

OPINION 6

LIFE LESS ORDINARY
OR EXTRAORDINARY

WORLD 9

NEPAL LIKELY TO HAVE
HUNG PARLIAMENT

MONEY 10

MARKETS HIT FRESH ALL-TIME
HIGHS; RALLY FOR 5TH DAY

NEW DELHI, TUESDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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ENGLAND TO
FACE WALES IN
WORLD CUP
11 SPORT

Shraddha-like murder, chopping in Capital

Woman, with son's help, kills hubby, chops body, stores pieces in fridge

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after Shraddha Walker's brutal murder and hacking of her body in 35 parts by her boyfriend, a similar murder-chopping incident has been reported from Pandav Nagar in East Delhi.

The Delhi Police Crime Branch on Monday arrested a woman and her son for killing the woman's husband, chopping his body into 10 pieces, storing them in the refrigerator and then disposing them off across the Pandav Nagar area.

The police recovered six pieces of the victim's boy, but the torso is missing. The duo killed him for his reported illicit affair, wife's harassment and sending money to his first wife by selling jewellery.

The latest incident is similar to the manner in which Aftab Poonawala allegedly strangled his live-in partner Shraddha, chopped her body into 35 pieces, stored these parts in his fridge for about 3 weeks, before disposing of the pieces one by one in South



Poonam and her son Deepak, accused in the murder of the former's husband Anjan Das, following their arrest by police, in New Delhi on Monday

Delhi's Mehrauli forest.

The police first found the body parts in Pandav Nagar in June, but could not identify the victim due to their decomposed state. After the Shraddha murder case came to light, the police suspected that the body parts found from Pandav Nagar could be hers. But tests later on proved otherwise.

"The accused have been identified as Poonam Das (48) and her son Deepak Das (25).

The victim has been identified as Anjan Das (45). The mother and her son confessed to the killing," the police said.

DCP (crime) Amit Goel said initially two legs, two thighs, a forearm and head were found stuffed inside a bag at the Ramlila Ground in East Delhi on June 5 following which a case was registered under sections 302 (murder) and 201 (causing disappearance of evidence and giving false

information) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Pandav Nagar Police Station. A team of the Crime Branch was tasked to investigate the matter.

According to Special Commissioner of Police (Crime) Ravindra Yadav, police teams spoke to nearby residents about if anyone was missing but there was no luck. CCTV footage was scanned but it didn't give any lead.

Continued on Page 2

SC frowns at Rijiju's attack on Collegium

Court upset over delay in clearing names of judges recommended by Collegium

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed anguish over the delay by the Centre in clearing the names recommended by the Collegium for appointment as judges, saying it "effectively frustrates" the method of appointment.

Expressing displeasure on Law Minister Kiren Rijiju's comments in a recent TV interview, the Bench headed by Justice SK Kaul said the unhappiness of the Government appears to be due to quashing of the NJAC.

The Bench also comprising Justice AS Oka urged the Attorney General and the Solicitor General to ensure that the law laid down by the SC as regards appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and High Courts is followed.

Coming down heavily on the Government, the bench said a three-judge bench of the apex court had laid down the timelines within which the appointment process had to be completed. Those timelines, it said, have to be adhered to. Justice Kaul observed it

appeared the Government is unhappy with the fact that the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act did not pass the muster, but that cannot be a reason to not comply with the law of the land. The apex court had in its 2015 verdict struck down the NJAC Act and the Constitution (99th Amendment) Act, 2014, leading to the revival of the Collegium system of existing judges appointing judges to constitutional courts.

During the hearing on Monday, the apex court told Attorney General R Venkataramani the ground reality is that the names recommended, including those reiterated by the apex court Collegium, are not being cleared by the Government. "How does the system work?" the bench asked, adding, "Our anguish we have already expressed."

"It appears to me, I would say, unhappiness of the Government of the fact that NJAC does not pass the muster," Justice Kaul observed.

He said sometimes laws pass the muster and sometimes they don't. "That cannot be a reason not to comply with the law of the land," he said.

The top court was hearing a plea alleging "willful disobedience" of the time frame laid down by the apex court in its April 20 order last year to facilitate timely appointment.

Continued on Page 2



Govt returns 20 files to SC Collegium on HC judges' appointment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government has asked the Supreme Court Collegium to reconsider 20 files related to the appointment of High Court judges, including that of advocate Saurabh Kirpal who has candidly spoken about his gay status, sources said on Monday.

The Government expressed "strong reservations" about the recommended names as it sent back the files to the collegium on November 25, sources aware of the procedure to appoint SC and HC judges said. Out of the 20 cases, 11 were fresh cases and nine were reiterations made by the top court collegium, they said. Kirpal's name was recommended by the Supreme Court Collegium, headed by then Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana, for elevation as a Delhi High Court judge.

Continued on Page 2

Hackers seek ₹200 crore as AIIMS server hit for 6th day

New Delhi: Hackers have demanded an estimated ₹200 crore in cryptocurrency from the AIIMS, Delhi as its server remained out of order for the sixth consecutive day, official sources said on Monday.

It is feared that data of around 3-4 crore patients could have been compromised due to the breach detected on Wednesday morning.

However, the Delhi Police late on Monday said no such information has been reported by AIIMS authorities.

P3

CAPSULE

CHILD RAPED BY FATHER'S FRIEND IN GRENO SOCIETY

Noida: A nine-year-old girl was allegedly raped inside a high-rise society in Greater Noida by a 57-year-old man, who has been friend of her father for several years, police said on Monday. The accused, a native of Mirzapur, has been arrested.

CAR PLOUGHS INTO 3 SISTERS; 6-YR-OLD DIES

NOIDA: A speeding car ploughed into three sisters in a busy market in Noida, leading to severe injuries to two of them while the youngest sibling — Six-years-old — died, police officials said on Monday. The 24-year-old accused driver, identified as Sanoj, a native of Mainpuri district in Uttar Pradesh, has been arrested.

BJP's drubbing in Haryana rural polls is gain for independents

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Zila Parishad polls saw the rise of Independents in a big way even as the ruling BJP suffered a setback as it could win only 22 of the 100 seats it contested on the party symbol.

While the Congress did not contest on party symbol and its claims cannot be verified, the AAP bagged 15 seats out of the over 100 seats it contested on the party symbol. The polls, the results of which were declared on Sunday, also saw the Indian National Lok Dal making some gains. BJP's ally Jannayak Janata Party did not contest the panchayat polls on party symbols.

BJP leaders, however, claimed that more than 150 BJP-backed candidates also won the elections in other districts of the State.

The result came as a shocker for the BJP in Panchkula, near Chandigarh where it lost all 10 seats which it contested.

Continued on Page 2

Centre pitches for law against forced religious conversion

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday made a strong pitch for formulating a law against forced religious conversion, justifying its enactment to protect the vulnerable sections of society, including women and economically and socially backward classes.

"The right to freedom of religion does not include the right to convert an individual through fraud, deception, coercion, allurements or other such means," the Union Ministry of Home Affairs said in an affidavit.

The Centre's response came on a plea by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay against fraudulent religious conversion and religious conversion by intimidation, threatening, deceptively luring through gifts and monetary benefits, as it offends Articles 14, 21, and 25.

The plea claimed that if such conversions were not checked, Hindus would soon become a minority in India.

Continued on Page 2

Idea of India has nothing to do with religion: SC judge

NEW DELHI: Supreme Court Justice PS Narasimha has said the original idea of India has nothing to do with religion or identity, but the people who loved the nation.

Delivering the keynote address for the 1st Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi Memorial Lecture at the India International Centre, Justice Narasimha delved into various phases of Indian history and said, "We are a tolerant nation and let us keep it that way."

Detailed report on Page 4

40 cops hurt in protest against Adani port in Kerala capital

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The rioting and vandalism unleashed by hundreds of people at Vizhinjam Police Station in Thiruvananthapuram district on Sunday in protest against the construction of Adani port has shocked the Kerala Government.

A series of criminal complaints have been filed against Archbishop Thomas J Netto, the spiritual head of the Latin Catholic community along the Thiruvananthapuram coast line, Auxiliary Bishop Christudas and Vicar Eugene Pereira under various sections of the IPC for rioting and encouraging people to take up arms against the police.

The midnight action saw 40 policemen getting injured in the attacks unleashed by the laity and public property, including police vehicles, being set ablaze by the mob demanding scrapping of Adani port.

Continued on Page 2

World Cup frenzy puts strain on Qatar's camels

AP ■ MESAIEED (QATAR)

Shaheen stretched out on the sand and closed his eyes, but there was little time to rest for the camel. World Cup fans coming in droves to the desert outside Doha were ready for their perfect Instagram moment: riding a camel on the rolling dunes.

As Qatar welcomes more than a million fans for the month-long World Cup, even its camels are working overtime. Visitors in numbers the tiny emirate has never before seen are rushing to finish a bucket list of Gulf tourist experiences between games: ride on a camel's back, take pictures with falcons and wander through the alleyways of traditional markets.

On a recent Friday afternoon, hundreds of visitors in soccer uniforms or draped in flags waited for their turn to mount the animals. Camels that did not rise were forced up by their handlers. When one

camel let out a loud grunt, a woman from Australia shrieked, "it sounds like they're being violated!" Nearby, a group of men from Mexico dressed in white Qatari thobes and headdresses took selfies.

"It's really an amazing feeling because you feel so tall," 28-year-old Juan Gaul said after his ride. The Argentine fan was visiting Qatar for a week from Australia.

Cashing in on the opportunity are the animals' handlers who, thanks to the World Cup, are making several times more than they normally would.

"There's a lot of money coming in," said Ali Jaber al Ali, a 49-year-old Bedouin camel herder from Sudan. "Thank god, but it's a lot of pressure."

Al Ali came to Qatar 15 years ago but has worked with camels since he was a child. On an average weekday before the World Cup, Ali said his company offers around 20 rides a day and 50 on weekends.

Continued on Page 2

Morocco win spurs riots in Belgium, Netherlands



AP ■ BRUSSELS

Riots broke out in several Belgian and Dutch cities after Morocco's 2-0 upset win over Belgium at the World Cup. Police detained about a dozen people after they deployed water cannons and fire tear gas to disperse crowds in Brussels on Sunday and eight more in the Northern city of Antwerp.

Two police officials were injured in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam. Dozens of rioters overturned and torched cars, set electric scooters on fire

and pelted cars with bricks. Police moved in after one person suffered facial injuries, said Brussels police spokeswoman Ilse Van de Keere.

"Those are not fans, they are rioters. Moroccan fans are there to celebrate," Close said. "Sad to see how a few individuals abuse a situation to run amok," said Interior Minister Annelies Verindien.

Police in the neighbouring Netherlands said violence erupted in the port city of Rotterdam, with riot officers attempting to break up a group of 500 soccer fans who pelted police with fireworks and glass.

Morocco's victory was a major upset at the World Cup and was enthusiastically celebrated by fans with Moroccan immigrant roots in many Belgian and Dutch cities.

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Adfactors

Forest dept nod for vehicular movement through Asola Bhatti

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government’s Forest department permitted vehicular movement on a road passing through the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary for people from Haryana to attend a spiritual event. The organisers — Radha Soami Satsang Beas — said the Forest and Wildlife department allowed them to use the road for the three-day event on the condition of depositing Rs 2.5 lakh and planting 5,000 saplings. According to the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the chief wildlife warden may, on application, grant a permit to any person to enter or reside in a sanctuary for “investigation or study of wildlife, photography, scientific research, tourism or

transaction of lawful business with any person residing in the sanctuary.”

A permit to enter or reside in a sanctuary is issued subject to such conditions and on payment of such fee as may be prescribed, the Act stipulates. People aware of the matter said the decision was surprising considering that the organisation’s south Delhi campus was directly connected to Gurugram and Faridabad.

The road for which permission was granted is only used for patrolling, they said.

“This was the first time that traffic movement was allowed on the four-metre-wide road, which is used for patrolling purposes only,” a Forest department source said.

SC stays NGT orders imposing fines on NOIDA, DJB over untreated waste

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the order of the National Green Tribunal imposing a fine of ₹100 crore on NOIDA for failing to prevent untreated sewage from flowing into the Yamuna river.

The top court also stayed the NGT order asking the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to pay a fine of ₹50 crore for release of untreated sewage in the Yamuna river in the national capital.

“Issue notice. Returnable in eight weeks. Pending further orders, the direction of the National Green Tribunal asking the NOIDA and DJB to pay ₹100 crore and ₹50 crore respectively as fine will remain stayed,” the bench said.

Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani appeared for the New Okhla Industrial Development Authority (NOIDA) and assailed the NGT order. The top court issued notices to the Uttar Pradesh and Delhi governments, besides others, on the appeal of NOIDA and sought their responses within eight week, making it clear that it was staying the fine aspect of the NGT order only.

Will hand over Markaz keys to chief Maulana Saad, says Delhi Police

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Facing criticism, the Delhi Police on Monday told the Delhi High Court that it will hand over the keys of Nizamuddin Markaz, the headquarters of Tablighi Jamaat, to its chief Maulana Muhammad Saad. The Police version that Saad is absconding was challenged by the Markaz managing committee. Justice Jasmeet Singh recorded the police’s statement that the keys will be handed over to Saad after he furnishes an indemnity bond.

“Counsel for Delhi Police said they will have no objection in handing over the keys of the property to Maulana Saad on him furnishing indemnity bond without any documents. In this view of the matter, the petitioner (Delhi Waqf Board) does not wish to prosecute the petition any further. With these directions, the petition is disposed,” the Court ordered.

The Court was dealing with a petition filed by the Delhi Waqf Board seeking full reopening of the mosque which was closed in March 2020. Senior Advocate Sanjoy Ghose appeared for the Waqf Board and argued that though the mosque has been allowed to reopen, some parts of the Markaz building are still locked.

UP downgrades Shivpal’s security from ‘Z’ to ‘Y’ category

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh Government has downgraded the security of Pragatisheel Samajwadi Party (Lohia) president Shivpal Singh Yadav from ‘Z’ to ‘Y’ category, days after he mended fences with his nephew and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav.

Shivpal Yadav has been aggressively campaigning for SP candidate Dimple Yadav in Mainpuri Lok Sabha bypoll.

Shivpal was given ‘Z’ category security in 2018 by the Yogi Adityanath government.

“Following a review at the meeting of the state-level security committee on November 25, it has been decided to provide ‘Y’ category security to Shivpal Singh Yadav in place of ‘Z’,” a letter written by the Superintendent of Police (Training and Security) Vaibhav Krishan said.

A letter, dated November 27 in this regard, has been sent to the Lucknow police commissioner and senior superintendent of police in Etawah.

Sources said that besides Shivpal, gunners provided to some leaders close to the PSPCL chief had also been withdrawn.

New entertainment platforms recognising raw talent: Anurag

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has always had the talent, it just needed an opportunity to be seen without gatekeepers where the audience determined its success, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur said on Monday, referring to the popularity of new entertainment platforms such as OTT. Addressing the closing ceremony of the International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Panaji, Thakur said the world of cinema is bustling with raw talent, finding its voice from theatre schools, small production houses and the hinterland of India.

“The platforms are new, whether it is short films on our mobile devices, movies on the go, or binge watching on OTT (over-the-top). We are seeing incredible talent being recognised, enthralling audiences and doing great business too,” he said, drawing similarities with sports leagues that have brought raw talent to the fore in cricket, kabaddi and hockey.

Thakur said the advent of different streams of cinema



Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting Anurag Singh Thakur and Israeli actor and screenwriter Lior Raz at the closing ceremony of 53rd International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa on Monday

PTI

propelled by affordable handsets and cheaper data prices was leaping ahead on sheer individual talent to showcase powerful and captivating stories to the world.

“Not only are the audiences enjoying a plethora of regional content, but also foreign content dubbed in Indian languages,” the minister said at the star-studded closing ceremony of IFFI.

Centre...

From Page 1

On November 14, the Supreme Court asked the Centre to file an affidavit on the need for a Central law to deal with this menace after observing that forced religious conversion is a “very serious issue” and may affect the “security of the country” along with the freedom of conscience of citizens as far as religion is concerned.

During the hearing of the case on Monday, Supreme Court Justice MR Shah said there cannot be any forced religious conversion. The SC also asked the Centre to file a report on the steps taken by States to prevent religious con-

version.

In the affidavit, the Central Government said the petitioner has highlighted a large number of instances carried out in an organised, systematic and sophisticated manner of conversion of vulnerable citizens in the country through fraud, deception, coercion, allure-ment or other such means.

It further added that the meaning and purport of the word “propagate” falling under Article 25 of the Constitution was discussed and debated in great detail in the constituent assembly and the inclusion of the said word was passed by the constituent Assembly only after the clarification that the fundamental right under Article 25 would not include the right to convert.

The Centre said the apex court has held that the word

“propagate” does not envisage the right to convert a person rather is in the nature of the positive right to spread once religion by exposition of its tenets. Nine States over the course of years have passed enactments seeking to curb forced religious conversion, the Centre said.

Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka & Haryana are the states which already have legislation in place on conversion, it said.

Justifying legislation to prevent conversion, the Centre said, “Such enactments are necessary for protecting cherished rights of vulnerable sections of the society including women and economically and socially backward classes.”

World Cup frenzy...

From Page 1

Since the World Cup started, Al Ali and the men he works with are providing 500 rides in the morning and another 500 in the evening. The company went from having 15 camels to 60, he said.

“Tour guides want to move things fast,” Al Ali said, “so they add pressure on us.” As crowds formed around them, many camels sat statue-like with cloth muzzles covering their mouths and bright saddles on their bodies. The smell of dung filled the air. Like other Gulf cultures, camels once provided Qataris a vital form of transport and helped in the exploration and development of trade routes. Today, the ungulates figure into cultural pastimes:

camel racing is a popular sport that takes place on old-school tracks outside the city.

Al Ali said he knows when an animal is tired — usually if it refuses to get up or sits back down after rising to its feet. He can identify each camel by its facial features.

“I am a Bedouin. I come from a family of Bedouins who care for camels. I grew up loving them,” Al Ali said.

But the sudden rise in tourists means there’s less time to rest between rides, he said. A short ride lasts just 10 minutes while longer ones run 20 to 30 minutes long.

Normally, Al Ali said a camel can rest after five rides. “Now, people are saying we can’t wait ... Because they have other plans they need to go to in the middle of the desert,” he said. Since the World Cup started, the animals are taken for 15 to 20 — sometimes even 40 rides — without a break.

40 cops hurt in protest against Adani port in Kerala...

From Page 1

The Vizhinjam International Sea Port Ltd is being built by the Adani Group. The situation is Vizhinjam has deteriorated to such an extent that on Monday the Adani Group told the Kerala High Court that unless Central police forces are deployed in the area, it was not possible to resume the work which has been held up due to rioting and destruction of public property by the agitating crowd.

The group told the High Court that the police which was expected to maintain law and order remained mute spectators as the agitating crowd went on a rampage.

The Kerala Government told the court on Monday that 40 cops were injured and have been admitted to hospitals following the attacks carried out by the mob.

“Many police vehicles have been set ablaze and properties worth millions have been destroyed. We are taking action to get the leaders of the agitation pay the compensation for the destruction of public property,” the Kerala Government counsel told Justice Anu Shivraman who adjourned the case to Friday to facilitate the filing of affidavit by the State administration.

The Pioneer had reported on Sunday that Vizhinjam Port Project has run into rough waters because of the agitation by a section of the population demanding the scrapping of the project. The CPI (M) in a statement released on Monday blamed some sections of the rioters for trying to sabotage the project.

SC frowns...

From Page 1

The bench referred to the process undertaken for appointing judges in the apex court and the high courts.

“Once the Collegium reiterates a name, it is end of the chapter,” it said, adding, there cannot be a situation where recommendations are being made and the Government keeps sitting on them as this frustrates the system. The Judges said some names are pending with the Government for a year and half.

“You are effectively frustrating the method of appointment,” the bench observed, adding some lawyers are withdrawing their consent given for elevation to the bench due to the delay in the appointment process.

Judges said the Government sometimes picks just one name from among those recommended by the Collegium and this “completely disturbs” the seniority.

