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NEW DELHI, MONDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



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# Guj poll campaign reaches crescendo

## Be wary of parties that are soft on terror: Modi

### PM holds three rallies before curtains on campaigning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attacked the Congress and the AAP — the BJP's main rivals in the Gujarat elections — for being “soft on terror for votes” as he addressed three back-to-back rallies and held a road show in the diamond city of Surat.

“Gujarat and the country need to be wary of the Congress and like-minded parties, which keep mum on big terror attacks for their vote-bank politics. Gujarat had for a long time been a target of terrorism. People of Gujarat were killed in explosions in Surat and Ahmedabad. Congress was



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with other BJP leaders waves at supporters at a rally ahead of the Gujarat Assembly elections, in Kheda district on Sunday

PTI

at Centre then, we asked them to target terrorism but they targeted me instead. Terrorism was at peak in the country,” he said. As the curtains will come down on campaigning on Monday for the first phase of polls on December 1, all the stakeholders have gone all out to woo voters

“Your one vote in 2014 has created a lot of difference in killing terrorism in the country. Let alone cities of the country, terrorists have to think a lot even before attacking our borders. But Congress questions our surgical strike,” he said.

Detailed report on P4

## Modi's frequent Guj visits imply BJP is sacred of rebels, anti-incumbency, says Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday questioned the need for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make frequent visits to Gujarat for campaigning and said it was because the BJP Government did not work and the party was scared of its rebels. It also attacked the BJP for lack of employment in the State. Addressing a rally in Vadodara, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the Prime Minister had campaigned on every street in the State despite the BJP controlling it for nearly 30 years.

“The situation arose as the BJP did not work for the State. No enquiry was conducted into the Morbi incident where 135 people died,” Gehlot, who is Congress' incharge for Gujarat elections, said. Gujarat voting for the Congress would

force the BJP to introspect, he claimed.

“What is the need for PM Modi to visit Gujarat repeatedly when his name is enough? It is because the BJP is scared now. I have heard that there are nearly 30-35 rebels inside the BJP. Such is the extent of anger inside the party,” Gehlot said.

For his part, addressing a public rally at Dediapada in tribal-dominated Narmada district, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called Modi a “jhothon ka sardar (chieftain of liars).”

He said Modi tries to gain sympathy by calling himself poor and claiming that people abuse him. But, Kharge said, he himself comes from the “poorest of the poor and untouchable caste. At least people drink your tea. People do not even drink my tea,” he said.

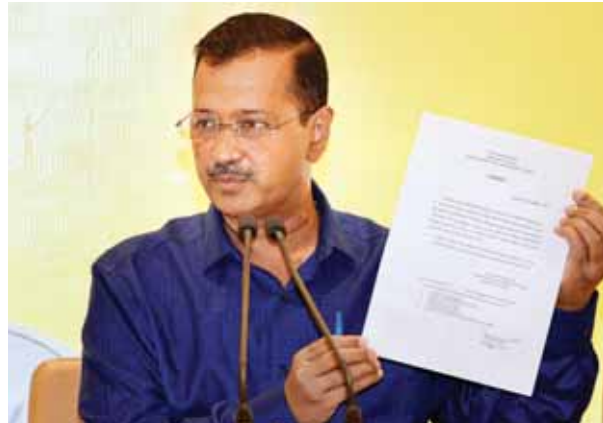
Detailed report on P4

## AAP will form Govt in Guj, Kejriwal asserts in writing

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday made an assertion in writing that his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will form the Government in Gujarat as he held fort in Surat where a dozen Assembly seats are at stake.

“I am going to make a prediction in writing in front of you all. Note down the prediction that the AAP is going to form the Government in Gujarat. After 27 years of mis-governance, the citizens of Gujarat will get relief from these people (BJP),” Kejriwal, AAP's national convener, told media persons in a press conference. He then wrote his prediction on a piece of paper and showed it to media persons and said his predictions for the Delhi and Punjab Assembly elections came true, and the same will happen for Gujarat as well. He claimed people are so



Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party National Convener Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference, in Surat on Sunday

PTI

scared of the ruling BJP that they shy away from openly admitting support for the AAP in the Gujarat Assembly elections, scheduled in two phases on December 1 and 5. Urging Government

employees in the State to back the AAP, Kejriwal also promised the implementation of the old pension scheme for them by January 31 next year if the party was in power. Detailed report on P4

## Protests against Covid lockdowns intensify in China



Chinese police officers block off access to a site where protesters had gathered in Shanghai on Sunday

AP | PTI

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's rare public protests Copping stringent Covid lockdowns turned political on Sunday with protesters shouting slogans against President Xi Jinping and the ruling Communist Party, as the demonstrations spread to the university campuses in Beijing and Nanjing, Shanghai, where thousands of protesters converged at the Wulumuqi Road — which is named after Xinjiang provincial

capital Urumqi — witnessed fresh demonstrations on Sunday despite the heavy presence of police. The protests, which began in the morning, intensified with the participation of hundreds of people by mid-afternoon. According to videos posted on social media about the protests in Shanghai, people were heard openly shouting slogans such as “Xi Jinping, step down” and “Communist party, step down”, a BBC report said.

Continued on Page 2

## G20 presidency opportunity to focus on global good: PM

India will assume presidency from current chair Indonesia on December 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With India set to officially assume the G-20 presidency from the current chair Indonesia on December 1, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday pitched for its success. He said it is a “huge opportunity for India” and the country must utilise it by “focusing on global good.”

Addressing his monthly radio talk ‘Mann Ki Baat’, the Prime Minister devoted much time talking about the G-20 meet and India's recent space achievement.

Modi lauded a weaver from Telangana who gifted him a self-woven logo of the G-20 Summit. Mentioning Veldi Hariprasad Garu who hails from Rajanna Sircilla district of Telangana, the Prime Minister said he has a mastery over his skills and he was “surprised to see this amazing gift.”



“Friends, the G-20 has a partnership comprising two-thirds of the world's population, three-fourths of world trade, and 85 per cent of world GDP. You can imagine, India is going to preside over such a big group, such a powerful group, three days from now i.e. from December 1.

“What a great opportunity has come for India, for every Indian! This becomes even more special because India was awarded this responsibility during ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Kaal’,” said Modi. He said the country “has to make full use of this opportunity and focus on global good, world welfare.”

He said whether it is peace or unity, sensitivity towards the environment, or sustainable

development, India has solutions to challenges related to these. He said, “The theme that we have given ‘One Earth, One Family, One Future’ shows our commitment to Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.”

The Prime Minister said in the coming days, many programmes related to G-20 will be organised in different parts of the country. “During this period, people from different parts of the world will get a chance to visit your States. I am sure that you will bring the diverse and distinctive colours of your culture to the world and you also have to remember that the people coming to the G-20, even if they come now as delegates, are tourists of the future.” Continued on Page 2

## All travel restrictions to Meghalaya lifted by Assam

### Heavy security, prohibitory orders to remain in place in disputed area

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the law and order situation in Meghalaya improving, Assam on Sunday lifted the restrictions on vehicular movement, allowing all vehicles to travel to the State.

Vehicles from Assam were not being allowed to enter Meghalaya due to security concerns after six people were killed following violent clashes along the border of the two States. However, deployment of heavy security and prohibitory orders remain in place at the disputed area along the Assam-Meghalaya border.

Vehicles from Assam are now allowed to enter Meghalaya, a senior police officer said. “Wherever necessary, vehicles are being escorted. In other vulnerable areas, police patrolling has been provided,” he said.

Violence had broken out at Mukroh Village near the disputed border between the two States in West Karbi Anglong



district in the early hours of Tuesday, after a truck allegedly laden with illegally-felled timber was intercepted by forest guards from Assam. Six persons, five tribal villagers from Meghalaya and a forest guard from Assam, were killed in the clashes.

An advisory was issued by the Assam Police, asking people to avoid travelling to the neighbouring State following the incident six days ago. “The situation is still not completely peaceful in Meghalaya. There could be attacks on people or vehicles from Assam. Hence, we are asking people not to travel to that State,” the police officer said.

“If at all someone has to

travel, we have asked them to go by Meghalaya-registered vehicles,” he said.

Police barricades remained erected at Jorabat in Guwahati and Cachar district, the two main entry points from Assam into Meghalaya. No restrictions, however, were imposed on commercial vehicles like trucks, carrying goods and other items, the officer said. Restrictions under Section 144 of the CrPC continued at the clash site and surrounding areas. Assam and Meghalaya have a long-standing dispute in 12 areas along the 884.9-km-long inter-State border, and the location where the violence took place is one of those.

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## CAPSULE

### NEPALI CONG KEEPS LEAD AS SINGLE-LARGEST PARTY

**Kathmandu:** The ruling Nepali Congress led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Sunday maintained its lead as the single largest party by winning 53 seats in the parliamentary polls held to end the prolonged political instability in the Himalayan nation. The Nepali Congress has won 53 seats and the CPN-UML secured 42 seats, the CPN-M has 17 seats while the CPN-Unified Socialist has bagged 10 seats.

### 13 HURT AS PART OF RLY FOB COLLAPSES IN MAHA

**Nagpur:** At least 13 people were hurt, four of them seriously, as they fell on a railway track after some part of a foot over-bridge collapsed at a railway station in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra on Sunday. The incident occurred at Balharshah junction railway station at 5 PM.

### GUJ ATS NAB BADAUN MAN FOR THREAT TO PM

**Badaun:** Gujarat ATS arrested a man from Badaun for sending an email to PMO threatening to kill the PM. The man's father said his son, a Mumbai IIT passout, is mentally unstable.

## Modi Stadium sets Guinness record for max T20 spectators

May 29 IPL 2022 RR-GT final was attended by 1,01,566 people

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad has entered the Guinness Book of World Records for the maximum spectator attendance during the 2022 IPL final. Earlier known as Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) Stadium, Motera the stadium has a capacity to host 110,000 people which is nearly 10,000 more than Melbourne Cricket Ground with an official capacity of 1,00,024.

On May 29 the IPL 2022 final between Gujarat Titans and Rajasthan Royals at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad was attended by 1,01,566 people, setting a new world record. Gujarat Titans defeated Rajasthan Royals by



BCCI Secretary Jay Shah being presented the certificate after the Narendra Modi Stadium entered into the Guinness Book of World Records for maximum spectator attendance at a T20 match during the 2022 IPL final

PTI

seven wickets to clinch the IPL 2022 title. “Extremely delighted & proud to receive the Guinness World Record for the largest attendance at a T20 match when 1,01,566 people witnessed the epic IPL final at @GCAMotera's magnificent Narendra Modi Stadium on 29 May 2022. A big thanks to our fans for making this possible,”

BCCI secretary Jay Shah tweeted on Sunday.

“A proud moment for everyone as India creates the Guinness World Record. This one is for all our fans for their unmatched passion and unwavering support. Congratulations to @GCAMotera and @IPL,” tweeted BCCI.

## FIFA WC fans in danger of catching camel flu, says WHO

AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI

The world does not seem to be catching a break! Even as some nations are still grappling with the Covid pandemic and yet others are still reeling under the outbreak's socio-economic impact, the FIFA World Cup 2022 that is underway in Qatar is under the World Health Organisation's (WHO) scanner.

According to WHO experts football fans in Qatar are at risk of catching the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) infection, also known as Camel flu. The experts say that FIFA is expected to draw nearly 1.2 million people from around the world and this massive gathering could trigger the spread of the virus.

In a study published in the journal ‘New Microbes and New Infections’, scientists have listed Camel flu as an infection risk during the four-week-long sporting event. Camels are known to be the origin of MERS, which is caused by a coronavirus.

MERS was recently named by the WHO as one of the viruses with the potential to start a pandemic in the future.

Scientists, as per the study, have found that mass gatherings pose a threat of potential infectious disease spreading rapidly.

Considered to be a deadlier cousin of the Covid virus, Camel flu has affected dozens in Qatar over the last decade. The virus kills up to a third of everyone who gets infected. Apart from Camel flu, football fans are also face potential health-threatening diseases such as cutaneous leishmaniasis, malaria, dengue, rabies, measles, hepatitis A and B and travellers' diarrhoea.

As per WHO, the Camel flu virus

### Morocco stun Belgium

**Doha:** Morocco pulled off another shock at the World Cup on Sunday, beating Belgium 2-0 to leave Kevin de Bruyne and the 2018 semifinalists in peril of a group-stage exit. Substitute Abdelhamid Sabiri got one past Belgium goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois by whipping in a free kick from a tight angle at the near post in the 73rd minute for Morocco's first goal.

Zakaria Aboukhlal then guided a shot into the roof of the net off a pass from Hakim Ziyech in stoppage time. Belgium, ranked No. 2 in the world behind Brazil, had won its last seven group games at the World Cup.

could get transferred to humans from infected dromedary camels. Camel flu has been identified in dromedaries in several countries in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. The WHO also claims that human-to-human transmission is also possible.

Since 2012, 27 countries have reported Camel flu cases, which has led to 858 known deaths due to the infection. Symptoms of Camel flu include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Currently, there's no vaccine or specific treatment is available, but are in development.

Because the camel flu virus is zoonotic, it may spread between humans and animals. According to studies, contact with an infected person, whether direct or indirect, can result in human infection. Travellers to Qatar for the FIFA World Cup 2022 have also been warned not to touch camels, which are thought to be the source of the deadly infection. Worryingly, camel rides and safari vacations are still being advertised by tourism businesses in Qatar. Researchers have discovered that the large crowd at the FIFA World Cup 2022 unavoidably poses potential infectious disease risks for the players, the fans, the locals and the countries of the team's origin.



# Mahakumbh to showcase ‘New UP’ of ‘New India’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Mahakumbh in 2025 will be unparalleled in grandeur and will also showcase a 'New Uttar Pradesh' of 'New India'. It will showcase the state's administrative capacity, rich culture and tourism possibilities.

Official sources here said that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had asked officials to ensure that the event's management in 2025 was so efficient that the state outperform its achievements during the 2019 Kumbh.

The chief minister, according to the government spokesman, asked officials to focus on the need to ensure



quality and adherence to time-lines in the tender work related to the event. He directed that a committee be formed under the divisional commissioner to monitor projects on a weekly basis.

The chief minister pointed out, "For the first time, Kumbh 2019 was given a new logo. The Akshayvat and Saraswati Koop,

opened for darshan. Over 24 crore devotees and pilgrims took a dip in the river Ganga. The president, prime minister, chief ministers of various states and other dignitaries including ambassadors of 70 countries and more than 3,200 NRIs came to Prayagraj Kumbh-2019."

To ensure proper sanitation during the mega event, the chief minister said that the number of toilets should be increased and special arrangements should be made for the cleaning staff to ensure their stay and remuneration.

He directed officials to increase the number of ghats as well as the length of ghats. To

ensure that the Ganga is clean and flows uninterrupted, an action plan will be made to complete ongoing projects for river cleanliness in all districts from Bijinor to Prayagraj.

Coordination will be maintained with the Finance department to ensure timely release of funds so that no work is delayed. For enhanced security, the chief minister stressed that arrangements should be made for adequate management in case of fires and disaster events. The police should have access to fire equipment, anti-terrorist surveillance, baggage checking equipment, river barricading, among others, for better disaster management, he added.

# Bharat Jodo Yatra reaches Indore, Rahul seen helping wheelchair-bound man

PTI ■ INDORE

The Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi reached Indore on Sunday on the fifth day of its Madhya Pradesh leg.

People from different sections of society including a differently-abled man, Manohar, also joined the foot march and Gandhi was seen pushing his wheelchair to some distance.

The man said he told Gandhi that the country now needs a change.

After a night halt at Mhow, the birthplace of Dr B R Ambedkar, the yatra participants resumed the march on Sunday morning.

The yatra passed through the suburban area of Rau and reached Indore. A red carpet was rolled out to welcome

when the march reached Rau.

Indore Commissioner of Police H C Mishra said 1,400 personnel have been deployed in the city to provide security to the yatra and barricades have been put up at various places.

Twelve dilapidated houses in the densely populated Rajwada area with narrow streets have been temporarily evacuated to avoid the possibility of any untoward incident during the march, he said.

Earlier, a sweet shop in Juni area of Indore received an anonymous letter by post on November 17, threatening bomb blasts in Indore city during the yatra.

The letter, which referred to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, had also threatened assassinations of Rahul Gandhi and



MP Congress chief Kamal Nath. The police had arrested a person in this connection.

The Congress's Bharat Jodo Yatra, a mass contact initiative, will take a night halt at Chimanbagh Ground in the city, officials said.

As per the initial plan of the Congress, Gandhi and other yatra participants were to be accommodated at the city's Khalsa Stadium. But the plan could not materialise

following a controversy.

A row had erupted after Kamal Nath, facing allegations in connection with the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, was felicitated by organisers at a Sikh religious event held at Khalsa College in Indore on November 8. After Nath left the venue, famous kirtan singer Manpreet Singh Kanpuri had lashed out at the organisers for inviting the Congress leader.

# Fire at Delhi's Bhagirath Palace market rages for fourth-consecutive day

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The fire at the Bhagirath Palace market in Chandni Chowk continued to rage for the fourth consecutive day on Sunday even after the engagement of more than 150 fire tenders since its outbreak. Nine fire tenders are still present at the spot.

More than 200 shops have been damaged in the massive fire that broke out in the wholesale market for electrical appliances on Thursday night, the officials said. "Around 150 fire tenders have been engaged till now, nine of them are still at the spot. Around 200 shops have been affected and while five building have been completely or partially burnt, three have collapsed," a senior fire department official said.

A case under IPC sections 285 (negligent conduct with respect to fire or combustible matter) and 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) has been registered against unknown people, the official said. The fire was brought under control by Friday morning but while the



cooling process was still underway, the blaze reignited again and turned massive by the evening.

The area's narrow lanes and shortage of water posed a major challenge for the firefighters. While traders suspect short-circuit as the cause of the fire, officials said the reason is yet to be ascertained.

On Saturday, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena visited the market and said a multi-disciplinary committee had been constituted to look into ways to effectively address issues like hanging wires and overloaded circuits.

He sought the active involvement of residents and other stakeholders in areas like Chandni Chowk, Sadar Bazar and Paharganj, among others. He has also sought a report within 30 days.

# Kejriwal defamed Muslims: Owaisi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday attacked Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, alleging he defamed the Muslim community in the entire country and "wants to break all records of Narendra Modi".

Campaigning for the AIMIM candidates in Delhi's Seelampur ahead of the civic body polls, he alleged that Kejriwal disappeared at the time of riots in the national capital and spoke against those who protested against the fire, officials said the reason is yet to be ascertained.

On Saturday, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena visited the market and said a multi-disciplinary committee had been constituted to look into ways to effectively address issues like hanging wires and overloaded circuits.



responsible for this," the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief said. At the gathering, Owaisi alleged the Delhi chief minister said he would have removed the (anti-CAA) protesters at Shaheen Bagh in half an hour.

"A person from his party who later joined the BJP raised the 'goli maaron...' slogan," he claimed at the gathering. "The Delhi chief minister got an FIR registered against Tablighi Jamaat, but not against this person. This is his true face... He is the Narendra Modi of 2013 and wants to break all his records."

Owaisi alleged that Kejriwal "disappeared" when violence flared up in Delhi. "Houses were burnt and people were killed. The Delhi chief minister could not be seen anywhere," he said. The AIMIM chief alleged that no party wants to work for the betterment of Muslims, Dalits and the Adivasis.

# 22 IAS, 10 PCS officers transferred in Punjab

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab government on Sunday shifted 22 IAS officers and 10 PCS officers with immediate effect, according to an official order.

Among senior IAS officers, 1988 batch IAS officer Ravneet Kaur has been posted as special chief secretary, food processing with additional charge of jails while Anurag Aggarwal has been given the charge of additional chief secretary-cum-financial commissioner, cooperation.

Services of IAS officer Malwinder Singh Jaggi have been placed at the disposal of the department of local government for posting as chief executive officer of Punjab water supply and sewerage board, the order said.

Services of Vipul Ujjwal have been placed at the disposal of the department of transport for posting as managing director, Pepsu Road Transport Corporation, Patiala.

Harish Nayar goes as special secretary of the public works department while V K Setia has been posted as Registrar of cooperative societies, as per the order.

Sandeep Hans has been posted as special secretary, general administration and coordination while Kumar Saurabh Raj goes as special secretary, home affairs and justice.

Mohammad Ishfaq goes as special secretary, water supply and sanitation while Senu Duggal will be deputy commissioner, Fazilka with additional charge of commissioner, municipal corporation, Abohar, the order said.

Poonamdeep Kaur will be deputy commissioner, Barnala while Komal Mittal goes as deputy commissioner, Hoshiarpur while Himanshu Aggarwal goes as deputy commissioner, Gurdaspur and Rishpal Singh as deputy commissioner, Tarn Taran.

Moneesh Kumar will be state transport commissioner while Palavi goes as additional deputy commissioner (general), Bathinda, the order stated.

Uma Shankar Gupta has been posted as director, local government while services of Sandeep Rishi have been placed at the disposal of the department of local government for posting as commissioner of municipal commissioner.

