryana and UP for their own welfare. The farmers in Punjab have to be convinced that it has to be a win-win situation for them to adopt machinery-based solutions for the stubble. The Punjab government needs to spend funds on farmers in the state in place of buying freebies for votes. Anarchists, who believe that freebies are the passports to governance, have taken the people in the national capital to such a state of affairs. The people must hold them accountable.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE BJP WAS CONTESTING ELECTIONS TO THE MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI AND THE GUJARAT ASSEMBLY WITH THE SUPPORT OF JAILED CONMAN SUKESH CHANDRASHEKHAR. —AAP LEADER SAURABH BHARDWAJ



FOUR FRIENDS SITTING TOGETHER: SATYENDRA (JAIN), (KAILASH) GAHLOT, SUKESH (CHANDRASHEKHAR) AND (ARVIND) KEJRIWAL, DO CORRUPT PRACTICES IN JAIL. — BJP SPOKESPERSON SHEHZAD POONAWALA

App loan fraud: A new challenge in digital world

There are certain dos and don'ts which everyone needs to follow to steer clear of the traps of mobile loan frauds

To put things into perspective, here is the real story of Karan (name changed), a salon worker, who lives with his wife and an eight-year-old daughter. He earns a decent monthly salary that suffices his day-to-day expenses. About a month ago, he decided to buy a smart TV and a refrigerator. Though this expenditure was beyond his budget, he anyways went ahead with the purchases.

Unknowningly, he put himself in a financially restrained situation and the monthly deficit put him in a tough spot to manage his daily expenses. So, Karan started exploring the online money lending applications on his phone to relieve himself from the financial stress.

Scrolling through hun-

SANDEEP JOSHI

APPURVA BHANDARI

(Sandeep Joshi is a freelance journalist; Appurva Bhandari is a digital safety activist)

dreds of options, he came across a mobile application (App), which offered him some lucrative money-lending options. Unfortunately, it was a fraudulent mobile loan application, which asked Karan to enter his mobile number, bank account number, PAN and Aadhar details to get approval for a Rs 9,000 instant loan.

To his surprise, the amount was immediately credited to his bank account. Karan was confused at the superfast transaction from the money lending application, which alerted him to read the minute details and terms and conditions of the loan. Upon closely checking the repayment details, he was shocked that his loan amount, which had an interest compo-

nent of a staggering 80 per cent, was due for repayment within the next 10 days.

And then his worst nightmare started. He started getting calls from various numbers, saying that if he refuses to pay back the money, he will get into various troubles, his bank account would be hacked. The scammers got access to his email contacts and phone numbers, his photos and videos, who then threatened to expose his personal details. Karan's fake social media account was created where the scammers started demanding money from his contacts. Even his wife started getting threatening calls.

Fearing worse, Karan approached the cyber cell of police. But police refused to

file any case, saying that since he was getting calls from various numbers it was difficult to file the case. He was asked to shut his bank account, change his mobile number and alert his close contacts not to respond to any "emergency situation" related to him. Though Karan did manage to come out to salvage the situation, his entire social, personal and financial life were messed up.

Today thousands of individuals like Karan get scammed from online money lending applications and fake calls. Though the government has no data so far on this mobile application financial fraud, the situation is alarming. Recently a Chinese loan app fraud, which resulted in extortion and harassment of

many across India had created stir. From Mumbai to Delhi, Bangalore, Lucknow and Hyderabad, daily news reports related to mobile app loan frauds have become the order of the day.

While the Government and the Reserve Bank of India is still struggling to deal with online frauds, this new challenge of mobile app loan fraud has forced the government to set up a team of IT, financial, legal and security experts to find a solution to find a way out of this complex situation.

According to the latest government data, cases related to online frauds have come down by about 17.5 per cent in 2021-22 to ₹128 crores as against ₹160 crores recorded in the previous fiscal. Interestingly, the amount of

fraud decreased but the number of cases increased. In the 2021-22, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported around 9,103 bank fraud cases across India.

Recently, many online scammers have started using newer ways to target innocent people by morphing their photos with vulgar images on video calls and blackmailing them into paying money. Dating apps and WhatsApp messenger have become common ground where unknown people send video call requests and record the screen with your live photo/ video, and later use it to blackmail individuals to extort money.

There are certain dos and don'ts which everyone needs to follow to steer clear of the traps of mobile loan frauds.

Do not download untrusted mobile applications, doing so could lead your devices prone to malware, virus, and spyware attacks and compromise the safety of the digital device. Do not upload sensitive information such as your bank account details, Aadhar, or PAN information on a non-trusted mobile application. Always use stronger passwords to protect your digital accounts such as email accounts and social media accounts from getting hacked.

And the most important lesson is that instead of falling prey to unknown financial sources, always seek financial support from a known bank or non-banking financial company or NBFC. As they say, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

Ukraine warns of Russian 'brutality' in eastern region

AP ■ KYIV

Russian forces are stepping up their strikes in a fiercely contested region of eastern Ukraine, worsening the already tough conditions for residents and the defending army following Moscow's illegal annexation and declaration of martial law in Donetsk province, Ukrainian authorities said.

The attacks have almost completely destroyed the power plants that serve the city of Bakhmut and the nearby town of Soledar, Pavlo Kyrylenko, the region's Ukrainian governor, said. Shelling killed one civilians and wounded three, he reported late Saturday.

"The destruction is daily, if not hourly," Kyrylenko said in a state television interview.

Moscow-backed separatists controlled part of Donetsk for nearly eight years before Russia invaded Ukraine in late February. Protecting the separatists' self-proclaimed republic there was one of Russian President Vladimir Putin's justifications for the invasion, and his troops have spent months trying to capture the entire province. While Russia's "greatest brutality" was focused in the Donetsk region, "constant fighting" continued elsewhere along the front line that stretches more than 1,000



kilometers (620 miles), Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address.

Between Saturday and Sunday, Russia's launched four missiles and 19 airstrikes

impacting more than 35 villages in seven regions, from Chernihiv and Kharkiv in the northeast to Kherson and Mykolaiv in the south, according to the president's office.

Russia has focused on

striking energy infrastructure over the last month, causing power shortages and rolling outages across the country. The capital, Kyiv, was scheduled to have hourly blackouts rotating Sunday in various

parts of the city of some 3 million and the surrounding region,

Rolling blackouts also were planned in the Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Zhytomyr, Sumy, Kharkiv and Poltava regions,

Ukraine's state-owned energy operator, Ukrenergo, said in a Telegram post.

More positive news was the re-connection of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant to Ukraine's power grid, local media reported Sunday. Europe's largest nuclear plant needs electricity to maintain vital cooling system, but it had been running on emergency diesel generators since Russian shelling severed its outside connections.

In the Donetsk city of Bakhmut, some 15,000 remaining residents were living under daily shelling and without water or power, according to local media.

The city has been under attack for months, but the bombardment picked up after Russian forces experienced setbacks during Ukrainian counteroffensives in the Kharkiv and Kherson regions. In Kharkiv, officials are working to identify bodies found in mass graves after the Russians withdrew, Dmytro Chubenko, a spokesperson for the regional prosecutor's office, said in an interview with local media.

DNA samples have been collected from 450 bodies discovered in a mass grave in the city of Izium, but the samples need to be matched with relatives and so far only 80 people have participated, he said.