The apex court said the Collegium recommends the names keeping also in mind the

aspect of seniority. The Attorney General said after the apex court passed an order in the matter on November 11, he had some discussion with a secretary-level officer and that he will come back to the court. Senior advocate Vikas Singh, who had assisted the apex court in the matter earlier, referred to media reports on a statement by Union Law Minister Rishi Jaishankar on the issue of appointments. Rishi in a recent Times Now interview criticised the Collegium System and claimed that there was no delay from Government side in clearing the names.

“How many statements we take note of?” the Bench asked. During the hearing, when Singh again referred to media reports, Justice Kaul said, “I ignore all press reports.” “When somebody high enough says let them do it themselves, we will do it ourselves,” the Bench said. “It is crossing the rubicon by keeping the names pending like this,” the court observed. The bench said both the Attorney General and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta are appearing in the matter. “So the double barrel gun should work,” the Bench said in a lighter vein. The top court said the Collegium has recommended the names of Chief Justices for some High Courts and these recommendations are lying in

abeyance.

“For the last two months, the whole thing has come to a standstill,” it said, adding, “Please resolve it.”

“Don’t make us take a decision on this on the judicial side,” the Bench said. The apex court, which posted the matter for hearing on December 8, said it expects both the Attorney General and Solicitor General to play a role to advise the government so that law of the land is followed. “Till the law stands, it has to be followed,” it said.

On November 11, the apex court had expressed displeasure over the delay by the Centre in clearing the names recommended for appointment as judges and said keeping them pending is “something not acceptable”. It had issued notice to the Secretary (Justice) of the Union Law Ministry and Additional Secretary (Administration and Appointment) seeking their response to the plea.

The petition filed by the Advocates’ Association Bengaluru, through lawyer Pai Amit, has raised the issue of “extraordinary delays” in the appointment of judges to the High Courts as well as the segregation of the names, which is “detrimental to the cherished principle of the independence of the judiciary”.

BJP’s drubbing in Haryana rural polls is...

From Page 1

The party also suffered a setback in Sirsa where it failed to win a single seat out of the 10 it contested. BJP MP from Kurukshetra Nayab Singh Saini’s wife Suman Saini was defeated from ward number 4 of Ambala Zila Parishad. The ruling party also could not perform well in Ambala, which is the home district of Home Minister Anil Vij, where it could win only two seats out of a total of 15 Zila Parishad seats.

In Gurugram, the BJP could win four out of 10 Zila Parishad seats. However, in Yamunanagar, Nuh and Kurukshetra, the ruling party won six, seven, and three seats respectively. Haryana BJP spokesperson Sanjay Sharma, however, asserted that the party performed very well in these polls. He claimed the BJP supported 151 candidates won in 15 districts.

The Aam Aadmi Party won 5 seats out of more than 100 seats it contested on the party symbol. It performed well in Sirsa by winning six seats, besides registering a victory over three seats in Ambala and two in Jind. AAP MP and party’s Haryana in-charge Sushil Gupta said with the poll result, it has become clear that the coming time in the state belongs to the Aam Aadmi Party.

The Indian National Lok Dal also managed to make some gains in the Zila Parishad polls as it won 10 seats in Sirsa. INLD leader and Ellenabad legislator Abhay Chautala’s son Karan Chautala won from ward number 6 of Zila Parishad in Sirsa by more than 600 votes. An INLD leader said the party won a total of 14 out of 72 seats it contested on the party symbol.

In the polls, it was independent candidates who bagged a majority of seats in several districts including Jhajjar, Hisar, Rewari and Rohtak.

LOST AND FOUND

I, Rajiv Kumar Bhatia S/o Sh. K.L. Bhatia (No. 35, Arya Nagar Apartment, Plot No.91, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092) do hereby solemnly affirm and declare that I am the owner and in possession of Flat No. D-35, Situated in Arya Nagar Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd. Plot No.91, Known as Arya Nagar Apartments, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092 allotted by Society. ORIGINAL SHARE CERTIFICATE issued by The Arya Nagar C.G.H.S. Ltd. In my name has been lost/misplaced somewhere is not traceable by my best efforts.
Rajiv Kumar Bhatia

THE PIONEER CLASSIFIEDS

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I, Sunita, spouse of Umesh Kumar resident of D1/348 (3rd Floor), Gali No.-5, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi-110045 have changed my Name from Sunita to Sunita Singh for all purposes.

PD(90207)A

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The sale proclamation was issued dated Nov 18, 2022 in THE PIONEER(ENG) and THE PIONEER (Hindi), for Vehicle No.DLB8CAR9164 with applicant as Rajni, Please read Court Order No as OA/131/2021. For Vehicle No. UP14GT8288 with applicant as AKSHAY Rishi, Please note Auction Reserve Price will be Rs.2,50,000/- and EMD will be 25,000/- . Rest all term and conditions remains the same

Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited
Date: November 29, 2022
Place: Delhi/INCR

Public Notice
This is to inform General Public that Mrs. Kavita Devi acquired the Property No. 71, Block-A, Land area measuring 83.61 sq. yds. (100 sq. yds.), out of Khaska No. 31/1, situated in the revenue estate of Village Dabri, Delhi state Delhi, abadi known as Dabri Extn. New Delhi-110045 vide Sale Deed dated 08.02.2008, (Doc. No. 1219). Now, Mr. Parvash Solanki and Mrs. Kavita Devi are mortgaging the above said property to Axis Finance Limited by mortgaging the said property. In case anyone has any objection regarding mortgage of the said property, the same may be raised within 7 days of this publication to Mr. Muneesh Dhanraj Mr. Sudhir Jain (Advocates), Law Veritas North, Unit no 907, 9th Floor, GD-ITL Tower, (B-08), Netaji Subhash Place, Delhi-110034 or contact at 9066707172/ 9818228636 (M).

Public Notice
When an error in my concern
General public is hereby informed that my client namely Mrs. Bindu Devi W/o Mr. Bholu Shanker is the owner of the Third Floor, with roof rights, Built on Property Bearing No. 716, area measuring 41.8 Sq. Mtrs., i.e. 50 Sq. Yds., out of Khaska No. 742, situated in the area of Village Chandrawali alias Shahdara, in the Revenue Estate of Village Shahdara, Delhi-110032, by virtue of Sale Deed dated 25.06.2014 regd. at doc. No. 2196 and the same is to be financed & mortgaged with properly the same may be raised within 7 days from date of this notice or below address. Failing which, it will be assumed that there are no other legal heirs of Late Mr. Mool Chand Singh except for Mrs. Reena Agarwal, Mrs. Manu Gupta, Mr. Parmod Kumar Singh.
Further it is informed that there are no other legal heirs of Late Mr. Mool Chand Singh except for Mrs. Reena Agarwal, Mrs. Manu Gupta, Mr. Parmod Kumar Singh.
If any person(s) have any objection(s) or claim in this property, then contact the undersigned within 7 days from date of this notice or below address. Failing which, it will be assumed that there are no claims or issues in respect of the aforesaid property.

Raghav Tiwari (Advocate)
Ch. 830, Patiala House Courts, New Delhi – 110001
Mob.: +91-807188322

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
SMM/EMU/GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India Invites GeM-BID No GeM/2022/B/2748036 - 31.12.2022 The details are as under	
1. Name of Work : Medical Comp. cleaning for JHI Railway colony.	
2. Approx. cost of work : Rs. 60,67,992/-	
3. Quantity Sqft & Rft : 423800 Sqft, 10400 Rft	
4. Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender : 15.12.2022 (11:00 Hrs.)	
5. Date & Time of Opening of tender document : 15.12.2022 (11:30 Hrs.)	
6. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen : www.gem.gov.in	
Note: (i) The tenderers must be registered on the (GEM portal) site i.e. www.gem.gov.in (ii) Please refer to the BID document for all terms and conditions. (iii) No manual offers are acceptable.	
Gem Bid - GeM/2022/B/2748036 Date:- 23.11.2022	3169/2022
Serving Customers with a Smile	

Pandav Nagar shaken by Anjan’s murder

Where did Poonam get courage to cut him up, wonder neighbours

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Neighbours of the woman who along with her son allegedly killed her husband and chopped his body into 10 pieces in her Pandav Nagar house said on Monday they did not know much about the family as they did not socialise much.

Anjan Das (45) was killed on May 30 by his wife Poonam (48) and stepson Deepak (25) who were arrested from east Delhi’s Pandav Nagar.

Oblivious to the conspiracy that was hatched in their neighbourhood, the residents of the area were in shock and trying to comprehend what could have made the woman carry out the bone-chilling crime.

“Pata nahi, kaise himmat aagyi usme (I don’t know from where she gathered the

courage). I got to know about the case through news channels. The family was living here for the last five-six years but we had no inkling that a conspiracy was being hatched here,” said Puspa, who lives in a house opposite the rented accommodation where Das and Poonam were living.

Puspa said that the woman did not interact much with her neighbours.

“Poonam has a son and two daughters who are married. She never interacted with the neighbours. Her son and his wife were living in the nearby area. One of her daughters had visited her almost nine months ago,” said Puspa.

The residents have been left in shock as the details of the gruesome murder poured in. Several women sitting outside their homes in the area were seen discussing the case.

“I cannot understand. How can a woman go to this extent to kill her husband?” said a woman resident. While another woman inquisitively asked, “Did you know her? Have you ever talked to her?”

“No. I just saw her once or twice outside the house buying vegetables,” said the first woman.

The incident came to the fore when some of Das’ body parts were found stuffed inside a bag at the Ramila Ground in east Delhi’s Kalyanpuri on June 5.

Das had a wife and eight children in Bihar, a senior police official said, adding that he used to send them money, but not regularly.

The official said as he did not send money at “regular intervals”, his family in Bihar “did not suspect he is missing and no missing complaint was lodged in Delhi or in Bihar”.



Poonam had met Das in 2011. He had a rented accommodation in the same building she was living in. When her husband Kallu died in 2016, she started living with Das, according to police.

Later, she came to know that Das was already married and had eight children from his first wife in Bihar, they said, adding that he started stealing jewellery and cash from

Poonam and sent it to his first wife, due to which they had quarrels and arguments.

Police said around March or April, Poonam came to know that Das had allegedly tried to molest and sexually assault her divorced daughter as well as Deepak’s wife.

It was in April, that the mother-son duo hatched a plan to kill Das and they committed the crime on May 30.

Hackers demand ₹200 cr in crypto from AIIMS

Hospital’s server remains down for 6th-consecutive day; data of around 3-4 crore patients could have been compromised

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hackers have allegedly demanded an estimated Rs 200 crore in cryptocurrency from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi as its server remained out of order for the sixth-consecutive day, official sources said on Monday. It is feared that data of around three to four crore patients could have been compromised due to the breach detected on Wednesday morning.

Patient care services in emergency, outpatient, inpatient and laboratory wings are being managed manually as the server remained down, the sources said.

The India Computer Emergency Response Team

(CERT-IN), Delhi Police and representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs are investigating the ransomware attack. A case of extortion and cyber terrorism was registered by the Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations (IFSO) unit of the Delhi Police on November 25.

Official sources said internet services are blocked on computers at the hospital on the recommendations of the investigating agencies. The AIIMS server has stored data of several VIPs, including former Prime Ministers, Ministers, bureaucrats and judges.

“Hackers have allegedly demanded around Rs 200 crore in cryptocurrency,” one of the sources told PTI.

Meanwhile, the NIC e-hos-

pital database and application servers for e-hospital have been restored. The NIC team is scanning and cleaning infection from other e-hospital servers located at AIIMS which are required for delivery of hospital services, an official source said.

Four physical servers arranged for restoring e-hospital services have been scanned and prepared for the databases and applications.

Also, the AIIMS network sanitisation is in progress. Antivirus solutions have been organised for servers and computers. It has been installed on nearly 1,200 out of 5,000 computers. Twenty out of 50 servers have been scanned and this activity is ongoing 24x7, the source said.

BJP sure of bagging 170 MCD wards, AAP counting on 230

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

An internal survey conducted by the Delhi BJP has shown that the party may bag 170 of 250 wards in the MCD polls next month. The AAP also seems to be confident of winning 230 seats while the Congress has claimed that it will get over 130 seats in the civic body polls.

The survey, having a sample size of 43,750 voters was conducted between November 13 and November 25, Delhi BJP media head Harish Khurana said.

“The survey, conducted in all the 250 wards shows that the BJP is going to win 170 seats. There are 150 wards where the BJP is in a very strong position while there are 20-25 other wards where the party has an edge over other parties,” Khurana said. Interestingly, Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has claimed that the party would win over 230 seats in the MCD polls.

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Raghav Chadha has expressed confidence that the party would win



over 230 seats in the MCD on the performance of the Arvind Kejriwal Government’s works in Delhi.

However, Delhi Congress leader Anil Bhardwaj has also claimed that the party would win over 130 seats. Interestingly, the party is “banking on its former MLAs and leaders of Delhi to fight against the BJP and AAP. We are highlighting the achievements of the then Sheila Dikshit regime in the national Capital,” said a Congress leader.

Earlier in the day, the Delhi BJP challenged Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to list two development works carried out by his Government without

indulging in corruption.

“The BJP has done a lot of work in the MCD with limited resources as a result, the people are showing huge support to our candidates during campaigning,” said State BJP president Adesh Gupta, while addressing the media.

Gupta accused the AAP of crossing all limits of corruption in the Delhi Government saying that this is the reason why Delhiites are not letting their leaders hold public meetings. “In many places, senior leaders of AAP had to leave the meeting and run away. Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, who opened liquor shops in every street, had to run away from a meeting yesterday itself due to heavy protests,” he claimed.

Informing about the initiatives taken by the BJP to make the city garbage-free, Gupta said that four waste to energy plants have been made operational along with a dhala-free campaign.

“BJP has made all the facilities online for birth - death and other trade licences. We only provide permanent solutions to people’s problems,” Gupta added.

Delhi MCD polls giving ‘stiff’ competition to Guj elections

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a ‘stiff competition’ to the Gujarat polls are the elections for the ‘humble’ Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), slated for December 4, with the BJP deploying its full army of leaders barring Prime Minister Narendra Modi to stop the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in its tracks to capture the local body. The BJP on Monday held over 80 meetings including door-to-door campaigns, padyatras, nukkad sabhas and road shows across Delhi.

The din and dust kicked off by the key BJP leaders in the nooks and corners of Delhi has virtually given the modest MCD a ‘national fame’ with BJP president JP Nadda held over 80 meetings including Amit Shah and BJP-ruled State Chief Ministers making a bee-line to campaign in the national Capital.

The ‘high force’ used by the BJP has made the Delhi citizenry awaken to their new

found importance with the distant and marginalized streets lighting up with the big-wigs canvassing for votes.

Aiming to return to power in the MCD for the fourth time in a row, Delhi BJP has lined up a list of over 60 star campaigners, including its incumbent state CMs and former CMs from distant states.

Union Ministers, including Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Smriti Irani, Piyush Goyal, Kiren Rijjiu, Hardeep Puri and Anurag Thakur are seen in public rallies and road shows in all the 14 districts. They are addressing rallies and also joining the door-to-door campaigning. The high octane canvassing is underway day and night.

Wary of AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal engaging in subtle tactics to unseat the BJP from the seat of power from the MCD and also prove a point nationally, the BJP is going full steam with a planned conduct of 250 small meetings in different parts of

the city. The BJP has been helming the MCD since 2007.

It is also reaching out to non-Hindi speaking people from southern states, Odisha, West Bengal and North East among others. They have a sizeable population in large pockets across the city, including Dwarka in south-West Delhi and RK Puram, CR Park, Satya Niketan and Munirka in South Delhi.

The Capital city also has sizeable number of growing settlers from the North-East.

As of now Assam, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana Chief Ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma, Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Manohar Lal Khattar respectively have hit the streets in Delhi taking on the AAP and the Congress.

Khattar, while campaigning for the MCD poll candidate in Shastri Nagar, hit out at Kejriwal, alleging that he is used to “cheating and lying”. “I have been a victim of this as the chief minister of Haryana,” the Haryana chief minister



said, citing the issues of water supply to Delhi from his state and crop residue burning. He targeted Kejriwal for not removing jailed AAP leader Satyendar Jain from the cabinet, saying if he does not do it either the court will or people will “beat up and remove” him.

Kejriwal earlier used to cry over crop residue burning in Haryana and Punjab, and blame farmers in these states when air pollution levels increased in Delhi. “Satellite images show there is no pollution from Haryana due to crop residue burning, but there is an AAP government in Punjab

where crop residue is still being burnt,” the senior BJP leader said.

Lambasting the Kejriwal, MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said, “It is amusing that Kejriwal demanded Bharat Ratna for Satyendar Jain and Manish Sisodia. Kejriwal should be given ‘Dhokha Ratna Puraskar’ and Sisodia ‘Sharab Ratna Pursakar’ for the existing condition of Delhi”, Union Minister Jitendra Singh campaigned in Jagatpuri and Anarkali wards. Tomar participated in the election campaign in Jama Masjid, Chandni Mahal and Sadar Bazar ward.

‘Vote for AAP in MCD for development’

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday held 10 nukkad sabhas across the Capital and promised that all sanitation workers would be paid salaries on time and jobs of contractual workers would be regularised if the AAP was voted to power in the MCD.

Holding street corner meetings in Gokalpur, Rohtas Nagar, Ashok Nagar, Dilshad Colony and Shahdara, the Deputy Chief Minister said his party will focus on making Delhi “the cleanest and the most beautiful city”. “People must be aware that if corporators from the BJP or the Congress are elected, they will spend their tenure fighting. To pace up development work, AAP councillors must be voted to power,” Sisodia said.

He claimed that the BJP in MCD failed to clean Delhi’s garbage and turned the city into a dumpyard instead. “It (BJP) failed to fulfil its core responsibility. The public now has expectations from Arvind Kejriwal...They believe he will help get rid of the BJP and the



garbage,” the Deputy Chief Minister said.

The AAP’s 10 guarantees for the December 4 elections announced earlier this month include a promise to clear the three landfill sites at Ghazipur, Bhalaswa and Okhla. Sisodia also alleged that a school run by the MCD in Gokalpur had been neglected and it is surrounded by a garbage mound. “The BJP has problems with the education of poor children, which is why they did not get the schools of MCD repaired. In Gokalpuri ward, they have made a dumping yard outside a school wall,” he said.

The senior leader said Delhiites had only one demand from the government and that was to keep the city clean.

Meanwhile, AAP senior leader and MP Raghav Chadha

also visited the Ghazipur Landfill site on Monday.

Taking the matter to the Twitter, Chadha commented, “You might be wondering what hill station this is.

“Welcome to Ghazipur’s mountain of garbage that has now grown taller than Qutub Minar, thanks to BJP led MCD. A stunning example of ‘Vikas’ by BJP that continues to achieve greater heights. #BJPFailedDelhi #KachreKaPahad.”

“Delhi gave BJP one job — to manage garbage & clean the city, but BJP failed at that too. Only AAP can fix MCD, come out in large numbers and press the Jhaadu button to bring Kejriwal Model in MCD,” he added. Chadha campaigned in Deoli on Monday, sought votes for AAP candidates.

AAP pulls out all stops in its mass contact poll programmes

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Monday conducted around 145 nukkad sabhas, buzz programs, and jamsnavd, ahead of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) election.

During the campaign, several big names of the party including Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, Delhi State Convenor Gopal Rai, Rajya Sabha MP Sushil Gupta, Rajya Sabha Raghav Chadha, Cabinet Ministers Kailash Gahlot, Raaj Kumar Anand, Punjab Minister Sardar Harjot Bains were among other who hit the roads of the national Capital to seek votes for the forthcoming election in Delhi.

As per the statement released by the AAP, the party is working to connect with each and every person in Delhi by holding mass dialogues, Nukkad Sabhas, padyatra, and door-to-door visits all over Delhi.

“Workers talk to people



about their problems door-to-door and tell them how AAP will deliver on the Kejriwal Ki 10 Guarantee campaign. Apart from this, star campaigners of AAP are holding public dialogues and sabhas every day at different places of Delhi,” it said.

“Under the leadership of Arvind Kejriwal, AAP is sending this message to every person in Delhi that if the Kejriwal Model comes to MCD, all the problems of MCD will be solved. Today, star campaigners appealed to people to vote for AAP by holding public

dialogues, Nukkad Sabhas, and buzz programs at more than 145 places in Delhi,” it stated.