# 3 kids crushed to death by train in Rupnagar, inquiry ordered

PTI ■ RUPNAGAR

Three children were crushed to death by a passenger train near Sri Kiratpur Sahib here on Sunday, police said. The Punjab government has ordered an inquiry into the incident. The incident took place when four children of migrant labourers were playing near the railway track close to a bridge over Sutlej river, they said.

The fourth child was injured in the incident and was admitted to a hospital, said police. The boys were in the age group of 7 to 11 years, police added.

Punjab School Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains expressed grief and said an inquiry has been ordered into the incident.

"In a very sad incident, 3 children have lost their lives in a Rail Accident in Kiratpur Sahib. An enquiry has been ordered. My sincere condolences to the grieved families," said Bains in a tweet.

Former Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh sought compensation to the affected

families.

"Distraught to hear about the news of a passenger train crushing 4 children causing 3 of them to die on the spot near Sri Kiratpur Sahib today. My condolences are with the family and I urge @PunjabGovtIndia to provide appropriate compensation to the families," said Singh in a tweet.

Shiromani Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Singh Badal also expressed grief over the incident. "Saddened to hear that 3 kids lost their life in a tragic incident near Kiratpur Sahib where a train crushed them to death when they were crossing a railway track. I pray to Gurusahab to grant peace to the innocent souls and strength to the families to bear this irreparable loss," said Badal in a tweet.

Punjab Congress chief Amrinder Singh Raja Warring tweeted, "Shocked and grieved beyond expression over the tragic death of three children near Kiratpur Sahib who were run over by a train today. My profound condolences to the parents."

# Delhi Govt's Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinic makes its debut in IITF

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinic has made its debut in the ongoing India International Trade Fair (IITF) in the capital which has garnered quite support from across sections during the 14 days event.

According to the Delhi government, the stall is catching the attention of people across the globe.

"There are over 500 Mohalla clinics located across the national capital. Recently the government launched 4 pilot Mahila Mohalla Clinics across Delhi, especially for women and children," stated the government in a press statement.

Following this, Mahila Mohalla Clinic made its debut at the India International Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan and

along with spreading the word about these clinics, it is also providing free medical consultation to those in need.

"The clinic has gained much popularity at the fair in the past week and the stall can be seen buzzing with women willing to take advice on their health from doctors. The clinic has come to the rescue of not only visitors but also the staff of other states' and countries' stalls who are spending their days dealing with the huge number of visitors," stated the Delhi government in a press release.

Dr. Monika Relan who along with other staff members is deputed at the clinic in the trade fair said, "From Nov 14 to Nov 18 the trade fair was open for business people and the response from them was overwhelming. We provided medical help to more than 300



people during this time."

The trade fair was opened for the general public on November 19 and since then the clinic has addressed the queries and attended to hundreds of people every day, she added. Mahila Mohalla Clinics provide primary healthcare services to women, children under 12, and adolescent girls in a female-friendly environment.

Clinics have all-female staff

to deal with patients. In addition to this 239 lab tests and general curative medicines are also provided to visiting patients, as in Aam Aadmi Mohalla Clinics, stated the Delhi government.

The recently launched Mahila Mohalla clinics are in Moti Lal Nehru Camp in Munirka, Batla House in Okhla, Sapera Basti in Kondli, and Block 58, Near Kali Mandir in New Delhi.

# All travel restrictions to Meghalaya lifted by...

From Page 1

The two States had signed MoU in March this year towards ending the dispute in six of the areas. Meghalaya was carved out of Assam in 1972 and had since then challenged the Assam Reorganisation Act, 1971, which demarcated the border between the two States.

# G20 presidency opportunity to focus on...

From Page 1

The Prime Minister asked his listeners to join efforts in a way similar to Hariprasad to contribute to G-20.

"I urge all of you, especially my young friends on one more thing. Like Hariprasad Garu, you too must join the G-20 in one way or the other. The Indian logo of G-20 can be made, can be printed, in a very cool way, in a stylish way, on clothes. I would also urge schools, colleges and universities to create opportunities for discussions, debates and competitions related to G-20 in their respective places. If you go to the G20.in website, you will find many things there according to your interest," said the Prime Minister.

Drawing attention to country's space programme, he said on November 18, the whole country witnessed 'new history being made in the space sector'.

"On this day, India sent its first such rocket into space, which was designed and prepared by the private sector of India. The name of this rocket is - 'Vikram-S'. As soon as this first rocket of the indigenous Space Start-up made a historic flight from Sriharikota, the heart of every Indian swelled with pride," he said.

Modi said 'Vikram-S' Rocket is equipped with many features.

"It is also lighter than other rockets, and also cheap-

er. Its development cost is much less than the cost incurred by other countries involved in space missions. In space technology, world class standard at a low cost, has now become the hallmark of India. Another modern technology has been used in making this rocket. You will be surprised to know that some crucial parts of this rocket have been made through 3D Printing."

The Prime Minister pointed out to the radio listeners that the name 'Prarambh' given to the launch mission of 'Vikram-S', suits it perfectly and marks 'the dawn of a new era for the private space sector in India'.

"This is the beginning of a new era full of self-confidence

for the country. You can imagine the children who once made paper airplanes and used to fly them with their hands are now getting a chance to make airplanes in India itself," said Modi.

The Prime Minister further said India is sharing its success in the space sector with its neighbouring countries as well.

"Just yesterday, India launched a satellite, which has been jointly developed by India and Bhutan. This satellite will send pictures of very good resolution which will help Bhutan in the management of its natural resources. The launching of this satellite is a reflection of the strong Indo-Bhutan relations," he said.

# Protests against Covid lockdowns intensify in...

From Page 1

Hale said the protests are extremely significant as the politics of COVID policies reflected wider political frustrations including the slowing down of the economy.

Elsewhere protesters held blank white banners, while others lit candles and laid flowers for the victims in Urumqi, where 10 people were killed in a fire at a building reportedly under Covid lockdown on Thursday.

Observers say that the latest political protests appeared to be in continuation of "banner protest" in Beijing last month ahead of the CPC's once-in-five-year Congress which elect-

ed 69-year-old Xi for an unprecedented 3rd five-year term.

The anti-lockdown protests appear to be posing a major challenge for Xi, just over a month into his third term in power.

Political protests opposing the CPC and its leadership are very rare in China while the country witness sporadic agitations over various issues. As such criticism of the party and leadership could result in harsh penalties.

Videos posted on social media showed police arresting several protesters in Shanghai amid protests against their detention from the angry crowd.

Also, students' protests broke out in the prestigious Tsinghua University in Beijing as well as Communication University in Nanjing.

Photos and videos posted online showed students holding vigils for the Urumqi fire victims and launching protests at universities in Beijing and Nanjing.

Students said hundreds of people took part in one such demonstration in Tsinghua University where they held up blank sheets of paper - an act which has become a symbol of defiance against Chinese censorship.

One protester in Shanghai told the BBC that he felt

"shocked and a bit excited" to see people out on the streets, calling it the first time he'd seen such large-scale dissent in China.

He said lockdowns made him feel "sad, angry and hopeless", and had left him unable to see his unwell mother, who was undergoing cancer treatment.

A female demonstrator said that police officers when asked how they felt about the protests, and the answer was "the same as you". But, she said, "they wear their uniforms so they're doing their job."

Shanghai, a city of over 25 million, endured weeks of COVID lockdowns in April sparking protests.



# Jain’s luxury saga in jail continues

Latest footage shows housekeeping service being provided in Minister’s cell

STAFF REPORTER/ANI ■ NEW DELHI

The latest video that has emerged in a series of purported CCTV footage of Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain inside the Tihar jail, shows house-keeping services being provided to the jail cell of Aam Aadmi Party leader.

The purported footage that emerged according to the sources on Sunday morning was dated September 13, 15 and October 1 in which the visuals show men sweeping the floor of the jail cell and also arranging the Minister’s bed. In the visuals dated September 12, Jain was seen interacting with other people inside his jail cell. This is ostensibly the fourth CCTV footage that has emerged relating to the jail Delhi Minister. The first purported visuals, which appeared



on November 19, showed the Minister getting a full body massage. The second purported footage surfaced on November 23, a day after Jain’s counsel claimed inside the trial court that the Minister had lost 28 kg of weight during his custody.

In the footage, Jain was seen having an elaborate and extensive meal. Interestingly, sources had said that the Minister had gained 8 kg weight instead. In the third purported footage that came

out on November 26, the Minister was seen having a conversation with some people, including currently suspended Jail superintendent Ajit Kumar. Earlier on Saturday, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla slammed AAP over the November 26 video of Jain and termed it as “AAP ka darbar of Bhrashtachar”. Shehzad said this was the third video in the series — first AAP made a ‘spa’ in Tihar where Delhi’s health minister

Satyendra Jain got a ‘maalish’ from a child rapist and AAP labelled it as physiotherapy. Then he was served 5-course meal but he claimed he was being starved.

Now a video shows how he was allowed to hold a “darbar” inside jail, he added. Slamming Delhi chief minister and AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal, Poonawalla asked whether Jain was kept as a minister despite getting no relief from courts so that he could do “Vasooli” and can also get VIP maalish?

The BJP leader demanded that Satyendra Jain be sacked and Kejriwal should apologise to the entire nation for defending a child rapist as a therapist and insulting physiotherapy.

Earlier on November 22, Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi’s Deputy CM Manish Sisodia were aware of Satyendar Jain getting a massage in jail after a video of the minister had surfaced.

“The whole matter was in the knowledge of Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia, but they are trying to fool the people that this was physiotherapy being done by a rapist,” Shehzad Poonawalla had said while talking to ANI.

Poonawalla had said that person whom Kejriwal and Sisodia were passing off as a physiotherapist was actually a potential rapist and that too a rapist of young children who is involved in cases and the section 376 of IPC under POCSO Act. Poonawalla had said that this shows that Arvind Kejriwal and Manish Sisodia were not just passing off physiotherapy but actually defending “corruption therapy”.

# MCD election campaign: Nadda launches scathing attack on AAP



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president JP Nadda meets people in Keshav Puram during an election campaign for upcoming MCD elections, in New Delhi on Sunday PTI Photo

Senior BJP leaders and union ministers, including its national president JP Nadda, former Union Minister Dr Harshvardhan, Union Ministers Piyush Goel, Meenakshi Lekhi, Kiren Rijiju, Hardeep Singh Puri, Sushil Modi, Baijayant Jay Panda, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Sunday carried out door-to-door campaigns and nukkad sabha on Sunday ahead of the municipal polls.

The BJP plans to reach out to voters across the 250 Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) wards. The Delhi BJP also took around 10,000 slum dwellers from 50 assembly constituencies for a visit of 3,024 flats recently provided to people from economically weaker sections under the ‘Jahan Jhuggi Wahan Makan’ scheme at Kalkaji.

Nadda went to door to door campaign in Wazirpur Industrial Area and addressed a rally in Badarpur alongside Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and exuded confidence and said that people are eager to vote for BJP as they are fed up with AAP work.

He sought votes from the public on the basis of the achievements of the last 15 years during the BJP rule in the MCD. In a scathing attack at AAP, for their ‘Kattar Immandar’ theory, Nadda said that the party claims to be honest but today Satyendar Jain is

in jail for corruption. AAP used to say that its leaders were honest but today Satyendra Jain is in jail for corruption. “In the health sector they (AAP) have done good work and opened a massage centre in Tihar,” he said referring to purported videos of Jain getting a massage inside his cell in Tihar Jail.

“They have also done good work in the education sector and turned a rapist into therapist,” he said, reacting to AAP leader and Deputy CM Manish Sisodia’s defence that Jain was being treated by a physiotherapist due to a spinal injury in the jail.

The senior BJP leader also listened to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s latest monthly radio address ‘Mann Ki Baat’ and praised him for refraining from talking about politics in the broadcast.

Union Minister Piyush Goyal campaigned in the Gandhi Nagar and the Shastri Nagar areas of East Delhi.

The “biggest evidence” of the Kejriwal government’s “corruption” was withdrawing its excuse policy-2021, he said. “Together, Kejriwal and his ministers have crossed the pinnacle of corruption and tarnished the image of India not only in the country but also abroad,” Goyal alleged. In the Kalkaji area, Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Kejriwal talks about making

everything free, but when it comes to funds for it, he becomes dependent on the central government. “People of Delhi have been cheated for the last eight years in the name of politics of freebies followed by Kejriwal and his party,” Puri said.

Puri also took a swipe at the AAP’s ‘freebies’ strategy for polls, and said the more pressing issue is to “rebuild the city” as the national capital’s land area has remained the same while its population has increased manifold.

BJP leaders Sushil Modi and Manoj Tiwari went for door to door campaign in Burari while Baijayant Jay Panda interacted with people in Mayur Vihar ward. Lekhi addressed nukkad sabha for Andrews Ganj ward.

Puri and UP deputy chief Minister Brajesh Pathak addressed nukkad sabha in Srinivaspuri. Rijiju participated in Jansampark abhiyan in Munirka ward. Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami was also a part of the door-to-door campaign Moti Nagar area.

After meeting with the representatives of Delhi Teachers Council Corporation body on Sunday, BJP chief Aadesh Gupta has said that if party wins elections, a policy will be made to regularise contractual teachers working in corporation for years.

# ‘Bhalswa landfill symbolises BJP’s mountain of failure’



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Sunday held outreach campaigns in over 160 areas of the national Capital for the forthcoming MCD polls. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Delhi State Convenor Gopal Rai, Rajya Sabha MPs Raghav Chadha, Sushil Gupta, MLAs Atishi, Durgesh Pathak, Dilip

Pandey, Senior Leader Mahabal Mishra, took part in the Jansamvad along with other campaigners. AAP leaders are trying to connect with each and every resident of Delhi by holding mass dialogues, Nukkad Sabhas, padyatras and door-to-door visits all over Delhi. Party workers talk to people about their problems and how AAP will work to

deliver upon the Kejriwal Ki 10 Guarantee initiative while going door-to-door. Sisodia held Nukkad Sabhas in various wards of Narela and Badli constituency and sought votes for the Kejriwal government’s achievements on Sunday.

Sisodia claimed the Bhalswa landfill site symbolises the BJP’s ‘mountain of failure’ during its 15-year-rule in the city’s civic body.

During an interaction with the people in the Badli assembly segment ahead of the December 4 civic body polls, the senior Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader alleged the height of the landfill site “rose parallelly with the BJP’s corruption in MCD”.

In a snappy wisecrack, he asked people to click selfies with the garbage mound while

they still can, claiming it will disappear after the AAP comes to power in the MCD. The party had, earlier this month, announced “10 guarantees” for the MCD polls, the foremost of which was to clear the Bhalswa, Okhla and Ghazipur landfill sites.

“Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is an engineer himself. He has developed a complete plan to eliminate these mountains of garbage from Delhi. This time, the people will vote the AAP to power in the MCD too. Immediately after coming to power in the civic body, the work on eliminating these mountains of garbage will begin,” Sisodia said.

In public meetings at Jahangirpuri, Swaroop Nagar, Samaypur Badli, Bakhtawarpur, Alipore and Narela, he accused the BJP of

“crossing all the limits of corruption” in the past 15 years. The party failed terribly in its core responsibility of cleaning Delhi, he alleged.

Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha held a Padyatra in Keshavpuram. Interacting with people, Chadha said that the BJP does not have any reasonable issue to attack AAP on and therefore they are struggling to find topics to attack us on. “They have become mentally bankrupt.

I would like to offer the BJP an opportunity to get their mental state checked in one of the good hospitals that Shri Satyendar Jain has built.

All the parties, it could be the BJP, Congress, BSP, SP, JDU – they all indulge in abusing CM Arvind Kejriwal. This is because he has gotten their political shops shut,” he said.

# Muslims likely to play key role in 100 wards

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After Purvanchali, Muslim voters are likely to play a crucial role in deciding the outcome in many wards, especially over 100 wards those in Chandni Chowk, East and North-East Delhi parliamentary constituencies in the coming MCD polls. The Congress has fielded 24 candidates from the minority community, the AAP and the BJP have fielded seven and four such candidates, respectively.

The Muslim vote comes to around 18 per cent of Delhi’s electorate, even though, the 2011 Census states that Delhi’s population was 1.6 crores with the Muslim population forming 13 per cent. According to former Delhi minister Harun Yusuf, the Congress has always been vocal about the issues of the minorities. We have fielded 24 candidates from the minority community and we are confident that the party will sweep the minority-dominated areas. Asserting that the Congress will sweep the minority-dominated areas, Yusuf said that the

community “trusts Congress” more than any other parties. He said that Arvind Kejriwal has misled the minority community in Delhi. “He did nothing for minority community. It is for the minority community to see who is good for them,” he added. The Congress has fielded candidates in Mustafabad, Seelampur, Okhla, Babarpur, Matia Mahal, Laxmi Nagar, Krishna Nagar and Jama Masjid areas. Alleging that the BJP and AAP “neglected” the minorities in Delhi, Delhi Congress leader Ali Mehdi said, “While the BJP fuelled hatred amongst people, AAP chose to remain silent and even distanced itself from minority-related issues.”

He further said that the Congress worked towards promoting communal harmony in the city on multiple occasions.

The BJP has fielded four candidates from the backward Pasmanda Muslims, including three women, in the upcoming civic body polls. The contenders include a social activist, a would-be lawyer and a scrap dealer. The Pasmanda commu-

nity comprises 41 castes such as Ansari, Qureshi, Mansoori, Salmani and Siddiqui, in professions such as butchers and weavers, and are considered most backward in social, economic and political terms. The saffron party has fielded Irfan Maliq from Chandni Mahal, Samina Raja from Quraish Nagar, Saba Ghazi from Chauhan Bangar, and Shabnam Maliq from Mustfabad.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Yasir Gilani says although less number of Muslims have been fielded by the party, “our focus is to prove that the BJP can get votes of the minority community and win on seats dominated by them”.

Underlining the BJP’s motto of “sabka saath, sabka vikas”, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had in July advised party workers to reach out to deprived and downtrodden sections among minorities also. BJP had been making a huge outreach to the Pasmanda Muslims in Delhi since 2015, and its efforts bore fruit in 2017 MCD elections, where it damaged AAP in Muslim-majority wards.

# SEC launches theme song to raise awareness among Capital’s voters

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The State Election Commission (SEC) has launched a theme song to raise awareness among the voters here to exercise their franchise in the December 4 civic polls on Sunday.

The SEC is undertaking the multimedia voter awareness campaign through radio, TV, social media, outdoor media and newspapers to motivate the voters for enhanced voting percentage, they said.

The Commission has intensified its voter awareness campaign to ensure maximum voter participation in coming election to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, it said in a statement.

The SEC has also launched a campaign theme song, with tag line - ‘Loktantra ka Samman Karen. Aao hum matdan karen’, it said. Also, 50 auto-rickshaws bearing printed voter awareness message were flagged off by the Commission. Voter awareness campaign is being intensified by

the Commission to educate and motivate voters, the statement said. As auto rickshaws plying all over Delhi are accessible mode of transport and have high visibility span on the roads, the printed messages will help the Commission to spread its awareness drive to every nook and corner of the city to ensure that each and every voter of Delhi can connect with the voter awareness campaign, it said.

The Commission is also airing radio jingles developed for the MCD elections through prominent FM radio channels in Delhi. Telecast of theme-based campaign video spots through prominent news channels has also been undertaken by the Commission, it said. Vijay Dev, State Election Commissioner said that the Commission has launched an intensive awareness campaign through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube to ensure maximum voter participation in this election.

# Fed up with corruption of BJP, AAP, Delhiites looking for change: Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Sunday held around 150 meetings, 100 corner meetings and padyatras across the Capital and sought votes in the name of Sheila Dikshit performance in her 15 years rule ahead of the MCD polls. The Congress appealed to purvanchali to vote for the party in the MCD elections.

Speaking at the meetings, Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar said people in Delhi are remembering the Congress regime under Dikshit for the all-round developments of the city.

Kumar said there was a pronounced tilt towards Congress candidates all across Delhi, as people, fed up with the misrule and corruption of the BJP and AAP in Delhi, were looking for change, and were determined to bring back Congress to power in the Corporation. Kumar lambasted at the BJP and AAP saying they always make false promises to the people of the Delhi during the time of elec-



tions and forgets about them after coming to power. The congress party has always fulfilled its promises after getting the throne. Kumar said that the Congress has made promises for the MCD, like restructuring House Tax by writing off the arrears and halving future

taxes, providing RO (Reverse Osmosis) water purifiers to the poor, and setting up Day Boarding Schools in the MCD to provide quality education to poor children to empower them through education, as these were the requirements of most people.

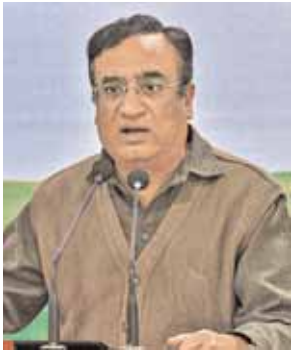
# ‘Cong banking on 3 Bs to make comeback in MCD poll’

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

Out of power in the civic bodies for the last 15 years, the Congress is banking on Bhrashtachar (Corruption), Bijli (Electricity), and Berozgar (Unemployment) – the three Bs – to put up a fight and make the upcoming MCD elections a triangular contest.