15 Indian fishermen arrested by Lankan Navy



PTI ■ COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan Navy has arrested at least 15 Indian fishermen and seized their two trawlers for allegedly poaching in the country's territorial waters, an official statement said on Sunday.

The fishermen were arrested on Saturday off Talaimannar, a settlement located on the northwestern coast of Mannar Island, the Navy said in the statement.

The fishermen, who remain in naval custody in Talaimannar, will be handed over to the fisheries inspector, it said.

Illegal fishing in the Sri Lankan waters by Indian fishermen has been a recurrent problem despite many high-level talks held between the two sides.

The latest arrest came as Sri Lanka and India held talks on the international maritime boundary challenges between the two South Asian nations on board a Sri Lanka Naval craft.

The 32nd international maritime boundary line meeting had discussed the roles of the two Navies and their coast guards, the Navy said.

The fishermen issue is a contentious one in the ties between India and Sri Lanka, with the Lankan Navy personnel even firing at Indian fishermen in the Palk Strait and seizing their boats in several alleged incidents of illegally entering Sri Lankan's territorial waters. The Palk Strait, which is a narrow strip of water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka, is a rich fishing ground for fishermen from both countries.

Japan PM vows to strengthen military at int'l naval review

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at an international fleet review Sunday said his country urgently needs to strengthen its military capabilities amid a worsening security environment in the East and South China seas and threats from North Korea's nuclear and missile advancement and Russia's war on Ukraine.

Eighteen warships participated in the review from 12 countries, including the United States, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand, Singapore and South Korea, while the U.S. And France also sent warplanes.

South Korea joined for the first time in seven years, in the latest sign of improvement in badly strained ties between Tokyo and Seoul over Japan's wartime atrocities.

"The security environment

in the East and South China seas, especially around Japan, is increasingly becoming more severe," Kishida said, noting North Korea's increased missile firings, including one that flew over Japan last month, and growing concern about the Russian invasion's impact in Asia.

Avoiding disputes and seeking dialogue is important, Kishida said, but it is also necessary to be prepared for provocations and threats to peace and stability. He repeated his pledge to significantly reinforce Japan's military capability within five years.

Kishida said Japan urgently needs to build more warships, strengthen anti-missile capability and improve working conditions for troops.

"We have no time to waste," Kishida said after his review aboard JS Izumo, where naval officers from the participating countries gathered to review a



demonstration of the frigates, submarines, supply ships and warplanes in Sagami Bay southwest of Tokyo.

The 248-meter- (813-foot) long Izumo has been retrofitted so that it can carry F-35Bs, stealth fighters capable of short take-offs and vertical landings, as Japan increasingly works side-by-side with the U.S. Military.

Kishida said Japan will further strengthen the deterrence and response capability of the Japan-U.S. Alliance.

Later Sunday, Kishida was to visit the USS Ronald Reagan, the U.S. Navy's only forward-deployed aircraft carrier, off the U.S. Naval base of Yokosuka, with U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel.

Japan has steadily stepped up its international defense role and military spending over the past decade, and plans to double its military budget in

the next five to 10 years to about 2% of its GDP, citing a NATO standard, amid threats from North Korea and China's growing assertiveness.

Kishida's government is currently working on a revision to its national security strategy and mid- to long-term defense policies, and is considering allowing the use of pre-emptive strike capability in a major shift to Japan's self-defense-only postwar principle. Critics say allowing pre-emptive strike capability could violate Japan's pacifist Constitution.

Apparently addressing concerns from Asian neighbors, Kishida said Japan will stick to its postwar pledge as a "pacifist nation" and continue to explain its security policy to gain understanding, while asking other countries to do the same.

Many Asian countries, including South Korea, were victims of Japanese aggression

in the first half of the 1900s, and an attempt by Japan to increase its military role and spending could be a sensitive issue.

Sunday's international fleet review marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of Japan's postwar navy, called the Maritime Self-Defense Force, seven years after Japan was demilitarized after its World War II defeat. The naval ships and warplanes were to participate in joint exercises later on Sunday and Monday.

It was the first time Japan hosted an international fleet review in 20 years. China did not take part in the review but is to participate in the two-day Western Pacific Naval Symposium to be held in Yokohama from Monday. Naval officers from about 30 countries are expected to attend the gathering to discuss maritime security.

Monitors say 9 killed in Syria shelling of tent settlements

AP ■ IDLIB

Syrian government forces shelled tent settlements housing families displaced by the country's conflict in the rebel-held northwest early Sunday, killing at least nine people and wounding dozens, opposition war monitors and first responders said.

The shelling was the latest violation of a truce reached between Russia and Turkey in March 2020 that ended a Russian-backed government offensive on Idlib province. Idlib is the last major rebel-held stronghold in Syria. The truce has been repeatedly violated over the past two years killing and wounding scores of people.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, reported that government forces fired about 30 rockets toward rebel-held areas Sunday morning. Those areas included the Maram camp just northwest of the provincial capital of Idlib, where nine were killed



and 77 wounded. It said the dead included three children and one woman.

Rebel factions responded by targeting government positions with artillery and missiles in the area of Saraqib, east of Idlib, and the al-Ghab plain, the observatory reported.

The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense, also known as

White Helmets, reported that nine people were killed, including two children and a woman, and about 70 injured in shelling targeting at least six camps west of the capital.

The pro-government Sham FM radio station said Syrian government forces shelled positions of the al-Qaida-linked Hayat Tahrir al-Sham group,

the most powerful militant group in Idlib. It said Syrian and Russian warplanes also attacked the areas.

Syria's conflict broke out in March 2011 and has since killed hundreds of thousands of people, displaced half the country's pre-war population of 23 million and left large parts of Syria destroyed.

Tanzania: At least 3 dead as small passenger plane crashes into Lake Victoria



AP ■ NAIROBI

A small passenger plane crashed Sunday morning into Lake Victoria on approach to an airport in Tanzania, and regional authorities said at least three people died.

Local authorities said 26 of the 43 people on board the

Precision Air flight from the coastal city of Dar es Salaam were rescued and taken to a hospital. The plane was headed to Bukoba Airport. Precision Air is a Tanzanian airline company. News reports showed photos of the plane mostly submerged in the lake. "We have managed to save

quite a number of people," Kagera province police commander William Mwampaghale told journalists. "When the aircraft was about 100 metres (328 feet) midair, it encountered problems and bad weather. It was raining and the plane plunged into the water," he said.



Seven killed, three injured in road accident in Afghanistan

IANS ■ KABUL

At least seven people were killed and three others injured in a road accident in Afghanistan's Dawlat Shah district.

The vehicle ferrying health workers overturned and fell off the valley in Laghman province on Saturday, Khaama Press reported.

The injured were being treated at hospital.

The cause of the accident is yet to be identified.

Road damage and reckless driving are the main contributors to traffic accidents in the country, contributing significantly to the traffic related fatalities.

Deadly tornadoes hit Texas and Oklahoma, flatten buildings

AP ■ IDABEL

Residents in southeastern Oklahoma and northeastern Texas began assessing weather damage Saturday, working to recover and thankful to have survived after a storm stretching from Dallas to northwest Arkansas spawned tornadoes and produced flash flooding, killing at least two people, injuring others and leaving homes and buildings in ruins.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt went to the town of Idabel to see the damage. He said on social media that all the homes had been searched and

a 90-year-old man was killed. Keli Cain, spokesperson for the state's Department of Emergency Management, said the man's body was found at his home in the Pickens area of McCurtain County, about 36 miles (58 kilometers) north of Idabel.