The way people are coming in larger and larger numbers day by day in the Jamsnavd and Nukkad Sabhas of the AAP, it has been proved that the party’s strategy has been highly successful.

People are siding with the Kejriwal Ki 10 Guarantee campaign and demanding a garbage-free Delhi, which only the Kejriwal government can make possible, the statement read.

Police van carrying Aftab attacked by armed men

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A police van carrying Aftab Poonawala, accused of killing his live-in partner Shraddha, was attacked by some weapon-wielding people outside the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) in Rohini where he was taken for a polygraph test on Monday. The police van was attacked by at least two men brandishing swords who claimed to be from the Hindu Sena.

According to GS Sidhu, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini), two persons, Kuldeep Thakur and Nigam Gujjar, both residents of Gurugram, have been detained. Thakur has a car sale and purchase business while Gujjar works as a truck driver. In a

video doing rounds on social media, the men can be seen chasing the van carrying Aftab and managing to open the van’s rear door in an apparent attempt to attack him, only to find a policeman standing inside.

At the time of incident outside the Forensic Science Laboratory in Rohini at least five Police personnel were guarding Poonawala. He had underwent polygraph test at the FSL Laboratory earlier in the day.

Hindu Sena chief Vishnu Gupta said that through police and media reports he has learnt that the people who attacked the police van carrying Aftab Poonawala were members of the outfit. “They could be members of our



group but what they did was their own/personal step and not of the Hindu Sena,” said Gupta.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police has recovered the weapon allegedly used by Aftab to cut the body of Shraddha. Police have also recovered a ring that belonged to the 27-year-old victim, which Aftab allegedly gave to another

woman.

Earlier, the Delhi Police, along with teams from the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, pumped out water from a pond at Maidan Garhi in Chhatarpur area after Poonawala claimed that he had thrown Walker’s severed head and some other remains there.

On Monday, the remaining

session of the polygraph test was held at Rohini’s Forensic Lab. “When the last session was held, there was a health issue due to which some sessions were not satisfactory. Our lab and preparation for the narco test is complete,” Head of the Department of Crime Scene Management at FSL, Rohini, Sanjeev Gupta, said.

“Whether Aftab is cooperating during the test or not, we will tell the investigating agency as this is a confidential matter,” he said. Tihar jail PRO Dheeraj Mathur said Poonawala is in Tihar jail number 4. When he came, his health check-up was done and there were no issues, he said.

He has been kept in a separate cell and is under 24-hour CCTV monitoring.

NCDRC orders JMD Gardens’ builders to refund excess amount taken from allottees

STAFF REPORTER ■
GURUGRAM

In a huge relief to the flat buyers, the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has directed the builder of the JMD Gardens to refund excess amount charged towards super area by adding the area of balcony and also ordered to transfer Contingency Deposit to the Resident Welfare Society (RWA) with Interest Free Maintenance Service (IFMS).

An order passed by the Bench headed by C. Vishwanath and Justice Ram Surat Ram Maurya, stated that joint reading of the clauses makes it clear that in the



Builder Buyer Agreement the area of balcony was not included in the super area and Opposite March 19, 2021, directed the parties to clarify whether the super area included balcony also.

“In the Builder Buyer Agreement, balcony is not included in the super area. Therefore, the contention of the Complainants relating to changing of definition of super area stands proved. Accordingly, it is directed refund the price collected towards that area,” it stated.

The order further stated that the fact, however, remains that builder had taken PLC from the allottees of L and M Block towers. Construction of new towers after collecting preferential location charges is illegal.

Accordingly, it is directed to refund the PLC collected from the allottees of L and M Block with interest at the rate of nine per cent per annum

India, France seek to boost Def industrial cooperation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India and France on Monday explored possibilities to bolster defence industrial co-operation with the focus on 'Make in India' and strengthen maritime co-operation during talks here between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his French counterpart Sebastien Lecornu.

The two leaders also held parleys on a wide range of bilateral, regional and defence issues under the aegis of the fourth India-France Annual Defence Dialogue.

Giving details of the Dialogue, defence ministry officials said later the two Ministers reviewed the ongoing military-to-military co-operation which has increased substantially in the recent

years. They discussed means to strengthen maritime co-operation and increase the scope and complexity of bilateral exercises. They noted with satisfaction that India and France recently held their bilateral Air Exercise 'Garuda' at Air Force Station, Jodhpur successfully.

During the dialogue, one of the key areas of discussion was defence industrial co-operation with a focus on 'Make in India'. Future collaborations and potential co-production opportunities were discussed. The Ministers agreed that the technical groups from both the countries should meet early next year and take the key co-operation issues forward.

The Ministers recognised their convergences on a number of strategic and defence issues and shared the com-



mitment to work together on enhancing cooperation in bilateral, regional and multi-national fora, with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region. France is the current chair of Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and Indian Scan Naval Symposium (IONS) and both countries cooperate closely in these fora.

As part of his visit to India, Lecornu on Sunday made a

day-long trip to Headquarters, Southern Naval Command and visited India's first indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant. The French Minister said he was highly impressed with INS Vikrant. France is one of India's most trusted strategic partners and both countries look forward to celebrating 25 years of their strategic partnership in 2023.

Green panel nixes Min's request to exempt it from prior approval for gas pipeline repair

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A central green panel has rejected the Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas' (MoPNG) request to exempt it from taking prior approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 while carrying out repair, maintenance, upgradation and widening works of hydrocarbon pipelines across the States.

The Directorate of Hydrocarbon (DoH), under the MoPNG, had sought exemption similar to that for roads and transmission lines which do not have to take mandatory approval from the central panel.

Refusing to give the nod, the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC), under the Union Environment Ministry, however, argued that hydrocarbons and oil pipelines work usually ends up in breaking of forest land, resulting in felling of trees as well as damage to the surrounding vegetation and fauna.

The matter had come up for discussion at a FAC meeting early this month where the Directorate of Hydrocarbon (DoH) under the MoPNG had submitted that oil and gas sector, national oil companies (NOCs) have been operating in the country since 1960s and several pipeline networks have been installed with vested Right of Ways (RoWs) prior to 1980s for the transportation of oil and gas products.

"The existing pipeline network needs repair and maintenance work to be done on a regular basis. Since pipelines are linear projects as the transmission lines and roads, their repair, maintenance and upgradation may be allowed without prior approval under FC Act 1980," said the DoH.

However, the Committee dismissed the DoH demand, pointing out that the two works i.e. related to oil and natural gas



and roads and transmission lines cannot be compared. "Repair and maintenance of transmission lines and roads, constructed prior to 1980 is with the prior permission of the State Forest Department. Repair and maintenance has been restricted within the RoW of the road/transmission line without involving fresh breaking of forest land. Moreover, the road and transmission lines are above ground facilities which have continuously been in use and therefore, there is no perceptible damage to the vegetation of

land by allowing their repair and maintenance.

However, after laying such lines (of oil and gas), the land use is restored to its original state. In most cases, vegetation comes over the pipelines and the land use is restored to its original forest land use.

Hence, the Committee apprehended that repair and maintenance of such lines may not be possible without breaking of forest land and disturbance may be caused to the surrounding vegetation and fauna due to breaking of forest land.

Original idea of India nothing to do with religion or identity: SC Judge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court Justice P S Narasimha has said the original idea of India has nothing to do with religion or identity, but the people who loved the nation.

Delivering the keynote address for the 1st Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi Memorial Lecture at the India International Centre, Justice Narasimha delved into various phases of Indian history and said, "We are a tolerant nation and let us keep it that way."

In his 40-minute speech, Justice Narasimha talked about how colonial powers tried to destroy Indian identity and along with it the self respect of

the people. He said the freedom struggle was driven not only by the aspiration of the people to gain territorial independence but also to assert their identity, and the psychological aspect of it must be studied.

Justice Narasimha spoke at length on the evolution of the Indian nation and said India evolved as nation not because commonality of religion of its people. "The original idea of India has nothing to do with religion or identity, but the people who loved the nation."

In this context, he also talked about the need for greater tolerance in the society and said India is a tolerant nation and it should remain that way.

The occasion was the inau-

guration of the Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi Foundation on Saturday. Also present were a host of judges of the Supreme Courts and High courts. Sidharth Luthra, Senior Advocate of the SC, was the Guest of Honour, while Vinod Kanth, senior dddocate, Patna High Court was the Special Guest.

Referring to the Preamble of the Indian Constitution, Justice Narasimha said among everything else the Constitution promises to strive for 'Fraternity' was the most important of all.

"Only Fraternity can bring about harmony and allegiance to truth and reason. Fraternity must entail a willing and agreeable reduction of the assertion

of the self, for it to give way and to bestow identity to the neighbor," he said.

Justice Narasimha concluded that most cases of contention in Courts arise from an assertion of power, property or ego, and said that the Indian Constitution leaves space for the most subtle and sacred; and our identity is embedded in its interpretation, and this must find way in the judgments of the Indian courts.

The Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi Foundation is a non-profit organization established in the memory of Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi. It aims to contribute to the development of the full spectrum of the new legal order in India. The Foundation shall endeavour

to promote, foster, and maintain legal thought through the betterment of legal, judicial, and social infrastructure, promotion of discourse on legal and judicial education and reform, judicial impact assessment and judicial conscientiousness. These proposed initiatives will be complemented by bolstering a comprehensive understanding of legal principles in professionals and nurturing the present and future generations of the legal profession. The Foundation aspires to contribute to positive efforts that effect a long-lasting difference in the field of Law.

Justice Tripathi was a prominent figure in the legal fraternity, both as a part of the Bar and the Bench. He was

sworn in as a judge of the Patna High Court on October 9, 2006. He took office as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Chhattisgarh on July 7, 2018. On March 23, 2019, he was appointed as a Judicial Member of Lokpal of India, the National Anti-Corruption Ombudsman, wherein he played a pivotal role during the formative period of the institution with his innovative ideas and inputs. He held this position until his untimely demise on May 2, 2020.

The functioning of the Foundation will be overseen by Justice Tripathi's wife, Alka Tripathi, as Founder and Trustee along with his daughters and son-in-law: Anushree Tripathi, Consultant (For Law on Climate Change), Ministry



of Environment, Forest and Climate Change; Aditi Tripathi, Advocate-on-Record, Supreme Court of India; Aakriti Tripathi,

Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School, and Rahul Narayanan, Senior Corporate Counsel (Litigation), Amazon.

SC closes proceedings on plea challenging demolition around tomb in Maha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday closed the proceedings on an interim plea after taking note of the submissions of Maharashtra authorities that the demolition drive conducted to remove alleged unauthorised structures on government land around the tomb of Afzal Khan, the commander of the Adil Shahi dynasty of Bijapur, has been completed.

"Now the demolition drive has been carried out and hence, so far as the interim application

(challenging the demolition) is concerned, actually nothing survives," a bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice P S Narasimha said while disposing of the interim plea of Hazrat Mohd Afzal Khan Memorial Society against the demolition drive.

It, however, kept the main appeal of the society pending for adjudication against two Bombay High Court orders asking the state government to demolish the illegal structures in and around the tomb. The Society had claimed the demo-

lition could damage the tomb.

The top court had on November 11 sought reports from the district collector and the deputy conservator of forests of Satara in Maharashtra on the demolition drive conducted to remove alleged unauthorised structures on government land at the site.

At the outset, the bench perused the reports filed by the district collector and the deputy conservator of forests of Satara besides the pictures of the demolition drive and said they showed the extent of illegal



constructions on forest land. Senior advocate N K Kaul, appearing for the state government, said the tomb of Afzal

Khan and another grave, which was found during the demolition drive, are "untouched" and "protected".

Joint military exercise boosts Defence cooperation between India, Malaysia

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to bilateral Defence ties, a joint military exercise between troops of India and Malaysia began on Monday there. The drill aims to enhance inter-operability in planning and execution of various operations in jungle terrain.

Exercise, 'Harimau Shakti-2022', commenced at Pulau Kluang, Malaysia and will culminate on December 12. The exercise is an annual training event between the Indian Army and the Malaysian Army, being conducted since 2012, the defence ministry said here on Monday.

Combat-experienced troops of the Garhwal Rifles Regiment of the Indian Army and the Royal Malay Regiment of the Malaysian Army are participating in the exercise this year to share experiences gained during operations in order to enhance inter-operability in planning and execution of various operations in jungle terrain, it said.

The scope of this exercise involves a command planning exercise at the battalion level and company-level field training exercise on sub-conventional operations in jungle terrain.

The joint exercise schedule includes the establishment of a joint command post, joint surveillance centre, sharing expertise in employment of aerial assets, technical demonstrations, casualty management and casualty evacuation apart from planning logistics at the battalion level, the ministry statement said.



Islamic luminaries from India, Indonesia to hold talks on countering radicalisation, terror

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Leading Islamic luminaries of India and Indonesia will on Tuesday hold discussions here on countering radicalization and extremism besides other related issues.

A delegation of Indonesian ulemas and other religious leaders accompanying Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Security Affairs Mohammad Mahfud MD will take part in the discussions, officials said here on Monday.

National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval had invited Mahfud when he had visited Indonesia for the Second India-Indonesia Security Dialogue at the NSA level on March 17, they said.

Mahfud, the coordinating minister for portfolios such as home, foreign and defence who is also the Indonesian counterpart of the NSA,

accepted the invitation.

He had suggested to bring a delegation of interfaith religious leaders to share experiences with their Indian counterparts on the "role of Ulema in fostering a culture of inter-faith peace and social harmony in India and Indonesia".

The delegation will have a day-long interaction at the India International Cultural Centre with Indian counterparts representing leading Islamic luminaries from Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Lucknow-based Asifi mosque, and the Bohra community among others. They are also likely to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The day-long discussion will be spread over three sessions -- Islam: Continuity and Change, Harmonising inter-faith society: Practice and Experience, and Countering Radicalization and Extremism in India and Indonesia.

CBI arrests imposter at Tamil Nadu Bhavan demanding costly gifts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested an alleged imposter who used to meet private individuals at the Tamil Nadu Bhavan here and demand costly gifts posing as an IPS officer and a joint director of the agency.

The arrested accused has been identified as Visakhapatnam-resident Kovvi ReddySrinivas Rao.

Rao allegedly demanded costly gifts from private individuals assuring them of lobbying with unidentified public servants on their behalf for getting favourable response in various matters, including in



cases registered by different Central investigative agencies, reads the FIR.

He also demanded costly gifts from private persons by claiming that the gifts needed to be further handed over to senior government officers, according to the FIR.

It is alleged that Rao posing as a senior IPS officer

allegedly met six persons after coming to the national capital on November 22 on various occasions, allegedly offering them favourable outcomes in various matters pending before Government authorities, the FIR alleged.

From offering employment to allowing entry of goods vehicles of a private company during no-entry hours in the National Capital Region, Rao assured solutions to problems faced by his victims, it added.

The CBI has booked Rao under Indian Penal Code Section relating to cheating (420) and cheating by personation (419).

Andhra HC can't be town planner or engineer: SC

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from farmers and their associations, and the Centre to a plea by the Andhra Pradesh Government challenging the High Court decision which said the State Legislature "lacked competence" to make any law for shifting, bifurcating or trifurcating the capital. It observed the Andhra Pradesh High Court cannot be a "town planner" or an "engineer" and direct the Government that the capital city should come up in six months.

A bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna also stayed time-bound directions issued by the High Court, including the one that said the state will construct and develop Amaravati capital city and capital region within six months. The High Court had also ordered the Government and the authorities concerned to complete infrastructure development like roads, drainage and electricity and drinking water supply in the Amaravati Capital

City and Region within one month.

The SC bench said it needs to examine the issue at length and posted a batch of petitions filed by the State, farmers, associations and their committees for further hearing on January 31. The top court, which asked the parties to file their responses by December, was informed by senior advocate KK Venugopal that the state government has repealed the law for having three different capitals of the State.

On March 3, the High Court had said the inaction of the State and Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA's) failure to develop the capital city and capital region as agreed to in terms of the Development Agreement-cum-Irrevocable General Power of Attorney, is nothing but a deviation from the promise made by the State, defeating legitimate expectation. It had said the State and the APCRDA violated the fundamental rights of the petitioners (farmers), as they surrendered their only source of livelihood -- over 33,000 acres of fertile land.

IN SHORT

FOREIGN SECY KWATRA GRANTED 16-MONTH EXTENSION

New Delhi: Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been granted a 16-month extension in the post beyond his date of superannuation on December 31 this year. Kwatra had assumed office as Foreign Secretary on May 1 this year, succeeding Harsh Vardhan Shringla to the post.

INDIA'S 1ST PRIVATELY-DESIGNED LAUNCHPAD INAUGURATED



New Delhi: India's first launchpad and mission control centre designed and operated by a private player has been inaugurated at the Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota, space startup Agnikul Cosmos announced on Monday.

EC ANNOUNCES ₹15L TO KIN OF JAWANS SHOT DEAD

New Delhi: The Election Commission of India has announced Rs 15 lakh ex gratia to the kin of two paramilitary jawans shot dead, following an internal clash, during election duty in Gujarat's Porbandar.

38,000 SCREENINGS AT MOHFW HEALTH PAVILLION

New Delhi: Nearly 38,000 screenings and counselling have been conducted at the health pavilion of the 'Ministry of Health and Family Welfare' which was awarded for its "Outstanding Contribution towards Public Communication and Outreach".



PUBLIC NOTICE

This relates to the completion of three transmission towers as part of the 220 KV Alusteng-Drass line diversion works in Nilgrar, Sonmarg. This detour work was carried out as a result of NHIDCL's new bridge being built for the Zojila tunnel.

The general public is informed that the aforementioned transmission line part will be charged on November 29, 2022. Therefore, all are advised to adhere to the guidelines of Indian Electricity Act and Keep away from the above transmission line assets.

Plantation of any high rise trees or construction in the corridor of line, climbing on the tower or attempt to touch the line conductors are highly dangerous and is therefore strictly prohibited POWERGRID shall not be responsible for any accident/incident of any kind, due to interference with the tower of the transmission line. Action as per the law shall be initiated against the defaulters.

The public is accordingly to take all precautions and not to interfere with high voltage line in any manner.

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Northern Region Transmission System-II
OB-26, Grid Bhawan, Near Bahu Plaza, Rail Head Complex, Jammu-180012 (J&K)
Tel.: 0191-2471178, CIN:L40101DL1989GOI038121
A MAHARATNA PSU

Mamata to announce 2 new districts today

Sundarbans, Basirhat dists to be carved out of South, North 24 Parganas

PTI ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is expected to officially announce Sundarbans and Basirhat as two new districts of the State during an administrative meeting scheduled on November 29, a senior official said on Monday. The two districts are set to be carved out of South and North 24 Parganas districts, he said. "All the necessary work to create the two new districts has been completed. The CM is likely to announce the names tomorrow in Hingalganj during the administrative meeting," the official told PTI.

The CM will begin her three-day tour of the mangrove area of Sundarbans from Monday. The district of Sundarbans is likely to have around 13 blocks of South 24 Parganas while Basirhat may have six of North 24 Parganas, he said. Sundarbans, a



Sundarbans National Park File photo

UNESCO World Heritage site, currently is spread over North and South 24 Parganas districts, while Basirhat is a subdivision of North 24 Parganas. West Bengal currently has 23 districts. The state had to bear a cost of at least Rs 200 crore to create each district, the official said. Banerjee will perform 'Pratiki Puja' (nature worship) at Hingalganj to protect inhabitants from elephant attacks, the official said. "I will perform 'Prakriti Puja' in Hingalganj. Of late, elephant attacks have increased as jumbos are straying out of forests in search of food," she had on November 25 said in the

assembly. She had also expressed concern over Sundarbans facing natural calamities such as cyclones and floods every year and said her government has submitted a master plan for the development of the area to the NITI Aayog. "We have submitted the master plan for Sundarbans to the NITI Aayog. Every year, there are cyclones and floods. If there is a master plan, the problem will be solved. I will ask the forest minister to look into the matter more seriously," she added. On Wednesday, Banerjee is scheduled to visit Sajnekhali in South 24 Parganas.

Modi, Shah are Duryodhan, Duhshashan: TMC MLA

BJP to press for House adjournment; if they can compare Didi with Surpanakha, then we can dub their leaders villains too, says Mitra

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari has asked the BJP MLAs to press for an adjournment motion in the State Assembly after Trinamool Congress legislator and former minister Sabitri Mitra compared Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah to epic villains Duryodhana and Duhshashana.