“If the BJP is facing anti-incumbency, then the AAP has been exposed for its lies. The people will vote us back having seen the two parties,” AICC general secretary Ajay Maken told ‘The Pioneer’ in a freewheeling interview on Friday.

“After a thorough analysis of the Kejriwal Government’s so-called ‘electricity model’, we found that the free electricity which they are providing is



nothing but another way of doing corruption. They make tall claims of giving free electricity to the people of the national Capital but Delhi has the highest rates for commercial and industrial units.

This has resulted in a mass exodus from the manufacturing and industrial sectors giv-

ing rise to unemployment,” Maken asserted.

The other issues that Congress is raising are the water, sanitation, and garbage crisis, “which have neither been addressed by the AAP government in last eight years nor by the BJP-ruled MCDs in the last 15 years”.

Maken claimed that Congress has not lost its vote bank. In fact, he rather hoped that given all the shocking revelations of alleged acts of corruption by the AAP coming out, Congress’ vote bank will increase with the voters choosing the grand old party.

In the 2017 municipal elections, Congress had a vote share of 23 percent while the AAP and the BJP had 26 percent and 36 percent respectively. Maken hinted that the

City will soon witness the big names from the party hitting the roads to campaign and provide support to the candidates in the municipal corporation elections. “We also feel that the MCD elections are all about facilitating people with the basic amenities such as sanitation, schools, hospitals, repairing of streets, etc, and solving their day-to-day problems.

Delhiites will vote on the basis of work done by the individual on the ward level, not the national level,” AICC general secretary said.

“The people of the national capital are feeling betrayed, as the tall claims made by both the parties – AAP and BJP – were lies and they have not fulfilled even a single promise in the past five years,” said Maken.

# Voters will overthrow BJP, says Raghav

SAURAV GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha has claimed that the saffron party has ruined the civic body and voters will overthrow the ruling BJP which has failed miserably in its years rule in the MCD polls. He exuded confidence in winning over 230 seats in the MCD elections and forming a power-packed government.

In an exclusive interview with ‘The Pioneer’ Chadha, said that cleanliness and corruption in the civic body under BJP’s 15 rule is main agenda of party in this polls. The MCD



under the BJP’s 15-year rule ‘failed miserably’ in its primary responsibility of ensuring cleanliness in city. Not even a single lane is cleaned by MCD in a city where tonnes of waste are generated every day. The

BJP has ruined civic body. People see Kejriwal as a powerhouse who transformed education and health sectors and he will do same in civic body as well,” Chadha said.

Chadha said MCD has become most corrupt department and its reached its peak, for example, if Corporation commissioner wants to build his house, he has to bribe councilors of ward in order to do it. “In name of unauthorised construction, the MCD carried out its own agenda. Sometimes they ask for conversion charges from traders and at other times they come up with property tax or resealing charges. We will

abolish such charges and provide facilities to traders. We will not burden anyone with taxes or harass them,” Chadha said.

Chadha said that the AAP will make Capital swanky clean, Corporation will get free from corruption being done by BJP and Civic body will be able to work in a cooperative manner to facilitate people of Delhi if party voted to power in MCD.

Reacting to corruption allegations levelled by BJP and release of a series of sting videos on AAP leaders in run-up to civic polls, he said BJP’s “propaganda machinery” is out to malign his party.



# Spectre of terror eradicated by us: Modi

## All parties go all out to woo voters for Dec 1 election



Prime Minister and senior BJP leader Narendra Modi waves at supporters at a public meeting ahead of the Gujarat Assembly elections, in Kheda district on Sunday

### ‘Congress objected to surgical strike’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday attacked the Congress and the AAP — BJP's main rivals in the Gujarat elections — for being "soft on terror for votes" as he addressed back to back rallies and held a road show in the diamond city of Surat.

"Gujarat and the country need to be vigilant from Congress and like-minded parties, which keep mum on big terror attacks for their vote-bank politics.

Gujarat had for a long time been a target of terrorism. People of Gujarat were killed in explosions in Surat and Ahmedabad. Congress was at Centre then, we asked them to target terrorism but they targeted me instead. Terrorism was at peak in the country," he said.

As the curtains will come down on campaigning on Monday for first phase of polls on December 1, all the stakeholders have gone all out to woo voters

Drawing attention of people to alleged Congress criticism of 'surgical strike' across border by his government, Modi asked voters to make a clear choice against terror.

"Your one vote in 2014 has created a lot of difference in killing terrorism in country. Let alone cities of country, terrorists have to think a lot even before attacking our borders. But Congress questions our surgical strike," he said. On Sunday, the Prime Minister addressed three rallies at Kheda, Netrang and Surat.

Modi's schedule includes addressing 14 rallies between November 27 and December 2, according to party sources. He will spend the night at the Surat circuit house and hold four more rallies on November 28, at Palitana, Anjar, Jamnagar and Rajkot, before returning to Delhi.

Modi first addressed a public meeting at Mota Varachha in Surat after a 25-km roadshow from the airport to the rally venue. Voting will be held in Surat in the first phase of the Gujarat Assembly elections on December 1 when 89 assembly constituencies are to go to polls.

Raising high the poll decibel and targeting the Congress, the Prime Minister at a public rally at Kheda said, "The Congress government at Centre was soft on terror."

Modi also mentioned Batla house encounter which was questioned by the top Congress leadership.

"During the Batla House encounter, Congress leaders cried in support of terrorists. Even terrorism is vote bank for Congress. It's not just congress now, several such parties have risen, who believe in politics of shortcut and appeasement", Modi said in an indirect reference to AAP too.

"Some parties using appeasement politics as shortcut to power", he further said attacking AAP which in Gujarat election fray for second time with 181 candidates. Citing increasing incidents of terrorism in Gujarat when the Congress was at centre, Modi said the then government "targeted me" instead of the "terrorism". "We caught terrorists in Gujarat but then Congress government in Delhi was saving terrorists for vote bank politics", he said.

itics", the Prime Minister continued in his rally accusing Congress of pursuing the alleged politics of appeasement.

Appealing to vote again for BJP in state, he cautioned people of rival parties' "vote bank politics". "The specter of terrorism will remain till time vote bank politics is eradicated", he said. All through his public meetings, he accused Congress and the AAP (without naming it) of "indulging in vote bank politics".

## AAP likely to form Govt in Guj, claims Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday made an assertion in writing that his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will form the government in Gujarat as he held fort in Surat where a dozen Assembly seats are at stake.

"I am going to make a prediction in writing in front of you all. Note down the prediction that the AAP is going to form the government in Gujarat. After 27 years of misgovernance, the citizens of Gujarat will get relief from these people (BJP)," Kejriwal, AAP's national convener, told media persons in a press conference.

He then wrote his prediction on a piece of paper and showed it to media persons and said his predictions for the Delhi and Punjab Assembly elections came true, and the same will happen for Gujarat as well. He claimed people are so scared of the ruling BJP that they shy away from openly admitting support for the AAP

## Kharge calls Modi 'jhoothon ka sardar'

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday questioned the need for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's frequent visits to campaign in Gujarat and said it was because the BJP government did not work and the party was scared of its rebels. It also attacked the BJP for lack of employment in the State.

Addressing a rally in Vadodara, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said the PM had campaigned on every street in the State despite the BJP controlling it for nearly 30 years.

"The situation arose as the BJP did not work for the state. No enquiry was conducted in the Morbi incident where 135 people died," Gehlot, who is Congress' incharge for Gujarat elections, said. Gujarat voting for Congress would force the BJP to introspect, he claimed.

"What is the need for PM Modi to visit Gujarat repeatedly when his name is enough? It is because the BJP is scared now. I have heard that there are nearly 30-35 rebels inside the BJP. Such is the extent of anger inside the party," Gehlot said. For his part, addressing a public rally at Dediapada in trib-

al-dominated Narmada district, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge called Modi a "jhoothon ka sardar" (chieftain of liars).

He said Modi tries to gain sympathy by calling himself poor and claiming that people abuse him. But, Kharge said, he himself comes from the "poorest of the poor and untouchable caste". "Modiji and (Union Home Minister Amit) Shah ask what Congress did in 70 years? Had we not done anything in 70 years, you would not have got democracy.

And people like you who always claim to be poor. I am also poor. I am from the poorest of the poor. I come from the untouchable caste. At least people drink your tea. People do not even drink my tea," he said.

"And then you say, I am poor, someone abused me, said something to me, asked what my status is. If you are trying to gain sympathy by saying such things, then (understand) people are now intelligent. They are not that foolish," he said.

Asserting that people will listen if you lie once or twice, Kharge asked the PM, "How many times have you told a lie?" He alleged Modi had



indulged in telling "lie after lie" and was accusing the Congress of looting the country while himself standing with the rich. "How many times have you told a lie? Lie after lie. He is a chieftain of liars. And on top of it he says, these Congress people looted the country. You are also looting the land of the

poor, not giving land to the Adivasis. Who is destroying land, water and forest? You and the rich people with whom you stand, they are looting us," he alleged.

Gujarat assembly polls is the real litmus test for Kharge as he got less time to address the Himachal Pradesh assembly elections campaign which finished on November 12 just within 15 days of his taking over.

Kharge has devised a strategy to take on the BJP which

has been in power for over two decades, in the home state of the Prime Minister. He will address several rallies and public meetings in his four consecutive days of stay there.

So far, former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi has addressed only a single rally as part of campaign in the State since he has been leading the Bharat Jodo Yatra which has now almost completed the halfway mark of the 3500 Km total padyatra from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.



Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party National Convener Arvind Kejriwal addresses a press conference, in Surat, Sunday

## Party would take tough decisions if Gehlot-Pilot fight worsens: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday indicated that if the crisis involving Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot worsened then the party would not 'shy away from taking tough decisions'.

The statement from party's chief spokesperson Jairam Ramesh is significant as the newly elected president Mallikarjun Kharge is scheduled to meet his predecessor Sonia Gandhi this week to discuss the Gehlot-Pilot tug of war. "The organisation is most

important for us. On the issue of Rajasthan, we will decide on a solution which will strengthen our organisation. For this, if we have to take tough decisions, we will take. If a compromise has to be made (between the factions of Gehlot and Pilot), then it will be done," he said.

Ramesh also said the Congress leadership is considering a proper solution to the Rajasthan issue. "But, I cannot fix any time frame for this solution. Only the Congress leadership will decide the time frame for it," he said. In a dilemma over how to diffuse the renewed crisis in Rajasthan,

Kharge has sought time from Sonia Gandhi to resolve prevailing tension. While party said that meeting is to discuss strategy for Winter Session of Parliament and also modalities of Plenary session to be convened, sources said Gehlot-Pilot tussle is top on agenda.

Ramesh said Gehlot and Pilot both are equally important for the party, but decisions to resolve crisis in Rajasthan will be taken to strengthen party — not looking at individual. "Some unexpected words have been spoken by chief minister. I was also surprised. But I am reiterating myself that both are equally

important for party," Ramesh said. The comment comes in the context of Gehlot calling his bete noire Pilot 'gaddar' (traitor) which escalated their tussle. Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra is scheduled to enter Rajasthan in December.

Ahead of yatra, the state unit remains strife-torn with Gurjar community leader Vijay Singh Bainsla threatening to disrupt yatra if Sachin Pilot is not made chief minister.

On demands of making Pilot chief minister, Gehlot said he cannot be replaced by a 'gaddar' like Pilot and accused him of plotting to topple the government in 2020.

## India, Australia hold Army exercise today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to further strengthen the defence ties between the two countries, India and Australia will for the first time participate in a joint army exercise.

It starts on Monday in Rajasthan and will last for 11 days. Named 'Austra Hind 22', this exercise will be conducted alternatively every year in Australia and India.

The bilateral training exercise between the contingents of the Indian Army and the Australian Army is scheduled to take place at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges (Rajasthan) from 28 November to 11 December 2022. This is the first exercise



in the series of AUSTRA HIND with participation of all arms and services contingent from both armies, the defence ministry said here on Sunday.

The Australian Army contingent comprising soldiers from the 13th Brigade of the 2nd Division has arrived at the exercise location.

The Indian Army is represented by troops from the

Dogra Regiment, it said.

The aim of the exercise is to build positive military relations, imbibe each other's best practices and promote the ability to operate together while undertaking multi-domain operations in semi-desert terrain under a UN peace enforcement mandate, the ministry said.

This joint exercise will enable the two armies to share best practices in tactics, techniques and procedures for conducting tactical operations at company and platoon level for neutralising hostile threats.

"Training on new generation equipment and specialist weapons including snipers, surveillance and communication equipment to achieve a

high degree of situational awareness apart from casualty management, casualty evacuation and planning logistics at battalion/ company level are also planned, it said.

During the exercise, participants will engage in a variety of tasks ranging from joint planning, joint tactical drills, sharing basics of special arms skills and raiding a hostile target.

The joint exercise, besides promoting understanding and interoperability between the two armies, will further help in strengthening ties between India and Australia, the ministry said.

Defence and strategic ties between the two countries have increased in the last few years.

## 1 in 8 elderly experienced depression during Covid pandemic: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

One in eight older persons in Canada experienced their first episode of depression during the epidemic, says a study. The statistics were significantly worse for people who had previously struggled with depression. Nearly half (45 per cent) of this population reported having depression by the fall of 2020.

The analysis of responses from the Canadian Longitudinal Study on Aging, which gathered information from participants for an average of seven years, was published in the International



Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health. "The high rate of first-onset depression in 2020 highlights the substantial mental health toll that the pandemic caused in a formerly mentally healthy

group of older adults," says first author, Andie MacNeil, a recent Master of Social Work graduate from the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work (FIFSW) and the Institute for Life Course and Aging,

University of Toronto. Although it is well known that depression among older adults increased during the pandemic, few studies have examined the proportion of people who developed the disorder for the first time or the proportion of people with a history of the condition who had a relapse.

"The devastation of the pandemic which upended so many aspects of daily life hit those with a history of depression particularly hard," said co-author Sapriya Birk, a researcher formerly based in the Department of Neuroscience, Carleton University, Ottawa who is cur-

rently a medical student at McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, adding, "Health professionals need to be vigilant in screening their patients who had mental health problems at an earlier time in their life.

"The researchers determined that a number of factors, such as low income and savings, loneliness, chronic pain, difficulty accessing healthcare, a history of traumatic childhood experiences, and family conflict, were linked to depression in older adults during the pandemic. Prior to the pandemic, older adults who felt their income was insufficient to

meet their basic needs and those with fewer savings were more likely to experience depression during the pandemic. "These findings highlight the disproportionate mental health burden borne by individuals with low socioeconomic status during the pandemic.

Many of these socioeconomic risk factors may have been exacerbated by the economic precarity of the pandemic, particularly for individuals with fewer resources," says co-author Margaret de Groh, scientific manager at the Public Health Agency of Canada.

## CBI files case against Delhi couple for possessing leopard skins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a case against Delhi resident Sikha Pahuja and her husband Anurag Pahuja for illegally possessing two leopard skins.

The recoveries were made during searches at her residential premises in Saomi Nagar here in connection with a separate case registered on May 20 against Sikha, her husband and their company Sikha Developers Ltd on a complaint from the Specialised Assets Recovery Branch of Small Industries Development Bank

of India (SIDBI).

After recovery of the two animal skins believed to be of leopard, Sikha was telephonically contacted by the CBI but she could not provide any justification for the possession of the wildlife product which is a punishable offence under the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Following the failure of Sikha to provide a justification for the possession of the wildlife product, the recovered skins were taken into possession by observing due procedure, reads the FIR.



# State's responsibility to check anti-national forces: Nadda

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD/VADODARA

BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday said like "antibodies keep a check on bad cells", it is the government's responsibility to maintain vigil on anti-national forces, as he battled for an anti-radicalisation cell announced by his party in its Gujarat assembly polls manifesto.

Releasing the BJP manifesto for the polls, Nadda on Saturday had announced setting up the cell to identify and eliminate potential threats and sleeper cells of terrorist organisations and anti-India forces. In an interview with PTI, he said it is the State's responsibility to keep a check on forces working against the country and society.

"Like antibodies in the human body, keep a check on bad cells. It is the State's responsibility to keep a check on anti-national cells in the

country. Then there are some cells that work underground so this anti-radicalisation cell is required to keep a check on such cells," said the chief of the BJP, which has been in power in Gujarat for nearly 25 years.

On the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), which the BJP has promised in several assembly polls, including for the recently held Himachal Pradesh elections and now for Gujarat, Nadda said it is a "national issue" for the party and it is committed to it.

"The country's resources and its responsibilities are equal for all. Therefore, the UCC is a welcome step. We would like to implement the UCC in as many states as possible," he said.

Asked about the BJP not fielding a Muslim candidate in Gujarat, Nadda said his party believes in 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas' (with all and development for all).

"Late Dr. (APJ) Abdul

Kalam became the President (of India) with the BJP's support, then the (Narendra) Modi government at the Centre appointed Muslim governors as well. So, we follow the principle of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas', and tickets for elections are given purely based on winnability," he said.

On the BJP announcing several "freebies" in its manifesto for the Gujarat polls like its rivals did, Nadda said one should "distinguish between empowerment and allurements".

"Both the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Congress know they are not coming to power in Gujarat. Therefore, they can announce freebies without accounting for the funds and budget needed for them," the BJP chief said.

"While our programmes are welfare measures for empowering the poor and the needy. It is not like freebies, which are free for all, they are



specifically meant for a segment of the population," he said.

He said that the BJP's welfare programmes are for the "empowerment" of the poor and the needy. This has resulted in them contributing to the economy, Nadda asserted.

Nadda, who has been holding election rallies and roadshows across Gujarat, is confident of a massive victory for the BJP in the state assembly polls. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi resides in the

hearts of the people of Gujarat and they will again repose their faith in the BJP and the party will win another term," he asserted.

The BJP is eyeing to win Gujarat for a record seventh time.

Besides the Congress, the party has a new challenger in the form of the Aam Aadmi Party. The state will see two-phase assembly polls on December 1 and 5, while votes will be counted on December 8.

## Gujarat polls: Cricketer brother, his sister bat for different parties in battle of Jadejas

PTI ■ JAMNAGAR

Hours before cricketer Ravindra Jadeja travelled through the city's market in an open SUV as part of a BJP roadshow, his sister Naynaba Jadeja sought votes for the Congress, reminding voters of price rise under the ruling party and its "unfulfilled" employment promises.

While the famous cricketer campaigned for his wife Rivaba Jadeja, his elder sister canvassed for Bipendrasinh Jadeja, highlighting the 'sibling rivalry' that has added another layer of interest in the poll after the BJP dropped its sitting MLA Dharmendrasinh Jadeja, locally better known as Hakubha.

Herself a contender for the

Congress ticket from the Jamnagar North seat, Naynaba has emerged as a key campaigner for her party after the BJP chose her famous brother's wife as its candidate.

She is often the focus of media queries while the Congress candidate, a seasoned organisation man and businessman, plays a supporting role.

"I have my ideology and have been with a party I admire," she says, slamming the BJP over the issue of price rise and claiming that it only makes promises to people but never fulfils them, be it on employment or education.

An overwhelmingly urban constituency, Jamnagar North may be seen as more favourable to the BJP than the Congress

even though the opposition party's supporters believe their party can spring a surprise.

Naynaba argues that since the constituency voted for the first time in 2012 after being carved out following delimitation, it is essentially a Congress seat as it won for the first time while the BJP grabbed it in 2017 after the incumbent MLA crossed over to the saffron camp. Even the winning BJP candidate was a Congressman who won on his appeal, and our party will score this time, she claims.

Congress leaders also hope to benefit from any faultlines within the BJP caused by its denial of the ticket to the sitting MLA. The AAP has fielded Karsan Karmur, who had quit the BJP to join it last year.

## BJP using police, dist administration to threaten SP workers in bypoll: Azam

PNS/PTI ■ BAREILLY

Senior Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan has alleged that BJP is using police and district administration officials to threaten SP workers campaigning for the Rampur Sadar Assembly by-election.

"Akhilesh Yadav, Jayant Chaudhary and Chandrasekhkar Azad are going to come here to campaign for the bypoll. But they need not to, as elections are not going to take place in the



district," he said in a press conference in Rampur on Saturday.

"When Akhilesh Yadav comes here, I will ask him to request the Election

Commission to declare the BJP candidate as the winner," he added.

He also alleged that the SP workers are being "threatened" and "atrocities" are being meted out to them at the hands of police and district administration.

"Police broke doors of 50 houses and picked up innocent people from road. They did not even spare my wife, who is a former MP, and used unparliamentary language for her," Khan said.

He alleged that besides

others his wife - Tazeen Fatma - has also been warned not to come out of the house.

"Asking for votes for my party candidate is my right," Khan said, adding that he has video footage of "police atrocities", which he will not share with the media as then the court will not consider it as an evidence.

The bypoll will be held on December 5.

The seat fell vacant after the disqualification of Khan after his conviction by a court in a 2019 hate speech case.