Morris County, Texas, Judge Doug Reeder said in a social media post that one person died as a result of a tornado in the far northeastern Texas County, offering no other details.

Reeder and other county officials did not immediately return phone calls for additional comment.



The Oklahoma Highway Patrol also reported a 6-year-old girl drowned and a 43-year-old man was

missing after their vehicle was swept by water off a bridge near Stilwell, about 135 miles (217 kilometers)

north of Idabel. The drowning has not been officially attributed to the storm and will be investigated by the medical examiner, Cain said.

Saturday afternoon Stitt declared a state of emergency for McCurtain County, where Idabel is located, and neighboring Bryan, Choctaw and LeFlore counties.

The declaration is a step in qualifying for federal assistance and funding and clears the way for state agencies to make disaster-recovery related purchases without limits on bidding requirements.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said damage assessments and recovery

efforts are under way in northeast Texas and encouraged residents to report damage to the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

"I have deployed all available resources to help respond and recover," Abbott said in a statement. "I thank all of our hardworking state and local emergency management personnel for their swift response."

National Weather Service meteorologist Robert Darby in Tulsa said the far-reaching storm produced heavy rain in the Stilwell area at the time, around 4 inches (10.16 centimeters).

Idabel, a rural town of about

7,000 at the foothills of the Ouachita Mountains, saw extensive damage, Cain said. "There are well over 100 homes and businesses damaged from minor damage to totally destroyed," Cain said. Trinity Baptist Church in Idabel was preparing to complete a new building when the storm ripped apart their sanctuary and flattened the shell of the new structure next door, according to Pastor Don Myer.

The 250-member congregation was to vote after the Sunday service on whether to move ahead with the final work to complete the building. Myer told The Associated Press.

Sugar export call after yield review: Centre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government, which has allowed export of 6 million tonne of sugar till May 31 of the ongoing 2022-23 season, on Sunday said it could consider allowing more export after periodic assessment of the domestic production.

A food ministry notification issued on November 5 said export quota of 6 million tonne has been permitted from November 1 till May 31, 2023 with an option for millers to export on their own or through exporters or swap with domestic sale quota.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the ministry said the export quota has been fixed based on the available initial estimates of sugarcane production in the country.

“The sugarcane production in the country will be reviewed periodically and based on the latest available estimates, the quantity of sugar exports to be allowed could be reconsidered,” the ministry said.

Mills have been asked to export allocated sugar quota speedily to make early payment to cane farmers, it said.

Mill-wise sugar export quota has been fixed for the current season (October-September) based on average production of sugar mills in last three years and average sugar production in the country in



the same period, it said.

Further, to expedite sugar exports and to ensure flexibility to sugar mills in execution of the export quota, mills are allowed to surrender the quota partially or fully within 60 days of the date of issue of order or they can swap the export quota with domestic quota within 60 days.

“This system would ensure lesser burden on the logistics system of the country as the swapping system would reduce the need to transport the sugar from distant locations to the ports for exports and movement of sugar across the length and breadth of the country for domestic consumption,” the ministry said.

Further, swapping would also ensure liquidation of sugar stocks of all mills. Mills which are not able to export could swap their export quota with domestic quota of sugar mills which are able to export more, mainly due to their vicinity to

ports, it said.

At the end of 2022-23 season, it is expected that most sugar mills will be able to sell their production either in domestic market or in international market through exports and will clear the cane dues of farmers in time.

“Thus, the policy has created a win-win situation for sugar mills in the country,” the ministry added.

In the ongoing 2022-23 season, the ministry said sugar availability for domestic consumption would be 27.5 million tonne, while 5 million tonne of sugar would go for ethanol making and the closing balance would be about 5 million tonne at end of the season.

The sugar production in 2022-23 season has already commenced in Maharashtra and Karnataka from October onwards, whereas in Uttar Pradesh and rest of the cane growing states it would kick off in a week's time.

Mcap of seven of top 10 most valued firms rises ₹1.33 lakh crore

Reliance biggest winner

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seven of the top-10 most valued firms together added ₹1,33,707.42 crore in market valuation last week amid an overall positive trend in equities, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest winner.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 990.51 points or 1.65 per cent.

Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Infosys, State Bank of India, HDFC and ITC were among the gainers, while ICICI Bank, Hindustan Unilever Limited and Bharti Airtel faced erosion from their market valuation.



The market capitalisation (mcap) of Reliance Industries jumped ₹44,956.5 crore to ₹17,53,888.92 crore. HDFC Bank added ₹22,139.15 crore taking its valuation to ₹8,34,517.67 crore.

The market valuation of State Bank of India rallied ₹20,526.61 crore to ₹5,29,898.82 crore and that of TCS climbed ₹19,521.04 crore to ₹11,76,860.69 crore.

HDFC's mcap advanced ₹16,156.04 crore to ₹4,52,396.31 crore and that of ITC spurred by ₹9,861.07 crore to ₹4,38,538.73 crore. The valuation of Infosys gained ₹547.01 crore to ₹6,37,023.14 crore. In contrast, the mcap of ICICI Bank declined by ₹1,518.27 crore to ₹6,31,314.49 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever fell by ₹1,186.55 crore to ₹5,92,132.24 crore.

Six years since demonetisation, massive jump in cash with public at ₹30.88 lakh cr

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Currency with the public has jumped to a new high of ₹30.88 lakh crore as of October 21, illustrating that cash usage is still robust even six years after the demonetisation move.

At ₹30.88 lakh crore, the currency with the public is 71.84 per cent higher than the level for the fortnight ended November 4, 2016. On November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced the decision to withdraw ₹500 and ₹1,000 denomination notes with the ultimate aim of reducing corruption and black money in the economy.

The intent of the move, which was criticised by many experts for poor planning and execution, was to make India a “less cash” economy.

As per the fortnightly data on money supply released by the RBI on Friday, the currency with the public increased to ₹30.88 lakh crore as on October 21. The central bank data for Reserve Money had put the currency in circulation at ₹17.7 lakh crore on November 4, 2016.

Currency with public refers to notes and coins used by people to transact, settle trades, and for buying goods and services. The figure is arrived at after deducting cash with banks from the currency in circulation.

Cash usage has been steadily rising in the economy, even as newer and far convenient digital alternatives of



payments have become popular. The Covid-19 pandemic, which laid an emphasis on contactless transactions, also gave a fillip to such digital modes. A 2019 RBI study on digital payments had partly addressed the issue.

“Although digital payments have been growing gradually in recent years, both in value and volume terms across countries, data also suggests that during the same time, currency in circulation to GDP ratio has also increased in consonance with the overall economic growth,” it had said.

“... An increase in digital payments to GDP ratio over a period of time does not seem

to automatically imply a fall in the currency to GDP ratio of the country,” it had added.

It had said that after demonetisation, India has witnessed a significant increase in digital transactions, although the digital payments to GDP ratio in the country has been traditionally low.