"The way a senior TMC leader has insulted the Prime Minister, the party owes an explanation and so we have asked our women MLAs to press for an adjournment motion in the State Assembly tomorrow," Adhikari on Monday said.

In an apparent counter attack against some BJP leaders for comparing Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Surpanakha the sister of demon king Ravana, Mitra a former minister earlier said that "if they can compare our leader with Surpanakha then I have no hesitation comparing there leaders Narendra Modi and Amit Shah to Duryodhana and Duhshashana whose only job was to de-robe women."

The TMC MLA from



Leader of Opposition in West Bengal Assembly and BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari with party MLAs protests against the State Government after staging a walkout from the State Legislative Assembly during the ongoing Winter Session, in Kolkata on Monday PTI

Malda's Manikchak constituency also alleged that very few Gujaratis had fought the freedom struggle and instead "many of them were involved in supporting the British and supplying them weapons... they had no role in the freedom struggle and yet they are shouting Bharat Mata ki Jai ... do they have the right to raise this slogan..." Adhikari reacted sharply wondering whether Mitra had similar feelings about Mahatma Gandhi or Sardar Ballavbhai Patel.

"She has come from the Congress ... has she forgotten

the contributions of Bapu (Gandhi) and Patel in the Indian freedom struggle ... Does she remember the National Anthem which refers to all the constituent States of India ... we will bring up these issues tomorrow," Adhikari said. The Duryodhana controversy erupts days after the Trinamool Congress and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had to publicly apologise for a statement made by her ministerial colleague Akhil Giri who made disparaging remarks against President Droupadi Murmu.

CAA will come soon, says Union Min Pramanik

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

Days after Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari assured the members of Matua community of southern Bengal districts that Citizenship Amendment Act would be implemented in the State, Union Minister of State for Home affairs Nisith Pramanik on Monday told a large gathering in North Bengal that "soon CAA is going to be a reality."

Addressing a public meeting Pramanik who is an MP from Coochbehar said "CAA has not been enacted to take away anyone's citizenship ... rather CAA will be implemented to give citizenship to the genuine and deserving persons ... there is no doubt that soon it will be implemented not only in Bengal but in the entire country."

Adhikari had a few days ago told a large rally at Thakurnagar in North 24 Parganas that "no power can stop implementing CAA."

Apparently referring to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee he said "some people are trying to obstruct CAA from being implemented ... but I dare them all to stop it

from coming ... CAA will be definitely implemented ... for those who have to produce their pre-1971 property deeds to get a passport done ... this cannot go on for long ... the Matuas who had been driven away from Bangladesh and who took refuge in India to save their Hindu religion will definitely be made Indian citizens through CAA."

The Chief Minister on the other hand said that the fact that the Matuas had their voting rights and properties in India itself proved that they were Indian citizens, so there is no need for CAA ... it is only a device to divide the population ahead of the elections ... it is an electoral tool of the BJP to polarise the population ... but they will never succeed."

The BJP digs up the CAA issue at a time when the panchayat elections are barely a few months away. The experts say that the reason why CAA is being raised in the Matua region and North Bengal because the saffron outfit desperately wants to hold on to its support base.

Curiously the BJP has not been raising the CAA issue in other districts like Malda, Murshidabad, Burdwan and Jangalmahal.

Ex-bureaucrat slams Modi Govt for failing to revive eco

PNS ■ KOCHI

A widely respected former bureaucrat and a veteran corporate honcho have lambasted the Narendra Modi Government at the Centre for its failure in resuscitating the country's economy and taking India to the path of Hindu majoritarianism which has destroyed its social fabric as well as religious pluralism.

K M Chandrasekhar, former cabinet secretary (2007-2011) has said in his memoir As Good As My Word (Harper Collins) said that Narendra Modi's action disbanding the Planning Commission has done a lot of damage to India's economy as well as federalism.

The Prime Minister in his first ever Independence Day Message to the nation in 2014 had announced that the Planninhynjh Commission, which till then had played a lead role in plan allocation to the States was being disbanded and a new entity by name NITI Ayog would become functional soon with wider mandate.

Gujjar-Bakerwal JAC calls off strike after assurance on quota status

J&K JAC suspends 'Paidal March' scheduled from Kupwara to Kathua

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

After extracting a commitment from the Union Home Minister Amit Shah that no dilution in the existing quota for Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis will be entertained during their close door meeting in New Delhi last week, the Jammu Kashmir Gujjar Bakerwal Joint Action Committee (JAC) Monday suspended their protest 'Paidal March' after it started from Kupwara to Kathua on November 4.

The Gujjar Bakerwal community members were protesting against the Central Government's move on granting Scheduled Tribe status to the Pahari Speaking people who belong to a linguistic group.

The community feared the government's move to include upper castes in the scheduled tribe category will deprive

- KEY POINTS**
- Gujjar Bakerwal community members were protesting against the Central Government's move on granting Scheduled Tribe status to the Pahari Speaking people who belong to a linguistic group
 - The March started from Kupwara on November 4 towards Kathua was scheduled to touch all the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir

them of their rights in education and jobs.

The March started from Kupwara on November 04 towards Kathua was scheduled to touch all the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. It was halted at Kalakote on November 22 in the Rajouri district.

However, during a meeting with the Union Home Minister Amit Shah on 24th of November at New Delhi the agitating Joint Action Committee members were assured that no dilution in the existing quota Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis will be entertained.

Addressing a joint press

conference in Jammu, the JAC members thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah for an effective move to protect the reservation of existing 12 tribal groups.

The JAC members expressed hoped that Union Home Minister will fulfill his promises made with the delegation who met Amit Shah at New Delhi in presence of Union Home Secretary A K Bhalla, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), Er Ghulam Ali Khatana, senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma, prominent Tribal researcher Javid Rahi and some Gujjar leaders.

The JAC members said, Amit Shah assured the Gujjar Bakerwal Joint Action Committee leaders that existing reservations to the community will remain intact and the Pahari, Gadda Brahman, Koli and Padri as Scheduled Tribe would be accommodated in a separate block.

"It was made clear to their delegation that new STs will be accommodated as a separate group of Scheduled Tribe with special arrangements ensuring that reservation to Gujjars, Bakerwals, Gaddis, Sippis does not get affected".

Opp must shun divide-rule policy to win over Gujarati hearts: Modi

PM slams Cong for allowing Narmada Bachao activist Patkar to join Rahul's yatra

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Targetting the Congress over the participation of 'Narmada Bachao Andolan' activist Medha Patkar in the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' led by Rahul Gandhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said in his Gujarat election campaign that the opposition party must shun its "divide and rule" strategy to regain the trust of the people of Gujarat.

While the first phase of poll campaigning ended in Gujarat, the campaign for the second-phase is continuing with three main parties- the BJP, Congress and AAP- going whole hog to woo voters with their high and low decibel campaign strategy and road shows.

Addressing a poll rally in Palitana town of Bhavnagar district, Modi said the people of



Gujarat have rejected the Congress because the State had suffered a lot due to the party's policy of inciting people of one region or community against another.

The people of Gujarat are not ready to help those who support "elements wanting to break India", he said.

Modi, during his previous campaign rallies in Gujarat, had also targeted Rahul Gandhi for walking with Medha Patkar during the Bharat Jodo Yatra.

On Monday, Modi accused the Congress of trying to disrupt the reach of the Narmada water to the parched region of Saurashtra.

He said the people of Gujarat will never forgive those who were walking with a person who was responsible for stalling the Sardar Sarovar dam

project for 40 years. "The Congress's ideology is to divide and rule. Before Gujarat became a separate state, it (Congress) made Gujaratis and Marathis fight against each other. Later, the Congress incited people of different castes and communities to fight against each other. Gujarat suffered a lot because of such sins of the Congress", he claimed.

The smart people of Gujarat understood this strategy of the Congress and came together to show the door to such "divisive forces", the Prime Minister said.

The situation changed after the BJP came to power, he said, adding Gujarat has been on the path of development for the last

20 years. "The Congress is losing because the people of Gujarat have shown unity. The Congress must shun casteism, communalism, vote bank politics and divide and rule (ideology) to win back the trust of people of Gujarat, because they are not at all ready to help those who support elements wanting to break India," Modi said.

Elections for the 182-member Gujarat Assembly are scheduled on December 1 and 5 and the counting of votes will be taken up on December 8.

Amidst the competitive electioneering, former BJP leader and Gujarat minister Jaynarayan Vyas joined the Congress on Monday.

Cong sacrificed two Prime Ministers in terror fight, Kharge counters Modi jibe



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge addresses a press conference ahead of the forthcoming Gujarat Assembly elections, in Ahmedabad on Monday PTI

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused Congress of playing vote bank politics over terrorism, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Monday said his party had sacrificed two prime ministers in the fight against terrorism.

Kharge questioned whether any leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had fought for the freedom of the country.

"We have done the work to fight against terrorists. To maintain peace in the country, we have sacrificed our leaders. Indira Gandhi sacrificed her life to keep the country united. Rajiv Gandhi was martyred for the unity of the country. Is there a leader in the BJP who at least fought for the freedom of the country?" Kharge asked.

Addressing a rally in Kheda in poll-bound Gujarat on Sunday, the prime minister had said Congress views terrorism from the prism of the vote bank. He also said, "terrorism was not over yet and the politics of the Congress has also not changed."

"Here (in Congress), we have lost our two famous and

world-respected prime ministers to strengthen and unite the country. This is an election of the state Assembly and not of Parliament. We are here before you with the issues affecting the state. It is better if he (Modi) talks about the successes and failures of the state," Kharge said. On the BJP's poll promise of implementing the Uniform Civil Code in Gujarat, Kharge said it was an attempt to divide society and create controversy for votes.

"They (BJP) are provoking Congress and other leaders to speak up and get angry. Their aim is to provoke us and divide society, but we are not going to fall into their trap," he said.

Slamming Modi for seeking votes in his name and claiming only he contributed to the progress of Gujarat as if there were no leaders before him, Kharge said the prime minister keeps talking about the Congress has done nothing in the past 70-odd years.

"If any party built the country in 70 years, it was Congress," Kharge said, adding, unlike Modi, he does not take credit for the several thousand crore worth of projects sanctioned when he was Union minister.

NIA court sentences six terrorists in JeM conspiracy case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A NIA Special Court here on Monday sentenced six terrorists in Jaish-e-Mohamad Conspiracy Case under various sections of Indian Penal Code (IPC), Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and Explosives Substances Act.

Those convicted in the case are Sajad Ahmad Khan alias Sajjad Ahmed Khan (Handoora, Awantipora, Pulwama, with life imprisonment and rigorous imprisonment, Tanveer Ahmed Ganie alias Tanveer Ahmad (Mandoora, Tral, Pulwama) slapped with five years imprisonment and fine, Ishfaq Ahmad Bhat alias Khalpora of Marhama, Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir convicted for life imprisonment, RI and fine and Mehraj-Ud-din Chopan alias Mehraj.

The case relates to criminal conspiracy by the top Jaish-e-

Mohammad (JeM) leaders Mufti Abdul Rauf Asghar, brother of Maulana Masood Azhar, based in Pakistan, to recruit persons to carry out terrorist acts in different parts of India.

A large number of Pakistan-trained terrorists, weapons and explosives trainers of JeM had illegally infiltrated into Indian territory after crossing the border, with the help of their associates based in different States of India.

"All the accused had carried out reconnaissance of targets, arranged hideouts and had provided logistical support to terrorists to carry out terror attacks in India. Sajad Ahmad Khan had been sent to Delhi to carry out reconnaissance of important targets and to establish a hideout in Delhi. The main aim was to identify, radicalize and recruit youth, impart them training in handling of weapons and explosives and fieldcraft and raise funds, procure weapons etc. in order to execute their nefarious designs," the NIA said in a statement.

Explosives were recovered at the behest of Mehrajuddin while detonators were recovered from Muzzaffar.

Ramdev tenders apology after MSCW serves him notice for objectionable remark on women

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

After a fierce public furore was sparked off three days ago by an objectionable remark against women that was allegedly made by Baba Ramdev recently, the Yoga guru on Monday, expressed his regret and also apologised for his sexist comment.

In an email sent to the Maharashtra State Commission for Women (MSCW) Chairperson Rupali Chakankar who had served him a notice seeking explanation for his questionable remarks, Ramdev expressed his regret and tendered his apology for his comment, even while claiming that his remarks had been "twisted out of the context".

Confirming the development, Chakankar said: "We have received Yoga Guru Ramdev's reply to our notice. However, if we receive more objections or complaints from the people, we will examine the full video-recording of last week's programme where he allegedly made the remarks and conduct a full-fledged inquiry into the entire episode."

It may be recalled that Ramdev - while addressing the women participants at a Yoga training programme had made objectionable remarks in the presence of Maharashtra CM.

Gehlot, Sachin are assets for party: Rahul after Raj CM's 'gaddar' slur on Pilot

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI | BHOPAL

Amid reports that the Congress leadership was highly upset with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for calling his former deputy Sachin Pilot a "gaddar", former party chief Rahul Gandhi on Monday said both the leaders are assets to the party.

Rahul's statement is significant as the Bharat Jodo Yatra, led by him, is expected to enter Rajasthan on December 4 from Madhya Pradesh. The padyatra will criss-cross through Rajasthan for 17 days.

On the prolonged power tussle between Gehlot and Pilot, Rahul said, "It will not affect the yatra and both the leaders are assets to the Congress party."

Gehlot last week called Pilot a "gaddar" (traitor) who cannot replace him as he had revolted against Congress in 2020 and tried to topple the state government, drawing a sharp response from his former deputy who said such "mud-slinging" would not help.

In a freewheeling Press conference in the midst of the yatra near Indore city in Madhya Pradesh, when Rahul Gandhi was asked by media whether he would like to con-



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi rides a bicycle during the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra, in Indore district on Monday PTI

test again from Amethi, he responded, "I don't want to give any headline to the media as at present my focus is on the Bharat Jodo Yatra."

"See, once again these are all attempts to distract from the main idea. You want newspapers to say tomorrow whether I will contest from Amethi or not. I want the newspapers to write about the Bharat Jodo Yatra, the ideas and philosophy behind the yatra. The answer to your question may come in a year or year-and-a-half," Rahul said, who currently represents Waynad Parliamentary constituency in Kerala.

In 2019, he had contested also from Amethi, considered to be his home turf, but lost to BJP leader Smriti Irani, a Cabinet Minister in the Narendra Modi government.

Panel holds talk with Gujjars on quota ahead of Bharat Jodo Raj leg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of former Congress President Rahul Gandhi's 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Rajasthan, a committee comprising three State Ministers on Monday held talks with a delegation from Gujjar community to address their demands related to reservation and other issues. The Ministers assured them that the Government will look into their charter of demands and asked them to attend another round of meeting on Tuesday.

Five communities under Most Backward Classes, including Gujjars, have been demanding a resolution to the problems faced in getting a five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutions, scholarships, promotion-related issues in jobs, budget for Devnarayan Board constituted for welfare of these communities and withdrawal of police cases against the protestors during the Gujjar agitation.

The three-member Cabinet sub-committee comprises Home Minister Rajendra Yadav, Education Minister B D Kalla and Youth Affairs Minister Ashok Chandra. Gujjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti had threatened that they will not allow the yatra to enter Rajasthan if their demands are not fulfilled.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Not so docile

People in ruthless dictatorships are not as submissive as their rulers want them to be

A few weeks ago, when Xi Jinping got elected as general secretary of the Chinese Communist Party for the next five years, he was on the top of the world—or at the centre of the Middle Kingdom, as imperial China saw itself. He is also China's President and head of the country's Central Military Commission. In short, all powers in the country are concentrated in his person. Backed with the second largest economy and a mighty military, and spurred by brazen belligerence, he looked like a Caesar who, after having taken full control of his own country, was now ready to take on the world. He even told the People's Liberation Army earlier this month to "focus all its energy on fighting" in preparation for war. The PLA must "comprehensively strengthen military training in preparation for war." At the CCP congress where he was made general secretary, he had cautioned of "dangerous storms" on the horizon. He vied with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, for the epithet 'the most dangerous man in the world.' And today, Xi is finding it hard to control his own people—or, in the communist lexicon, 'the masses.' The folks whom Xi and his CCP cronies take for granted—who can be subjected to exodus, surveillance, arrest, torture, execution—have rebelled against the tyranny they have been suffering, especially since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Hundreds of people are protested in China's major cities on Sunday the stupid and painful zero-Covid policy, "in a rare outpouring of public anger against the state," a news report said. 'Down with the Chinese Communist Party', 'down with Xi Jinping'—a crowd in Shanghai shouted these slogans. The protests against zero-Covid policy not just spread to other cities but may have also acquired the dimension of general resistance against the inhuman dictatorship people have been facing for decades, which intensified during the pandemic. Zero-Covid policy is plain stupid; it's like saying that Delhi would be shut down till there are no cases of influenza, for now Covid has become just another disease. It will still infect and even kill people, but it's no longer a pandemic. But one of the many problems with dictatorship is that the rulers and their henchmen think that they know everything—not just what is happening but also what should happen. In fact, greater emphasis is laid on 'should' in the countries where regimes are beholden to the ideologies antithetical to individual liberty, be it China or Iran. In China, communist bureaucrats decide what people should do in all situations, including when a disease spreads; then they impose their whims and fancies with utter ruthlessness. In Iran, the theocratic elite decides what women should do and wear—and then firmly execute their diktats. What tyrants don't understand is that in this day and age, when information flows freely, people are not as docile as the former think they are.



Buddhist monks welcome Nawang Tashi Rapten after he became a monk at age 4 in Shirmila

Ray of hope

Connecting Governed, Governing and Governance (CG3) initiative is creating hope in Kerala

Though the State of Kerala is in a mess caused by a profusion of stand-off agitations and demonstrations in all spheres of life, there are some rays of hope thanks to the kind of work being done under the patronage of committed jurists, lawyers and social activists spreading the message that all is not yet lost. Connecting Governed, Governing and Governance (CG3 for short), an initiative led by former Chief Justice of India K G Balakrishnan, former judge of the apex court Cyriac John, senior advocate of Supreme Court Dr K P Kysanatha Pillay and former vice-chancellor of NUALS Dr N K Jayakumar, is causing ripples across the State by spreading the message that the Indian Constitution has the solutions for all irritants that has crept into the body politic of the nation. Though most of the missions undertaken by CG3 may be Kerala-centric, it has the potential to cause ripples and a new awakening across India. The Constitution Day celebration on Saturday by the CG3 should be an eye opener to the policy makers. Hundreds took part in the congregation to 'celebrate' the Constitution and the crowd included the best legal brains, local body representatives as well as school students. Dr Pillay, who leads a team of researchers in exploring the hitherto unseen and unexplained features of the Constitution and bring this document to the heart of all Indian citizens says that the entire population should be inculcated with their rights and responsibilities to the nation.

The CG3's silent work among the elected representatives of the local bodies brought to light a naked truth; a big majority of the representatives are ignorant about their power as well as liabilities. The legal team working with Dr Pillay are unanimous in their view that once these representatives are exposed to the possibilities and potential of the Constitution, India will emerge as a republic of villages—a dream of Mahatma Gandhi. Local Body Members are not sure of their own power and this is the reason why Harijan local body chiefs are forced to sit on floors during panchayat council meetings in Tamil Nadu even after five decades of Dravidian Rule. Another endeavor in which CG3 created a ripple was through its campaigns against drug abuse, an octopus eating Kerala. Instead of media blitzkrieg, CG3 is taking parents, teachers and students into confidence. Who said there is no hope for Kerala? There is light at the end of the tunnel.