## KCR to lay foundation stone for airport express Metro on Dec 9

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhkar Rao would be laying the foundation for the Airport Express Metro on December 6, Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development KT Rama Rao said in a tweet on Sunday.

He said the project, starting at Mindspace junction to Shamshabad (Hyderabad International Airport) Airport, would be 31-km long and cost approximately Rs 6,250 crore. "Hyderabad is forging



ahead. Happy to announce that CM KCR will be laying the foundation for Airport Express Metro on December 9. This project starting at Mindspace junction to Shamshabad

Airport will be 31 KM long & will be costing approximately Rs 6,250 cr," he tweeted.

The airport express Metro is a Telangana government-funded project and would be completed in three years, he said in another tweet.

"We have submitted DPR & been in discussions with the Central government for an additional 31-km city Metro expansion; BHEL to Lakdikapul -26 KM & Nagole to LB Nagar - 5 km," he said.

The State government has already formed a special pur-

pose vehicle- Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited (HAML) which would be responsible for development, construction, operations and management of the airport Metro link.

The GMR group, operating the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) here, had earlier said the group would invest about 10 per cent of the total cost of the metro rail link project being proposed by the Telangana government for connectivity to the aerodrome from various parts of the city.

## Dimple warns of 'crackdown' on party leaders ahead of Mainpuri bypoll

PNS/PTI ■ MAINPURI

Samajwadi Party leader Dimple Yadav on Sunday claimed that the BJP-led administration will crack down on local party leaders ahead of the Mainpuri by-election and asked them to "not sleep at their homes" the night before polling.

She said the Uttar Pradesh's Mainpuri constituency has been the area of SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav's who had worked for its development and asserted that the party is going to the people with this reality in the upcoming bypoll here.

Dimple, the wife of SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, has been fielded from the seat, which has been represented by party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Polling in Mainpuri will be

held on December 5, while counting of votes will take place on December 8.

"I would like to tell my young friends and SP leaders that the administration will act tough on you on December 4. Do not sleep in your homes on December 4, so that on December 5, nobody can even touch you.

"You go and cast your votes, and on December 6, the administration will disappear from here," she said at an election meeting at Ahirava village under Bhogaon assembly segment.

She also urged women to vote for the party, saying "the administration cannot use force on you. You are the women power and you can fight. You should go and cast your vote."

"An elderly person told me that it is the administration which is contesting the bypoll.

I told her on one hand, there is the administration which is contesting the elections, on the other, the people of Mainpuri are contesting the bypoll for 'netaji'.

"This is not my election. This is the your (people) election and that of our respected 'netaji'. I am sure that Mainpuri will honour and pay tributes (to 'netaji')," she said.

An SP delegation also met Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and demanded removal of Mainpuri District Magistrate and Senior Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) from election work, alleging that they were misusing their administrative power.

The SP leaders alleged that DM Avinash Kumar Rai and SSP Jai Prakash Singh are putting pressure on village heads, block heads, district panchayat members and others



to vote for the BJP in the Mainpuri bypoll.

"It is a reality that this area (Mainpuri) has been the area of 'netaji'. You cannot cover this reality. This is the fact, and reality, and we are going to the public with this (reality)," she told PTI on the sidelines of her election meeting.

Asked how she views this bypoll, she said, "People of Mainpuri know that 'netaji' carried out development projects here and people will honour him in the upcoming

bypoll."

Asked whether the SP's first family reunited because of the polls and may again part ways later, she said, "Let us not speculate about the family. Let us work at the ground level on matters related to the public."

Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) president Shivalp Singh Yadav had recently said it was a phone call from "daughter-in-law" Dimple Yadav that prompted him to campaign for her for the upcoming Mainpuri bypoll.

Amid a deteriorating relationship with nephew Akhilesh Yadav, the PSP chief agreed to campaign for the SP chief's wife in the upcoming bypoll.

The Mainpuri parliamentary constituency has five assembly segments -- Mainpuri, Bhogaon, Kishni, Karhal and Jaswant Nagar.

In the 2022 assembly elec-

tions, the SP won the Karhal, Kishni and the Jaswant Nagar seats, while the BJP won the Mainpuri and the Bhogaon seats.

Akhilesh Yadav's Karhal assembly seat is part of Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency and so is Jaswant Nagar, which is represented by Shivalp Yadav.

Addressing the gathering, Dimple said, "This is the first bypoll when 'netaji' is not among us. 'Netaji' had an emotional relationship with the people of Mainpuri Lok Sabha constituency, and people from here resided in his heart.

"He used to consider their problems as his own. He has done the maximum development of this place -- be it roads, electricity, irrigation, education of girls or jobs for the youth.

"Netaji' had always thought

about everyone, he had given importance to everyone, and had taken everyone along. He had never indulged in politics of partiality and discrimination.

"He was always concerned about the development of Mainpuri, and how to help people here," she said.

She said the farmers are feeling worried under the BJP-led state government as they are not able to get fertilisers. Those who are getting it are able to do so with great difficulty and procuring it at expensive rates, she said.

"Our women are not safe, they are not getting their pensions," she said, adding that the earlier SP government had given 'Kanya Vidya Dhan' (to girls), laptops to students and had built good roads.

"However, a present, not a single new work has been done

in this area or in the state," she charged.

She alleged that the present "arrogant" government is not ready to accept that people are facing difficulties, they are dealing with inflation, youths are unemployed and the daughters are not safe.

"This government is not ready to accept the prevailing circumstances. When they will not ready to accept, how will it deliberate on them?" she asked.

"They can only talk about diversions. They can make you fight against each other, and will not think about your future or of your children," she said and urged people to vote for her party on December 5.

She also claimed that when SP was in power, the party followed the path of ideology and principles, and also moving forward by taking everyone along.

## LG Sinha unveils 'J&K Cyber Security Policy' at 25th National Conference on e-Governance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Sunday unveiled the 'J&K Cyber Security policy' during the valedictory function of 25th National Conference on e-Governance at Mata Vaishno Devi University.

A MoU between IT Department J&K and DITECH Haryana was also signed on the occasion.

The agreement between the J&K Government and Haryana Government is expected to strengthen and deepen the collaboration on knowledge sharing, IT initiatives & best practices in e-Governance, said the Lt Governor.

In his address, Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana, recalled his deep connection with Jammu Kashmir.

I am witnessing a new, 'badalta' Jammu Kashmir. We are looking forward to the new J&K-Haryana collaboration and are committed to support the J & K Government in meeting the goals, he said.

The Haryana Chief Minister also highlighted the IT interventions and several digital initiatives of his government to bring transparency in the system and streamlining the public service delivery system.

In response, the Lt Governor said that the 25th National e-Governance



Conference in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir will prove to be a milestone in the direction of fulfilling our resolve of Digital Society.

Under the guidance of PM Narendra Modi, J&K UT is an emerging model of digital government with focus on transparent governance and citizen-centric approach to delivering public services, he said.

Observing that technology is making a real difference in people's lives, the Lt Governor said in 2013, the total number of e-transaction was merely 20 Lakh. This year, till 25th November, the number of e-transaction is 38.50 Crore. On an average J&K is recording 550 e-transactions every minute.

The Lt Governor underscored that despite being a late entrant in digital transformation, J&K has achieved several milestones with solid technical architecture at the service of citizens. Speedy development is the new identity of

J&K, he said.

The Lt Governor further observed that the launch of Digital J&K Vision Document and launch of J&K Cyber Security Policy will promote a common approach to use the power of innovation and secure the IT assets in the rapidly changing technology landscape.

Speaking on the digital transformational journey of Jammu and Kashmir, the Lt Governor shared the vision of the J&K government to expand e-Governance to the next level. "We have prepared a roadmap and action plan for the next one, three & five years. More than 500 services will be made online in the next 3 years for a better digital delivery ecosystem," said the Lt Governor.

Our strategy is to enable the people to access high-quality services anywhere, anytime, on any device. All services in mobile for mobile workforce, the Lt Governor said.

## Nitish inaugurates Gangajal Aapurti Yojana at Rajgir, Gaya & Bodh Gaya

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PATNA

The popular tourist destinations of Rajgir, Gaya, and Bodh Gaya, known collectively as the 'Buddhist circuits', received a 'valuable gift' from Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar, on Sunday. The CM inaugurated the first phase of India's first-of-its-kind innovative drinking water project, the Gangajal Aapurti Yojana.

The project, initiated under the Jal Jeevan Hariyali mission, is the "dream project" of the Chief Minister. It is also Bihar's first, and largest drinking water programme.

The project will store, treat, and supply the floodwaters of the River Ganga the state receives during the monsoon months.

The initiative has two objectives. First, it conserves floodwater, preventing wastage, and second, it transforms this precious resource into safe, drinkable water.

This floodwater will be lifted through pumps at Hathidah and transported through a 151-kilometre pipeline to three enormous reservoirs in Rajgir, Tetar, and Gaya. These reservoirs stand out as they have been constructed based on the terrain and using natural materials.

Water from the reservoirs will travel to two Water Treatment Plants (WTP),



### SALIENT POINTS ABOUT GANGAJAL AAPURTI YOJANA

- The Gangajal Aapurti Yojana is India's first-of-its-kind floodwater to drinking water project
- It is Bihar CM Nitish Kumar's dream project
- It is the largest drinking water project in the State
- It serves dual purpose of saving floodwater & transforming it into safe drinking water

where it is treated and transported to the "enlightenment" cities.

These three South Bihar cities of Rajgir, Gaya, and Bodh Gaya have been experiencing water shortages due to excessive groundwater extraction via borewells.

Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) has executed the entire first phase of the project. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the MEIL finished the project within three years.

With the supply of potable, safe, clean drinking water, the water challenges in these cities will be minimised to a large extent.

With the successful completion of the first phase, drinking water requirements of significant locations, such as Nalanda University, IT Park, Cricket Stadium, Film City, Police training camp, Nature Safari, and Zoo Safari, will be fulfilled. In addition, the Ganga Jal will be accessible to well-known temples.

## BJP leaders ask for Rarh Banga in south Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Not sure whether Hindutva plank would fetch them a desired result in next year's panchayat elections a section of the State BJP leaders seem to have discovered a new strategy of inciting regional sentiments.

After a demand for a separate North Bengal State the BJP MLAs from south-western Bengal have started asking for a separate Rarh Banga comprising Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram West Midnapore and Birbhum districts.

BJP MLA Niladri Shekhar Dana on Sunday demanded a separate Union Territory carved out of five tribal dominated districts of southwestern Bengal which he wanted to be named as Rarh Banga.

"Enough is enough. The people of Rarh Banga have been a victim of negligence for decades ... now they have woken up to their cause. They have understood that under this Government there will be no development in this region ... all the projects conceived by Prime Minister Narendra Modi are hijacked by the Trinamool Government ... not only the names of the central schemes --- meant for the deprived people of this region are changed --- but funds too are

diverted and misused ... this can never go on for long ... "now the people of this area have woken up to their cause and they want a separate Union Territory of Rarh Bengal so the central funds can directly reach this area for development of the local people," Dana said adding he would personally make moves for a separate UT.

Dana's statements came days after another saffron legislator Amarnath Shakha made a similar demand. "The people of Bankura, Jhargram, West Midnapore and Birbhum are the victims of negligence ... the people should raise their voice for a separate state ... If our party does well in the panchayat elections then we will place this demand before Union Home Minister Amit Shah," he said.

A similar demand had earlier been made by Bishnupur MP Saumitra Khan. Senior BJP leader and national vice president of the party Dilip Ghosh however, rejected such demands saying demand for a separate state was not the party's official view.

"Our party never supports such demands. Though some of our MLAs have been raising such issues but that is not our party's official line and the national leadership has made it clear," said Ghosh.



## Precept and practice

Politicians say nice things in speeches but opt for expedience, as evident from their campaigns

When a netaji is pontificating about virtue, responsibility, etc., talking about dos and don'ts, he is actually telling his rivals how they should behave. He, however, would continue to do what he deems fits, expedient; after all, it is winnability that matters. Others, however, should behave themselves; they should not indulge populism or promote the 'revdi' culture; their language should be civil, within the lakshman rekha. Almost all politicians are convinced that their adversaries should follow these rules; I, however, will do whatever I want to do. This has once again become evident in the run-up to the Assembly polls in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 16 cautioned the political class about the menace of what he called the "revdi culture." He was absolutely correct when he said that freebies are "very dangerous" for economic development. For a while it looked like the Bharatiya Janata Party had decided to weed out the menace from the political arena. A BJP leader, Ashwini Upadhyay, petitioned the Supreme Court, seeking restrictions on parties on distributing "irrational freebies" before elections. All this looked nice—till the campaign for Assembly elections in the two states gained momentum. All the nice things said about the danger of freebies have been forgotten by the BJP. Other parties anyway were not preaching the virtues of fiscal prudence; in fact, Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party boss Arvind Kejriwal defended freebies with usual sanctimoniousness.

In Himachal, the BJP has promised Rs 2,500 every month to 5,000 girls in government schools with best performance in class 12 throughout their graduation. Also, all school girls will get bicycles and college girls scooties. While promoting female education is a laudable enterprise, one may wonder if freebies are the best way to do that. Unsurprisingly and expectedly, the AAP has promised free power, an unemployment allowance, and monthly cash allowance for all adult women in Gujarat, where its ambition is to topple the BJP Government. The saffron party has been ruling the western state for the last 27 years. Not to be left behind, the Congress manifesto has pledged farmers' debt waiver, gas cylinder at Rs 500, and 300 free units of electricity in Gujarat. Quite ominously, the party manifesto says, "Congress will stop mindless privatisation of healthcare and education." Such phraseology is the consequence of a socialist mindset. In a way, the three parties' elections manifestoes also show their desperation: the BJP doesn't want lose, especially in Gujarat because it is Modi's home state; the grand old party wants to stage a comeback; and the AAP wants to convince everyone that it is on a successful expansion drive, especially after its spectacular victory in Punjab earlier this year. In normal circumstances, politicians are not the best specimens of mankind; in their desperation, they can breach several norms of civility and canniness. This is exactly what they are doing now.



Artists perform a Garo traditional dance during Wangala festival at Chotipara, in Goalpara PTI

## Govt's dilemma

### Indian govt abstains on UNHRC resolution on anti hijab protesters to show its support to Iran

India abstained on a resolution adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to set up a fact-finding mission into alleged human rights violations in Iran committed on protesters in the country by state authorities. The anti-Hijab protests are at the peak in Iran which started after the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody. She paid with her life for not wearing a 'hijab'. India's was one of 16 abstentions on the resolution, sponsored by Germany and the Netherlands, and comes just a week after New Delhi voted against an Iran-specific resolution in the third committee of the UN General Assembly. Nevertheless, the resolution in the UNHRC was passed, at a special session of the 47-member human rights body. The resolution denounced the "violent crackdown on peaceful protests by security forces" which started after the death of Mahsa Amini. The resolution established a fact-finding mission into the allegations of human rights violations in Iran since September 16. China, Pakistan, Armenia, Eritrea, Cuba and Venezuela voted against the resolution. The two Gulf members of the Council, Qatar and United Arab Emirates, abstained and India gave them company. Earlier this month, the UN Security Council held an informal meeting on the Iranian protests. India did not give a statement at that meeting either. Two weeks later, on November 16, the UNGA's third committee voted on a draft resolution that referred to the death of Mahsa Amini and urged Iranian officials to "cease the use of excessive force against peaceful protesters, including women and children". India had voted 'No'.

It is indeed an Indian Govt's dilemma. From an economic perspective, Iran is the second-largest supplier of crude oil to India. India buys more than 4,25,000 barrels per day. India happens to be one of the largest foreign investors in Iran's oil and gas industry. The government wants to appease the Iranian rulers so as not to disturb its relations with them and so would not mind standing against the world at large in supporting hijab whereas back home it is doing the exact opposite. The Karnataka government led by the BJP is out to enforce 'hijab' ban and it does not mind crushing the pro hijab protesters. This is political expediency at its best where only interest matters. The govt doesn't mind looking regressive to the world, it is sheer convenience that is at play.

# Remembering demonetization

Demonetisation was successful in curbing the informal economy and insulating the country from the neighbour's financial mischiefs

Reportedly, there are some 50 petitions pending in the country's courts protesting the demonetization of currency notes that was implemented on November 8, 2016; we just passed its eighth anniversary. Understandably, this move by the Narendra Modi government continues to generate much talk. In all, I have witnessed three demonetizations and therefore feel qualified to comment on the subject. In 1946, the old 1000-rupee note was demonetized. In 1978, high denomination notes were rendered invalid. We are today debating the 2016 decision.

In the pre-Modi era, it was widely believed that approximately 50 per cent of the Indian economy generated in the country could not be tapped at all for purposes of development. The black money had to be spent in less productive activities like land deals, property transactions and what not. Such money had to be spent quickly in order to keep it away from thieves and from income tax vigilance; its mention in any legal document was not possible. The tax-evaded money could neither be legally invested nor safely saved for even one's children, not to speak of national development. In brief, black was money only for the time being, in contrast to the bankable money, which was actual wealth.

What was unusual about Indian black money was that it was reported to be manufactured in our neighbouring countries. For example, superannuated Bihari cows used to have a ready market at fancy prices. West Bengal traders used to buy our toothbrushes readily; more especially if one did not write a bill and accepted cash. In the event the notes paid happened to be jaali (counterfeit) one would have been informed at which shop one could change it back to a valid note. When the thunderbolt of the 2016 demonetization burst upon India, everyone up to the upper middle class was able to change their cash. Those who were hit were the people who had hoarded large sums of black



money and could not change their notes. On the morrow of the occasion, many an economist or an intellectual began using the term "informal economy" for the black economy, because it is inappropriate for a respectable person to plead for something illegal.

The result of the action was to get rid of the hoarded cash lying wastefully. However, its greatest service was to interrupt for a long time, if not forever, the printing of Indian currency notes in neighbouring countries. Simultaneously, smuggling of goods was significantly reduced. Nevertheless, demonetization would have been a fleeting event, had it not been followed by the introduction of the Goods & Services Tax (GST).

I would like to bring in a personal experience in this particular regard. The sale of our toothbrushes increased within a fortnight. It was indeed a welcome surprise. Upon thinking further, we realized that quite a few of our competitors might not have maintained systematic records. Some of them were making brushes by simply sticking nylon into the plastic handles; they had brought these in on a friendly basis from, say, China. The history behind all this was that

“IN THE PRE-MODI ERA, IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT APPROXIMATELY 50 PER CENT OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY GENERATED IN THE COUNTRY COULD NOT BE TAPPED AT ALL FOR PURPOSES OF DEVELOPMENT

toothbrush manufacturing was for decades, reserved for the small scale sector. In short, overnight, an informal activity turned into a formal sector one. Apart from sales tax, the additional fear was that from the GST website and the income tax department could also monitor how much of what product was being sold by whom.

An incidental but a substantial advantage that emerged from the introduction of the GST was the drastic reduction in lorry transport time. Post-GST, an interstate lorry no longer has to stop at every state border. The lorry's photograph and registration are recorded by CCTV. Earlier, the vehicle had to queue up at the state border to obtain clearance by the states' sales tax authorities. Up to 40 per cent travelling time has thus been saved.

Without the GST, the demonetization move of eight years ago would have been say, a birth without a life to follow up. And without demonetization, the GST might have been a life without a birth. Yet another advantage of GST has been the abolition of most other indirect taxes, starting from the excise duty. Imagine the expenditure saved to the tax-

payer on the one hand and the governments, beginning with the Centre, and ending with the states, small and big. As a guess, at least one-third of India's lorry time would have been saved. Above all, the tax has taken India towards its goal of one country one tax. Moreover, the demonetization has helped India avoid its exploitation by its neighbours. The veteran political analyst and economist S. Gurumurthy has likened the 2016 demonetization to a "financial Pokharan", i.e., a nuclear strike against not only black money, but covert financial war against the nation.

Assuming that in the pre-Modi era, 50 per cent of India's economy was black; at least half this amount is currently being ploughed back into the economy as white money. In that sense, India's economy has become 25 per cent larger spontaneously. It is also a necessary step towards making India a more modern economy, which is the first necessary step, if we aspire to make the rupee into a convertible currency.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SANJAY RAUT'S BAIL HEARING

Sir—As per report the single bench of the Bombay High Court on Friday November 25 recused itself from hearing the Enforcement Directorate's plea seeking cancellation of bail granted to Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut and his aide Pravin Raut in a money laundering case. The ED had approached the HC seeking cancellation of bail granted to the Rajya Sabha MP and his aide by a special court on November 9.