In a recent note, economists at SBI had said the currency in circulation (CIC) declined by ₹7,600 crore in the Diwali week, which was the first such decline in nearly two decades if one were to exclude the 2009 festivities, which saw a marginal dip due to the global financial crisis.

Ola Electric to touch production of 10 L units by November 2023



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ola Electric will touch cumulative production of 10 lakh units by November 2023, according to a new set of numbers shared by its founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal.

Earlier the company had said it has the current capacity of 20 lakh units per annum at its factory and it would be exhausted in the next six to eight months.

“Our cumulative production numbers: Dec 2021: 0; Nov 2022: 1,00,000; Nov 2023: 10,00,000; Nov 2024: 1,00,00,000.. This is the journey to #EndICEAge by 2025,” Aggarwal said in a tweet on Friday.

IOB posts 33.2% jump in Q2 net at ₹501 crore

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Public sector Indian Overseas Bank has recorded a 33.2 per cent jump in its net profit for the second quarter ending September 30, 2022 at ₹501 crore, the bank said on Sunday.

The city-headquartered bank registered net profit at ₹376 crore during the corresponding period last year.

For the half year ending September 30, 2022 the net profit surged to ₹893 crore from ₹703 crore last year.

The total income during the quarter ending September 30, 2022 went up to ₹5,852.45 crore from ₹5,028 crore recorded as on June 30, 2022. The total business stood at ₹4,34,441 crore as against ₹4,23,589 crore.



The deposits grew to ₹2,61,728 crore from ₹2,60,045 crore. The net non-performing assets (NPA) ratio stood at 2.56 per cent as on September 30, 2022 when compared to 2.77 per cent registered as on September 30, 2021, the bank said. During the quarter under review, the gross NPA reduced by ₹43 crore. “GNPA (gross NPA) ratios improved to 8.53 per cent (as on September 30, 2022) from 10.66 per cent as on June 30, 2022,” the bank said.

With ₹14,752 cr net, SBI beats RIL to become most profitable company in Q2

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State Bank of India has become the country's most profitable corporate with ₹14,752 crore of consolidated net income in the second quarter of FY23, beating Reliance Industries having net earnings of ₹13,656 crore.

On a standalone basis too, with ₹13,256 crore of net profit, the nation's largest lender has beaten the Mukesh Ambani firm which remained the most profitable corporate for decades, by a wider margin as Reliance took a hit of ₹4,039 crore in windfall tax on its exports during the quarter.

The net income of Reliance includes ₹4,729 crore from Jio Platforms and ₹4,404 crore from the retail business, both pre-tax earnings, which was marginally down from Rs 13,680 crore in the year-ago period.

On the other hand, SBI's



standalone net soared 74 per cent to ₹13,256 crore in the July-September quarter, making this the best-ever quarterly numbers for the bank and beating all other usually more profitable companies by a wider margin.

SBI chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara said had the bank booked treasury profits in the quarter, net income would have been much higher. He did not quantify by how much, though.

Unlike all other banks, the chairman said the bank has had notional gains on its treasury investments, which has a ₹2.85-

lakh-crore of additional exposure than the mandated 19 per cent in SLR or statutory liquidity ratio. The Reserve Bank mandates all banks to invest 19 per cent of their total deposits in central government securities. SBI consolidated net soared 66 per cent during the period under review, which was only ₹8,890 crore in the year-ago period. Total income of the SBI group also rose to ₹1,14,782 crore in the quarter from ₹1,01,143.26 crore in the year-ago period.

On a first half basis, however, Reliance continues to be the most profitable firm with ₹31,611 crore in net as against SBI's ₹22,077 crore. Similarly, on an income basis too, Reliance leads with total revenue of ₹253,497 crore (traditionally Indian Oil and ONGC are the largest in terms of top-line), as against SBI's ₹1,14,782 crore for the period under review.

Indian firm eyes sending tourists to space in balloon-propelled capsule by 2025

PTI ■ DEHRADUN

An Indian firm is planning to ferry tourists near space in a spaceship attached to a unique high-altitude balloon system by 2025.

Inspired by Elon Musk's SpaceX, the Mumbai-based Space Aura Aerospace Technology Pvt Ltd company has begun to build a space capsule measuring 10 feet x 8 feet, which can carry six tourists besides the pilot into space at a time. However, the space capsule will remain within 35 km radius above the earth.

The company presented a prototype of the space capsule named SKAP 1 at a science exhibition 'Akash Tatva' here, which got great response from scientists and common people alike.

The firm has set itself a target of 2025 for beginning its flight into space, Space Aura founder and CEO Akash Porwal told PTI.

Two places have been identified in Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, from where the flight into space can be launched, and a decision in this regard will be taken soon, he said. The company is busy trying to achieve its target with the help of scientists from ISRO and TIFR, Porwal said.

Equipped with all modern facilities, life saving and information systems, the space capsule will be propelled by a balloon filled with helium or hydrogen gas up to 30 to 35 kilometre above the sea level, where space tourists

can witness the earth's curvature and the blackness of space for around 1 hour, he said.

The space balloon will slowly be deflated and a parachute will be unpacked to bring down the spaceship. At a definite point the space balloon will be detached from the space capsule and the tourists will be brought down safely.

“Our objective is to attract space tourists to India by presenting to them a mix of space tourism and Indian culture,” Porwal said.

“In comparison to Space X and Blue Origin, our company will help space tourists go to space at a much lower cost,” he said. Though the fare for a flight in the spaceship has not been decided, it is likely to be nearly ₹50 lakh.

IRDAI in talks with Govt for relaxation of ₹100-crore entry capital for insurers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has suggested the government to ease the minimum capital requirement of ₹100 crore and permit the regulator to fix the amount depending upon business plans of the prospective company.

Doing away with the minimum capital requirement of Rs 100 crore would allow entry of small, specialised and niche players, which would help in increased insurance penetration and density in the country.

“Like in the banking system, we have microfinance institutions, regional banks,



and small finance banks. So, we have all categories of banks then there are non-banking financial companies. In the insurance sector also, we should have different size players to come into the market so that they can operate in smaller geographies.” IRDAI Chairman Debasish Panda told PTI in an interview.

Entry of smaller and specialised players would help in increasing insurance penetration and density, he said.

India a priority country, says Alliance to End Plastic Waste

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Singapore-based the Alliance to End Plastic Waste (AEPW), which is working across the globe, has said that India is a priority country for them and the AEPW is implementing 11 projects in the country, which are in various stages of implementation.

“Twenty per cent of our projects are in India, which are being implemented in partnership with various urban local bodies in public private partnership mode,” AEPW President and CEO Jacob Duer, who was in India to visit and meet its allies and partners, said, adding that this includes projects in iconic cities like Agra and Haridwar which are

being implemented together with local municipal corporations.

The aim of these projects is to divert more than 25,000 tonnes per year of plastic waste from the environment and recycle up to 25,000 tonnes per year, said Duer, adding that plastic waste management is a critical issue for a country like India which is estimating to be generating 9.4 million tonnes of plastic waste annually.

“40 percent that plastic waste (generated by India annually) is currently estimated as being unmanaged.

And by unmanaged, that means that it ends up in the environment, can end up in rivers and oceans, ends up in

open dump sites or it can even be burned. All that plastic has a significant value.

Through the AEPW, we are working to support efforts at the community level, at the municipality level to put in place infrastructure solutions for plastic waste,” he said.

The projects of AEPW are located in several Indian cities including Agra, Kolkata, Sundarbans Haridwar, Rishikesh, Puducherry etc. and are focusing on enhancing plastic waste management capabilities, including setting up of material recovery centres, waste collection and sorting, enhance opportunities for recycling and behavioural change programmes.

Less than 50% capex planned for FY23 utilised: Tata Steel CEO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Steel has spent less than half of the capex planned for ongoing 2022-23 fiscal year, its CEO T V Narendran said.

The company had planned ₹12,000 crore of capex for the year, of which about ₹8,500 crore was for India and the balance for Europe.

“We have spent a little less of the 50 per cent (of the planned capex) till now,” Narendran told PTI in reply to a question related to capital expenditure plan for FY23.

For September quarter, Tata Steel reported 90 per cent drop in consolidated net profit to ₹1,297 crore as against ₹12,547.70 crore in the year-ago period.

In India, Tata Steel acquired Odisha-based steel maker Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd (NINL) for ₹12,000 crore in a bidding process in July.

In the UK, the company is seeking 1.5 billion pounds from the UK government to execute its decarbonisation plans.

Voda Idea expands retail presence with 300 new ‘Vi shops’ in rural markets

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea (VIL) on Sunday said it has rolled out 300 new-format ‘Vi Shops’ across multiple towns in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal and UP West, in line with its expansion blueprint to digitally connect the rural population.

VIL plans to further strengthen its local presence and enhance engagement with mobile users by expanding its retail footprint to cover more rural markets in the coming months.

“To ramp up its retail footprint at the sub district level, Vi has rolled out 300 new format ‘Vi Shops’ across multiple towns in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, West Bengal and UP West,” the company said in a statement.

Customers in Indapur, Maharashtra; Hapur in Western UP; Basirhat in West Bengal; Usilampatti in Tamil Nadu; Payyoli in Kerala; and hundreds of other such towns will have access to quick, face-to-face service along with a range of differentiated products and offerings, it added.

Maruti Suzuki may expand Manesar plant capacity by 1L units by Apr 2024

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) may increase its Manesar plant production capacity by one lakh units to cater to the enhanced demand before its Sonipat facility commences operations in 2025, a senior company official said.

The country's largest car-maker may also look at expanding production capacity at its Gurugram-based manufacturing facility to cater to the rising demand for its products.

Currently, MSI has a cumulative production capac-



ity of 15 lakh units per annum at both Manesar and Gurugram plants. It additionally has access to 7.5 lakh units from parent Suzuki Motor's facility in Gujarat.

The company has already commenced work at the new facility in Kharkhoda in Haryana. The plant is expected to be operational by 2025 with an installed production

capacity of 2.5 lakh units in the first phase.

“As of now, we have about 22.5 lakh capacity in Haryana plus Gujarat...And in times to come, we are in process of working on the Kharkhoda plant, which will be up and running in the year 2025.

“And if required, I think most likely we might have to add about one lakh capacity on a short-term basis in Manesar to meet intermediate demand,” MSI Executive Director (Corporate Planning and Government Affairs) Rahul Bharti said in an analyst call.

GABRIEL SENDS ARSENAL TOP

AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal moved back to the top of the Premier League as Gabriel Magalhaes sealed a gritty 1-0 win against Chelsea after Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang's revenge mission fell flat on Sunday.

Mikel Arteta's side made it 11 wins from 13 league games thanks to a close-range finish from Brazilian defender Gabriel in the second half at Stamford Bridge.

The Gunners are two points clear of second-placed Manchester City after the champions briefly took pole position with a win against Fulham on Saturday.

With only one round of games remaining before the World Cup brings the Premier League to a halt, Arsenal have emerged as genuine contenders to end City's grip on the title.

After beating Tottenham and Liverpool at home earlier this season, winning in west London was another significant statement from Arsenal as their unexpected challenge gathers pace.

This was an even sweeter victory than their other landmark successes this term as it came at the expense of former Arsenal star Aubameyang.

Aubameyang was anonymous in his first meeting with his old team since he was stripped of the captaincy and sold to Barcelona in January after Arteta lost patience with the Gabon forward's repeated disciplinary issues.

Exiling Aubameyang has proved an inspired move by Arteta as Arsenal look a far more unified and determined group without the sulking striker.

Booted by the travelling Arsenal fans, Aubameyang was so underwhelming that it might



LEADER PSG WIN 2-1 AT LORIENT

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain needed a late goal from defender Danilo Pereira on Sunday to scrape a 2-1 win at Lorient and restore its five-point lead at the top of the French league.

Pereira headed home Neymar's corner in the 81st minute as unbeaten PSG maintained its comfortable gap over second-place Lens.



Lionel Messi was rested for the game because of some inflammation in his Achilles tendon. The Argentina star,

who will look to win the World Cup for the first time in his stellar career, is expected to resume training next week.

Messi was replaced in attack by 20-year-old Hugo Ekitike, who marked a rare start by setting up Neymar's opening goal after nine minutes. Neymar's 11th league goal moved him level with teammate Kylian Mbappe atop the scoring charts.

Fourth-place Lorient equalised in the 53rd through club top scorer Terem Moffi's ninth goal of the campaign.

Midfielder Enzo Le Fee sent the Nigeria striker running clear, veteran central defender Sergio Ramos didn't cover him and Moffi fired past goalkeeper Donnarumma.

Moffi hit the crossbar shortly after as Lorient got on top, but then failed to pick up Pereira from Neymar's corner.

not be long before he becomes unwelcome at Chelsea as well.

Chelsea boss Graham Potter might also be feeling the heat soon after his side's winless league run extended to four games with a second successive top-flight defeat, prompting jeers from Blues fans at full-time.

Seventh-placed Chelsea lacked Arsenal's urgency and now trail the leaders by 13 points, with even a top four finish far from certain.

Arsenal have not won the title since Arsene Wenger's Invincibles in 2004, but no Gunners team has amassed more points at this stage in the Premier League era.

Facing the latest test of their title credentials, Arteta's men were quickly into their stride, probing the Chelsea defence with authority and intent.

Aubameyang struggled to make any impact and lost his cool with a reckless lunging foul on White that earned a booking from Michael Oliver.

Gabriel Martinelli was a constant threat and his floated cross picked out the unmarked Jesus, whose face was a picture of frustration after his diving header missed the target from just six yards.

Having managed just four touches in the first half, Aubameyang finally had a sight of goal after William Saliba's miskick but the Arsenal defender recovered to block the shot.

Chelsea's defending was woeful as Saka's delivery was missed by three Chelsea players before Gabriel reacted fastest to poke home on the goal-line.

The sight of Aubameyang being substituted moments after Gabriel's goal only added to the glee among the Arsenal fans crammed into one corner of the Shed End as they start to dream of title glory.



Pique insists he'll be back at Barca

AP ■ BARCELONA

Gerard Pique played his last game at Camp Nou on Saturday in Barcelona's 2-0 win over Almeria and told fans he would be back in the future during an emotional speech.

The 35-year-old centre-back, who has won 30 trophies with the club, including three Champions League titles and eight La Ligas, will retire from football after Tuesday's visit to Osasuna.

Pique, who was cheered by fans throughout the game after more than 14 years in Barcelona's first-team squad, enjoyed a lap of honour at the end of the game and was tossed into the air by his team-mates, as over 92,000 fans stayed in Camp Nou to pay homage to him.

"Thanks to my team-mates, the staff and everyone who helps us to make everything so easy," Pique said in a speech to the supporters after the game.

"To the board as well, for these years. When you get older, sometimes loving is letting go.

"After a relationship of such love and passion, I think it was the moment to leave some space, to give some air. I am sure in the future I will be back here again.

"It's not a goodbye. I left after 17 years to get some air. My grandfather made me a club member. I was born here and I will die here."

Pique, who won the 2010 World Cup and 2012 Euros with Spain, shed tears during his speech, and also kicked a ball around on the pitch with his children as fans finally departed.

When he was replaced in the final stages of the game, each of his team-mates embraced him on the pitch one by one, as fans chanted his name. Ousmane Dembele and Frenkie de Jong's strikes earned Barcelona a victory which put them top of the league.

Hussamuddin joins Lovlina in semis



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time Commonwealth Games Bronze medalist Mohammad Hussamuddin progressed to the semifinals as India's medal count continued to swell at the ASBC Asian Elite Boxing Championships in Amman, Jordan on Sunday.

Up against South Korea's Haengseok Lee in the quarter-final bout, Hussamuddin (57kg) fell behind early with his rival landing clean punches in the opening round.

With the prospects of an upset looming, Commonwealth Bronze medalist Hussamuddin utilised his experience to make a comeback. He went all out in the next two rounds to dominate his way to a 5-0 win and guarantee yet another medal for India.

Hussamuddin will face the 2021 World Championships Silver medalist Serik Temirzha in his semifinals bout on November 10.

In the other quarterfinal, Thailand Open Gold medalist Ananta Chopade (54kg) bowed out of the competition after suffering a 0-4 loss to Seidekmatov Sanzhai of Kyrgyzstan.

On Saturday night, Anikushita Boro (56kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (75 kg) prevailed over Tsubata Arsia of Japan and Valentina Khalzova of Kazakhstan, respectively, to progress to the semifinals.

Olympic Bronze medalist Lovlina, who was contesting in the 75kg weight category for the first time at an international tournament, had to work hard to earn a 3-2 split decision victory against the 2016 world champion Khalzova.

The Assam boxer, who won the bronze medal in 69kg at the Tokyo Olympics, has moved up to 75kg division as her former weight class doesn't feature in the Paris Olympics. However, it was the end of the road for Pooja (70kg), who suffered a 0-5 defeat at the hands of Kazakhstan's Dariga Shakimova in her last eight bout.

Earlier on Saturday, debutants Minakshi (52kg) and Preeti (57kg) and world championships Bronze medalist Parveen had sealed semifinal berths.

Giroud saves AC Milan's blushes against Spezia



AP ■ MILAN

Olivier Giroud spared AC Milan the embarrassment of having their Serie A title defence damaged by Paolo Maldini's son on Saturday with a stunning late volley which earned his team a 2-1 win over Spezia.

Milan moved up to second, six points behind league leaders Napoli, after substitute Giroud crashed in a superb finish from Sandro Tonali's cross in the 89th minute just as it looked like Daniel Maldini had left them trailing even further behind.

In the bedlam that followed his winner veteran striker Giroud, 36, was sent off as he ripped his shirt off in celebration and was given a second booking.

France international Giroud was on a high as he scored twice and set up two more on Wednesday, when Milan moved into the Champions League last 16 for the first time in nine years, and has now scored nine goals in all competitions.

"It was a great goal but it was a brilliant pass

from Sandro," said Giroud to Sky Sport Italia.

"I'm annoyed because I forgot (about the first yellow card), but it is what it is."

On loan at Spezia from Milan, Daniel Maldini curled in a superb leveller just before the hour mark to stun the 70,000 fans present to watch what was expected to be a simple win for the champions, especially after Theo Hernandez had poked the hosts ahead in the 21st minute.

The strike from 21-year-old midfielder Maldini, whose only other senior career goal came against Spezia for Milan last season, would have left Stefano Pioli's side eight points off the pace had Giroud not stepped in with another huge goal.

"He's a great player and he needs to get games. We're waiting for him to come back here as soon as he can," Theo Hernandez said of Maldini to Sky Sport Italia.

A draw with 17th-placed Spezia would have been a big blow for Milan as Napoli went eight points clear earlier on Saturday by beating Atalanta 2-1 in Bergamo as they hunt a first Scudetto since 1990.

Bhagat, Ramadass bag Gold at Para Badminton Worlds

PTI ■ TOKYO

Paralympic champion Pramod Bhagat and promising Manisha Ramadass emerged champions as India finished with a total of 16 medals at the BWF Para Badminton World Championships here on Sunday.

Taking the court first, Bhagat defended his men's singles SL3 title in style as he defeated compatriot Nitesh Kumar 21-19, 21-19 in 53 minutes to clinch the Gold medal.

Bhagat now has 11 medals, including six Gold, two Silver and three Bronze medals in the world championships. He has the distinction of reaching the finals in all the editions, barring 2007 and 2017 World Championships.

For Ramadass, it was a dream come true moment as she beat local star Mamiko Toyoda 21-15, 21-15 in women's singles SU5 finals.

Having started playing senior international only in March this year, it was definitely a milestone for the 17-year-old from Chennai, who stayed dominant throughout the match.

However, Bhagat and Manoj Sarkar had to settle for Silver in the men's doubles SL3-SL4 event after the duo squandered a game advantage to lose to Indonesia's Hikmat Ramdani and Ukun Rukaendi 21-14, 18-21, 13-21.



Indian challenge ends in Hylo Open

PTI ■ SAARBRUCKEN

Star shuttler Kidambi Srikanth and women's doubles pair of Tressa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand lost their respective semifinal matches in contrasting fashion to end India's challenge at the Hylo Open Super 300 tournament here.

Srikanth, 2021 World championship bronze medalist who eliminated world No. 7 Jonatan Christie in the quarterfinals, looked inconsistent and went down to world No. 6 Anthony Ginting of Indonesia 18-21, 15-21 in a match that lasted 38 minutes on Saturday night.

Earlier in the day, the doubles duo of Tressa and Gayatri conceded a 18-15 lead in the decider to eighth seed Thai sisters, Benyapa Aimsaard and Nuntakarn Aimsaard 21-17, 14-21, 18-21 in a gruelling contest lasting more than an hour.



Rune to face Djoker in Paris Masters final



AP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic needed a third set tiebreak to squeeze past world number five Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-2, 3-6, 7-6 (7/4) on Saturday and reach the final of the Paris Masters.

The Serbian will face Danish teenager Holger Rune who earlier beat in-form Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-4, 6-2 to reach a first Masters final.

"It's very sweet, obviously, when you win matches like this against one of the best players in the world," said Djokovic, who is bidding for a record-extending seventh Paris crown and 39th Masters triumph.

An eighth successive win over the Greek, extended the Serbian's overall winning streak to 13 matches.

GARCIA EDGES KASATKINA TO ADVANCE AT WTA FINALS

AP ■ FORT WORTH

Caroline Garcia rallied from a set down to beat Daria Kasatkina 4-6, 6-1, 7-6 (7/5) on Saturday in a winner-take-all clash that sent the French player into the WTA Finals knockout phase.