Life less ordinary or extraordinary

Port Blair is considered a punishment posting, though it is nothing compared to the hardships of border areas faced by the armed personnel

As an Infantryman, almost half of one's professional life was divided into tenant postings that were either in 'field areas' or 'peace stations'. Put simply, this alternative oscillation at the 'field area' entailed deployment in the direct line of defense against the 'enemy', hence usually in the border outposts at the geographical-topographical extremities of the sovereign, with extremely difficult conditions and frequent threats to life. Herein, serving in isolated 'pickets' at heights that can be 17,000 feet (minus 20-degree temperature) or above, as indeed in foreboding terrains like leech-infested tropical forests of the Northeastern jungles or frozen glaciers of Siachen, are par for the course. After a grueling posting that could range from 2 to 3 years in 'field areas', comes the relative relief of 'peace stations' that ostensibly allow for retraining and recouping, as also enjoying precious family time, albeit in stations like Dhana in Madhya Pradesh, Danapur in Bihar or Shahjahanpur in Uttar Pradesh! The so-called relief of 'peace stations' is invariably punctuated by sudden deployment in insurgency-hit areas, training 'exercises' in forward areas, or even individual postings (beyond Unit attachments), back to 'field areas'! Truly exemplifying the Indian Army's recruitment pitch, 'Join the Army and Live a Life Less Ordinary. Serving in the 'field areas' is not only imperative for career progression but very often, deliberately sought and volunteered by soldiers who consider the same a badge of honour, duty, and pride.

With this understanding of 'normalcy' in-service conditions of the 'Uniform' for forty years, one proceeded to the pristine and salubrious Andaman and Nicobar Islands, post hanging the dockmartens boots in 2006. The land of India's freedom struggle had then just been struck with nature's fury via the Tsunami and in dire need of relief and rehabilitation. As soldiers, one was familiar with the necessities of relief operations after having partaken in rescue operations in



avalanches, floods, earthquakes, etc. However, no longer in 'Uniform' and now as a civilian Administrator with a team of civilian bureaucrats in the task, was a cultural change – sometimes for the better and sometimes, not. Many exemplified the best of minds, commitment, and integrity that makes the Civil Services amongst the toughest examinations to crack, as indeed, aspirational.

However, some within the AGMUT cadre that is responsible for the Islands (along with all other UTs like Delhi, Chandigarh, Goa, etc.) took to postings in the Emerald Islands like a 'punishment posting' to the proverbial Kaala Paani (a blot of nomenclature for the holy land) – for these odd derelicts, it bred disinterest, dismay and 'time serving' attitude that led to an apathetic performance. Conversely, it also led to occasional cases of extreme hubris and highhandedness, as the 'State' has a disproportionately larger say in livelihood than it does in other places, as is the case in all border areas or distant lands. Having served in far-flung areas of Ladakh or Northeastern states, one was conversant with the subliminal sensitivities and the need to 'reach out' as much as possible and allowed. Often these odd

RECENT ACCUSATIONS SURROUNDING THE EXTREME ABUSE OF POWER BY THE FORMER SENIOR MOST BUREAUCRAT (CHIEF SECRETARY) OF THE ISLANDS, IS A DOOMSDAY SCENARIO OF WHAT COULD GO WRONG

bureaucrats didn't exactly enjoy the spirit besetting, 'a life less ordinary. Dereliction of duty could be an unfortunate outcome, if not corrected.

Recent accusations surrounding the extreme abuse of power by the former senior-most bureaucrat (Chief Secretary) of the Islands, is a doomsday scenario of what could go wrong. This militates in the face of the 'steel frame' imagined by Sardar Patel who had beseeched the IAS probationers even before independence, "No Service worth the name can claim to exist if it does not have in view the achievement of the highest standard of integrity" and had cautioned sagely about the possible misuse of power, "render your service without fear or favour and any expectation of extraneous rewards". When the highest bureaucrat of the land is accused in a sex-for-job scandal, not only is something amiss with the 'system' but also with the adherence to the civilizational truths of the land. Andamans and Nicobar Islands was the first territory to unfurl the Tricolour (by Netaji in 1945) and instill the lofty 'Idea of India' – this incident besmirches that sacredness of thought and land.

Ironically, Port Blair with its basic facilities (Government Hospital, International



BHOPIINDER SINGH

Airport, Educational facilities, etc.) befitting a capital city is still considered a 'hard posting' in the official recording of the bureaucracy – whereas there is an Infantry Brigade in Port Blair that has Infantry Units who are in a 'peace station' after having done a truly hard posting in the unforgiving heights of the border areas! So much for the supposed parity of conditions and considerations between the two arms of governance? Loose talk of 'free rations', 'mess life', 'CSD rates', and copious amounts of free-flowing alcohol is a cruel joke for those who lead a 'life less ordinary.' This is not to suggest that there aren't instances of dereliction in the 'Uniform' or that every civilian bureaucrat is only a 'pen pusher' – but to state the uneven service conditions, considerations, and imagination between services. Unfulfilled and forgotten OROP is a manifestation of that lack of parity and no number of condescending visits to 'forward areas' by politicians, can compensate for the reality. The Port Blair incident shames our conscience, as it should to those who lead a life 'extraordinary.'

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNEXPECTED WINS AT WORLD CUP

Sir — If Saudi Arabia beats 2-times World Cup winners Messi - enriched Argentina, Japan beats 4-times World Cup winner football superpower Germany; if Iran comes up with demolition of 2016 Euro semi-finalist Wales, South Korea is ending the match with a draw against twice World Champion Uruguay! Moving to Africa, we see Morocco and Tunisia ending its match with goalless draws against reigning World runners-up Croatia and last Euro semifinalist Denmark respectively! From the Americas, if USA draws with past World Champion England; Ecuador produces the same result against 2010 World Cup runners-up Netherlands!

While the 'snob' brigade might feel "nauseating" in upcoming of the 'proletariat'; but true connoisseurs of the game feel overjoyed in this comparative democratisation of football with the erstwhile "dictatorship" of the handful of superpowers from Western Europe and South America having been called into question! Surely this positive change has arrived due to the "globalisation" of the game thanks to the "import" and "export" of football players and coaches all across the world! If talented players from Japan or Senegal are trading their skills in the best of the clubs of Spain, Germany Italy France or England; coaches from Brazil, Argentina or Uruguay are guiding the upcoming footballers of Asia or Africa! This continuous intermingling of skills knowledge and experience are indeed playing a major role behind emergence of a new global order in soccer arena!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

COOPERATE OR PERISH

Sir — The UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres had exhorted the world leaders that "We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator" and asked the countries to "cooperate or perish" when he delivered one of his best speeches in the Conference of Parties, better known as CoP 27, organized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) secretariat at Sharm El

Corporal punishment for children



The government has also banned it. According to a news item reported in a section of the press, a school boy's palm was drilled for not being able to recite the table of 2. The boy's palm was severely damaged and the injury would have been more severe had the boy next to him not been with the presence of mind. He is said to have screamed and drawn the attention of others against continuing the drilling of palm by the teacher. Still enough damage is reported to have been made. In another instance, Amruth, a Class 8 student from True Shepherd Public School in

Shantipura in HD Kote taluk of Mysuru district was injured after a teacher by name Siddharaju allegedly beat him with a metal scale when the child was found playing with a chalk. On noticing the profuse bleeding, the teacher and the school management called the parents of the student and they were told that the child injured himself while playing with a cutter. In the olden days the teachers used to punish the 'errant' students by asking them to do sit-and-stand exercise.

When students showed tardy progress in learning, they were asked write that part of the lesson for 5-10 times. In doing so, prima facie the students were punished. But at the same time the students were forced to learn the academic lessons. Teachers should not miss the point that punishment to the students should be to reform them, not destroy them. It is said students' life is a golden life'. It should be allowed to be so. KV Seetharamaiah | Bengaluru

- Sheikh in Egypt that ended on November 20 (The Pioneer, November 27). The conference ended with the adoption of a declaration for the creation of a fund for providing compensation for nations facing the vagaries of climate change and extreme weather conditions. The United States and European Union have not met their previously agreed commitments of \$ 100 billion in support to the poor nations. The developed world has better alternatives for coal, but on the issue of transfer of technology.

Neither they want to part with the technology nor are they willing to be liberal on funding the poor nations. Yet they want to assume the leadership role in climate change dialogue. The creation of a loss and damage fund is not a solution. We need to declare climate emergencies in each country and support a programme to meet the emergency. Regarding India, we need to declare water scarcity and its poor management, agricultural uncertainties, soil degradation, and natural forest and biodiversity depletion as a climatic emergency. Developing nations should look inwards

and help each other with technology and other resources.

TV Jayaprakash | Palakkad

VIKRAM GOKHALE IS NO MORE

Sir — The veteran thespian and the gem of theatre Vikram Gokhale left for heavenly abode at the age of 77. He marked his presence by being an actor in movies like Tum Bin, Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam, De Dhana Dhan, Bhool Bhulaiyaa and so on. He made an appearance in the most-watched television serial 'Sanjivani' the medical boom drama and accomplished his dream by being a director of Marathi movie like Aaghat (2010), also a theatre artist.

The winner of National Film Award was also humanitarian activist runs a charitable organization which works for disabled soldiers, orphan children. He will always hold a special place in his fans hearts.

Tashi Baheti | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Terrorism is not over yet and the politics of the Congress has not also changed. The fear of terrorism will remain till appearance politics continues. Congress views terrorism from the prism of vote ban.



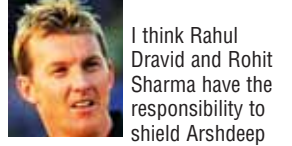
Prime Minister — Narendra Modi



China hopes to strengthen coordination and cooperation in international and regional affairs with Cuba. The two will go hand in hand down the road of building socialism with each's own characteristics. Chinese President — Xi Jinping



When I stopped working and everybody said, 'Oh she's sacrificed her career for her marriage and children', it was not so. I was really very happy being a mother and a wife. Actor — Jaya Bachchan



I think Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma have the responsibility to shield Arshdeep Singh from this overdose of advice. Former cricketer — Brett Lee



Rajasthan has emerged as model state for public welfare schemes. Rajasthan CM — Ashok Gehlot

FIRST COLUMN

ROBOTICS IS CHANGING HEALTHCARE

Artificial intelligence is also playing a key role



VINEET AGGARWAL

Till a few years back, it was impossible to fathom the idea that robots could be used as helping hands in the way healthcare organisations are managed. Fast forward a few decades and the advancement in technology has evolved robotics to the extent that healthcare organisations are now considering it for enhanced patient care, waste reduction and cost savings and for efficiencies within organisations. Automation driven by advanced digital technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics can play an effective role in boosting the efficiency of healthcare professionals by automating tasks that are monotonous and repetitive but require persistent attention to detail. Additionally, robotics can also assist healthcare organisations to deal with the shortage of healthcare workers including nurses, doctors and allied health professionals. Application of robotics in healthcare range from simple laboratory tasks to complex surgeries that can execute operations on their own or aid a human surgeon. They're also being used for rehabilitation and physical therapy and to support patients with long-term conditions. With the global medical robotics market expected to reach \$20 billion by 2023, here's a look at the promising applications of robotics in healthcare.

The progress of motion control technologies has further enabled surgical-assistance robots to become more precise. Such robots are assist-



ing surgeons and doctors to achieve high levels of accuracy and speed while performing complex surgical procedures with computer vision/capable and AI-enabled technologies. Additionally, robots are also being pre-programmed to carry out common orthopaedic surgeries, like knee and hip replacements.

Healthcare organisations are increasingly implementing AMRs to help with critical requirements like telepresence, delivery of medical supplies and medication, disinfection as well as freeing up professionals to spend more time with the patients. When AMRs are equipped with mapping capabilities, visual computing or LiDAR (light detection and ranging) systems, they can self-navigate hospital or exam rooms, allowing doctors to interact from a safe distance. When controlled by a remote specialist, AMRS can also accompany physicians as they make rounds in the hospital, allowing a specialist to contribute through an on-screen consultation regarding patient care and diagnostics. Some robots are also assisting healthcare organisations before patients' check-ins. For instance, an autonomous robot developed in Mexico is helping medical staff to deal with high-risk COVID patients. It triages every patient by taking their medical history, temperature and blood oxygen level when they arrive at the hospital. The benefit of social robots is that they can interact with humans directly. These robots can be utilised in long-term care scenarios to provide monitoring and social interaction. They may help patients to follow their treatment regimens or contribute towards cognitive engagement, helping them keep alert and positive.

Service robots reduce the burden on healthcare professionals by automating routine logistical tasks. The majority of service robots can function autonomously and even send reports after completing a task. The robots are capable of setting up patient rooms, tracking supplies, filing purchase orders, restocking medical supplies and transporting bed linens from and to laundry facilities. Also, they can assist with disinfection and cleaning. These service robots may use UV light, air filtration or hydrogen peroxide vapours to help reduce the risk of infection and sanitize places in a uniform manner.

While robotics is already bringing a paradigm shift in healthcare services, more is expected over the years to come with further advancements in technology. Therefore, it becomes imperative for healthcare organisations to look at the long-term benefits and immense potential of robotic technologies and invest in them to better manage their organisations. *(The author is CIO, Paras Healthcare Group)*

Mahatma Phule: Great doyen of social justice



BANDARU DATTATRAYA

On Mahatma Phule's 132nd death anniversary today, we remember the matchless social reformer who strived for casteless society and peasant rights

Mahatma Jyotiba Govindrao Phule (April 11, 1827- November 28, 1890) will ever live in our hearts for his great deeds to emancipate the downtrodden through education and social reforms! It was a tough time indeed when he took up the cudgel to empower people from weaker sections of society, in particular women, with the help of his wife Savitribai Phule, by imparting education to them. Braving all odds, challenges and hardships, he stood up firmly against brute injustice being meted out to SCs, STs, OBCs and other marginalised sections who also suffered the trauma of untouchability.

A towering personality with very few parallels in human history, Mahatma Phule used education and social reforms as the most powerful tools to champion and spread the cause of social justice, equality and women empowerment, and emerged as a rare source of hope for countless downtrodden people, who were being brutalised on the basis of their caste. His commitment to serve and uplift the downtrodden in a selfless manner was so inspiring and appealing to the people that they hailed him as Mahatma—a great soul!

What inspires me immensely is the determination of Mahatma Phule to stand up against tormentors of the downtrodden. The 19th century was a tough time in our history. It was also the time when a lot of social churning was going on. Born on April 11, 1827, in a simple family of 'Maali' caste in Satara, Maharashtra, he was disturbed over the rampant evils of caste-based discrimination. His father Govindrao was a vegetable vendor at Pune. Influenced by Thomas Paine's book The Rights of Man, Mahatma Phule believed that the only solution to combat social evils in all their forms and magnitude was the enlightenment of women and members of the lower castes.

He strongly opposed the idea of caste-based domination in the society and struggled for the rights of peasants and other low-caste people. As the saying goes, charity begins at home, he first educated his wife Savitribai Phule. They started the first school for girls in 1848 in Pune at Tatyasaheb Bhide's residence. Savitribai Phule is fondly regarded as the first woman teacher of our country. It was a new dawn, which infused a new kind of hope among SCs, STs and OBCs whose children in general and girls in particular did not have easy access to education.

There are many takeaways for us from the life of Mahatma Phule, which are so relevant today as we are collectively striving to build a new India—resilient, inclusive and Atma Nirbhar. The idea of new India veers around the empowerment of all, including women. Mahatma Phule worked and made tireless efforts for social equality, women's empowerment and boosting education for SCs, STs and OBCs. The vision of Mahatma Phule is amply reflected even in the Sustainable Development



INDIA, UNDER THE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP OF PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODIJI, IS TODAY FOLLOWING THE PATH OF SABKA SAATH, SABKA VIKAS AUR SABKA VISHWAS AS ENVISIONED BY MAHATMA PHULE AND HIS WIFE SAVITRIBAI PHULE

(The author is Governor, Haryana. The views expressed are personal)



Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations, which are so candidly articulated in the global resolve to end poverty, hunger, ensuring good health and well-being, quality education and gender equality among other things.

India, under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is today following the path of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas Aur Sabka Vishwas as envisioned by Mahatma Phule and his wife Savitribai Phule. The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is implementing Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to reduce poverty and vulnerability of urban poor households on a sustainable basis. Since 2014-15, till June 30, 2022, over 12.02 lakh urban poor have been imparted skill training to enhance their employability, out of which more than 6.42 lakh skill trained have been placed under self- or wage employment.

Similarly, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is actively organising rural poor women into self-help groups (SHGs) and helping them come out of abject poverty. As on June 30, 2022, about 8.39 crore rural poor women have been mobilised into more than 76.94 lakh SHGs. Over Rs 30,160 crore loans have been sanctioned to over 133,995 accounts under Stand-Up India Scheme to the aspiring SC, ST and women entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurship will ensure they become rich from poor. Under no circumstances we should allow downtrodden to become poorer. It is one of the reasons that the governments of the Centre and the state are working wholesomely to ensure

that no one is left behind.

However, we need to note that total implementation of affirmative and welfare measures should be at the heart of our collective efforts to build a new India. For example, there is a provision of reservation for SCs, OBCs, EBCs, and STs. It should be implemented in totality across the country. Similarly, every possible effort should be made to check dropouts from schools, since the majority of them are from weaker sections of society. According to the Unified District Information System for Education Plus (UDISE +), the dropout rate among primary students went up from 0.8 per cent in 2020-21 to 1.45 per cent in 2021-22. At the secondary level (Class IX to X), the dropout was 14.6 per cent. Though an improvement from 16.1 per cent in 2019-20, lakhs of students do not continue their education further. As a result, our gross enrolment ratio in higher education remains less than 30 per cent.

Given the prevalence of malnutrition among poor children, they should be provided with nutritious diet along with quality education. It will be nice if there are model schools for them. Governments are doing a commendable job in empowering the poor among us but other stakeholders should also come forward and act as eyes and ears for affirmative policies and welfare schemes meant for the downtrodden. Only then the dream of social equality and justice will be realized. The ideals with which Mahatma Phule formed Satyashodhak Samaj, Society of Truth Seekers, to champion the cause of equal rights for the people from exploited castes and communities are reflected in the spirit of equality, justice, fraternity

and liberty, also the key pillars of our democracy.

It is gladdening indeed that several states have initiated a number of measures to check dropout at primary and higher secondary levels. For example, the Government of Haryana has introduced the process of mainstreaming the students who were found to be out of school. We must adopt a multipronged strategy to equip SC, ST and OBC students with special skills as well so that their income goes up. Making the poor rich is more important than the rich getting richer. Special focus must be laid on holistic empowerment of women and extremely backwards communities (EBCs) among downtrodden. Atrocities against them despite education are a grave issue. New set of social inequalities have cropped up. Women should get their share in Parliament and state legislatures as well.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule—who brilliantly articulated his thoughts and ideas in his writings such as *Gulamgiri* (Slavery) and *Shetkarayacha Aasud* (Cultivator's Whipcord)—left for his heavenly abode on November 28, 1890, but his ideals and vision of life will ever be relevant for us. It was indeed one of the toughest periods we survived as a nation, though we paid a heavy price for the acts of caste-based exclusion and discrimination. Pioneering efforts of a great soul, Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, laid the foundation of an inclusive, tolerant and compassionate India, which we are today. As a mark of real tribute to him, let us resolve during Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav celebration to build an inclusive and vibrant India by following the footprints of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

DOES RAHUL GANDHI HAVE THE STATURE TO TALK ILL ABOUT SAVARKAR WHO WAS SENTENCED TO 50 YEARS OF RIGOROUS IMPRISONMENT? — MNS PRESIDENT RAJ THAKERAY



THACKERAY HAD NO RIGHT TO CRITICISE RAHUL GANDHI. THE MNS CHIEF WAS UPSET AT THE HUGE RESPONSE TO RAHUL GANDHI'S YATRA — MUMBAI CONGRESS PRESIDENT BHAJI JAGTAP

Gen Z needs real-time data applications everywhere

Organisations need a way to empower their developers, so they need a layer of application programming interfaces of APIs

It's been well-established that Gen Z, those between the ages of 18 and 24, are "digital natives". Their lives are driven by tech and they have a low tolerance for user experiences that don't live up to their expectations of performance and speed.

But real-time isn't just being demanded by a demographic slice of India's population. It's a necessity across the board. Winning organisations take data, process it, and use it to deliver an instantaneous experience to the customer – whether that customer is an internal logistics manager, warehouse worker, or a 20-something posting on social media.

Think about an organisation where, at each moment, a recommendation engine is



CHET KAPOOR

(The author is Chairman & CEO, DataStax)

talking to every part of the business—sharing immediate data on live sales and inventory, the purchasing pipeline, and the context that impacts the business.

Organisations that rely on processing data in batches and depend on analysts to review dashboards cannot deliver data-driven actions when it matters most—and they will be left behind. Let's take a look at what real-time data can do and how to activate it in every app, for all kinds of customers.

Consumers love apps that meet them at the speed of life. Take Starbucks as an example. The Seattle-based coffee company's app, with 31 million users, is the second most popular point-of-sale app, behind Apple Pay.

When a customer orders a drink via the Starbucks app, they expect it to be ready within minutes. They also expect real-time updates throughout the ordering process.

And when a customer comes into a store, they get real-time recommendations, based on ordering preferences, past purchases, and even the season. Behind the scenes, Starbucks needs to ensure it has all the right ingredients, someone there to make the drink, an estimate of when the order will be ready for pickup, and the technology to communicate when the order is ready.

BlackBuck has developed a digital freight and fleet management platform that simplifies the process of booking freight loads, provid-

ing shippers of all sizes instantaneous access to the right truck, at the right time, for the right price.

Starbucks, BlackBuck, and so many other enterprises can't deliver these experiences—or reap the rewards they offer—without the right technology.

The term "real-time" has been around for years. "Reactive apps" were promoted as the next big thing in the early 2000s. But the technology wasn't there yet.

Today we have the right technology stack to enable every app to meet every customer with a real-time action. It's not magic anymore. So, how can organizations go about building the right foundation to do this?

First of all, it's critical to

have a database that's optimized for customer context and instant access to data. It's how you take advantage of your real-time data "at rest." NoSQL databases are optimized for modern data applications that require large data volume, low latency, and flexible data models ("NoSQL" stands for "not only SQL," which means these databases can store and retrieve data using a variety of languages).

Invented by Facebook in 2007, Apache Cassandra is an obvious choice, with its high throughput and ability to support apps that are globally distributed and always on.

Secondly, customer behaviours and actions need to become visible and available to all applications across an organization. This is where

streaming technology comes in. A best-of-breed streaming system should not only pass events along from one service to another, but store them in a way that keeps their value for future usage. The system also needs to scale to manage tons of data and millions of messages per second.

Apache Pulsar is an advanced, open-source streaming and messaging technology that's ideal for handling real-time data. It was built for the high throughput and scalability that many data-driven applications require.

And, finally, organisations need a way to empower their developers to make the most of real-time data. They need a layer of APIs (application programming

interfaces) that lets them build apps with freedom of choice and without operational distractions. Stargate, for example, is an open source data API layer that sits between applications and the database, and offers a variety of endpoints for developers to build with.

We've thought a lot about these components at DataStax as we've built the real-time open data stack that just works. When enterprises can activate data in real-time, applications keep improving, more value is delivered, faster, and amazing experiences are delivered to customers—whether they are workers getting up-to-the-minute inventory information, or Gen Zers posting a new dance video on Josh.

Ukraine on edge for more attacks

West eyes humanitarian aid

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine prepared for more Russian strikes on Monday and warned of the possibility for a new round of evacuations from the capital during a relative lull from the airstrikes on energy facilities and other key infrastructure in recent weeks.

In the West, meanwhile, preparations were stepped up to boost humanitarian aid to Ukraine so that the population can enjoy some warmth during their coldest months of need and keep the resolve of the nation as high as possible.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Russian troops "are preparing new strikes and as long as they have missiles, they won't stop."

"The upcoming week can be as hard as the one that passed," he said.

In the capital, Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said that part of the city's 3 million people might well have to be evacuated to places where essential services would be less prone to shutdowns caused by missile attacks.

Russia has pounded energy facilities around Kyiv with a bar-



rage of missile strikes, resulting in power outages and halts in water supplies to the city.

And with temperatures hovering around freezing, and expected to dip as low as minus 11C (12 Fahrenheit) in little more than a week, international

aid help was increasingly focused on items like generators and autotransformers, to make sure blackouts that affect everything from kitchens to operating rooms are as limited and short as possible.

Russian President Vladimir

Putin "continues trying to make Ukraine a black hole — no light, no electricity, no heating to put the Ukrainians into the darkness and the cold," said European foreign policy chief Josep Borrell. "So we have to continue our support providing more

material for the Ukrainians to face the winter without electricity."

Borrell was leading a meeting of EU ministers that would specifically "look at the Ukrainian war from the point of view of a humanitarian crisis."

Over the next three days NATO top officials and foreign ministers will be gathering in Bucharest, Romania, where such humanitarian aspects will also be assessed.

Ukraine's energy provider Ukrenergo said Monday that it is still short 27 per cent of output after Russian strikes on energy infrastructure. "The scale and complexity of the damage are high, and repair works have continued around the clock," the company said in a statement.

Power supply was restored to 17 per cent of residents in the southern city of Kherson, which Ukraine reclaimed earlier this month. The Russians have continued pounding the city with artillery barrages. Ukraine's presidential office said Monday that at least four civilians were killed and 11 others wounded in the latest Russian attacks. It said intense fighting is continuing along the front line in the east, with the Russians shelling Bakhmut and Toretsk at the epicentre of the fighting.

"People are sheltering in the basements, many of which are filled by water," said Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko.

Russian energy giant says no further gas cuts to Moldova

AP ■ BUCHAREST (ROMANIA)

Russian energy giant Gazprom announced Monday that it will not further reduce natural gas to Moldova as it had threatened to do after claiming that bills went unpaid and that flows crossing through Ukraine were not making it to Moldova.

Gazprom tweeted that Moldovagaz has "eliminated the violation of payment" for November supplies and that "funds for the gas deposited on the territory of Ukraine, intended for consumers in Moldova, have been received."

Last week, Moldova and Ukraine hit back at Gazprom's claim that Russian gas moving through the last pipeline to Western Europe was being stored in Ukraine, saying all supplies that Russia sends through the war-torn country get "fully transferred" to Moldova.

"The volumes of gas that Gazprom refers to as remaining in Ukraine are our savings and reserves stored in warehouses in Ukraine," Moldovan Infrastructure Minister Andrei Spinu said last week. "These volumes were and will be fully paid for by our country."

The Russia state-owned company alleged "regular violation" by the Moldovan side of



contractual obligations in terms of payment for Russian gas supplies," adding that it "reserves the right to reduce or completely stop gas supplies in case of violation of their payment."

It comes as Europe's poorest country — which had relied entirely on Russia for natural gas — is facing an acute energy crisis after Moscow dramatically reduced supplies in October and halved them in November as cold weather took hold.

Moscow's attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure also have triggered massive blackouts in several cities in Moldova.

Russia has cut off most natural gas to Europe amid the war in Ukraine, which European leaders have called energy blackmail. Gazprom's threats to fur-

ther reduce flows raised concerns about rising prices heading into winter, when natural gas is needed to heat homes as well as generate electricity and power factories, with higher bills already squeezing households and businesses.

With inflation high all around, there were fears consumers in Moldova, a former Soviet republic of about 2.6 million, would struggle to pay their heating and electricity costs.

The European Union pledged 250 million euros (nearly USD 262 million) in aid to Moldova this month to help it weather the crisis. Last week, an international aid conference in Paris raised more than 100 million euros to support the country through the energy crisis.

14 years on, NATO to renew vow to Ukraine

AP ■ BUCHAREST (ROMANIA)

NATO returns on Tuesday to the scene of one of its most controversial decisions, intent on repeating its vow that Ukraine — now suffering through the 10th month of a war against Russia — will join the world's biggest military alliance one day.

NATO foreign ministers will gather for two days at the Palace of the Parliament in the Romanian capital Bucharest. It was there in April 2008 that US President George W. Bush persuaded his allies to open NATO's door to Ukraine and Georgia, over vehement Russian objections.

"NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO," the leaders said in a statement.

Russian President Vladimir

Putin, who was at the summit, described this as "a direct threat" to Russia's security.

About four months later, Russian forces invaded Georgia.

Some experts describe the decision in Bucharest as a massive error that left Russia feeling cornered by a seemingly ever-expanding NATO. NATO counters that it doesn't pressgang countries into joining, and that some requested membership to seek protection from Russia — as Finland and Sweden are doing now.

More than 14 years on, NATO will pledge this week to support Ukraine long-term as it defends itself against Russian aerial, missile and ground attacks — many of which have struck power grids and other civilian infrastructure, depriving millions of people of electricity and heating.

"NATO will continue to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. We will not back down," the

organisation's top civilian official, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, vowed last week.

North Macedonia and Montenegro have joined the US-led organisation in recent years.

With this, Stoltenberg said, "we have demonstrated that NATO's door is open and that it is for NATO allies and aspirant countries to decide on membership. This is also the message to Ukraine."

This gathering in Bucharest is likely to see NATO make fresh pledges of non-lethal support to Ukraine: fuel, electricity generators, medical supplies, winter equipment and drone jamming devices.

Individual allies are also likely to announce fresh supplies of military equipment for Ukraine — chiefly the air defence systems that Kyiv so desperately seeks to protect its skies.

NATO as an organisation will



not offer such supplies, to avoid being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia.

But the ministers, along with their Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba, will also look further afield.

"Over the longer term we will help Ukraine transition from Soviet-era equipment to modern NATO standards, doctrine and training," Stoltenberg said. This will not only improve Ukraine's armed forces and help them to better integrate, it will also meet some of the conditions for membership.

That said, Ukraine will not join NATO anytime soon. With the Crimean Peninsula annexed, and Russian troops and pro-Moscow separatists holding parts of the south and east, it's not clear what Ukraine's borders would even look like.

Many of the 30 allies believe the focus now must be uniquely on

defeating Russia.

But even as economic pressure — high electricity and gas prices, plus inflation, all exacerbated by the war — mounts on many allies, Stoltenberg would not press Ukraine to enter into peace talks, and indeed NATO and European diplomats say that Putin does not appear willing to come to the table.

"Most wars end with negotiations," he said. "But what happens at the negotiating table depends on what happens on the battlefield. Therefore, the best way to increase the chances for a peaceful solution is to support Ukraine."

The foreign ministers of Bosnia, Georgia and Moldova — three partners that NATO says are under increasing Russian pressure — will also be in Bucharest. Stoltenberg said NATO would "take further steps to help them protect their independence, and strengthen their ability to defend themselves."

Surgeons work by flashlight as Ukraine power grid battered



AP ■ KHERSON

Dr. Oleh Duda, a cancer surgeon at a hospital in Lviv, Ukraine, was in the middle of a complicated, dangerous surgery when he heard explosions nearby. Moments later, the lights went out.

Duda had no choice but to keep working with only a headlamp for light. The lights came back when a generator kicked in three minutes later, but it felt like an eternity.

"These fateful minutes could have cost the patient his life," Duda told The Associated Press.

The operation on a major artery took place Nov. 15, when the city in western Ukraine suffered blackouts as Russia unleashed yet another missile barrage on Ukraine's power grid, damaging nearly 50% of the country's energy facilities.

The devastating strikes, which continued last week and plunged the country into darkness once again, strained and disrupted the health care system, already battered by years of corruption, mismanagement, the COVID-19 pandemic and

nine months of war.

Scheduled operations are being postponed; patient records are unavailable because of internet outages; and paramedics have had to use flashlights to examine patients in darkened apartments.

The World Health Organisation said last week that Ukraine's health system is facing "its darkest days in the war so far," amid the growing energy crisis, the onset of cold winter weather and other challenges.

"This winter will be life-threatening for millions of people in Ukraine," the WHO's regional director for Europe, Dr. Hans Kluge, said in a statement.

He predicted that 2 million to 3 million more people could leave their homes in search of warmth and safety, and "will face unique health challenges, including respiratory infections such as COVID-19, pneumonia and influenza."

Last week, Kyiv's Heart Institute posted on its Facebook page a video of surgeons operating on a child's heart with the only light coming from headlamps and a battery-powered

flashlight.

"Rejoice, Russians, a child is on the table and during an operation the lights have gone completely off," Dr. Boris Todurov, director of the institute in the capital, said in the video.

"We will now turn on the generator — unfortunately, it will take a few minutes."

Attacks have hit hospitals and outpatient clinics in south-eastern Ukraine, too.

The WHO said in a statement last week that they have verified at least 703 attacks between Feb. 24, when Russian troops rolled into Ukraine, and Nov. 23. The Kremlin has rejected accusations that it targets civilian facilities. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov once again insisted last week that Russia is targeting only sites "directly or indirectly related to military power."

But just last week, a strike on a maternity ward in a hospital in eastern Ukraine killed a newborn and heavily wounded two doctors.

In the northeastern Kharkiv region, two people were killed after the Russian forces shelled an outpatient clinic.

In Lviv, Duda said the explosions were so close to the hospital that "the walls were shaking," and doctors and patients had to go down to the shelter in the basement — something that happens every time an air raid siren sounds.

The hospital, which specialises in treating cancer, performed only 10 out of 40 operations scheduled for that day.

In the recently retaken southern city of Kherson, without power after the Russian retreat, paralysed elevators are a real challenge for paramedics.



Servicemen of the People's Militia of Russian-controlled Donetsk region repair a T-72 tank damaged in fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces, in the Russian-controlled Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine, on Monday

(AP Photo)

Belarus Foreign Min killed by Kremlin assassins: Reports

IANIS ■ LONDON

Belarus Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei was poisoned in a Kremlin sting operation, extraordinary new reports have claimed, according to a media report.

The veteran diplomat and former spy died suddenly on Sunday amid claims that he was in secret contact with the West concerning the war in Ukraine and preventing Belarus from being incorporated into Russia by Vladimir Putin, Daily Mail reported.

A video shows Makei, 64, looking healthy on a Belarus military cargo plane last week shortly before he died. He wasn't known to suffer from any chronic illness. Some reports say he had a heart attack and that his death has 'shaken' president Alexander Lukashenko, who now fears for



his own safety, Daily Mail reported.

Lukashenko has even replaced his cooks and servants, fearing assassination by Moscow, it is claimed.

Exiled Putin foe and businessman

Leonid Nevzlin alleged that Makei "died as a result of poisoning developed in an FSB special laboratory", Daily Mail reported.

He cited sources "close to the Russian special services", claiming: "The clinical picture in such cases corresponds to death from stroke or heart failure."

Makei was this week due to attend an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) meeting in Poland to meet key Western politicians and officials - a session from which Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has been banned.

Nevzlin claimed that the poisoning theory is supported by the fact that the 64-year-old official had no health problems, was leading an active lifestyle and was making plans.

Zelenskyy warns against new Russian strikes

IANIS ■ KIEV

After last week's large-scale Russian attack that disconnected Ukraine's all four nuclear power plants and other major power facilities from the grid, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned that Moscow is "preparing new strikes" and the coming days "may be difficult".

In his nightly video address to the nation on Sunday, he said: "We understand that terrorists are preparing new strikes and as long as they have missiles, they won't stop."

"The upcoming week can be as hard as the one that passes. Our Defence Forces are preparing. The whole state is preparing. We work out all scenarios, including with partners."

Zelenskyy also urged the people to "please pay attention to the air alerts during the week". He further as of Sunday evening, most regions in Ukraine were having only rolling power cuts, adding that "the situation is under the control of the energy authorities".

The President noted that the situation at the front remains "very difficult", especially in the Donetsk region.

The latest warning comes days after Russia launched another large-scale missile attack on Ukraine's critical infrastructure on November 23, which also led to the deaths of 10 people. Ukraine's anti-aircraft defence systems shot down 51 out of 70 Russian cruise missiles and five kamikaze drones, Ukrayinska Pravda reported.

The attack resulted in temporary power outages at all nuclear power plants and most thermal and hydroelectric power plants, while power transmission facilities were also damaged.

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

Democrats keep Senate this year, but 2024 may be harder

AP ■ NEW YORK

Democrats celebrating a successful effort to keep control of the US Senate this year will soon confront a 2024 campaign that could prove more challenging.

The party enters the next cycle defending 23 seats, including two held by independents who caucus with Democrats. That's compared with just 10 seats that Republicans hope to keep in their column.

Adding to the potential hurdles is that some 2024 contests are in states that have become increasingly hostile to Democrats, including Montana, Ohio and West Virginia.

Other Democratic-held seats are in some of the same hotly contested states that were at the centre of this year's midterms, such as Pennsylvania, Arizona and Nevada. And while Democrats carried each of those races, they did so at great cost and with sometimes narrow margins. In Nevada, for instance, Democratic incumbent Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto won by less than 1 percentage point, or about 9,000 votes.

For now, both parties insist

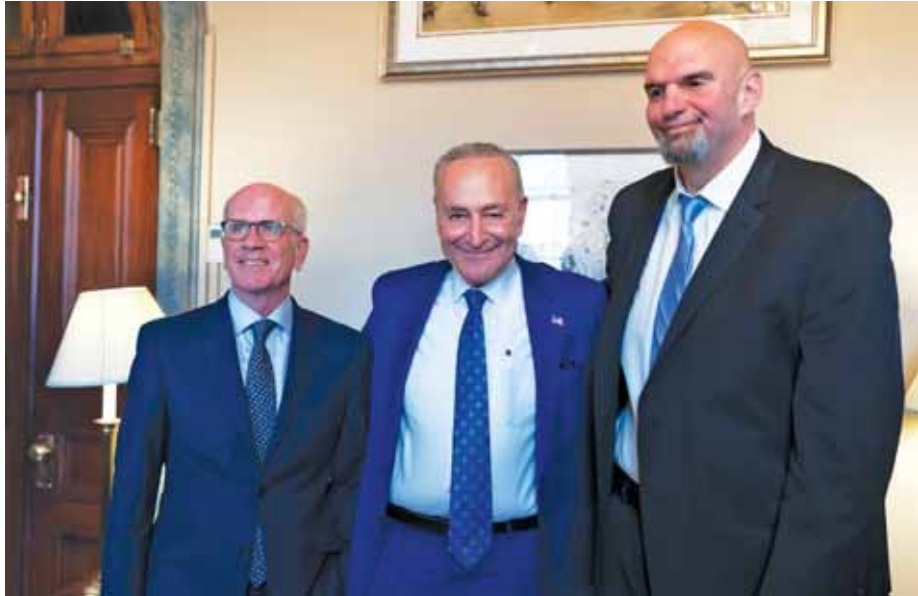
they're laser focused on coming out on top in the December 6 Senate runoff in Georgia. But Democrats who are on the ballot in 2024 know that they could face fierce headwinds and are studying the results of this year's election, when the party outperformed expectations.

For Nevada Sen. Jacky Rosen, a Democrat facing her first reelection campaign, that means staying focused on kitchen table issues and touting legislation like the infrastructure law and gun violence legislation signed by President Joe Biden.

"We know that races are always close," Rosen said in an interview. "We never take anything for granted."

The dynamics of the next Senate campaign could be influenced by a variety of outside factors, particularly the presidential election and the attention it generates.

Biden, who turned 80 this month, has said his "intention" is to run for reelection and that he will make a final decision early next year. Former President Donald Trump has already announced a third White House bid, and multiple other Republicans are lining up to



launch campaigns.

The eventual nominee in each party could have a profound impact on down-ballot races, including those for Senate.

But perhaps the biggest question for Senate Democrats seeking reelection will be who Republicans nominate as their opponents. The GOP lost several Senate elections this year, including those in Arizona, Pennsylvania and Nevada, after Trump-backed candidates struggled to raise money and connect with a broader, more moderate range of voters during the general election.

In Nevada, the Republican field to challenge Rosen has not begun to shape up but is expected to attract several contenders.

Masto.

Richard Hernandez, who was Brown's campaign adviser, said, "He has committed to his supporters that he will never stop fighting for their issues, but he has not made any decisions as to whether that involves a future run for office."

Also in the southwest, Arizona Sen. Kyrsten Sinema, a centrist Democrat, will be up for reelection. The race, like other recent statewide contests in Arizona, is expected to be very competitive. But Sinema is likely to first face a well-funded primary challenger after angering much of the Democratic base by blocking or watering down progressive priorities like a minimum wage increase or Biden's big social spending initiatives. She has not said whether she plans to run for reelection.

Sinema's most prominent potential primary challenger is US Rep. Ruben Gallego, who has a long history of feuding with Sinema. Gallego has not announced his plans for 2024 but has made it no secret that he's thinking about challenging Sinema. He even raised money on the prospect he might oppose Sinema.

Biden boosts US effort to stem sexual violence in war zones

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden is strengthening US policy aimed at stemming sexual violence in war conflict zones, elevating the problem — increasingly documented in Ukraine and elsewhere — to the level of a possible serious human rights abuse that triggers sanctions and other actions against foreign perpetrators.

Biden, a Democrat, on Monday will sign a presidential memorandum that seeks to combat the use of rape by both foreign governments and individuals as a weapon of war, according to a senior administration official, who insisted on anonymity to discuss the decision ahead of the announcement.

The memorandum directs for the first time that the State and Treasury departments and other agencies give equal consideration of acts of sexual violence to other serious human rights abuses in leveraging



sanctions and other punishment against foreign actors and to respond to the full extent possible, the official said.

Currently, US policy allows for the imposition of sanctions for conflict-related sexual violence, but it is not commonly used.

Biden's action comes when the United Nations has warned that sexual violence in Ukraine, especially against women and girls, remains prevalent and underreported. US Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield has previously cited "a mountain of credible reports of atrocities committed by Russia's forces against civilians," including "horrific accounts of sexual violence."

Nepal likely to have hung Parliament

PM Deuba-led ruling NC emerges single largest party

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

With no party getting a simple majority in the general election, Nepal is facing a hung parliament even as the ruling Nepali Congress-led five-party alliance is likely to get the maximum number of seats in the House of Representatives.

The ruling coalition comprising the Nepali Congress (NC), CPN-Maoist, CPN-Unified Socialist, Loktantrik Samajwadi Party (LSP) and the Rastriya Janamorchha has so far bagged 85 seats in the direct election, followed by the Opposition CPN-UML alliance with 56 seats.

The NC led by Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba maintained its lead as the single largest party by winning 53 seats in the parliamentary polls held on November 20, while its partners CPN-Maoist bagged 17 seats, CPN-Unified Socialist (10), LSP (4) and Rastriya Janamorchha (1).

The CPN-UML got 42 seats, while its partners Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP) and Janata Samajwadi Party (JSP) won 7 seats each.

A party needs at least 138 seats to form a majority government in the 275-member



House of Representatives. However, without a clear winner, political instability could persist in Nepal as it faces slowing economic growth and rising inflation, according to political observers.

Elections to the House of Representatives (HoR) and seven provincial assemblies were held to end the prolonged political instability that has plagued the Himalayan nation. The counting of votes started on Monday last.

Out of 275 Members of

Parliament, 165 will be elected through direct voting, while the remaining 110 will be elected through a proportional electoral system.

The CPN-UML has secured over 2.5 million votes under the proportionate voting method, followed by NC with 2.4 million votes.

Meanwhile, it is not clear whether the newly-formed Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP), which won 7 seats under direct election, will join the ruling

alliance or the Opposition. The decision of the RSP, which is emerging as the fourth largest party, will also affect the power equation in Nepal gripped with political uncertainty.

So far results of 158 seats have been declared and the results of seven are awaited.

Although the ruling alliance led by NC is capable of forming a majority government, it cannot be said if the country will get the much-needed political stability, political observers said.



'China's anti-Covid protests may be due to people's distrust against Xi's regime'

PTI ■ BEIJING

The unprecedented protests against the controversial zero-COVID policy being held in different cities in China may also be due to the Chinese people's "distrust" of President Xi Jinping's regime, Australia's former prime minister Kevin Rudd said on Monday.

Rudd also pointed out that the current protests appear to be about more than just Covid measures.

The protests, which came nearly a month after President Xi was elected as the ruling party's top leader for a third

consecutive term, have spread to Shanghai, Beijing and many parts of the country in the last few days against the stringent policy under which cities and localities are kept under prolonged lockdowns and isolations.

"There is an argument that this is now a metaphor for a much broader set of, shall we say, distrust on the part of the Chinese people about different aspects about what Xi Jinping's regime is doing. The key question is what does the regime do next," Rudd told the BBC.

Since 1989, when Beijing's

Tiananmen Square became the focus of large-scale protests which were crushed by China's Communist rulers, demonstrations have been rare, said Rudd, who is regarded as an expert on Chinese studies.

There have been occasional protests over labour rights and land disputes, along with sporadic demonstrations over human rights that have been suppressed, he said.

"But this seems to be general, seems to be across multiple cities at once, it doesn't seem to be centrally coordinated — it seems to be spontaneous," Rudd said.

Japan births at new low as population shrinks, ages



AP ■ TOKYO

The number of babies born in Japan this year is below last year's record low in what the top government spokesman described as a "critical situation."

Chief Cabinet Secretary Hirokazu Matsuno promised comprehensive measures to encourage more marriages and births.

The total of 599,636 Japanese born in January-September was 4.9% below last year's figure, suggesting the number of births in all of 2022 might fall below last year's record low of 811,000 babies, he said.

Japan is the world's third biggest economy but living costs are high and wage increases have been slow.

The conservative government has lagged on making society more inclusive for children, women and minorities.

So far, the government's efforts to encourage people to have more babies have had limited impact despite payments of subsidies for pregnancy, childbirth and child care.

"The pace is even slower than last year ... I understand that it is a critical situation," Matsuno said.

Many younger Japanese have balked at marrying or having families, discouraged by bleak job prospects, onerous commutes and corporate cultures incompatible with having both parents work.

The number of births has been falling since 1973, when it peaked at about 2.1 million. It's projected to fall to 740,000 in 2040.

Japan's population of more than 125 million has been declining for 14 years and is projected to fall to 86.7 million by 2060.

A shrinking and aging population has huge implications for the economy and for national security as the country fortifies its military to counter China's increasingly assertive territorial ambitions.

A government-commissioned panel submitted a report to Prime Minister Fumio Kishida last week citing the low birth rate and falling population as factors that might erode Japan's national strength.

Niece of Supreme Leader asks world to cut ties with Iran

AP ■ BAGHDAD

The niece of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is calling on people to pressure their governments to cut ties with Tehran over its violent suppression of anti-government protests.

In a video posted online by her France-based brother, Farideh Moradkhani, urged "conscientious people of the world" to support Iranian protesters. The video was shared online this week after Moradkhani's reported arrest on Nov 23, according to US-based rights monitor HRANA.

Moradkhani is a long-time activist whose late father was an opposition figure married to Khamenei's sister is the closest member of the supreme leader's family to be arrested. The branch of the family have opposed Khamenei for decades and Moradkhani has been imprisoned on previous occasions for her activism.

"I ask the conscientious people of the world to stand by us and ask their governments not to react with empty words and slogans but with real action and stop any dealings with this regime," she said in her video statement. The protests, now in their third month, have faced a brutal crackdown by Iranian security forces using live ammunition, rubber bullets and tear gas to suppress demonstrations.



At least 451 people have been killed, including 63 minors, according to HRANA. Another 18,173 have been detained, the rights monitor reports.

Despite the crackdown, demonstrations are ongoing and scattered across cities.

The unrest was sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody in Tehran for violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code. It has quickly morphed into the most serious challenge to Iran's establishment since the 1979

Islamic Revolution.

Iran also said it would not cooperate with any UN fact-finding mission to investigate the deadly crackdown on protests, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said on Monday. The UN Human Rights Council voted to set up the mission last week.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will not engage in any cooperation, whatsoever, with the political committee called the fact-finding committee," Kanaani said.



Israel's Likud signs coalition deal with anti-LGBTQ radical

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Former Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has struck a coalition deal with a small ultranationalist faction leader known for homophobic rhetoric and disparaging remarks about non-Orthodox Jews, a sign of the prospective government's hardline makeup.

Netanyahu's Likud party announced Sunday that the agreement names Noam faction leader Avi Maoz as a deputy minister whose portfolio includes an office bolstering Jewish identity among Israelis.

The incremental step is part of Netanyahu's effort to hammer out a power-sharing agreement with his potential ultra-Orthodox and ultranationalist allies following the Nov 1 parliamentary election. Netanyahu stands poised to form one of the most headline religious and nationalist governments in Israel's history.

Maoz is a Jewish fundamentalist and West Bank settler who is an outspoken opponent to LGBTQ rights and women serving in the military, and has voiced opposition to Arabs teaching Jewish students in Israeli schools.

4 killed as Somalia's al-Shabab attacks hotel

AP ■ MOGADISHU

Somali forces on Monday were still trying to flush out armed assailants who attacked a hotel in the capital Mogadishu, killing at least four people, according to residents.

The death toll is likely to rise as there has been no official word of any casualties.

There were reports of sporadic gunfire Monday afternoon, more than 18 hours after the attack on the Villa Rose hotel started. Islamic extremist group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the attack.

A police spokesman said Sunday that scores of people, including government officials, had been rescued from the hotel.

Mogadishu resident Mohamed Suleyman told the AP that two of his relatives, both civilians, died in the attack. "It's a great sadness to learn that two of my relatives were among those killed in yesterday night's attack," he said. "We were informed by their colleagues who managed to escape the attack after jumping (over the perimeter) wall of the hotel."

Ali Moalim, another Mogadishu resident, said he saw "two bodies of the security forces carried by their fellow soldiers."

Al-Shabab said in a broadcast on its own radio frequency Sunday that its fighters attacked the hotel, which has a restaurant



popular with government and security officials. The attack is believed to have started with an explosion before gunmen penetrated the hotel's gates.

The hotel is not far from the presidential palace, Villa Somalia, in one of the most protected parts of central Mogadishu. A successful attack near the seat of the federal government is likely to instill deep fear among residents of the seaside capital that has long been prone to attacks by militants.

Such militant attacks are common in Mogadishu and other parts of the Horn of Africa nation.

The latest attack comes amid a new, high-profile offensive by the Somali government against al-Shabab, which still

controls large parts of central and southern Somalia.

Extremist fighters loyal to the group have responded by killing prominent clan leaders in an apparent effort to dissuade support for the government offensive, and attacks on public places frequented by government officials and others persist.

Hotels and restaurants are frequently targeted, as are military bases for government troops and foreign peacekeepers.

Last month at least 120 people were killed in two car bombings at a busy junction in Mogadishu. Al-Shabab carried out that attack, the deadliest since a similar attack at the same spot killed more than 500 people five years ago.

Bank credit grew at 17.2% in Q2: RBI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Bank credit growth improved to 17.2 per cent in the September quarter 2022 from 7 per cent in the year-ago period, reflecting pick-up in economic activities.

“Credit growth remained broad-based: all population groups and bank groups recorded double digit annual growth,” the Reserve Bank said while releasing ‘Quarterly Statistics on Deposits and Credit of SCBs: September 2022’.

Bank credit growth improved further to 17.2 per cent (year-on-year) in September 2022 from 14.2 per cent a quarter ago and 7 per cent a year ago, it said.

Aggregate deposits growth (y-o-y), which remained in the close range of 9.5-10.2 per cent since June 2021, stood at 9.8 per cent in September 2022. Since December 2020, bank branches in metropolitan centres have been recording higher annual growth than those in rural, semi-urban and urban areas.



Private sector bank group has been outpacing public sector banks, foreign banks and regional rural banks in deposit mobilisation, the RBI said.

As per the data, year-on-year growth in term deposits rose to 10.2 per cent in September 2022 from 6.4 per cent a year ago. Current and savings deposits growth moderated to 8.8 per cent and 9.4 per cent from 17.5 per cent and 14.5 per cent, respectively, a year ago.

“The share of savings deposit in total deposits, which

increased from 32.4 per cent in June 2019 to a peak of 35.2 in June 2022, moderated marginally to 34.7 in the latest quarter,” the RBI added.

It further said the all-India credit-deposit (C-D) ratio increased further to 74.8 per cent in September 2022 from 73.5 per cent a quarter ago and 70 per cent a year ago. The C-D ratio for metropolitan bank branches, which have a dominant share in the banking business, stood much higher at 87.6 per cent in September 2022 (82.8 per cent a year ago).

GDP may print at 5.8% in Q2: SBI Research

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Citing a weak manufacturing sector coupled with the steep margin compression, SBI Research has pencilled in the country's GDP growth for the second quarter at 5.8 per cent, down 30 basis points from average estimates.

The government will release the official numbers on November 30.

In a report on Monday, SBI Research headed by Soumya Kanti Ghosh said corporate results, operating profit of companies, excluding banking and financial sector, degrew by 14 per cent in Q2FY23 as against 35 per cent growth in Q2FY22, though the top line continued to grow at a healthier pace. Net sales grew by 28 per cent, while bottom line was down by around 23 per cent from the year ago period.

Further, corporate margin seems to be under pressure, as reflected in results of around 3,000 listed entities, excluding



banking and financial sector, due to higher input costs with declining operating margins, from 17.7 per cent in Q1FY22 to 10.9 per cent in Q2FY23.

Given this and the wide divergence in market consensus (6.1 per cent) regarding Q2 GDP numbers, SBI sees the economy printing in at 5.8 per cent, Ghosh said citing the lag of two months in the quarterly GDP data. It also pegs the full year growth at 6.8 per cent, 20 basis points lower than the RBI estimate.

The SBI forecast, based on its composite leading index which is a basket of 41 leading indicators based on monthly data, shows declining economic activity between June and September but increased economic activity in October making Q3 growth more optimistic.

Govt gets ₹5,001 cr dividend from ONGC; total dividend reaches ₹23,797 cr so far

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has received about ₹5,001 crore as dividend tranche from ONGC, taking the total dividend receipt from all CPSEs (Central Public Sector Enterprises) so far this fiscal to ₹23,797 crore.

“The government has received about ₹5,001 crore from ONGC as dividend tranche,” Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey tweeted.

The DIPAM, in 2020, advised CPSEs to follow a consistent dividend policy and strive to pay higher dividends taking into account factors like profitability, capex requirements, cash/reserve and net worth.

As per guidelines, CPSEs are required to pay a minimum annual dividend of 30 per cent of profit after tax (PAT) or 5 per cent of net worth, whichever is higher. The total dividend receipts so far this fiscal stood at ₹23,796.55 crore, as per DIPAM website.

Markets hit fresh all-time highs; rally for 5th day

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices ended at fresh lifetime highs on Monday amid foreign fund inflows, a decline in crude oil prices and buying in index major Reliance Industries.

Rallying for the fifth day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 211.16 points or 0.34 per cent to settle at 62,504.80, its fresh record closing high. During the day, it jumped 407.76 points or 0.65 per cent to its lifetime intra-day peak of 62,701.40.

The broader NSE Nifty gained 50 points or 0.27 per cent to end at 18,562.75, its record closing high.

“Sentiment and flows currently are acting as a strong catalyst for the markets which touched an all-time high. We are seeing domestic as also foreign investors being net buyers of equity aiding the momentum,” said Lakshmi Iyer, CEO- Investment Advisory, Kotak Investment Advisors Limited.

Among the Sensex pack, Reliance Industries jumped the most by 3.48 per cent, followed by Nestle, Asian Paints, Bajaj Finserv, Wipro, ICICI Bank and IndusInd Bank.

Tata Steel, HDFC Bank, Bharti Airtel, HDFC and Mahindra & Mahindra were among the laggards.

“Despite unfavourable



global cues, the domestic market reversed its early losses to trade at record highs. Following the decline in oil prices, oil & gas stocks led the rally in anticipation of margin gains, as ongoing protests in China fuelled demand concerns. Going ahead, global markets will depend on Powell's speech on Wednesday, which is crucial in maintaining the momentum, as the market seems to have factored in a moderation in the pace of rate hike,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.77 per cent and midcap jumped 0.72 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, oil & gas climbed 1.49 per cent, energy (1.44 per cent), auto (0.64 per cent), consumer discretionary (0.59 per cent), industrials (0.46 per cent) and FMCG (0.29 per cent).

Power Min launches schemes to procure 4,500 MW electricity supply for five years

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Power Ministry has launched a scheme for the procurement of aggregate electricity of 4,500 MW for five years under of the SHAKTI (Scheme for Harnessing and Allocating Koyala Transparently in India) policy. “Ministry of Power kicks off a scheme for procurement of aggregate power of 4500 MW on competitive basis for five years on Finance, Own and Operate (FOO) basis under B (v) of SHAKTI Policy,” a power ministry release said.

PFC Consulting Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of PFC Ltd, has been designated as the nodal agency by the Ministry of Power.

Under the scheme, the PFC Consulting Ltd has invited bids for the supply of 4,500 MW. The supply of electricity will commence from April 2023. The Ministry of Coal has



been requested to allocate around 27 MTPA for this, it stated.

The utilities that have evinced interest for the scheme are Gujarat Urja Vikas Nigam Ltd, Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd, Madhya Pradesh Power Management Company Ltd, New Delhi Municipal Corporation and

Sebi revises framework to OK changes in control of market intermediaries

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has put in place a revised Sframework for seeking its prior approval for changes in control of stock brokers, depository participants and other market intermediaries.

The framework will be applicable for stock broker/clearing member, depository participant, investment adviser, research analyst or research entity, registrar to an issue and share transfer agent and KYC (Know Your Client) Registration Agencies (KRAs).

In a circular on Monday, the regulator said the changes have been made to streamline the process of providing approval to the proposed change in control of the entities.

Under the provisions, which will be effective from December 1, an intermediary should apply online for Sebi's prior approval and along with the application, the entity concerned has to submit various details, including the current and proposed shareholding pattern of the applicant.

“The prior approval granted by Sebi shall be valid for a period of six months from the date of such approval within which the applicant shall file application for fresh registration pursuant to change in control,” it said.

The application should be accompanied by information/declaration/undertaking about itself, the acquirer/person



as well as the director/partner of the acquirer/person who will have the control.

Information about whether any action has been initiated under Sebi regulations against the entity and any pending investor complaints should be submitted to the regulator.

Among other information, the entity has to provide declaration that there will not be any change in the board of directors till the time prior approval is granted.

“... Pursuant to grant of prior approval by Sebi, the incumbent shall inform all the existing investors/clients about the proposed change prior to effecting the same, in order to enable them to take informed decision regarding their continuance or otherwise with the new management,” the circular said. The ‘fit and proper person’ criteria should also be complied with. In case the entity is a registered stock broker, clearing

member or a depository participant, then NOC (No Objection Certificate) should be obtained from all stock exchanges/clearing corporations/depositories where the entity is a member/depository participant. A self-attested copy of the same has to be submitted to Sebi.

When it comes to cases involving scheme of arrangements that need NCLT approval, Sebi said that first, the application seeking approval for the proposed change in control of the intermediary should be filed with Sebi prior to filing the application with NCLT. An in-principle approval will be given for three months provided all other regulatory compliances are met, as per the circular.

Within 15 days from the date of the National Company Law Tribunal's order, the intermediary should submit an online application for Sebi's final approval.

Realty firm Signature Global gets Sebi nod for its ₹1,000 crore proposed IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Signature Global (India) Ltd has received a nod from capital markets regulator Sebi for its initial public offer (IPO) to raise up to ₹1,000 crore to clear debt and land acquisition.

In July, Signature Global, which focuses on affordable and mid-housing segments, had filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP) with Sebi to launch its maiden public issue.

Sebi issued its observation letter on November 24, according to the latest update on the regulators' website.

In Sebi's parlance, an issuance of the observation letter implies the go-ahead from the regulator for the proposed IPO.

As per the DRHP, the IPO will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares worth up to ₹750

crore and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of up to ₹250 crore.

Promoter Sarvpriya Securities and investor International Finance Corporation will sell equity shares worth up to ₹125 crore each.

The company proposes to utilise the net proceeds from the fresh issue towards payment of the debt, inorganic growth through land acquisitions and general corporate purposes.

The funds will also be used to pay the debt of subsidiaries— Signature Global Homes, Signature Infrabuild, Signature Global Developers and Sternal Buildcon. Signature Global commenced operations in 2014 through its subsidiary Signature Builders Pvt Ltd with the launch of ‘Solera’ project on 6.13 acres of land in Gurugram, Haryana.

HCL Tech bags multi-year contract from Swiss company SR Technics

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT company HCL Tech has signed a multi-year contract with Switzerland-based maintenance, repair and overhaul service provider SR Technics to digitally transform its operations, the company said on Monday.

SR Technics works with a network of partners and business development offices in Europe, Americas, Asia and the Middle East, offering comprehensive, fully customized O solutions for aircraft engines, airframe and components including technical support to over 500 customers worldwide.

“The combined SAP and



HCLTech offering was the only solution that fully met our unique business requirements. It provides a future-proof technology foundation to optimize and grow our engine's operations,” Patrick Kuster, Senior Vice President IT and executive sponsor of the ReSeT digital transformation program at SR Technics said.

Under the contract, HCL Tech will implement a new greenfield SAP technology hosted on Microsoft Azure.

Moving to cloud-based ERP (enterprise resource planning) platform will allow SR Technics to transform and simplify its business operations, the statement said.

“This contract highlights HCL Tech's strong partnership with SAP and our innovative product engineering capabilities. SR Technics works with many of the world's major airlines and aerospace manufacturers, making this a significant engagement as we further grow our business in the DACH region and across the aviation sector globally,” Pankaj Tagra, Corporate Vice President, Europe and Africa, HCL Tech said.

The local unit finally settled at 81.66, registering a rise of 5 paise over its previous close of 81.71.

Rupee rises 5 paise to close at 81.66 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee climbed 5 paise to close at 81.66 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday as lower crude prices in and a firm trend in domestic equities boosted investor sentiment.

Besides, a weak American currency and foreign fund inflows also supported the domestic unit, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 81.81 and touched an intra-day high of 81.61 and a low of 81.83 against the greenback.

The local unit finally settled at 81.66, registering a rise of 5 paise over its previous close of 81.71.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, slipped 0.35 per cent to 105.59.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined 3.10 per cent to \$ 81.04 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the 30-share BSE Sensex advanced 211.16 points or 0.34 per cent to end at a fresh closing peak of 62,504.80, while the broader NSE Nifty gained 50 points or 0.27 per cent to record 18,562.75. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net buyers in the capital markets on Friday as they bought shares worth ₹369.08 crore, according to exchange data.

Gold falls by ₹61; silver sheds ₹146

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold price slipped by ₹61 to ₹52,822 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday amid a fall in prices of the precious metal overseas, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had touched ₹52,883 per 10 gram.

Silver also declined by ₹146 to ₹61,855 per kg.

“A weaker rupee and strong physical demand following the marriage season supported limiting the fall of domestic gold prices,” said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at \$1,750.46 per ounce while silver was down at \$21.25 per ounce. “COMEX Gold fell as growing unrest in China over Covid zero controls strengthened the dollar. The haven demand has been seen after protests by Chinese people against Covid curbs,” Parmar said.



Strong bank loan growth in FY23 despite higher interest rates: Fitch

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Monday said India's bank credit will see strong growth in current financial year despite effects of higher interest rates.

It said the strong loan growth should benefit net revenue, particularly as it will be coupled with wider net interest margins. “We see bank credit expanding by around 13 per cent in FY23, up from 11.5 per cent in FY22.

The acceleration will be driven by the normalisation of economic activity after the Covid-19 pandemic, and high nominal GDP growth, which we expect to boost demand for retail and working-capital loans,” Fitch said in a statement. Fitch forecasts India's real GDP growth at 7 per cent in 2022-23.

It said Indian banks generally remain open to additional capital-raising to fund growth, despite the rise in rates.

NBCC gets ₹271.62 cr order in stalled projects of erstwhile Amrapali Group

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned construction firm NBCC (India) Ltd on Monday said it has got work orders worth Rs 271.62 crore in projects of erstwhile realty firm Amrapali Group.

In a regulatory filing, the company informed that it has got an order of Rs 42.44 crore for construction of balance works/left out works of Amrapali corporate Hub at IMT Manesar, Gurugram in Haryana. NBCC got another order of Rs 229.18 crore for “special repair and up-gradation works of civil, electrical, mechanical and plumbing along with all allied works required due to lack of comprehensive maintenance of Amrapali Projects at Noida & Greater Noida”.

The order value mentioned is including of PMC (project management consultancy) charge and excluding of GST. NBCC has undertaken the completion of many residential projects in Noida and Greater Noida under the aegis of Amrapali Stalled Projects and Investment Reconstruction Establishment (ASPIRE) and supervision of the Supreme Court.

Honda Cars ties up with Maruti Suzuki Toyotsu for vehicle scrapping

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Cars India on Monday said it has tied up with Maruti Suzuki Toyotsu for vehicle scrapping.

The initiative will allow Honda to offer its customers an end-to-end solution for scrapping their End of Life Vehicles (ELVs).

With this tie-up, the Japanese automaker strives to assist its customers to get the best value for their ELVs and facilitate hassle-free deregistration and issue of Certificate of Deposit/ Destruction through its dealer partners, Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) said in a statement.

Maruti Suzuki Toyotsu India (MSTI) is a government-approved ELV scrapping and recycling company, which is setting up scrap and recycling centres in the coun-



try.

The service alliance will begin in Delhi NCR, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The coverage area will expand with the addition of new scrappage centres by MSTI in future.

“The Vehicle Scrapage Policy by Government of India stipulates scrappage and deregistration of old vehicles to promote phasing out of unfit vehicles from the roads, improve safety and lowering of carbon footprint in India,” Honda Cars India President & CEO Takuya Tsumura said.

The company will offer a one-stop solution to its customers through dealers to scrap their old cars in a systematic and environmentally friendly manner, he added.

MSTI Managing Director Masaru Akaishi said the company will continue to contribute to the improvement of India's environment by providing environment-friendly ELV dismantling services.

MSTI is a joint venture between Maruti Suzuki India, Toyota Tsusho Group and Toyota Tsusho India.

NPC to hold meet on ESG for industry transformation

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ MUMBAI

As a part of the country's commitment towards curbing climate change threats, SEBI's top 1000 listed companies are gearing up to align with the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) framework with the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting (BRSR) as mandated by the SEBI.

In this regard, the National Productivity Council, under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry which is handholding the corporate to help follow ESG practices, has organized a one-day national conference to be held in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Experts and important functionaries like the SEBI chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch, Union Environment Secretary Leena Nandan, corporate leaders, experts and industry players will attend the conference. NPC Director General, Sundeep Nayak said that the Union Ministry of Environment and NPC have come together to facilitate the corporate sector and the Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) achieve higher goals in the ESG framework.

RECORD-BREAKER RUTU

MAHARASHTRA OPENER HITS SEVEN SIXES IN AN OVER AGAINST UP IN VIJAY HAZARE QUARTERFINALS

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Double centurion Ruturaj Gaikwad blazed his way into the record books, smashing seven sixes in a 43-run over as Maharashtra outplayed Uttar Pradesh by 58 runs to storm into the Vijay Hazare Trophy semi-finals here on Monday.

Opting to bowl, Uttar Pradesh were in for a shocker as the Maharashtra skipper went hammer and tongs at the Motera B ground during his knock of 220 that came off 159 balls, propelling Maharashtra to 330 for five. In reply, wicketkeeper-batter Aryan Juyal led UP's charge with a 143-ball 159 but it was not enough as they folded for 272 in 47.4 overs.

Rajvardhan Hangargekar picked up a maiden five-wicket haul (5/53) and was the wreck-er-in-chief for Maharashtra.

The penultimate over of Maharashtra's innings was the most eventful one as Gaikwad unleashed his fury against hapless UP left-arm spinner Shiva Singh, smashing him for seven sixes in a row thanks to a no ball while creating a List A record.

He also became the only batter in limited overs cricket to score 43 runs in a single over.

In the last-four clash on Wednesday, Maharashtra will face Assam who eliminated Jammu and Kashmir in another quarterfinal here.

Earlier, Brett Hampton and Joe Carter of Northern Districts jointly hit 43 runs against Willem Ludick in their match against Central Districts in a Ford Trophy game in 2018.

It was a one-man show by the Maharashtra opener as he held their innings together even as wickets kept falling at the other end.

The first ball of the 49th over



was a low full-toss and Gaikwad smoked it over deep midwicket for the first six. The second one was hit straight down the ground, while he cleared deep square leg for his third maximum. The fourth delivery was tonked over long-off, the fifth, a no ball, was played almost in the same direction, and the batter took full advantage of the free hit by hammering it over long-on and reach his double century.

The seventh and final ball was smashed over deep midwicket, as the UP spinner returned with expensive figures of 0/88 from nine overs.

Overall, Gaikwad hit 16 sixes and 10 fours and did the bulk of the scoring as the rest of his teammates managed only 96 runs from 142 deliveries. In reply, wicketkeeper-batter Aryan Juyal led UP's charge with a 143-ball 159 but it was not enough as they folded for 272 in 47.4 overs.

Rajvardhan Hangargekar picked up a maiden five-wicket haul (5/53) and was the wreck-er-in-chief for Maharashtra.

PARAG SCORES 174

Riyan Parag smashed a superb 116-ball 174 to help Assam chase down a mammoth target of 351 in 46.1 overs against Jammu & Kashmir.

Parag struck 12 sixes and a dozen fours as Assam won the match by seven wickets.

Replying to J&K's 350 that was built on tons by Henan Nazir 124 (113 balls, 5 fours, 5 sixes) and Shubham Khajuria 120 (84 balls, 8 fours, 8 sixes), Assam slipped to 45 for two before Parag and Rishav Das (114 off 118 balls) got into the act. The 21-year old Parag was in a belligerent mood and waded into the rival bowling while hitting . He kept finding the ropes and did not hesitate to go over the field.

The right-handed batter's huge 277-run partnership with Das left the J&K bowlers, who had been impressive through the tournament, clueless.

It was Parag's third century in the ongoing Hazare Trophy and made a daunting task look easy for Assam.

Karnataka pip Punjab

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Young pacer Vidwath Kaverappa showed a lot of promise and bagged a career-best 4/40 as Karnataka defeated Punjab by four wickets in a thrilling finish to enter the Vijay Hazare Trophy semi-finals here on Monday.

Karnataka will take on Saurashtra in the semifinals here on Wednesday.

Young Abhishek Sharma's knock was the backbone of Punjab innings as he anchored the show with a 123-ball 109, even as wickets kept falling around him.

Punjab were eventually bowled out for a modest 235 in the final delivery, with Kaverappa being the pick of Karnataka bowling. Ronie More took 2/48.

The chase was not easy

for Karnataka as Punjab bowlers managed to take the game to the last over where Manoj Bhandage (25 not out) and Krishnappa Gowtham (six not out) sealed the issue with four balls to spare.

On a day when Mayank Agarwal got out for one, his opening partner Ravikumar Samarth top-scored for Karnataka with a resolute 106-ball 71. But Samarth failed to carry on and perished in the 36th over.

The likes of Shreyas Gopal (42), Manish Pandey (35) and Nikin Jose (29) also got starts but could not finish the task, leaving it for the lower-order to pull off a nervy win.

Sanvir Singh was the pick of the Punjab bowling and returned with tidy figures of 10-1-28-2.

Saurashtra knock out TN

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Chirag Jani came up with an all-round show (52 not out and 3/52) as Saurashtra defeated Tamil Nadu by 44 runs to enter the semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Monday.

Put in to bat by the Tamil Nadu skipper B Indrajith, Saurashtra made 293 for 8 in 50 overs. Half centuries by Harvik Desai, Arpit Vasavada and Chirag Jani powered Saurashtra.

Tamil Nadu's prolific opening pair of N Jagadeesan

and B Sai Sudharsan was separated quite early with Chetan Sakariya ((1/31) trapping the former LBW when the batter had made only 8.

Jagadeesan, who has hit five centuries on the trot and made a List A record score of 277 in the league phase, was expected to play a key role for Tamil Nadu. His early dismissal was a huge setback for last year's runners-up.

Saurashtra struck three more crucial blows, removing Sudharsan (24), B Aparajith (4) and the experienced Dinesh Karthik (9) to seize the

advantage.

Captain Baba Indrajith (53) and Sai Kishore (74) joined hands at this juncture and stitched together a 113-run stand for the fifth wicket to bring Tamil Nadu back in the reckoning.

While Indrajith was watchful, Sai Kishore did not mind taking the aerial route and hit three sixes.

Parth Bhut (2/47) did the trick for Saurashtra by removing Indrajith when the partnership was assuming ominous proportions. Sai Kishore and R Sanjay

Yadav (21) added 28 runs for the sixth wicket. Jani, after his heroics with the bat at No.7, had Sai Kishore caught by Samarth Vyas to tilt the balance in his team's favour.

Though R Sonu Yadav (29, 21 balls, 1 four, 2 sixes) went after the bowling, he lacked support at the other end as the team was bowled out for 249 in 48 overs.

Dharmendrasinh Jadeja (2/48) and Parth Bhut (2/47) picked up two wickets each while Jani finished with a three-wicket haul.



Best environment to learn: Excited Green on IPL

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Excited to be part of next year's IPL after registering his name for the players auction, young Australia all-rounder Cameroen Green said the T20 league has the best environment that a cricketer needs to hone his craft.

The 23-year-old youngster is expected to attract huge interest from the franchises during the IPL players auction, scheduled to be held in Kochi on December 23. "I have registered for it. It will be an exciting opportunity. Speaking to a lot of guys, especially in the WA (Western Australia) setup about their experiences in the IPL, they speak so highly of it," Green was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au.

"They speak about the quality coaches that you're around, the quality players that you're around. They're all the best in the world at their craft.

"It's a craft that I haven't

been exposed to too much. I'm so open to wanting to learn as much as I can and that's probably one of the best environments to learn in," he added.

Green, however, is focussed on his Test career and is preparing for hours with his father, Gary on bowling machines ahead of the two-Test series against the West Indies starting November 30 in his hometown Perth.

"I had a few sessions on the bowling machine basically trying to change my contact point. In T20 cricket, you're meeting the ball so far in front of you, so you get that full swing," he said.

"To try to rein it back and hit the ball under your eyes (is difficult). I had a few good sessions basically just playing the defence shot and just getting your balance right and being able to leave the ball – that felt weird.

"It's a challenge for all guys that do chop and change (formats). I'm just getting exposed to it now."

LEE WANTS DRAVID, ROHIT TO SHIELD ARSHDEEP FROM OVERDOSE OF ADVISE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Australian fast-bowling legend Brett Lee wants India coach Rahul Dravid and captain Rohit Sharma to shield rising left-arm pacer Arshdeep Singh from an overdose of advise as it could prove to be "counter-productive".

Since making his international debut in July this year, Arshdeep has been one of the star performers with the ball for India, cemented his place in the T20 side, and has played his maiden ODI in the ongoing New Zealand tour.

In Jasprit Bumrah's absence, Arshdeep has grabbed the opportunity with both hands, picking up 33 wickets from 23 T20Is. "Very often teams don't know what to do with these young and breakout stars. We have seen it before when young players get involved and advices from players, TV, commentators, at the hotel. Every man means well but very often, too much advice can be counter-productive," Lee said on his YouTube channel, BRETT LEE TV.

"So, I think Rahul Dravid and Rohit Sharma have the responsibility to shield Arshdeep Singh from this overdose of advice."

Lee gave Arshdeep a few inputs to remain injury free. "As someone who has played a few matches, I believe I am pretty qualified to pass him

my thoughts. I have got a couple of little things that I believe can help Arshdeep with his action and take more wicket.

"My first advice to Arshdeep would be that people often say that a fast bowler should get to the gym, and bulk. We hear they want him to bulk up, be strong. Now strong can be strong in the mind. I would say do not over-gym," he said. "Lightweight, high repetitions, don't worry about the beach muscles, if you want to do that, it won't help you bowl fast," Lee added.

The former Australian



cricketer also wants Arshdeep to play domestic cricket, a platform which will help him fine tune his skills. "Keep working on your skills in domestic cricket, because when there is no big World Cups, and you're not playing Test cricket, there aren't any spectators. This is where you have to shine," Lee said.

"So this is what I believe what was the bread and butter of my career. Going back to first-class cricket, enjoy the quietness of the crowd and hone and build those skills. If you can look after that, the high-level will follow."

You are messing up chances, need to reinvent game: Srikanth to Pant

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rishabh Pant is "messaging" his chances and should be given a break from international cricket to reinvent his game, feels former chairman of selection committee Krishnamachari Srikanth.

Pant has looked subdued in limited overs cricket this year, scoring just one fifty in the shortest format way back in February against the West Indies, while crossing the 30-run mark only twice in the 21 innings that he has played in 2022.

In ODIs, the 25-year-old

had two fifties and a hundred in the nine innings he has played this year.

"Maybe you can give him (Pant) a break and tell him just wait a bit, come and play in India', they haven't handled him well. Are you going to wait for a couple of matches before giving him a break or remove him after one or two games?" Srikanth said on his YouTube channel Cheeky Cheeka.

"Yes, Rishabh Pant is not utilising the chances he's getting. I am very disappointed - ennada Pant-u (what is this Pant)?," he added.

Maninder Singh, SS Das in race to become national selectors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Former left-arm spinner Maninder Singh, opener Shiv Sunder Das were the two prominent names to have applied for senior national selectors' posts with experience of playing more than 20 Tests for India.

It couldn't be confirmed whether former pacer Ajit Agarkar has applied or not. According to many, Agarkar has a sure-shot chance of becoming selection committee chairman with his international credentials, if he decides to apply.

Salil Ankola, current chairman of senior Mumbai team, former keeper Samir Dighe and the flamboyant Vinod Kambli are said to have applied from Mumbai.

As the date of application for the new panel closed at 6 pm on Monday, it is understood that

more than 50 persons have applied but there aren't too many heavyweights in the fray.

Among the confirmed applicants, no one has played more Tests than Maninder (35 Tests) while Das (21 Tests) is second in that list.

However, Maninder had applied in 2021 also and despite qualifying for the interview round, he was pipped by Chetan Sharma, who was the choice of erstwhile Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) headed by Madan Lal.

Chetan, in fact, had played lesser number of matches as compared to Maninder but stature-wise both were almost of same category, having been young stars of mid to late 1980s before fading away.

"Yes, I have applied," Maninder said.

Sources in the know confirmed that Das, who is current-



ly senior Punjab team's batting coach, has applied and with East Zone barely producing Test players of repute, he stands a very good chance to become a selector.

But, it is not confirmed if Das' home state Odisha will back his candidature.

Last time, Agarkar, despite being the favourite, didn't get the

job as the former MCA regime hadn't backed him as the officials wanted Abey Kuruvilla.

The other names from North zone are lightweight former cricketers.

From North zone, apart from Maninder, Atul Wassan, Nikhil Chopra (Delhi), Ajay Ratra (Haryana) and Reetinder Singh Sodhi (Punjab) are former India players who have thrown their hat into the ring.

From East zone, save Das, other names are really lightweight. They include Prabhjan Mullick, Rashmi Ranjan Parida from Odisha, Subhamoy Das, Saradindu Mukherjee and Sourasish Lahiri from Bengal.

Deep Dasgupta and Laxmi Ratan Shukla (current Bengal coach) — two former India players — have decided against applying.

From central zone, Amay Khurasiya of Madhya Pradesh

and Gyanendra Pandey of Uttar Pradesh are believed to have applied.

While there are no written rules, BCCI normally believes in convention of equal distribution and hence five junior and five senior selectors in recent times have been from 10 different states.

So, junior selection committee has one from Tamil Nadu (S Sharath), Bengal (Ranadeb Bose), MP (Harvinder Sodhi), Punjab (Krishan Mohan) and Gujarat (Pathik Patel).

Hence, it is expected that

candidates from these five states are likely to be excluded.

From Tamil Nadu, prominent names like L Sivarama-

krishnan and WV Raman haven't applied.

However, former Hyderabad off-spinner Kanwaljeet Singh has applied for the job as a South zone candidate.



the younger team members in Ramiz, Tahir, Mohsin, Shoaib Mohammad invited me to nightclubs."

Akram played under Malik's captaincy from 1992 to 1995 and there were reports that the two players were not on good terms.

Malik, however, denied the allegations, saying Akram wrote

all these to promote his book.

"I was trying to call him but he did not answer. I will ask him what was the reason for writing what he did," Malik was quoted as saying by the Pakistani media.

"If I was narrow minded, I would not have given him the chance to bowl. I will ask him why he wrote such remarks about me."

Saleem Malik treated me like servant in my early days: Akram

PTI ■ KARACHI

In a startling revelation, pace legend Wasim Akram has accused his former Pakistan teammate Saleem Malik of treating him like a servant in the early part of his career.

Akram, who made his international debut in 1984, said that senior teammate Malik made him give massage and clean his clothes and boots. Akram made the revelations in his biography 'Sultan: A Memoir'.

"He would take advantage of my junior status. He was negative, selfish and treated me like a servant. He demanded I massage him, he ordered me to clean his clothes and boots," read an excerpt from the biography, according to reports in Pakistani media.

"I was angry when some of