The Central probe agency had sought an interim stay on the bail order, which the High Court had refused. When the matter came up for hearing, the single bench of Justice M S Karnik said, "It would not be appropriate for me to take up this matter not before me." The matter will now be placed before a new bench. Sanjay Raut was granted bail by special PMLA judge M G Deshpande, over a hundred days after he was arrested in the money laundering case related to redevelopment of Patra Chawl in suburban Goregaon. The special court, in its order, had termed the Rajya Sabha member's arrest as "illegal, without reason". With this all is not well.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### WOES OF CONGRESS PARTY

Sir—Obviously, the woes of the Grand Old Party are far from over as a couple of its leaders are hell bent upon cutting the branch they are presently sitting on given that the party veteran and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has renewed his blitzkrieg against his bete noire and DY CM Sachin Pilot by calling him a 'traitor' and even going to the extent of accusing him of hatching a conspiracy in collusion with the BJP with a view to toppling the Congress government in Rajasthan. Down playing these charges however, Mr Pilot reminded that such a behaviour was unbecoming of a senior and experienced leader like Mr Gehlot and that the priority now should be given to Rajasthan where the assembly elections are due next year. In the same vein, he advised Ashok Gehlot to concentrate on Gujarat where the polls are round the corner and he (Mr Gehlot) is an

## Mass shootings in the USA



The horrifying shooting inside a Walmart store at Chesapeake, Virginia a few days ago yet again underscores the growing gun culture in the US. Though the nerve-racking incident reignites the debate over gun-control in America, realistically it is unlikely to result in any significant reforms, as the US has a deep and enduring connection to guns, integrated into the fabric of American society. Sadly and unsurprisingly mass shootings in the US have become a common affair, and it raises again the most

obvious question that has been discussed and debated many times in the past: "why can't America stop the scourge of gun violence?"

Distressingly enough, it cannot for the reason that gun violence in the US is symbolic of a broken political system that fails to protect its own citizens. Frequent mass shootings are a stain on the country's international reputation. In a broader sense, the failure to implement bold measures against gun violence is seen as a dysfunctional system of a government incapable of protecting its own citizens, including children. In fact, Pew Research Center's survey reveals the fact that an average 83 per cent of Americans have said that the US is no longer a good model of democracy to follow. This makes for depressing reading and seemingly makes it incumbent on the Biden administration to take immediate action on gun control and the need for gun reform.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

observer. Notably, Sachin Pilot also recently asked new Congress chief Mr Mallikarjun Kharge to initiate disciplinary proceedings against Mr Gehlot's royalist legislators who had boycotted the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting in Rajasthan and convened a parallel one instead, attended by the rebels. On the face of it, this internecine bickering in the Congress will simply lead to the differences among the leaders only to deepen.

Interestingly, Sachin Pilot has joined Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi in the ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', going to enter into Rajasthan in a couple of days and, hence, the party high command eagerly wants all the belligerent leaders to bury the hatchet as early as possible and unitedly campaign for the party's electoral prospects in the upcoming assembly polls getting ameliorated, or otherwise, all the hardships Mr Gandhi has been going through to amass public support everywhere during the foot march, might fall on stony ground.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

### THE SPIRIT OF CONSTITUTION

Sir—"The Constitution is not a mere lawyer's document, it is a vehicle of life and it's spirit is always the spirit of age - Father of Indian Constitution." Every year India witnesses November 26 as the Constitution day, also to honour the law minister and architect of independent India, Dr BR Ambedkar who played a pivotal role in drafting the constitution of India. Samwidhan Diwas aims to highlight the importance, of the Indian constitution.

Our Transformative Constitution teaches us about making decisions with a lot of patience among people from diverse communities. It is embedded with vision and reflection of the future. People of India are custodian of the longest written Constitution. It empowers citizens, and citizens empowers Samwidhan too by respecting it religiously. The Constitution is nobody's preserve but it is everybody's preserve.

Tashi Baheti | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

The history of India is not just about slavery...The history of India is about emerging victorious, it is about the valour of countless greats.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



Chinese President — Xi Jinping

I think the thing that Trump was most perturbed about (was) me asking him to be my vice president...Trump started by screaming at me at the table, telling me I'm going to lose.



Rapper — Kanye West



The situation we were in and from there to reach 307 is a commendable total. Definitely, some things didn't go our way today but it's a learning curve, we can introspect, comeback with new ideas in the next game.

Indian cricketer — Shreyas Iyer

During the Congress rule in Gujarat (before 1995), communal riots were rampant. Congress used to incite people of different communities and castes to fight against each other.



Union Home Minister — Amit Shah



FIRST COLUMN

CYCLING FOR NATURE,  
WITH SEED BALLS

Seeds can be conserved in balls  
which can help raising trees



ALKA GADGIL

As monsoon sets in, we head to the wild for seed bombing of native fruits like mango, jambul and jackfruit, said Makarand Vaingankar, an owner of a medical store, and Yashvant Bhosale, a treasury officer from Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra. In dry areas, the shape of the seed ball gives enough shade to conserve moisture. Eventually, the seeds begin to germinate, and the ball breaks apart. The small pile of crumbles leads to a rooting system. The plants then mature and produce their own seeds and provide shelter once the second-generation seeds fall to the ground, they said.

Both Vaingankar and Bhosale have been members of Kanak Riders Kankavli, a cycling group, for seven years now. The group has been involved in raising awareness about environmental conservation among students and youth through cycling.

"We use social media to raise our voice against the destruction of biodiversity. We hold meetings with schoolchildren and college students from the Kankavli area about these issues. I am worried, what kind of world will we be leaving behind for children," added Bhosale.

On Sundays and holidays, the group plans to cover 100 km in a day on cycle. Many students, youth, and their parents join their venture. This has led to a renewed interest in cycling among the population.



While sharing significant moments they experienced while cycling, the group said: "Recently we visited Vravade dam in Kankavli, which is a reserved area. We waded through a thick green cover to reach the dam." The clouds have descended, and it was a beautiful moment."

Ever since the group decided to uncover the hidden places in the region, cycling has not only increased environmental awareness among the population but also their health. "A person who had asthma came for a ride with us. There was a steep ascent on our way. He cycled for some time, halted, and used his inhaler, and then he joined again. We were stressed, but he did not give up. Six months have passed since then. He does not use an inhaler anymore and rides for 100 km without any hassle," said Bhosale.

The group faces a lot of challenges while carrying out their campaign. When they plant trees in open spaces, people from the neighbourhood are often very unsupportive. People ask what we are doing in their precinct. Some have a very myopic view and think that trees are a menace because they get in the way. Even temple authorities object to seed bombing in their vicinity, said the group.

Reflecting on their future plans, the group shared how, despite challenges, they had come together to form an association and approach the administration to find solutions to the growing environmental concerns. Informing about their next campaign, the group said, Murdeshwar Temple is amidst a thick jungle, and there are water bodies around it. But people are defacing the flora and fauna by throwing litter. We will make the administration take note of it. We are also going to hold sessions in schools, colleges and offices across Sindhudurga district.

As a first step towards environmental sustainability, the group urges the masses to be more conscious of actions, as they put it, If you are travelling in the Monsoon, please take seed balls with you. The seeds shouldn't be discarded, as they can be used to make seed balls. Seeds of native varieties should be sown, not those of exotic species. If 10 seed balls are thrown, at least two will take root for sure.

*(The writer is a development worker from Maharashtra: Charkha Features)*

# Under IBC, protecting minority shareholders



UTTAM GUPTA

## The soul of IBC mechanism lies in timely detection of stress in a firm and selling it as a 'going concern'

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has proposed a framework to protect the interests of public equity shareholders in case of listed companies undergoing insolvency proceedings under the corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). In 2016, the Modi Government enacted the IBC. This legislation overrides all other subsisting laws and gives a strong handle to the banks for resolving non-performing assets (NPAs) of lenders.

In 2017, it amended the Banking Regulation Act (BRA), giving RBI powers to force banks to act if they don't on their own. On February 12, 2018, the RBI issued a circular that provided a foundational basis for resolving NPAs. As per this circular, for accounts with aggregate exposure greater than Rs 2,000 crore, as soon as there was a default in the account with any lender, all lenders – singly or jointly – shall initiate steps to cure the default by preparing and implementing a resolution plan (RP). This needed to be done within 180 days from the date of default.


In case, the lenders fail to meet this deadline, they are required to refer the account to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) which would initiate proceedings under the IBC. The NCLT would get 180 days to complete the resolution process. A further 90 days is allowed in exceptional circumstances. Thus, the outer limit for consummating the process is 270 days.

The raison d'être of imposing this timeline and involving RBI to shepherd the exercise was to sell the NPA afflicted entity – as a going concern in an 'objective' and 'transparent' manner and maximise the realisation from sale.

Under the current process, existing shareholders get squeezed out as the CIRP results in huge equity dilution and even delisting—a situation arising consequent to the new acquirer's shareholding becoming 100 per cent pursuant to the CIRP process.

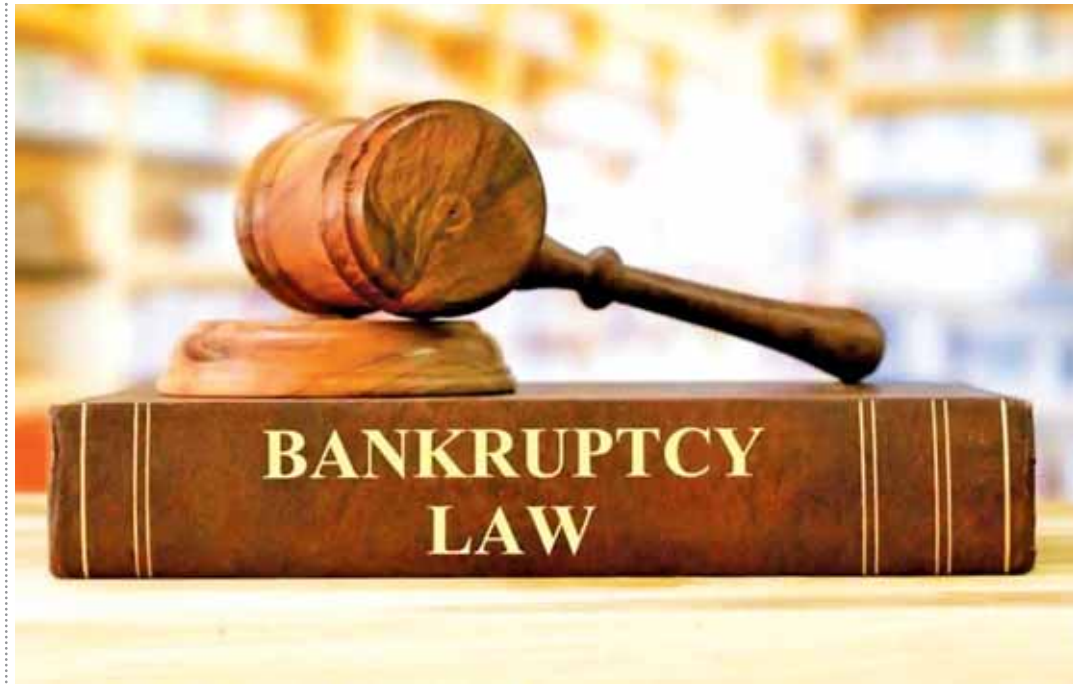
Under IBC, equity holders are considered owners of the insolvent company, and thus fall last in the resolution plan (RP) approved by the NCLT to receive any dues at the time of liquidation. They don't even get prior intimation and forget an opportunity to present their case to the committee of creditors (CoC), which steers the insolvency process even as the latter's rights are considered superior.

To address the concerns of public equity shareholders, Sebi has proposed they be given an opportunity to acquire a minimum of five per cent and up to 25 per cent in the new entity. The offer will depend on the shareholding the new acquirer gets as a result of the RP. If a new acquirer's shareholding becomes 100 per cent, the minimum offer required to be



THE RECOVERY BY FINANCIAL CREDITORS WAS A RECORD LOW OF 13.4 PER CENT OF THE ADMITTED CLAIMS DURING OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2021. MOREOVER, IN 363 MAJOR CASES, BANKS TOOK A HAIR-CUT OF 80 PER CENT ON AN AVERAGE

*(The author is a policy analyst)*



made for existing public shareholders will be 25 per cent and the minimum acceptance five per cent.

In the event there is no interest even for five per cent of shares, the resultant entity will be allowed to delist. If the acquirer's shareholding in the resultant entity becomes 75 per cent pursuant to the CIRP process, there will not be any requirement to make an offer to public investors as their holding will already be at 25 per cent.

The offer to acquire shares of the resultant entity (albeit consequent to the CIRP process) will not be available to associate companies, family members of promoter group companies, trusts managed by promoters, key managerial personnel, and directors, etc., as that will defeat the very purpose of helping small shareholders.

The price offered to these shareholders should be the same as the one agreed upon by the resolution applicant/new acquirer. The Sebi proposal is logical. It could give a fair opportunity to minority shareholders of the firm under CIRP process to be a partner and benefit from appreciation in share value as and when it runs profitable under the acquirer. It would also be in sync with a minimum of 25 per cent public float that the market regulator expects from a listed company. But, the situation on ground zero is different.

Even in well-run and profitable companies, the regulator is unable to enforce the 25 per cent norm.

The central government too remains keen to circumvent this norm as may be seen from its asking Sebi to exempt the IDBI bank from the public float requirement. By contrast, NPA afflicted firms under CIRP face heavy odds. They are struggling to prevent erosion of their asset value. Of the total 5,636 CIRPs, 3,637 have been closed. Of the closed cases, 1,703 have ended in liquidation.

The recovery by financial creditors was a record low of 13.4 per cent of the admitted claims during October-December 2021. Moreover, in 363 major cases, banks took a hair-cut of 80 per cent on an average (for some such as Videocon, it was even higher at 95 per cent).

When there is so much erosion in asset value and over 50 per cent of cases ended up in liquidation, any talk of rewarding minority shareholders is meaningless.

Under directions of the Supreme Court (SC), the RBI was forced to issue a revised circular dated June 7, 2019 in supersession of its February 12, 2018 order. It gives banks 180 days to come up with RP (in addition to 30 days to enter into an inter-lender agreement or ILA). If they do not, they are required to make an additional provision of 20 per cent. If they don't finalize the plan within 365 days, an additional 15 per cent provision has to be made.

Unlike the February 12, 2018, which mandates the bank to refer the account to NCLT at the end of

180 days, under the revised circular, there is no such compulsion on it. See it from another angle. If RP is not implemented within one year from the default date, the bank has to make provision of 50 per cent - 15 per cent normal ageing provision and 35 per cent additional (20 plus 15). At the end of 15 months, with normal ageing provision increasing to 40 per cent, the total provisioning requirement including 35 per cent additional, will be a steep 75 per cent.

Having provided for 75 per cent of loan amount in the balance sheet, where is the incentive for the bank to recover the money by initiating proceedings under the IBC?

In short, by taking away powers from the RBI and giving too much leeway to the banks under the June 7, 2019 circular, the SC intervention has rendered the IBC process dysfunctional. This apart, most of the NCLT rulings are challenged in the High Court and the SC, leading to inordinate delays in conclusion of CIRP proceedings and resultant erosion of asset value.

The soul of IBC mechanism lies in timely detection of stress in a firm and selling it as a 'going concern' so as to realize maximum value. Sebi's idea of protecting minority shareholders (in fact, all other efforts of the government to protect all creditors – financial and operational – through a spate of amendments in the law) will work only when the soul is preserved.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

FRANKLY, I FAIL TO UNDERSTAND HOW THE COMMENT ON PRIME MINISTER MODI WAS EITHER RELEVANT, NECESSARY OR CONTEXTUAL. — EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON ARINDAM BAGCHI



...SOME EXAMPLES: PRESIDENT MUGABE IN ZIMBABWE IN 2001; PM MODI IN INDIA IN 2014; THIS IS A CONSISTENT PRACTICE THAT WE HAVE AFFORDED TO HEADS OF STATE, GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN MINISTERS. — US STATE DEPT DY SPOKESPERSON VEDANT PATEL



# No massacre, no famine, just change in trade routes

## Trade and climate had turned against Greenland Norse, so they most likely just moved back to Iceland, or even to Norway



GWYNNE DYER

*(Gwynne Dyer's new book is The Shortest History of War)*

and the year was 1021 AD.

I was always interested in the Norse, because I grew up in Newfoundland and that was already seen as the likeliest location of the region they called 'Vinland'. I read the sagas ('Erik the Red' and 'The Greenlanders'), which were rip-roaring tales of triumph and treachery but distinctly short on geographical and chronological detail.

Then in the 1960s Norwegian archaeologists discovered the remains of eight Norse longhouses on the L'Anse aux Meadows site. So the location was known, but still not the date. The explorers came from the new Norse settlements in Greenland, which had been founded in 985 AD, but nobody knew how much later they arrived

in Newfoundland.

So what the hell! Let's say it was the year 1000 AD. The Newfoundland Museum declared that the year 2000 was the millennium of the Viking settlement, the local tourist authorities went into high gear—and somebody at the Museum contacted me to write the script for the exhibition, because... well, because I was a journalist and a Newfoundlander.

I swallowed my doubts, named my price, and did the job. Not a bad job, actually, because I could play with the fact that the Norse in Newfoundland had both peaceful and violent contacts with the local indigenous people.

Those people, probably related to the extinct Beothuk of Newfoundland or the modern

Innu of Labrador, were very distant descendants of the modern human beings who left Africa around 100,000 years ago, turned right, crossed all of Asia, and finally arrived in North America when the glaciers receded about 14,000 years ago.

The Norse, on the other hand, were the distant descendants of those who turned left when they left Africa, settled Europe—and eventually island-hopped across the Atlantic. After all those millennia the two streams of migration finally met up again in Newfoundland. So I called the exhibition 'Full Circle', and slid past the question of exactly when it happened.

But now we know. The ECHOES team figured it out by examining bits of wood

found on the L'Anse aux Meadows site that had clearly been cut with iron (European) axes. A huge solar flare in 993 AD left a spike in that year's tree rings, so just count rings out from there to the bark. The trees died in 1021.

The specific date of L'Anse aux Meadows doesn't really matter, of course, but the technique does. Cosmic-ray-induced surges in atmospheric radiocarbon concentrations are another new tool for figuring out the past, and that is now important work.

Two centuries ago our knowledge of the past barely reached back past classical Greece and Rome: say, 3,000 years. Now scientists are working hard to puzzle out past climate states ranging from hundreds to billions of years ago,

because understanding the patterns of the past may help us through whatever happens next. Every scrap of information may be valuable.

All very well, but why didn't the Norse settlement last? They abandoned their exploration of north-eastern North America because the 'cash crop' they were looking for in Vinland turned out to be much closer to home: ivory from the abundant walrus population that they could hunt in Disko Bay, only a thousand kilometres up Greenland's west coast.

They could feed themselves by farming and fishing, but it was the ivory that paid for all the things they needed to import from Europe (timber, iron and bronze, stained glass, etc.). Up to 5,000 peo-

ple lived in the Greenland settlements for more than four centuries, apparently quite happy to ignore 'Vinland'—and then they disappeared.

Where they went or how they died has been promoted as a great mystery, but the real reason is probably that the bottom dropped out of the European market for ivory in the early 15th century as abundant new supplies became available from Africa and Russia's new Arctic settlements.

The climate had also turned against the Greenland Norse (the 'Little Ice Age'), so they most likely just upped stakes and moved back to Iceland, or even to Norway. No massacre, no famine, just a change in the trade routes. It's not always dramatic.



# Russian shelling continue across Ukraine as wintry warfare looms

AP ■ KHERSON

Shelling by Russian forces struck several areas in eastern and southern Ukraine overnight as utility crews continued a scramble to restore power, water and heating following widespread strikes in recent weeks, officials said Sunday.

With persistent snowfall blanketing the capital, Kyiv, Sunday, analysts predicted that wintry weather — bringing with it frozen terrain and grueling fighting conditions — could have an increasing impact on the direction of the conflict that has raged since Russian forces invaded Ukraine more than nine months ago.

But for the moment, both sides were bogged down by heavy rain and muddy battlefield conditions in some areas, experts said.

After a blistering barrage of Russian artillery strikes on at least two occasions over the past two weeks, infrastructure teams in Ukraine were fanning out in around-the-clock deployments to restore key basic services as many Ukrainians dealt with only a few hours of electricity per day — if any.

Ukrenergo, the state power



A woman stands among debris of the destroyed house after recent Russian air strike in Chasiv Yar, Ukraine on Sunday. Shelling by Russian forces struck several areas in eastern and southern Ukraine overnight as utility crews continued a scramble to restore power, water and heating following widespread strikes in recent weeks, officials said on Sunday. AP | PTI

grid operator, said Sunday that electricity producers are now supplying about 80% of demand. That's an improvement from Saturday's 75%, the company says.

The Institute for the Study of War, a think tank that has been closely monitoring devel-

opments in Ukraine, said reporting from both sides indicated that heavy rain and mud have had an impact — but wider freezing expected along the front lines in coming days could play a role.

"It is unclear if either side is actively planning or prepar-

ing to resume major offensive or counter-offensive operations at that time, but the meteorological factors that have been hindering such operations will begin lifting," it said in a note published Saturday.

ISW said Russian forces

were digging in further east of the city of Kherson, from which they were expelled by Ukrainian forces more than two weeks ago, and continued "routine artillery fire" across the Dnipro River.

In the eastern Donetsk region, five people were killed in shelling over the past day, according to governor Pavlo Kyrylenko. Overnight shelling was reported by regional leaders in the Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk areas to the west.