The clash for the last semifinal berth was tense and action-packed, Garcia shaking off the frustration of the first set then holding on in the tightly contested third to line up a meeting with fifth-ranked Greek Maria Sakkari.

Djokovic had the chance to take charge of the third set when he had two break points at 4-4. He was unable to convert



either and the match went to the tiebreak.

After falling behind in a mini-break, Djokovic took the

Round robin play concluded with world number one Iga Swiatek, already assured of her semi-final berth, defeating American teenager Coco Gauff 6-3, 6-0, who was eliminated from semi-final contention on Thursday.

Swiatek, winner of the French Open and US Open this year, will face seventh-ranked Aryna Sabalenka in the semis at Dickies Arena.

four points to win the match after two hours 20 minutes on court.

"I thought I started the

match very well, again, great hitting like yesterday in the quarters," said Djokovic.

"I had chances early on in the second, I didn't break his serve. The momentum shifted, the crowd got into it. I think he elevated his level of tennis.

"Deservedly so, we went into — both of us — into an even battle all the way until the last point, until the last shot. Some incredible points towards the end. I'm just really glad to overcome this challenge."

In spite of the defeat, Tsitsipas can still finish the year as world number one if he wins the ATP Finals following Carlos Alcaraz's decision to skip the Turin tournament because of the abdominal tear that forced him to retire from his quarter-finals against Rune.



INDIA TO FACE ENG IN SEMIS

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Suryakumar Yadav reaffirmed his status as a short-format magician with another magnificent effort as India crushed Zimbabwe by 71 runs here on Sunday to set up a T20 World Cup semifinal date with the mighty England.

Surya, who has matched the peerless Virat Kohli stroke-for-stroke in this World Cup, smashed an unbeaten 61 off 25 balls in India's imposing total of 186 for 5.

Zimbabwe's batting depth was never enough to surpass that score and they were shot out for 115 in 17.2 overs with Ravichandran Ashwin (3/22) enjoying a good day at the office.

Save Axar Patel, who leaked 40 runs in 3.2 overs, all the other Indian bowlers were on target in one of the most lopsided games of this global event.

Hardik Pandya and Mohammed Shami took two wickets apiece while Arshdeep Singh and Bhuvneshwar Kumar shared a wicket each.

India finished on top of group 2 and will now play their fourth T20 World Cup semifinal (after 2007, 2014, 2016) against Jos Buttler's England in Adelaide on November 10.

If Kohli on October 23 lit up the MCG with a knock for the ages, November 6 resembled a rock-concert where the length of Surya's shadow grew with every passing stroke.

Zimbabwe pacer Blessing Muzarabani, after being hit for a couple of boundaries, had the ball slipped out of this hand on his run-up stride. He was basically shaken and nervous.

Indian cricket has seen a lot of supple wrists but malleable ones coupled with brute power are a rarity. Surya is indeed a rare breed.

On Sunday, he reaffirmed his status as world's number one T20 batter with the help of six fours and four sixes.

The last five overs yielded as many as 79 runs and bulk of them

Dugout can be at ease when he is batting: Rohit on Suryakumar

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Indian captain Rohit Sharma on Sunday said his "dugout can really be at ease" when Suryakumar Kumar is in the middle playing astonishing shots.

Suryakumar reaffirmed his status as the world's number one T20 batter with another magnificent effort on Sunday against Zimbabwe.

"The dugout can really be at ease when he bats, and he's shown a lot of composure when he's batted. We expected this from him, and he's gone from strength to strength," Rohit said at the post-match presentation ceremony.

"What SKY is doing for the team is remarkable, just coming out there, playing that way, taking the pressure off the others. We know his ability, and it allows the guy at the other end to take his time," Rohit added.

Zimbabwe's batting depth was never enough to challenge the Indian bowlers with Ravichandran Ashwin (3/22) enjoying a good

were scored by the Mumbaikar.

The casual ramp shot to guide left-arm Richard Ngarava's full-toss behind third-man, the slog sweep behind square using the pace of the delivery or the imperious inside out loft over extra cover of Tendai Chatara, Surya oozed class with each and every shot.

But certainly, the unforgettable ones were the last over slog sweeps off Ngarava as Surya fetched the deliveries outside the off-stump and deposited them behind deep fine leg.

If that was not enough, he finished with a six over fine leg.

Zimbabwe's slow bowlers – left-arm spinners Wellington Masakadza (0/12 in 2 overs),

day at the office. In fact, all the other Indian bowlers were among wickets in one of the most lopsided games of this global event. "A very good all-round performance, something we were looking for. We had qualified, but we wanted to come out and play the way we wanted to play, which we achieved."

Rohit said going into the semifinals at the Adelaide Oval, the key will be adjusting to the conditions quickly.

"The key for us will be to adjust quickly to the conditions. We have played a game there, but we need to adjust quickly. England are a good team, and it will be a great contest."

"We should take pride in qualifying, firstly, and if we play that semi-final well, we have another big game as well. It's about understanding the lines and lengths – the square boundaries are shorter – and executing well."

"The fans have been brilliant all this while, almost everywhere we have gone we've got a full

house, and we expect the same in the semi-finals as well. On behalf of the team I'd really like to thank them."

While the cricket world might be in awe of his game, Player of the Match Suryakumar said he is not trying anything different, and only looks to execute what he does at training in the match.

"I think the plan was very clear when me and Hardik were batting. He said let's take the positive route and see where we end up. We started hitting the ball well and never stopped till the 20th over. The atmosphere in the team is very nice, and the build-up to the knockouts has been very nice."

"My plan is always clear. I'm not trying anything different. I bat the same way in the nets as well."

Asked about his performance this year, Suryakumar said, "Feels really good, but coming out and starting from zero is what I always think when I come out to bat, and I'll keep doing that. It's good to see people come out and support us like this even after we've qualified."

Surya is a joy to watch, every time puts on a show: Dravid



PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Watching Suryakumar Yadav bat is an inexhaustible joie de vivre and India head coach Rahul Dravid believes that he is staging a spectacle every time he is on the 22 yards.

Each one better than the previous one and unforgettable at times.

"I think he has been absolutely phenomenal for us. He is just a joy to watch. It's a pleasure to watch him bat when he's in that kind of form. Every time, it's like he puts on a show, without a doubt," said Dravid.

SKY, as he is known in the cricketing ecosystem, blasted 61 off 25 balls against Zimbabwe.

"Yeah, it's incredible. That's why he is the No. 1 T20 player in the world at the moment," said the head coach about the magnificent knock.

With 225 runs, he is the second highest scorer in the Indian team in this competition. Only Virat Kohli (246) has scored more than him, but, at 193.96, Surya's strike rate has been absolutely jaw dropping.

"It's not easy to be consistent with the kind of strike rate he's going at. So, it's just fantastic the way he's playing. I think he's been very clear in his processes. He's very clear about his tactics," said the coach, who in his playing days was known for his immaculate technique and copybook strokes.

But if you think there has been no method to his madness, then you are wrong. Suryakumar has reached the top after incredible hard work and sacrifices.

"I think he's (Surya) worked very hard. I think one of the things about Surya is just the amount of hard work that he's put in the nets, in thinking about his game, his fitness."

The work on fitness had helped Kohli hit his peak few years ago and that is happening with Surya in the shortest format.

"If I look at Surya from a couple of years ago, just to see how he takes care of his body and the amount of time he spends on his fitness, I think he's just really earning the reward for a lot of the hard work that he's put in on and off the field, and long may it continue," the smiling coach didn't want to jinx this form.

Pakistan make dramatic entry into T20 WC semis

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Pakistan defied all odds to make a dramatic entry into the T20 World Cup semifinals with a clinical five-wicket win over Bangladesh after being handed a fresh lease of life by the Netherlands, who stunned South Africa here on Sunday.

Standing on the verge of an early exit from the tournament following defeats against India and Zimbabwe in the Super 12 stage, Pakistan were handed a lifeline after the Netherlands shocked South Africa by 13 runs at the same venue earlier in the day.

Opting to bat, Bangladesh got off to a rollicking start with Najmul Hossain Shanto slamming a counter-attacking 48-ball 54 but lacked the final flourish as Pakistan rode on pacer Shaheen Afridi's career-best T20I figures of 4 for 22 to restrict their opponents to a paltry 127 for eight.

It was not a straightforward chase as Pakistan lost wickets at regular intervals to find themselves in a tricky position before Shan Masood held his nerves to seal the win with 11 balls to spare.

Mohammad Haris played a crucial 18-ball 31 in the middle after Pakistan lost both their openers -- Babar Azam (25) and Mohammad Rizwan (32) in



quick succession.

With seven needed, Haris did a harakiri and was dismissed by Bangladesh captain Shakib Al

Hasan.

Pakistan lost one more wicket in the form of Iftikhar Ahmed with just two required for win.

SHAHEEN WARNS BEST YET TO COME

AP ■ ADELAIDE

Shaheen Shah Afridi warned he is still not back to his fearsome best even after leading Pakistan into the T20 World Cup semi-finals with figures of 4-22 against Bangladesh on Sunday.

The left-arm frontline fast bowler rattled the opposition batsmen with his swing and seam in Adelaide.

The 22-year-old missed the recent Asia Cup with a knee injury and is still working his way back to full fitness after being out of action for three months.

"It is not easy to come back from such an injury," Shaheen said.

"I can only give my 100 percent on the field, and I am trying. This injury needed time, I think I came (back) early as it is a World Cup and the team needs me."

Shaheen struggled for wickets early in the tournament as Pakistan suffered losses to India and then Zimbabwe in Group 2. But he seemed to have

found rhythm in a win over the Netherlands and came into his own with a match-winning 3-14 against South Africa, a victory that revived their campaign.

Pakistan's last Super 12 match turned out to be a virtual quarter-final after the Netherlands stunned South Africa in the earlier game.

Shaheen rose to the challenge after Bangladesh elected to bat first and sent back Liton Das for 10 in the third over.

It was his double strike in the 17th over that broke Bangladesh's back and he took one more to bag four wickets for the first time in T20 internationals.

"I am not bowling at 150 kph like Haris (Rauf)," Shaheen said. "Even before I bowled at 135-140 kph. (Earlier) I felt a pinch during run-up but now feeling much better."

"Staying in the room for two-three months with an injury affects your mind."

He added: "I believed that I would come back and my efforts would pay dividends."

SL cricketer Gunathilaka arrested in Sydney for alleged sexual assault

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Sri Lanka cricketer Danushka Gunathilaka, who was with the national squad for the T20 World Cup in Australia, was arrested on charges of sexual assault here on Sunday, prompting the Lankan government to order an "immediate investigation" into the incident.

It has been learnt that the 31-year-old Gunathilaka was arrested and taken to Sydney City police station in the wee hours of Sunday following an investigation into alleged sexual assault of a woman on November 2.

"Daushka Gunathilaka has been arrested for an alleged rape. The Sri Lankan team has left Australia without him," a source aware of the developments said.

The Sri Lankan team was eliminated from the tournament after losing to England on Saturday.

In a statement, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said it will take strict action against the player if found guilty.

"In consultation with the (International Cricket Council), (we) will expeditiously initiate a thorough inquiry into the matter and take stern action against the player if found guilty," the statement said.

The Sri Lankan government also reacted to the development, asking SLC to conduct an immediate investigation.

"We have asked for an immediate investigation by SLC and submit a report," Amal Harsha de Silva, the top bureaucrat of the country's sports ministry, told reporters.

The left-handed batter played against Namibia in the first round match of the ongoing showpiece and was out for a duck.

Later, he was ruled out of the

tournament due to an injury even as the team qualified for the Super 12 stage.

The Lankan team finished fourth in Group 1.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Gunathilaka and the woman were in touch for a number of days after connecting via an online dating app.

The paper also reported that the arrest was made from a Sydney hotel before 1 am local time as the Sri Lankan team was preparing to leave the airport for a 6 am flight back home.

New South Wales Police Child Abuse and Sex Crimes Squad Detective Superintendent Jayne Doherty said the woman took enough precautions before going on a date with Gunathilaka.

According to details on the website, a 29-year-old woman had been sexually assaulted at a residence in Rose Bay earlier this

week.

The batter is no stranger to controversies. In 2021, he was suspended by the Sri Lanka cricket board for one year after he breached the team's bio-secure bubble on the tour of England alongside teammates Kusal Mendis and Niroshan Dickwella.

The board had also handed him a six-month ban in 2018 after he had broken the team curfew. In the same year, Gunathilaka was also suspended after his unnamed friend was accused of raping a Norwegian woman.

In 2017, the board had suspended him for six limited overs games after it found about Gunathilaka missing training sessions and turning up for a game without his cricket gear.

He has represented Sri Lanka in eight Tests, 47 One Day Internationals and 46 Twenty20 Internationals.

Netherlands knock SA out with 13-run win



PTI ■ ADELAIDE

Minnows Netherlands knocked South Africa out of the T20 World Cup with a stunning 13-run win as the Proteas yet again choked in a big ICC tournament, here on Sunday.

Netherlands dished out a collective batting effort to post a decent 158 for four after being invited to bat and then restricted the Proteas to 145 for eight for their biggest victory in world cricket.

It was Dutch side's first win against South Africa across any format.

Hard one to swallow: Bavuma

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma said the ouster from the T20 World Cup was "hard one to swallow" as the Proteas choked in yet another ICC tournament here on Sunday.

"Hard one to swallow. We had the confidence and belief in ourselves as a unit to make the play-offs," a disappointed Bavuma said at the post-match presentation.

"Unfortunately for us, we couldn't do it. Winning the toss and bowling, what they got was-

n't ideal. We lost wickets at crucial times. They used the dimensions of the field a lot better than we did," he added.

South Africa have got the 'chokers tag' not by mere coincidence. Always the pre-tournament favourites, South Africa are yet to reach the final of a World Cup event.

They have lost at semi-final stage at the T20 World Cup twice -- 2009 and 2014.

In the ODI World Cup, they have lost out in the last-four on four occasions -- 1992, 1999, 2007 and 2015.

before becoming Brandon Glover's (3/9) first victim as South Africa slipped to 64 for three.

From thereon, it was a herculean task for the likes of Heinrich Klassen and Keshav Maharav to take the side past the finish line as South Africa fell short by 13 runs.