Kharkiv governor Oleh Syniehubov said one person was killed and three wounded in the northeastern region.

A day earlier, a long column of cars, vans and trucks caravanned away from the recently liberated city of Kherson after intense shelling in recent days and amid concerns more pummelling from the Russian forces nearby could loom again in coming days.

"The day before yesterday, artillery hit our house. Four flats burned down. Windows shattered," said city resident Vitaliy Nadochyi, driving out with a terrier on his lap and a Ukrainian flag dangling from a sun visor.

# Nepali Cong emerges single largest party with 53 seats

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

The ruling Nepali Congress led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Sunday maintained its lead as the single largest party by winning 53 seats in the parliamentary polls held to end the prolonged political instability that has plagued the Himalayan nation.

Elections to the House of Representatives (HoR) and seven provincial assemblies were held on November 20. The counting of votes started on Monday.

The Nepali Congress has won 53 seats and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) (CPN-UML) secured 42 seats in the elections. The CPN-Maoist has emerged as the third largest party with 17 seats while the CPN-Unified Socialist has bagged 10 seats.

The newly-formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) and pro-Hindu Rastriya Prajatantra Party have won 7 seats each. Independent and other smaller parties have emerged victorious on 21 seats. Out of the total 165 seats under direct voting, the results on 8 seats are still awaited.

The ruling five-party alliance has won 85 seats, against 55 seats won by the alliance led by CPN-UML. The ruling alliance includes the



Nepali Congress led by Prime Minister Deuba, CPN-Maoist led by Pushpakamal Dahal Prachanda, CPN-Unified Socialist headed by Madhav Nepal, Mahantha Thakur's Lokatantrik Samajwadi Party and Rashtriya Janamorchha led by Chitra Bahadur.

Under the proportionate voting method, the CPN-UML got the first position, securing more than 2.5 million votes and the Nepali Congress received 2.3 million votes. The CPN-Maoist and RSP have secured one million each. In the 275-member House of Representatives, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system. A party or a coalition needs 138 seats for a clear majority.

Besides Prime Minister and Nepali Congress president Deuba, three former prime ministers Prachanda, Oli and Madhav Nepal have also been elected to parliament.

Deuba and Prachanda met at the Prime Minister's residence in Baluwatar on Saturday and agreed to continue their ruling five-party alliance as part of a new majority government in the country.

Former prime minister and senior leader of CPN-Unified Socialist Jhulanath Khanal has lost the election. CPN-UML's Mahesh Basnet defeated Khanal, who contested from Ilam constituency No 1. Ex-prime ministers Lokendra Bahadur Chand, a senior leader of the pro-Hindu Rastriya Prajatantra Party, and Baburam Bhattarai did not contest the election.

# China grants free fuel to Lanka's farmers, fishers

PTI ■ COLOMBO

China said on Sunday that it has donated 10.6 million litres of diesel to Sri Lankan farmers and fishermen to facilitate their work in the most affected sectors of agriculture and fishery.

The vessel carrying the fuel donation was received by Sri Lanka's Minister of fisheries Douglas Devananda here on Sunday.

"The 10.6 million litres of diesel donation by China will be provided free of cost to 2,32,749 farmers for harvesting 3,42,266 hectares of paddy fields, 20 litres per hectare," the Chinese Embassy in Colombo tweeted.

Also 3,796 fishing vessels below 40 feet would receive 1,000 liters per vessel, the embassy added.



"Thankful to the government of China for the donation of 9,000 MT of diesel fuel towards strengthening food security in Sri Lanka," Minister of Power and Energy Kanchana Wijesekera said in a statement.

Both farming and fishing sectors have been complaining of fuel scarcities affecting them badly after the government started rationing fuel issues since the beginning of August.

Rationing brought an end

to the miles long fuel queues experienced in the island from May to July. However, the business sectors were raising objections claiming that the allocations were inadequate.

From the time the Sri Lankan economy crashed at the beginning of this year, the fuel and essential supplies were ensured by dedicated Indian credit lines.

The Indian assistance in the forex crisis which caused the economic impasse was worth USD 4 billion.

Sri Lanka, a country of 22 million people, plunged into financial and political turmoil earlier this year as it faced a shortage of foreign currencies. Due to this, the country has been unable to afford key imports, including fuel, fertiliser and medicine, leading to serpentine queues.

AP ■ LOPBURI

A meal fit for monkeys was served on Sunday at the annual Monkey Feast Festival in central Thailand.

Amid the morning traffic, rows of monkey statues holding trays were lined up outside the compound of the Ancient Three Pagodas, while volunteers prepared food across the road for real monkeys — the symbol of the province around 150 kilometers (93 miles) north of Bangkok.

Throngs of macaque monkeys ran around, at times fighting with each other, while the crowds of visitors and locals grew.

As the carefully prepared feast was brought toward the temple, the ravenous creatures began to pounce and were soon devouring the largely

vegetarian spread.

While the entertainment value of the festival is high, organisers are quick to point out that it is not just monkey business.

"This monkey feast festival is a successful event that helps promote Lopburi's tourism among international tourists every year," said Yongyuth Kitwatanusont, the festival's founder.

"Previously, there were around 300 monkeys in Lopburi before increasing to nearly 4,000 nowadays. But Lopburi is known as a monkey city, which means monkeys and people can live in harmony."

Such harmony could be seen in the lack of shyness exhibited by the monkeys, which climbed on to visitors, vehicles and lampposts. At

times the curious animals looked beyond the abundant feast and took an interest in other items.

"There was a monkey on my back as I was trying to take a selfie. He grabbed the sunglasses right off my face and ran off on to the top of a lamppost and was trying to eat them for a while," said Ayisha Bhatt, an English teacher from California working in Thailand.

The delighted onlookers were largely undeterred by the risk of petty theft, although some were content to exercise caution.

"We have to take care with them, better leave them to it. Not too near is better," said Carlos Rodway, a tourist from Cadiz, Spain, having previously been unceremoniously treated as a climbing frame by one audacious monkey.

# Railway workers in Austria to strike after failed pay talks

AP ■ BERLIN

Railway workers in Austria are set to hold a one-day strike on Monday after a failed round of talks in pay negotiations.

The Austria Press Agency reported on Sunday that both sides said the fifth round of talks on pay for some 50,000 employees of about 65 railway operators, including the main national operator OeBB, had failed.

That means that there will be no regional, long-distance or night trains on Monday, and that only buses and other pub-

lic transport run by municipal authorities will run.

Labor union vida has called for an extra 400 euros (USD 416) per month for railway employees, which it says is equivalent to an average 12 per cent increase.

Employers have said that would amount to a 13.3 per cent raise and is too much. OeBB said employers were offering an 8.44 per cent increase and strongly criticized the strike.

Like many other countries, Austria has seen inflation surge this year following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

# Mexican asylum seekers set their sights north on Canada

AP ■ MONTREAL

Pedro Meraz says living in Colima, Mexico, was like living in a war zone, with shootings, burning cars and dismembered bodies being left outside of schools.

When his wife Rocio Gonzalez, a 28-year-old lawyer who worked with abused women, began receiving death threats from a cartel and the local authorities ignored her pleas for assistance, they knew they had to leave.

"They knew where we lived and what car we drove," said Meraz, 41, who taught at The University of Colima, near the Pacific Coast and about 300 miles (485 kilometers) west of Mexico City.

"Feeling that you are going to lose your life, or one of your daughters, I don't mind start-

ing from scratch."

The family is part of a surge in the number of Mexicans who have requested asylum in Canada this year. Due to the relative ease of obtaining asylum in Canada compared to the US, visa-free travel between Mexico and Canada, and the threat of violence back home, more than 8,000 Mexican nationals have sought refugee status in 2022. That's almost five times as many as last year and more than twice as many as in 2019, the last year before the Covid-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions that accompanied it.

The vast majority of them are flying in to Montreal, which has many direct flights to and from Mexico.

Among them is Viviana Tapia Gonzalez, a human rights activist and mother of four



from Aguascalientes, about 265 miles (425 kilometers) northwest of Mexico City, who said she left Mexico in January after being attacked by the military. She said her work with the families of missing and murdered women and girls made her a target.

"Death threats were constant," she said. "I thought it was the last option I had to be safe. I work for many causes

and help many people. I did not want to stop helping, but I must also protect (and) take care of myself."

Tapia Gonzalez has been living in a Montreal women's shelter while awaiting a decision on her asylum claim, which she fears might get rejected.

If her claim is turned down, she wouldn't be alone.

In the first nine months of 2022, the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, an independent tribunal that investigates and decides asylum cases, finalized more than 2,700 claims by Mexican asylum seekers. Of those, 1,032 were accepted, 1,256 were rejected; and the remaining 400-plus were either abandoned, withdrawn, or had other outcomes, said Christian Tessier, an IRB spokesperson.

# Reviving a memory: Designer re-creates Diana's dress

AP ■ LONDON

This is a dress with a story, and Elizabeth Emanuel wants to tell it.

Shocking pink with a plunging, ruffled neckline and body-hugging shape, the gown was designed by Emanuel for Lady Diana Spencer to wear at a Buckingham Palace party a few days before her marriage to Prince Charles in 1981.

It was a visual coming-out event for the future princess, until then largely known for her conservative sweater-and-pearls look.

"This was definitely not a wallflower dress," said Emanuel, who also co-designed Diana's wedding gown.

"This was a dress to be seen in and celebrated." It was also soon forgotten. In an era

before smartphones put a camera in everyone's pocket and social media made private events public, the dress was mostly seen by the party guests, including Queen Elizabeth II, Princess Grace and Nancy Reagan, but no one else.

Emanuel doesn't know where it is, or even if it still exists.

So she has re-created it, out of bolts of shiny, satin taffeta cut and stitched to match the dramatic sketches she made more than 40 years ago.

Acting on an idea that took shape during Britain's long coronavirus lockdowns, she did it for herself, for her archive.

But also because she wanted to show another side of Diana, who Emanuel believes has been misrepresented by



"The Crown," the popular Netflix series that has brought the story of the princess and her ill-fated marriage to a new generation.

A fan of the series' first three seasons, Emanuel said she found it hard to watch the last

two because of the way Diana was depicted.

Creating a bespoke dress is a long process, requiring multiple fittings that give client and dressmaker lots of time to talk.

And throughout the hours

they spent together, Diana came across as a happy, vibrant young woman, not the shrinking girl "The Crown" portrays as being buffeted by events beyond her control, Emanuel said.

"She wasn't like that," Emanuel said.

"She was always very upbeat. And, you know, I like to feel that we were close enough that if she was having huge issues that we might have been aware of it at the time, because those fittings are fairly intimate."

One of the things the series does right is retrace Diana's style journey, from the cardigans and bows she wore when she first stepped into the public eye, to frothy ballgowns with frills and flounces and finally to her becoming a glob-

al fashion icon in Versace, Dior and Chanel.

Diana grew up in the country, looking to her older sisters for fashion cues.

This was a world of hunting, shooting and fishing, where Barbour coats and Wellington boots were everyday wear.

It was a culture where no matter how much you cared about your appearance, you had to seem like you weren't trying too hard.

Diana brought that style sense with her when she moved to London after leaving school and soon became the archetype of the Sloane Ranger, the media name for the wealthy young people who lived near London's Sloane Square and cultivated the look of bohemian aristocrats.

# Siddharth Chauhan's 'Amar Colony' wins special jury prize at Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Debutant director Siddharth Chauhan's feature film "Amar Colony" has won the special jury prize at the 26th Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, the makers said Sunday.

According to a press release, the movie is the only Indian title which was showcased in the 'First Feature Competition' at the festival, held annually in Estonia's capital Tallinn.

Starring Nimisha Nair, Sangeeta Agrawal and Usha Chauhan, the Shimla-set "Amar Colony" revolves around three women going through their mundane lives, representing the human condition, in a chawl.

Chauhan said he is excited about the film winning an award at the prestigious gala where the movie had its world premiere.

"I am so overwhelmed with the love which the European audience and POFF (Festival) have shown towards our film. I really didn't expect such a response to my film! I want to thank the jury for considering us worth it," the director said in a statement.

Therese Malvar, the co-juror for the 'First Feature Competition', said the jury presented the honour to "Amar Colony" for originality of vision.

"This film delighted us with a bold and innovative presentation of a small town community whose frank sensuality and unabashed pursuit of urges, both human and divine, are set against the resonant backdrop of a culturally rich and deeply personal setting. "The director daringly takes us by the hand and leads us on a journey to his world, introducing us to his characters and their lives with affection and often with humor," Malvar said.

"Amar Colony" winning the Special Jury Award is a dream come true. Siddharth Chauhan is a filmmaker to watch in the years to come," added producer Nisheeth Kumar of Indie Film Collective.



# ‘Will continue protests till polls announced’

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

Pakistan's ousted prime minister Imran Khan announced to continue his protest until new elections were announced. Elections are not due in Pakistan until the term of the current National Assembly gets over in August 2023.

"The movement of Haqeeqi Azadi will continue until genuine freedom is achieved," he said, adding that the moment would come once new elections were held.

Khan was ousted from power in April after losing a no-confidence vote in his leadership, which he alleged was part of a US-led conspiracy targeting him because of his independent foreign policy decisions on Russia, China, and Afghanistan. The US has denied the allegations.

He is the only Pakistani prime minister to be ousted in a no-confidence vote in Parliament. The term of the current National Assembly will end in August 2023.

Meanwhile, top leaders of



Pakistan's ruling coalition on Sunday termed former premier Imran Khan's decision to resign from the provincial assemblies as acceptance of his failure to force the government to announce early elections. The reaction came after 69-year-old Khan announced to resign from provincial assemblies as he withdrew a threat to march on capital Islamabad by saying that it would result in destruction.

Khan made the announcement in his first in-person address to the party workers in Rawalpindi after the failed assassination bid on his life earlier this month.

Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah said that the

announcement showed the frustration of Khan. "The decision to leave the assemblies has been taken as a face-saving to avoid defeat," he said.

"It is possible that he (Khan) will not follow the decision; it is also possible that he will come to the parliament," he added.

Khan along with more than one hundred lawmakers resigned from the National Assembly in April after his government was toppled through a no-confidence vote. But his provincial lawmakers are still part of the system.

Khan on Saturday claimed that there were three shooters involved in the failed assassination attempt on him during a protest march in the eastern city of Wazirabad earlier this month. The chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party suffered bullet injuries in the right leg when the gunmen fired at him in Punjab's Wazirabad area on November 3, where he was leading the march against the government to press for snap elections.

# ‘Blatant lies’: Pak Army rejects claims about Gen Bajwa, family’s assets

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

The Pakistan Army finally broke its silence on Sunday to reject reports that its outgoing chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa's family members and relatives became billionaires during his six-year tenure, terming them as "misleading" and based on "blatant lies."

Gen Bajwa, 61, is scheduled to retire on November 29 after getting a three-year extension. According to a report published by the FactFocus website, the alleged tax records of Gen Bajwa's family, the current market value of the known assets and business of the army chief, both within and outside Pakistan, amounted to Rs 12.7 billion.

Following this, the Shehbaz Sharif-led Pakistan government launched a probe and suspended two officers from service for their involvement in leaking the tax records of Gen Bajwa and his family members.

Pakistan Army's media wing, Inter-Services Public Relations, said misleading data regarding the assets of Army chief Gen Bajwa and his fam-

ily were shared on social media, and the same assumption-based data was presented in an exaggerated manner on different platforms.

"It is totally untrue and based on blatant lies and malice," the statement read, adding that the assets of Gen Bajwa, his wife and the rest of his family had been declared to the Federal Board of Revenue.

A "false impression" was being given that these assets were acquired by the father-in-law of Gen Bajwa's son during his six-year tenure, it said.

The Army chief and his family regularly file their tax returns, the statement said.

"Like every citizen, the Army chief and his family are answerable to the tax authorities for their assets," the statement added.

The FactFocus website, which describes itself as a "Pakistan-based digital media news organisation working on data-based investigative news stories", shared the alleged wealth statements of Gen Bajwa and his family from 2013 to 2021 on its page last week.

# Pak authorities arrest PTI Senator for tweets against military officials

**PTI ■ ISLAMABAD**

Pakistan authorities on Sunday arrested a Senator of Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) party for allegedly using abusive and threatening language against senior military officials.

Azam Swati was taken into custody by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for the second time in less than two months for tweets against army leaders. He was previously arrested by the FIA in October.

A first information (FIR) report was registered under Prevention of Electronic Crime Act 2016 (Peca) by the FIA on the complaint of the state through Islamabad Cyber Crime Reporting Centre (CCRC) Technical Assistant Aneesur Rehman.

The FIR stated that Swati and three other Twitter accounts — @WolfIAK, @HaqeeqatTV\_20 and @Azaadi99 — "with malafide intentions and ulterior motives, started [a] highly obnoxious campaign of intimidating tweets [...] against state institutions" and senior government functionaries.

# UK marks 26/11 Mumbai attacks anniversary

**PTI ■ LONDON**

Sombre musical, floral tributes and anti-terrorism protests in the UK commemorated the 14th anniversary of the Mumbai terror attacks that claimed 166 lives in 12 coordinated strikes across the city.

The High Commission of India in London hosted a special homage on Saturday, replete with a photography exhibition and snapshots from November 26, 2008, a shrine to the victims and tributes attended by members of the Indian diaspora and senior parliamentarians.

A film depicting the message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, voices of many Mumbaikars and foreign tourists caught in the attacks, including at the city's iconic Taj Palace Hotel, was followed by a violin recital by musician Sunita Bhuyan.

"These were real people, with real families with real hopes and aspirations, all of which were cut short," said Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswami, in his

address to the gathering.

"We salute the police personnel, the members of the National Security Guard (NSG) who lost their lives doing their duties. Let us also remember the many who lost their lives doing what was daily for them... Every one of us remembers and commemorates on this day the courage, fortitude and resilience of Mumbai and every citizen of the world who has known terror and has had to see it in its face and has not blinked but has started back," he said.

The theme of the commemoration was around "never forget, never forgive and never again" and also included messages from Britain's members of Parliament from across party lines.

"There is one strong message that we must all take away: that terrorism will never win because we will always stand in the face of terrorism and perpetrators of terrorist activities. That is the one thing that unites us all," said Priti Patel, Indian-origin Conservative Party MP and former UK Home Secretary.

# Italian rescuers search for missing in island landslide

**AP ■ MILAN**

Rescuers dug through mud for a second day Sunday in the search for people lost in an enormous landslide on the Italian resort island of Ischia.

One body was recovered on Saturday and about a dozen people, including children, were reported missing in the port town of Casamicciola, feared buried under mud and debris that firefighters said was six metres (20 feet) deep in some places.

Small bulldozers were being used to clear debris, and Italian media said digging was continuing by hand in some places and that teams of divers had been brought in.

"We are continuing the search with our hearts broken, because among the missing are also minors," Giacomo Pascale, the mayor of the neighbouring town of Lacco Ameno, told RAI state TV.

The massive landslide before dawn on Saturday was triggered by exceptional rainfall, and sent a mass of mud and debris hurtling down a mountainside toward the port of Casamicciola, collapsing buildings and sweeping vehicles into the sea. By Sunday, 164 people were left homeless by the events.

One widely circulated video showed a man, covered



A caterpillar removes mud and debris after heavy rainfall triggered landslides that collapsed buildings and left as many as 12 people missing, in Casamicciola, on the southern Italian island of Ischia on Sunday. Authorities said that the landslide that early Saturday destroyed buildings and swept parked cars into the sea left one person dead and 12 missing

with mud, clinging to a shutter, chest-deep in muddy water.

The island received 126 mm (nearly five inches) of rain in six hours, the heaviest rainfall in 20 years, according to officials. Experts said the disaster was exacerbated by building in areas of high risk on the mountainous island.

"There is territory that cannot be occupied. You cannot change the use of a zone where there is water. The course of the water created this

disaster," geologist Riccardo Caniparoli told RAI. "There are norms and laws that were not respected."

Italian Premier Giorgia Meloni convened a Cabinet meeting for later Sunday to declare a state of emergency on the island. "The government expresses its closeness to the citizens, mayors and towns of the island of Ischia, and thanks the rescue workers searching for the victims," Meloni said in a statement.

# N-Korean leader Kim’s daughter appears again, heating up succession debate

**AP ■ SEOUL**

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's daughter made a public appearance again, this time with missile scientists and more honorific titles as her father's "most beloved" or "precious" child. She's only about 10, but her new, bold photos are deepening the debate over whether she's being primed as a successor.

The daughter, believed to be Kim's second child named Ju Ae and about 9 or 10 years old, was first unveiled to the outside world last weekend in state media photos showing her observing the North's intercontinental ballistic missile launch the previous day with her parents and other older officials. The daughter wearing a white puffy coat and red shoes was shown walking hand-in-hand with Kim past a huge missile loaded on a launch truck and watching a soaring weapon.

# 2nd Israeli, wounded in Jerusalem blasts, dies in hospital

**AP ■ JERUSALEM**

An Israeli man died Saturday from wounds he sustained in twin blasts that hit Jerusalem earlier this week, bringing to two the number of dead in the explosions that Israeli police blamed on Palestinians.

Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem announced that Tadesse Teshome Ben Madeh had died. He was critically wounded in one of the blasts at the city's bus stops.

"The trauma and intensive care teams of Shaare Zedek fought for his life, but unfortunately his injury was very fatal," the hospital said. The first



explosion occurred near a typically crowded bus stop on the edge of the city. The second went off about half an hour later in Ramot, a settlement in city's north.

# Iran leader praises force tasked with quashing protests

**AP ■ BAGHDAD**

Iran's supreme leader praised paramilitary volunteers tasked with quashing dissent on Saturday in a televised address as dozens of eye doctors warned that a rising number of demonstrators have been blinded by security forces during anti-government protests.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei addressed members of the Basij, the volunteer paramilitary wing of the elite Revolutionary Guard, and reiterated unsupported claims that protesters demonstrating

countrywide are "tools" of the U.S. And its "mercenaries." "(The) Basij should not forget that the main clash is with global hegemony," Khamenei said, referring to the U.S. The address marking Basij week in Iran echoed previous statements lambasting protests as a foreign plot to destabilize Iran.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

TO WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN

My client Mr. Srinivasan T G son of Late Sh. Gopalan TK resident of V-18/3, DLF City, Phase-III, Gurugram, Haryana has entered into Agreement to Sell dated 19<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 with Mr. Winnie Nagpal son of Late Sh. Naveen Kumar Nagpal resident of X-24, DLF City, Phase-II, Gurugram, Haryana-122002 (permanent resident of Milton Keynes, United Kingdom) with respect to the purchase of residential Property No. X-24, DLF City, Phase-II, Gurgaon-122002 (Haryana) and the seller didn't turn up for registration of sale document on the stipulated date.

This public notice is being given to caution the public in large that anyone who intend to purchase the above subject property may be doing at their own risk and responsibility.

**Gajender Yadav**  
(Advocate)

Chamber No.59, Distt. Court,  
Gurugram (Haryana) Mob: 9311707317

# Indian student dies after pickup truck hit in Canada

**PTI ■ TORONTO**

A 20-year-old Indian student Awas killed after he was hit and dragged by a pickup truck while crossing a road on a cycle here, according to a media report. Though the police have not yet identified the victim, news website cbc.ca in a report published on Friday quoted the victim's cousin Parveen Saini as saying that Kartik Saini came to Canada from India in August 2021. Parveen Saini spoke from Karnal, Haryana, where their family is from, the report said. The family is hoping that Kartik's body will be sent to India as soon as possible for proper burial, Parveen said.

# Drive-by shooting injures 2 at funeral at US church

**AP ■ NASHVILLE**

A drive-by shooting in Nashville injured two people as they and others were walking out of church from the funeral of a woman who was fatally shot earlier this month, according to police.

Metro Nashville Police Department spokesperson Don Aaron said the Saturday afternoon shooting occurred outside New Season Church, where a funeral service had just ended for 19-year-old Terriana Johnson. The hearse was parked out front with the rear door open and people were filing out of church as the shots began, Aaron said.

Police say they are on the lookout for a black late-model



Honda Civic with a temporary tag, from which one shooter or more fired as the car passed by, hitting an 18-year-old woman in the leg and a 25-year-old man in the pelvis. Neither were considered life-threatening injuries, Aaron said.

Some attendees of the funeral services for Johnson — who was not a member of the church that was hosting — were armed and fired back at the car, Aaron said.

The shooting occurred before Johnson's body was brought out of the church, according to police, and her burial took place later in the afternoon.

Authorities remain on the lookout for a 17-year-old charged with criminal homicide in Johnson's fatal shooting on November 14 at Watkins Park. Police allege that the teen opened fire on a car in which Johnson was riding after Johnson and the suspect's sister were involved in a fight moments earlier.

Aaron said the shooting "appears to be some type of beef between two groups of people," but not necessarily between members of the two families.

# Venezuela Govt, opponents resume talks; US eases sanction

**AP ■ MEXICO CITY**

Venezuela's government and its opposition on Saturday agreed to create a U.N.-managed fund to finance health, food and education programs for the poor, while the Biden administration eased some oil sanctions on the country in an effort to boost the newly restarted talks between the sides.

The agreement signed in Mexico City by representatives of President Nicolás Maduro and the opposition, including the faction backed by the United States and led by Juan



Guaidó, marked the resumption of long-stalled negotiations meant to find a common path out of the South American country's complex crisis. The U.S. Government, in response, agreed to allow oil giant Chevron to pump Venezuelan oil.

The broad terms of the agreement for the United

Nations-managed social fund were announced by the head of a group of Norwegian diplomats guiding the negotiations.

Venezuelan resources held in the international financial system will be directed to the fund, though neither side in the talks nor Norway's facilitator, Dag Nylander, said whether the U.S. Or European governments have agreed to allow frozen assets to be funneled to the new mechanism.


"In line with UN norms and procedures, (the fund's) objective would be to support the implementation of social protection measures for the

Venezuelan people," Nylander said. "The parties have identified a set of resources belonging to the Venezuelan state frozen in the international financial system to which it is possible to progressively access, understanding the need to obtain the authorizations and approvals" from foreign institutions and organizations.

A U.N. Report published earlier this year estimated humanitarian needs at \$795 million to help about 5.2 million people in Venezuela through health, education, water and sanitation, food and other projects.

**APPENDIX IV A**  
[See proviso to Rule 8(6)]  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction sale notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.  
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to **Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029]** ("Secured Creditor"), the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on **30.12.2022 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M.**, for recovery of **Rs. 1,35,76,326/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Five Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Six only)** pending towards the Loan Account No. **HHLRA000168589**, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till **15.11.2022** with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. **16.11.2022** along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from **Dr. George Easow and Jophi George**.  
The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be **Rs. 1,30,00,000/- (Rupees One Crore Thirty Lakh only)** and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be **Rs. 13,00,000/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh only)** i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.  
**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
**Flat No-G2241, 24th Floor, Tower-G-2, Indiabulls Centrum Park, Sector-103, Gurgaon-201301, Haryana having super area of 2875 Sq. Ft. (267.09 Sq. Mtrs. approx.) covered area of 1950.20 Sq. Ft. (181.17 Sq. Mtrs. approx.).**  
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. [www.indiabullshomeloans.com](http://www.indiabullshomeloans.com). For bidding, log on to [www.auctionfocus.in](http://www.auctionfocus.in)  
**Date : 21.11.2022 Sd/**  
**Place : GURUGRAM (HARYANA) Authorized Officer**  
**INDIABULLS HOUSING FINANCE LIMITED**

**OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR**  
**UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) TRIBUNAL**  
**CHAMBER NO. 15, GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK 'A',**  
**DELHI HIGH COURT, NEW DELHI-110503**  
RE: Notification bearing No. S.O.4559(E) dated 27th September, 2022, published in the Official Gazette on 28th September, 2022, decaring the Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates or affiliates or fronts including Rehab India Foundation (RIF), Campus Front of India (CFI), All India 'Imams Council (AIC), National Confederation of Human Rights Organization (NCHRO), National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala as "unlawful association" in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section-3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention), 1967 read with Notification No. S.O. 4758(E)-dated 06th October, 2022  
**To,**  
**Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates or affiliates or fronts**  
WHEREAS the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") has declared Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates or affiliates or fronts vide Notification No. S.O.4559 (E) dated 27th September, 2022 published in the Gazette of India: Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii), **AND WHEREAS** by Gazette Notification No. S.O. 4758(E) dated 06th October, 2022 [published in the Gazette of India: Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii)], in exercise of powers under sub-section (1) of Section 5 read with subsection (2) of Section 4 of the Act, the Central Government has constituted a Tribunal comprising Hon'ble Mr. Justice Dinesh Kumar Sharma, Judge of the High Court of Delhi, for adjudicating as to whether there is sufficient cause for declaring Popular Front of India (PFI) and its associates or affiliates or fronts including Rehab India Foundation (RIF), Campus Front of India (CFI), All India 'Imams Council (AIC), National Confederation of Human Rights Organization (NCHRO), National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation and Rehab Foundation, Kerala as "Unlawful Association" as required by sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the said Act.  
**NOW THEREFORE**, a notice is hereby given under sub-section (2) of Section 4 of the Act and you are hereby called upon to show cause, within 30 days from the date of service of notice, as to why your Associations, declared as unlawful, be not adjudicated to be so and why an order confirming such declaration be not made under Section 4(3) of the Act.  
The objections/reply affidavits, if any, may be filed/delivered, before the next date of hearing of the Tribunal, to the undersigned at his office in Chamber No. 15, Ground Floor, 'A' Block, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi- 110503. In case the objections/reply and the documents are in regional language true English Translation thereof be also attached.  
You may appear through a duly authorized person before the Tribunal on 08.12.2022 at 4:00 pm in Court Room No. 24 Ground Floor, 'A' Block, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi-110503 for further proceedings.  
Given under my hand and the seal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, High Court of Delhi, New Delhi this the **31 October, 2022.**  
**(Roetesh Singh) Registrar**  
**Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal**



**ANDHRA ASSOCIATION, DELHI (REGD.)**  
ADD: 24 – 25, LODHI INSTITUTIONAL AREA, NEW DELHI – 110003  
Website: [www.andhraassociationdelhi.com](http://www.andhraassociationdelhi.com)  
E-mail: [andhraassociationdelhi@gmail.com](mailto:andhraassociationdelhi@gmail.com)  
Tel: 24623946, 24649056, 43755078

**PRE - ELECTION PUBLIC NOTICE**

All the members of *Andhra Association, Delhi* are hereby notified that the **Annual General Body Meeting (AGM) of Andhra Association, Delhi shall be held on 26-02-2023 (Sunday)**. The venue and the time of the AGM shall be informed separately along with agenda. **The elections to the working committee of the Andhra Association, Delhi, the Andhra Association, Delhi Trust and Executive Committee of Branches of Andhra Association, Delhi shall be held on 12-03-2023, (Sunday).**

Any person belonging to Andhra community, residing in NCT of Delhi and above the age of 18 years is eligible to become a member of Andhra Association, Delhi. Telugu persons intending to become members by fulfilling the above criteria, can obtain the prescribed membership form available free of cost in **Andhra Association office on all working days except Sundays and Gazetted Holidays between 3 PM to 7 PM up to 04-01-2023**. The applicant is required to fill the prescribed **membership form and submit the same upto 04-01-2023 before 8 PM except Sundays and Gazetted Holidays alongwith two recent photographs, attested copies of photo Id proof and proof of residence**, pay the subscription against receipt and sign the membership register kept for this purpose. The existing annual members whose membership may have lapsed can also renew their membership by depositing arrears up to 04-01-2023 before 8 PM except Sundays and Gazetted Holidays with two recent photographs, attested copies of photo Id proof and proof of residence alongwith application forms. The draft eligible Membership list/voters' List/Electoral Roll shall be made ready and will be kept in Andhra Association office 5<sup>th</sup> floor for verification of members from 23-01-2023 to 25-01-2023 so that discrepancies/errors if any, observed in the draft list can be corrected between 3 PM to 7 PM. **The new members enrolled upto 04-01-2023 are eligible to participate in the AGM / Elections alongwith the existing members.**

The changed addresses if any, and other rectifications in the electoral roll can also be got corrected by the existing members in the office of **Andhra Association, between 3 PM to 7 PM on the above 3 days i.e from 23-01-2023 to 25-01-2023** by submitting two recent photographs, attested copies of photo Id proof and proof of residence. After this, no further alterations shall be permitted in the Voters' list.

Those members who intend to have the Identity card being issued by Andhra Association, can also fill the prescribed Proforma available at the Andhra Association office and submit the same along with two recent stamp sized photographs, attested copies of photo Id proof and proof of residence.

Notice for the Annual General Body Meeting followed by elections will be issued to all the eligible members in due course.

**Place: New Delhi Sd/-**  
**Date: 25-11-2022 R. MANI NAIDU**  
**President Kotagiri Satyanarayana**  
**General Secretary**



# Govt can't violate privacy of citizens: MoS IT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government will not be able to violate the privacy of citizens under the proposed data protection law as it will get access to personal data only in exceptional circumstances like national security, pandemic and natural disasters, Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said.

Speaking during an online discussion, the minister said the National Data Governance Framework Policy has provision for handling anonymisation of data -- which is not part of the draft Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Bill 2022.

Chandrasekhar also said the proposed Data Protection Board -- which will adjudicate matters related to data protection -- will be independent and will not have any government officer on the board.

While responding to questions around privacy on Twitter Live on Saturday evening, the minister rephrased the question of a participant to clarify the stand of the government and provisions in the draft DPDP Bill 2022.

"Let us say that the government wants to essentially violate the privacy of citizens with this law. Is it possible? That's the question. The answer is no. The bill and laws

lay out in very clear terms what are the exceptional circumstances under which the government can have access to the personal data of Indian citizens.... National security, pandemic, healthcare, natural disaster.

"These are exceptions. Just like freedom of speech is not absolute and is subject to reasonable restriction, so is the right to data protection," Chandrasekhar said.

The draft DPDP Bill has exempted certain entities notified as data fiduciaries by the government from various compliances, including sharing details for the purpose of data collection.

The provisions from

which government notified entities will be exempted deal with informing an individual about the purpose for data collection, collection of children's data, risk assessment around public order, appointment of data auditor, among others.

The bill proposes to exempt government notified data fiduciaries from sharing details of data processing with the data owners under the "Right to Information about personal data".

The draft DPDP Bill also bars individuals from sharing unverifiable and wrong information with data handling entities, which some people believe will deter anonymisa-

tion on internet platforms, especially on social media.

The minister further said the National Data Governance Framework has provisions to deal with anonymous data while the scope of the DPDP Bill is limited to personal data protection only.

"We have a National Data Governance Framework Policy that is to deal with the entire non-personal data and anonymised data space. This (DPDP Bill) is a very narrow well defined legislation to do with digital personal data protection.

"The anonymised data, standards of anonymisation, the use of anonymous data, etc are all going to be decided by

the India Data Management Office (IDMO) under MeitY," Chandrasekhar said.

He said before IDMO's launch, there will be again a conversation about the non-personal data framework.

The minister said the Data Protection Board (DPB) will be an independent body and it says so in the bill -- 'independence of the government'.

"You will not find people like me or bureaucrats sitting on the Data Protection Board. It is important to understand that DPB is not a regulator. DPB is an adjudication mechanism to adjudicate a breach that has occurred. It is independent as the government will not be on the board,"



Chandrasekhar said.

He added that the DPB will have an oversight of the high court because all of its decisions will be scrutinised by the court system.

"The punitive consequences of data breaches that



we have mentioned in the bill should act as deterrent, catalyse the behavioural change in all data platforms in the way they look at personal data of Indian citizens. They will look at it with more responsibility," the minister said.

## Rupee should stabilise once US reduces speed of its rate increases: Economics Nobel winner

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Douglas W Diamond, winner of this year's Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences, says it is difficult to predict exchange rates but the rupee should stabilise once the US "reduces the speed of its rate increases".

In an email interview to PTI, the American economist also said that when the US raises exchange rates unexpectedly, the dollar tends to appreciate and things will normalise when interest rates are closer to each other in the US and India.

Diamond, a Merton H Miller Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business, shared the Nobel Prize with former US Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke and US-based economist Philip H Dybvig for their research into the fallout



from bank failures.

According to the Nobel panel at the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences in Stockholm, their research has shown "why avoiding bank collapses is vital".

Asked about the continuous fall of the Indian rupee against the USD dollar, Diamond says, "It is difficult to predict the exchange rates. When the US raises rates unexpectedly, the dollar tends to appreciate. Once the US reduces the speed of its rate increases, the rupee should

stabilise."

On Friday, the rupee appreciated 16 paise to 81.54 against the US dollar.

Diamond, who had once observed that delegated monitoring allows savers to get access to safe and high returns, says bank monitoring works well when banks are well capitalised and there is little lending to bank insiders.

"I expect this to continue in the future. For savers to get high returns, a reasonable amount of bank competition is needed as well," he argues.

Diamond, who had collaborated with former RBI governor Raghuram G Rajan on theory of banking in 2001, says one of their conclusions was that banks need to be a bit fragile to discipline them.

"This remains true. Short-term debt provides discipline because banks must continue to appear healthy to retain

their funding. This possible loss of funding does make them fragile," he says.

The research paper of Diamond and Rajan on 'Liquidity Risk, Liquidity Creation, and Financial Fragility: A Theory of Banking' was published in the Journal of Political Economy.

Diamond is known for his research in financial intermediaries, financial crises and liquidity. His research agenda for the past 40 years has been to explain what banks do, why they do it and the consequences of these arrangements. His selection for the Nobel was basically for his research towards enhancing the understanding of the role of banks in the economy, particularly during financial crises.

He says he was sound asleep at 3:40 am when he got the news of his win early October.

## Cumulative recovery rate under insolvency resolution fell to 30.18% in Sept qtr: Report

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The cumulative recovery rate under the insolvency resolution processes of debt-ridden companies declined to 30.18 per cent at the end of the September quarter, indicating that lenders took more haircut on their exposure, shows a study.

The recovery rate has fallen steeply from a peak of 43 per cent in Q1 FY20.

Of the Rs 7,90,626.2 crore claims from the financial creditors admitted by various benches of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), only Rs 2,43,452.5 crore or 30.18 per cent have been recovered till the end of Q2 FY23, as per an analysis of IBBI data done by Care Ratings.

The overall recovery rate implies a haircut of around 70 per cent for the lenders.

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) is a key institution in implementing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), which provides for market-linked and time-bound resolution of stressed assets.

The cumulative recovery rate has been on a downtrend, falling from 43 per cent in Q1 FY20 and 32.9 per cent in Q4 FY22 as larger resolutions have already been executed and a significant number of liquidated cases were either Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) cases and/or defunct with high resolution time, the report said.

There has also been a fall in the number of cases going to/admitted by the NCLT since H2 FY21.

Since the implementation of the IBC in 2016, close to 5,893 companies have been



admitted by various NCLT benches. Out of those cases, operational creditors filed 3,008 cases, a little over 50 per cent, and financial creditors filed 2,531 cases or around 45 per cent. The share of corporate debtors has continued to remain the lowest at around 3 per cent as of September 2022.

The share of the various sectors has largely remained constant compared with the previous period, with the manufacturing sector accounting for the highest at



39 per cent of the overall cases, followed by real estate (21 per cent), construction (11 per cent) and trading (10 per cent).

The status of the cases has largely remained constant compared with the previous period. Of the total 5,893 cases admitted as of September 2022, only 9 per cent ended in resolution. Of the total admitted cases, as much as 1,807 ended in liquidation (31 per cent), according to the study.

## NITI Aayog VC expresses concern over revival of old pension scheme, says it will burden future taxpayers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Suman Bery on Sunday expressed concern over the revival of Old Pension Scheme by some states, saying it would burden future taxpayers at a time when India needs to focus on fiscal prudence and promoting sustained growth.

In an interview to PTI, Bery also underlined the need for enhancing capital expenditure and creating a space for the private sector through fiscal consolidation.

"I am slightly more worried about the return to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS). I think that is more of a concern because the cost will be borne by future taxpayers and citizens, not the present," he said.

The OPS, under which the

entire pension amount was given by the government, was discontinued in 2003 from April 1, 2004.

Under the new pension scheme, employees contribute 10 per cent of their basic salary towards pension while the state government contributes 14 per cent.

"I think political parties have to exercise discipline, since we are all working for a common cause of growth of the Indian economy, and for India to become a developed economy, you know the long-term (objectives) needs to be balanced against the short-term (objectives)," Bery said.

Two Congress-ruled states, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, have already decided to implement OPS while BJP-ruled

Himachal Pradesh has promised to restore the scheme if voted to power in the state.

Jharkhand too has decided to revert to OPS, while Aam Aadmi Party-ruled Punjab recently approved the reimplement of OPS.

Bery further explained that in general, state borrowing is effectively limited by the RBI so states don't threaten the overall financial stability.

"Within this debt limit, duly elected state governments are free to make their own choices on taxation and expenditure priorities, and to bear the political consequences of these choices," he said.

According to Bery, currently RBI floats state debt on a club basis, so more prudent states don't benefit from their discipline and this is unlike the

situation in advanced countries, where states and local bodies' borrowing costs are based on their own creditworthiness.

"India should consider moving toward greater market discipline of state finances as is the case for the union government. This will take a considerable period to become a reality but preparatory thinking could begin," the NITI Aayog VC suggested.

Noting that the government pension issue is different because the announcement benefits the government of today, while the costs are imposed on future governments (and citizens), he said, "this is why political parties need to enter the picture, to safeguard the interest of future governments against the temptations faced by the incumbent."

Asked when the government think tank will come out with the official poverty line, he said the Aayog is comfortable with the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) last year by utilising 12 key components which cover areas such as health and nutrition, education and standard of living.

"We will be in a position to calculate a new poverty line once there is a Consumer Expenditure Survey, which I think Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) is now expecting will come out in 2024," he said.

In 2021, MOSPI had decided not to release the Consumer Expenditure Survey results of

2017-18 due to data quality issues.

According to the ministry, the reference period for the next Household Consumer Expenditure Survey is 2022-2023. On his suggestion for the upcoming Budget, Bery said since 2019, there has been continuity in the direction of the Budget, which is to focus on capital expenditure, cleaning up the tax system and trying to return to some kind of fiscal consolidation trajectory.

"So what we need to do in the next two years is to start creating space for the private sector through fiscal consolidation," he said.

While stressing that there is a need to maintain the thrust on infrastructure particularly in instruments like PM Gati



Shakti-National Master Plan to get more efficiency out of infrastructure, he said the commitment to disinvestment will also be required.

"We need a private investment boom focussed on the green economy," he said, adding there is also a need to increase investment rates in the country. The 2023-24 Budget will be presented in Parliament

on February 1.

The NITI Aayog VC pointed out that the Russia-Ukraine war has put pressure on the fertiliser sector and to a lesser extent on the petroleum sector.

He also opined that because of high inflation and US Federal Reserve raising interest rates, the Reserve Bank of India had no choice but to tighten its monetary policy.

## FPIs flock to Indian mkt; buy shares worth ₹31,630 cr in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors have rediscovered their liking for Indian equities, making a net investment of Rs 31,630 crore in November on hopes of an end to the aggressive rate hikes, and positivity about overall macroeconomic trends.

According to experts, after remaining net sellers in August and September, Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) are unlikely to be major sellers going forward.

Rising expectations of aggressive rate hike cycles nearing an end on relatively easing inflationary curve, better than expected US macroeconomics data and resilience of the Indian economy compared to global counterparts are also driving FPI inflows.

According to data available with the depositories, FPIs invested a net sum of Rs 31,630 crore in equities during November 1-25. In comparison, there was a net outflow of Rs 8 crore and Rs 7,624 crore in October and September, respectively.

In August, FPIs were net buyers to the tune of 51,200 crore and they purchased equities worth nearly Rs 5,000 crore in July.

Prior to this positive trend, FPIs remained net sellers for nine straight months starting October 2021 amid a continuous rise in the dollar.



Going ahead, FPI flows are expected to remain volatile in the near term given the geopolitical concerns, Shrikant Chouhan, Head - Equity Research (Retail), Kotak Securities, said.

So far this year, the total outflow by FPIs in equities stood at Rs 1.37 lakh crore.

The spurt in net inflows in November could be attributed to recent surge in equity markets, stability in the Indian economy compared to its global counterparts and stabilisation in the rupee, Morningstar India Associate Director - Manager Research Himanshu Srivastava said.

In a reflection of bullish market sentiments, Sensex and Nifty scaled lifetime highs for the second straight session on November 25.

On the global front, lower than anticipated rise in inflation in the US raised hopes that the Federal Reserve may not go for further aggressive rate hikes, which also eased recessionary concerns in the US. This helped improve sentiments and direct-

ed foreign flows towards Indian shores, Srivastava said.

In terms of sectors, FPI buying was seen in financial services, IT, autos and capital goods.

"FPIs are unlikely to be major sellers, going forward since their earlier policy of continuous selling in banking have cost them heavily. When FPIs were sellers earlier, Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) were buyers and they gained from the FPI policy of sustained selling," VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said.

Srivastava said that inflation numbers as well as the US Federal Reserve's policy stance will continue to be the most important factors for FPIs to consider when investing in global markets, including India.

Furthermore, they will be closely monitoring how India's economic environment evolves, as well as how Indian equities compare in terms of valuation and risk-reward profile to other comparable markets, he said.

## Kirit Parikh panel likely to recommend price cap for ONGC gas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A government-appointed gas price review panel, led by Kirit Parikh, is likely to recommend price caps for natural gas produced from legacy fields of state-owned firms to help moderate CNG and piped cooking gas rates, while keeping the pricing formula for difficult fields unchanged.

The panel, which was tasked with suggesting a "fair price to the end-consumer" while ensuring "market-oriented, transparent and reliable pricing regime for India's long-term vision for ensuring a gas-based economy", may opt to suggest two different pricing regimes, officials said.

For the legacy or old fields of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL) -- where the cost has long been recovered and which are currently governed by a formula that uses rates in gas-surplus nations such as the US, Canada and Russia -- the committee is likely to recommend a floor or minimum base price and cap or ceiling rates.

This would ensure that prices do not fall below cost of production, as they did last year, or do not spike to record levels as currently.

Gas from legacy fields is sold to city gas distributors who had to raise rates of CNG and piped cooking gas by over 70



per cent after prices went up from USD 2.90 per million British thermal unit till March to USD 6.10 in April and further to USD 8.57 last month, reflecting a surge in global rates. This rise in rates, which narrowed the gap between CNG and polluting diesel, had prompted the review.

For the gas from difficult fields such as those lying in deepsea or which are in high-pressure, high-temperature zones, the committee is likely to suggest not tinkering with the existing mechanism of paying them higher rates based on a different formula to compensate for the greater risk and cost involved, officials said.

This would ensure that explorers, who are seeing a surge in cost of services due to the spike in global energy rates, are not put at a disadvantage.

This way the concerns over investments in exploration and production (E&P) being hit would also be addressed, they said, adding that market-driven pricing would also encourage new investments and attract



global players.

KG-D6 fields of Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner bp plc of UK are governed by the pricing formula for difficult fields. Rates for difficult fields from October 1 is USD 12.46 per mmBtu.

The panel headed by former planning commission member Kirit S Parikh is in the final stages of finalising its report. It would be submitted to the government in the next few days, the officials said, adding the cap for the legacy fields is likely to be higher than USD 4.75 per mmBtu cost of production and the floor could be set at USD 3.50.

The oil ministry will process the recommendations before moving the Cabinet for approval for changes in the existing gas pricing regime.

Natural gas is a fossil energy source that is formed deep beneath the earth's surface. It is used to generate electricity, produce fertiliser and petrochemicals, converted into CNG to run automobiles and piped to household kitchens for cooking and heating.

## Housing sales in Gurugram jump over 3-fold to 24,482 units during Jan-Sept



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales in Gurugram jumped more than three-fold on an annual basis to 24,482 units during January-September this year on higher demand for residential properties across all price categories -- affordable, mid-income and luxury, according to Anarock.

Housing sales in Gurugram stood at 7,725 units in the year-ago period.

Noida saw a 52 per cent increase in sales to 5,040 units in the first nine months of this year compared to 3,315 units in the corresponding period of the previous year, as per data compiled by Mumbai-headquartered property consultant Anarock.

Sales in Greater Noida rose 46 per cent to 8,651 units during January-September 2022 from 5,925 units earlier.

Ghaziabad witnessed a 54 per cent rise in housing sales to 5,395 units from 3,510 units

in the corresponding period of 2021. Sales in Faridabad jumped nearly three-fold to 2,890 units from 1,018 units.

Overall, Anarock data showed that sales in the Delhi-NCR market more than doubled to 49,138 units during January-September from 22,478 units in the year-ago period. Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad are in Uttar Pradesh, while Gurugram and Faridabad are part of Haryana.

When contacted, Anarock Vice Chairman Santhosh Kumar attributed the sharp rise in housing sales in Gurugram to various factors, including lower base effect and strong revival in demand.

"Last year, builders launched less projects as demand was muted because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, there has been a significant increase in supply across all segments of the housing sector, be it affordable or ultra luxury," he said.







# IND VS NZ: RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT AGAIN



PTI ■ HAMILTON

The elegant Shubman Gill and the marauding Suryakumar Yadav briefly entertained a sizeable Sunday crowd before inclement weather yet again played spoilsport and forced abandonment of the second ODI between India and New Zealand, here Sunday.

India were 89 for 1 in 12.5 overs when a second stoppage sealed the fate of the game as there was no possibility of having a minimum 20-over per side match within the stipulated cut-

off time. The match was reduced to 29-overs-a-side as the first interruption caused a four-hour break. India were 22 for no loss in the fifth over at that time.

After resumption, the visitors lost skipper Shikhar Dhawan (3 off 10 balls) trying to up the ante. Gill (45 not out, 42 balls) and Suryakumar (34 not out, 25 balls) added 66 effortless runs under eight overs before heavens opened up once again. Gill had four boundaries and a pulled six off Matt Henry while Suryakumar hit three different sixes — slog sweep over

mid-wicket, reverse sweep behind square and a pull-shot to carry his T20I form into the longer format. The short six-game white ball series against New Zealand has been one of the most rain-interrupted series of recent times. The first T20 in Wellington was also abandoned without a ball being bowled.

Even the third T20I match in Napier was a rain-marred. The final match of the series will be held in Christchurch on November 30.

International teams usually tour the New Zealand between

December and March and poor scheduling where the vagaries of weather wasn't factored in, has spoilt the limited overs series.

The ongoing series is being held during receding monsoon and there won't be any take-aways from the series where no player got enough opportunity to get into the groove. There isn't a big sample size of performance to evaluate but Surya certainly has been a shining star and Gill with his phenomenal talent is making a serious case for himself for a permanent place in the ODI playing eleven.

## Irritating to see matches being affected by rain: Gill

PTI ■ HAMILTON

Rain-affected matches are an irritant for both players and the paying public, and hence, having closed roof cricket stadiums won't be a bad option, feels young India opener Shubman Gill.

In a six-match white-ball series in New Zealand, two matches (1st T20I in Wellington and Sunday's ODI) were abandoned and one game (Napier T20I) was decided on Duckworth-Lewis method.

Gill, who scored 50 in the first game and was looking in good touch during his unbeaten 45 here, said that it does get frustrating at times.

"This is a decision (playing in indoor stadiums) to be taken by the boards. As a player and as fans, it is irritating to go in and out and see so many matches being affected by rain. But I don't know how I can take a stand for it as it is a big decision. "Obviously closed (retractable) roof (stadiums) would be good," the youngster told mediapersons.

The issue with rain-affected games is planning of the innings as 50 overs was curtailed to 29 overs on the day after a four-hour delay.



"It was very frustrating. You don't know how many overs so you can't plan your innings," Gill, who had hit a purple patch in 50-over cricket, said.

Gill is a strong contender for a place in the squad of 15 for next year's ODI World Cup but he said that he isn't looking that far ahead.

"I am not looking that far ahead and my aim is to make most of the opportunities that I am getting. That's what I am trying to do and make most of the opportunities that I get, trying to score big runs for the team," he stated.

## There is something regal about Gill: Shastri

PTI ■ HAMILTON

India opener Shubman Gill has got an admirer in former head coach Ravi Shastri who feels the young batter has something "regal about him".

Gill has been in good touch in the ongoing ODI series. He scored 50 runs in the first match on Thursday and came up with an unbeaten 45 in the washed out second game on Saturday.

"It is great to watch him play. There is something regal about him. He is a quality player and he's going to be around for a long time (decade's time)," Shastri said on Prime Video.

"He has good work ethics, he trains hard, he's hungry and he loves this game. He will continue to play because his grooming is good, he is always grounded."

The 23-year-old Gill has

played 14 ODIs since making his debut in 2019 with 674 runs at an average of 61.27. He has also featured in 11 Tests and scored 579 runs.

Talking about Gill's performance on Sunday, Shastri said, "His emphasis today was in the timing of the ball. Sometimes when you are out of your depth, you want to get on with it by trying to hit the ball hard. He was in good control with good footwork."



## Australia thrash India 7-4 in 2nd hockey Test

PTI ■ ADELAIDE

India could play well only in patches as Blake Govers slammed a brilliant hat-trick to guide Australia to a dominating 7-4 win in the high-scoring second hockey Test here on Sunday. Skipper Harmanpreet Singh struck even before the home team could settle, firing India to a third-minute lead with his precise and powerful penalty corner conversion.

India looked threatening up front and Harmanpreet almost converted a second one but the home team began to call the shots soon with Govers and Jack Welch leading the goal spree.

The Men in Blue dished out an inspiring show in the third quarter and trailed by just one goal at 3-4, but were blown away in the final 15 minutes due to a sloppy defense.

India endured its 12th straight loss to the world num-

ber one side and now need to win the next two games to keep the five-match series alive.

The third Test of the World Cup build-up series will be played on Wednesday.

Having scored the winning goals in their close 5-4 victory in the first Test, Govers was once again in the thick of action.

He scored his goals in the 12th (PC), 27th and 53rd (penalty) minutes, while Welch secured his brace with his strikes in the 17th and 24th minutes.

Jake Whetton (49th) and Jacob Anderson (48th) were the other goal scorers for the Kookaburras led by Eddie Ockenden, who became the only seventh player in history to make at least 400 International appearances. Hardik Singh (25th) and Mohammed Raheel (PC 36th) struck the other two goals for India, while Harmanpreet completed his brace in the final minute (60th) of the match from a penalty.

## PT Usha set to get elected as IOA chief unopposed

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The legendary PT Usha is set to become the first woman president of Indian Olympic Association (IOA) as she emerged as the lone candidate for the top post for the December 10 elections. The 58-year-old Usha, a multiple Asian Games gold medallists and a fourth-place finisher in the 1984 Olympics 400m hurdles final, filed her nomination papers for the top job on Sunday, along with 14 others from her team for the various posts.

The deadline to file nomination papers for the IOA elections ended on Sunday. IOA elections returning officer Umesh Sinha did not receive any nominations

on Friday and Saturday but 24 candidates filed nominations for various posts on Sunday. There will be contests for one post of vice president (female), joint secretary (female). There were 12 candidates in the fray for four executive council members.

The IOA polls will be held to elect one president, one senior vice-president, two vice-presidents (one male and one female), one treasurer, two joint secretaries (one male and one female), six other Executive Council members, out of which two (one male and one female) shall be from the elected SOMs.

Two members of the Executive Council (one male and one female) will be the Athletes' Commission representatives.

## India ends campaign with 11 medals

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reigning Asian champion Ravina displayed splendid tenacity to punch her way to gold in the 63kg category final as India ended the Youth Men's and Women's World Boxing Championships with 11 medals in La Nucia, Spain.

Ravina was up against Megan deCler of Netherlands in her final bout. In spite of not getting off to the best of starts, the Indian pugilist utilised her technical ability and quick movement to mount an impressive comeback against her Dutch opponent.

The fiercely contested bout finished in favour of the 2022 Asian Youth gold medallist Indian who won 4-3 by split decision after the bout was reviewed.

In the other final, Kirti (81+ kg)



lost 0-5 to 2022 European youth champion Cliona Elizabeth D'Arcy of Ireland to settle for a silver.

India was a dominant force at the event as the 25-member team bagged 11 medals — four gold, three silver and four bronze.

Overall, 17 Indians had qualified for the quarterfinals of the tournament which was more than any other country in this edition.

India won the highest number of medals — eight — in the women's section, followed by Kazakhstan (5) and Uzbekistan (4).

In the men's category, youth Asian champions Vanshaj (63.5kg), Vishwanath Suresh (48kg) grabbed a gold each while Ashish (54kg) took a silver.

This year's championships witnessed participation of close to 600 boxers from 73 countries.

## There is still room for pure batsmanship in T20 cricket: Stead

PTI ■ HAMILTON

Unperturbed by criticism of their conservative approach to batting in the T20 World Cup recently, New Zealand coach Gary Stead on Sunday said there's "still room for pure batsmanship" in the slam-bang format.

The Black Caps failed to win a global ICC white-ball tournament once again when they lost to Pakistan by seven wickets in the semi-finals in Australia earlier this month after their batters failed to fire and managed a modest 152/4.

"I know there's a lot of chat around a number of players around the world in the T20 game but, in my opinion, many of the wickets we play on, it's not just about the game of crash bash the whole time," the 50-year-old told reporters.

"We have a couple of players with Devon (Conway) and Kane (Williamson) who probably put in that crafty kind of batsmanship as opposed to those crash-bash style from ball one. There is still a place for those players in my opinion."

"The World Cup in Australia actually showed a number of times that the batsmanship side of it comes into it."

England, who became the only team to hold both the ODI and T20 World Cups titles in the same cycle, have been successful with the template of playing fearless and aggressive cricket from ball one.

"You have to look at the resources within your group and then you got to look at what the gameplan is. Some teams are going down the method of boundary-hitting the whole time.

"But we showed in a couple of games that there's a different way of playing as well. The team selected are the best XV or XI that we had," the former Kiwi Test batter said, defending their strategy.

"For us, that's still the way we are playing the game. That may change again we have to keep



reviewing our style of play and making sure that we keep up with play."

Stead further said they had a par score against Pakistan in the semis, but it's their bowlers who let them down.

"It's more than just batting in T20 cricket, it's also your bowlers. Pakistan bowled exceedingly well at us, but we had a score that was potentially defensible. We just didn't start best with the ball in the game," he said.

**SURYA, A HUGE FORCE**

The Kiwi coach hailed India's latest white-ball sensation Suryakumar Yadav who sizzled with his powerful performances during the T20 showpiece.

"He makes it look terribly easy at times and extremely hard to bowl to because he can access both sides of the ground, he starts from ball one and puts you under enormous pressure.

"He's very innovative as well, his shots are a little bit different. He can look up to the field and have 2-3 options, it makes him very hard to defend against.

"He's a huge force in world cricket at the moment. He's probably one of the most sought-after wickets i would imagine in world cricket," he added.

## Cricket an outdoor sport, should be played under sun as much as possible: NZ coach

PTI ■ HAMILTON

Retractable roof stadiums could be an option but there's no substitute to playing cricket under the sun as it makes the sport a spectacle, feels New Zealand coach Gary Stead.

Four matches in the recently-concluded T20 World Cup in

neighbouring Australia were washed out while the fate of three were determined by the Duckworth-Lewis method, leading to a debate whether indoor cricket should be explored by the boards.

"It's very difficult to have that in New Zealand, we don't have grounds to be able to do

that," the 50-year-old Stead said after the second ODI against India was abandoned because of persistent showers.

In the six-match white-ball series in New Zealand, two matches (1st T20I in Wellington and Sunday's ODI) were abandoned and one game (Napier T20I) was decided by DLS.

"I guess if there are grounds available then it has to be considered. I think it's a spectacle that everyone tries, is considered an outside game and played in the sun as much we can. I think you still want to make that happen wherever possible," the former Kiwi Test batter added.

## England arrive for 1st Test series in Pakistan since 2005

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

England's cricket team arrived in Islamabad early Sunday to play its first Test series in Pakistan since 2005.

Led by Ben Stokes, England will kick off the tour in Rawalpindi -- an adjacent city to Islamabad -- which hosts the first Test from next Thursday. The second Test will be played at Multan from December 9-13 before England round off the tour with the final Test at Karachi from December 17-21.

England had played a seven-match T20 series in Pakistan prior to the T20 World Cup in Australia where it went on to beat Pakistan in the final.

England was due to tour Pakistan last year before the T20 World Cup in the United Arab Emirates but abandoned the tour due to security concerns after New Zealand had aborted its tour to Pakistan just minutes before the toss in the first ODI at Rawalpindi.

There were some concerns over England's Test tour to Pakistan after former Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was wounded in Wazirabad, a district in eastern Punjab province, during his protest against the sitting government.

Pakistan had hosted England twice in a Test series at UAE over the last 17 years with foreign teams reluctant to travel to Pakistan after the Sri Lanka cricket team was attacked in Lahore in 2009.



The three-Test series will be part of World Test Championship where Pakistan is sitting in fifth place while England is seventh. Pakistan needs to win the three-Test series to keep its hopes alive for next year's final.

Pakistan will be without its key fast bowler Shaheen Afridi, who has been ruled out of the series due to knee injury. The home team has also dropped middle-order batter Fawad Alam and ace leg-spinner Yasir Shah due to poor form.

Uncapped fast bowlers Haris Rauf and Mohammad Ali have been called up to the

squad along with mystery spinner Abrar Ahmed, who is expected to make his debut during the series.

England also has injury concerns ahead of the first Test with fast bowler Mark Wood in doubt due to a hip injury. Stuart Broad has been given paternity leave from the tour as England will be banking on its experienced fast bowler James Anderson to trouble Pakistan batters.

England has included 18-year-old Leicestershire all-rounder Rehan Ahmed in the squad after originally drafting him as a net bowler for the tour.

## UAE to host Afghanistan's home games for next 5 years

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The UAE will host Afghanistan's home games for the next five years, as per an agreement signed between the two cricket boards. The move was prompted by the political situation in Afghanistan which has not hosted international teams.

As part of the agreement, Test-playing nation Afghanistan will play UAE in a three-match T20I series in each of the five years. "We are happy to support the ACB in ensuring that they have a home for their cricket," general secretary of the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) Mubashir Usmani said in a statement.

"We are also thankful to the Afghanistan Cricket Board for

agreeing to play a series of T20I matches against UAE team each year. "This will provide our UAE team with invaluable exposure and help in their development," he added.

Until now, the Afghanistan team has been playing and conducting its training sessions on a series-by-series basis. The ECB would also provide logistic support to the ACB.

As per the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP), Afghanistan are set to host Australia, Pakistan and West Indies in three ODIs each, as well as Zimbabwe across formats, next year leading into the 2023 ODI World Cup. The matches will be played across venues in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah.