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Launching of Flight services for 'JEYPORE'

Inauguration by **Shri Naveen Patnaik**
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Odisha

31st October 2022 | 10.30 am
Biju Patnaik International Airport
Bhubaneswar



The Jeypore Airport has been licensed for scheduled commercial flight operations with collaborated effort of the State Government, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Govt. of India and Airports Authority of India under UDAN scheme. The IndiaOne Air shall operate scheduled flights between Bhubaneswar and Jeypore. This reduces the travel time between the state capital and Jeypore Town to 1.5 hr.



✈ ଜୟପୁର ବିମାନବନ୍ଦର(କୋରାପୁଟ) | जयपुर हवाई अड्डा(कोरापुट) | JEYPORE AIRPORT(KORAPUT)



Mann Ki Baat Modi praises Keonjhar's Kunni Deori, IIT BBSR

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi praised Kunni Deori of Odisha's Keonjhar district during his Mann Ki Baat programme on Sunday for generating employment for herself and others using solar energy.

"Kunni Deori, a daughter from Odisha, is making solar energy a medium of employment for her as well as for other women. Kunni lives in Kardapal village of Keonjhar district of Odisha. She trains tribal women to spin silk on a solar-powered reeling machine. Due to the solar machine, these tribal women do not have to bear the burden



of electricity bill, and they are earning income," the Prime Minister said.

"This is the very boon of Sun God's solar energy. The more the boon and the blessings spread, the better it is. Therefore, I urge you to join this and add others too," he added.

Modi also praised the IIT

Bhubaneswar for developing a portable ventilator for newborn babies.

"A team from IIT Bhubaneswar has developed a portable ventilator for newborn babies. It runs on battery and can be used easily in remote areas. This can prove to be very helpful in saving the lives of babies

who are born prematurely. Be it electric mobility, drone technology, 5G, many of our students are engaged in developing new technology related to them. Several IITs are also working together on a multilingual project that makes learning local languages easier," said Modi.

'Brain stroke patient must reach hosp in 3 hrs'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The World Stroke Day on October 29 is observed to create public awareness so that more and more people can come to know about it and also realize the importance of early medical consultation if anyone encounters a person with symptoms

Medical data suggests that in India, the incidence of stroke is 100 150/one lakh persons per year. The commonest symptoms by which anyone can easily identify stroke are FAST: F - Face drop, A - Arm weakness, S - Speech difficulty, T - Time. If any person develops these symptoms within minutes,

then he or she may have suffered a stroke.

Associate Professor and HoD Neurology, Kalinga Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhubaneswar Dr Santosh Dash says, "Human brain suffers irreversible damage if there is a loss of blood flow due to blockage of the blood vessels. In acute stroke, time is crucial, because early treatment saves valuable brain tissue from permanent damage."

In acute stroke, early arrival to the hospital, preferably within three hours is vital in stroke treatment. If the patient arrives early, the chance of complete recovery is good in acute stroke, or there may be a permanent disability, he added.

Defective machine Consumer forum penalises Chinese firm



PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Sambalpur District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum has penalised a Chinese firm and its Kolkata-based medical equipment supplier for selling a defective ultrasound machine to a Sambalpur-based doctor, Debasish Behera.

The complainant Sandhaya Kar and her husband Debasish Behera, both practising doctors, had purchased the ultra sonography machine manufactured by OP No 1 of China for Rs 6 lakh through bank finance. But while using the machine the complainant found poor resolution, image quality and deficient in diagnostic applications.

After getting information,

the supplier Hospital Supply Company's service engineer came and, after inspection, assured of rectification. But no rectification was done. Later, the complainant sent a lawyer's notice, but there was no response. So, the complainant approached the consumer forum.

The consumer body directed the company and the supplier to replace the defective machine with a new one within one month of its order or else pay Rs 8 lakh with 12% interest per annum from September 15, 2015.

For deficiency in service the OPs have to pay Rs 3 lakh and also pay the complainant Rs 10,000 as litigation charges, the forum ordered.

BBSR-Jeypore flight service from today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Direct flight service between Bhubaneswar and Jeypore is scheduled to commence from Monday. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik will inaugurate the service at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here at around 10.30 am.

The Ahmedabad-based IndiaOne Air airline will operate the flights between Bhubaneswar and Jeypore. The company has announced an introductory fare offer of Rs 999.

Flight timings: Bhubaneswar to Jeypore 11.35 am (departure from Bhubaneswar), 1.20 pm

(arrival at Jeypore). Jeypore to Bhubaneswar 4.05 pm (departure from Jeypore), 5.50 pm (arrival at Bhubaneswar).

While online bookings were open in the first phase till November 9 on the company's website (indiaoneair.com), all seats have been sold out, the airline said.

Notably, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had on October 20 granted licence for the Jeypore Airport to carry out commercial flight operations. The Jeypore Airstrip was constructed in 1960. The Jeypore Airport was selected by the Civil Aviation Ministry under the UDAN scheme in 2017.

Archana Honey-trap racket CM should break his silence: PCC chief

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Archana Nag honey-trap racket besides rocking Odisha has also become a topic of discussion in the country. The sinful incident has tarnished the image of the State, alleged the Odisha Congress on Sunday.

Though Archana has been arrested long back, no action has been taken against the other persons involved in the racket. Why the top Odisha



police officials including the Commissioner of Police and the DCP have not conducted an inquiry sincerely, questioned Pradesh Congress Committee president Sarat

Patnaik. The Chief Minister has remained silent over the matter. He should break his silence and issue a statement, demanded Patnaik.

He further said BJD leaders, including Ministers, have been involved in a number of crimes against women in the State. But the Chief Minister has neither expelled them from the Cabinet or the party though there are lots of evidences against them.

Odia-led int'l astronomers' panel discovers exotic galaxy

It'll help know how galaxies formed in early universe

SUDHIR MISHRA ■ BHUBANESWAR

An Indian-led international team of astronomers has discovered an enigmatic object in the sky using the Giant Meter Wave Radio Telescope (GMRT). The GMRT, the largest in the world and the most powerful radio telescope in the low frequency range of 150-1,500 MHz of the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

(NCRA-TIFR), has been widely used by astronomers from all over the world.

Observing at low radio frequencies with the GMRT is like making a deeper archaeological excavation to unravel the past history of jet activity of the black holes. Multiple evolutionary processes, driving evolution of galaxies and clusters of galaxies have been discovered by the team using the GMRT.

Dr Ananda Hota of Academia Sinica Institute of Astronomy and Astrophysics (ASIAA), Taiwan, discovered the exotic galaxy having a combination of properties never seen before and dubbed



it SPCA (Spiral-host Episodic Radio Galaxy Tracing Cluster Accretion). The SPCA is only the second spiral as opposed to elliptical galaxy known to produce large, powerful jets of subatomic particles moving at nearly the speed of light. This is probably the most exotic galaxy with a black hole and has the potential to teach new lessons about how galaxies and

clusters of galaxies formed in the early universe.

It also is one of only two galaxies to show that such activity occurred in three separate episodes. The reason behind this on-off activity of the black hole to produce jets is unknown.

"The on-going TIFR GMRT Sky Survey (TGSS) is going to discover more SPCA-like galaxies and Dr Hota's discovery is a potential demonstrator," said Dr Sandeep Sirothia of NCRA-TIFR.

"This kind of reborn radio galaxies are the laboratories to understand many puzzling aspects of black holes," said Dr

Chiranjib Konar of ASIAA.

The SPCA is a 'missing link', rare in the nearby universe, but is anticipated to be common in the early universe when black holes, galaxies and clusters were very young in their formative era, informed Dr Hota.

This is probably the first evidence of the process of growth and regulation of clusters of galaxies by supersonic in fall of matter from the cosmic-web and black holes to control that by outflow of powerful jets.

"It is an outstanding discovery that is very important for cluster formation models and

highlights the importance of sensitive observations at meter wavelengths provided by the GMRT," said Padmashri awardee Prof Govind Swarup, FRS, who is considered the 'father' of Indian radio astronomy and the chief architect of the GMRT.

In addition to Dr Hota, Dr Sirothia and Dr Konar, the research team includes Dr Youichi Ohya, and Dr Satoki Matsuchita of ASIAA, Suk Kim and Professor Soo-Chang Rey of Chungnam National University in Korea, Professor DJ Saikia of NCRA and Dr Judith H Croston of the University of Southampton in England.

CONTEMPORARIES

The story of fundamental duties of Indian citizens

The concept of duties is not alien to India. In fact, the Indian tradition through the ages has laid greater emphasis on duties than on the rights of citizens. Even so, the framers of the Indian Constitution did not think it necessary to incorporate the fundamental duties specifically in the Constitution. To them, these were basic and inherent values which were being practised by each and everyone. They were an integral part of the Indian ethos and it was taken for granted that they would be observed tenaciously. Moreover, the existence of such duties was implied in the Preamble to the Constitution which contains the aspirations and ideals of our founding fathers and the commitment of the Constitution towards realising them.

However, with the lapse of time, degradation of values became blatantly evident leading to the proliferation of rights and dilution of corresponding duties. The legislature felt the need to amend the Constitution and incorporate these values as fundamental duties. Ironically, the fundamental duties were introduced during the period of national Emergency. These duties were incorporated in Part IV



S JYOTIRANJANA

A of the Constitution consisting of the sole article 51-A. Article 51-A lists eleven fundamental duties. Significantly, such duties were not part of the original Constitution but were introduced through the 42nd Amendment Act 1976. Over the years, these duties have faced criticism from several eminent jurists, including Homi Seervai, who has termed them to be both "innocuous" and "ludicrous". These duties have no legal form or sanction. Furthermore, the Constitution is silent on its enforceability and it is debatable whether the fundamental duties by themselves are justiciable and can be directly enforced in a court of law. Perhaps, the Supreme Court may, by innovative interpretation, make certain duties partly

justiciable.

Even before the fundamental duties were incorporated in our Constitution, the apex court had observed that the concept of duties is implicit in the Constitution. In *Chandra Bhavan Boarding and lodging, Bangalore v. State of Mysore*, it was held, "It is a fallacy to think that under our Constitution there are only rights and no duties. While rights conferred under Part III are fundamental, the directives given under Part IV are fundamental in the governance of the country."

In *Sachidanand Pandey v. State of West Bengal* the Government of West Bengal, the court expressed that whenever a problem of ecology is brought before the court, the court is bound to bear in mind Article 48A of the Constitution and Article 51A(g) which proclaims the fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wild life and to have compassion for living creatures. Policy decisions taken by the courts are not ordinarily to be interfered with by the courts. But if it is a question of giving effect to the Directive Principles and the fundamental duty, the court is not

to shrug its shoulders and say that priorities are a matter of policy and are not to be touched by the court, the court may always give necessary directions so as to secure implementation of directive principles and fundamental duties.

In the *Kanpur tanneries case*, the Supreme Court outlined the importance of the fundamental duty of protecting the environment when it came to cases involving environmental harm. This was followed by the second MC Mehta case where Venkataramiah, J. held that there was a duty cast upon the Government to issue directions consistently with Article 51-A. Consequently, he issued directions to the state at Para 24 of the judgment.

Thus, the Supreme Court on a number of occasions, particularly in those cases dealing with the ecology and environment, has issued directions binding the state as well as the citizens under Article 51-A.

The relationship between fundamental rights and fundamental duties was first considered, though very indirectly, in the case of *Balaji Raghavan v. Union of India*, where the court held, "The theory of equality does

not mandate that merit should not be recognised. Article 51-A speaks of the fundamental duties of every citizen of India. In this context, we may refer to the various clauses of Article 51-A and specifically clause (j) which exhorts every citizen "to strive towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity, so that the nation constantly rises to higher levels of endeavour and achievement". It is, therefore, necessary that there should be a system of awards and decorations to recognise excellence in the performance of these duties."

The apex court over the years seems to have given increasing importance to the fundamental duties, initially resorting to it only in cases of environmental violations whereas today the duties along with the directives are 'kept in mind' while assessing legal restrictions placed on the fundamental rights.

The National Commission to Review the Working of Constitution has prepared a consultation paper dealing with the steps towards effectuation of fundamental duties and points out that awareness, inculcation, implementation and enforcement are the steps by which the

fundamental duties can be effectuated. The commission has observed that both the state and the society have failed to provide adequate means and mechanisms for citizens to identify, imbibe and practise the culture of the constitution. This failure has been mainly responsible for the low level of effectuation of the fundamental duties. The commission also outlined the importance of inculcating Constitutional values among youths through teaching programmes both in primary and secondary schools as well as universities and institutes of higher learning. To this end, the commission recommended that schools conduct one-hour classes for imparting the fundamental duties enshrined in Article 51-A three days a week, conduct periodical essay and elocution competitions on value-based topics and also annually award students who stand first in translating the values into reality. Also, the commission has recommended for legislations to bind citizens holding public offices with justiciable fundamental duties with appropriate sanctions to enforce them. It has also called for the extension of such sanctions

to professional bodies such as Bar Council of India, Medical Council of India, Institute of Chartered Accountants and Institute of Engineers. As for the implementation of the duties, the commission has recommended a number of substantive amendments to Article 51-A such as:

- (i) The opening words of Article 51-A should be reworded as follows: "Every citizen of India shall implement in daily life the following duties"
 - (ii) Article 51-A should be shifted to Part II (citizenship) of the constitution of India
 - (iii) Suitable changes may be carried out to make fundamental duties form a compendium with the fundamental rights.
- However, the commission has called for first educating the citizens regarding the spirit of the Constitution and then think of amending it.
- (The writer is an Additional Central Government Standing Counsel, Central Administrative Tribunal and a Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Law and Media Studies, School of Mass Communication, KIIT University. Views are personal)*

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MAX BEATS MERCEDES DUO FOR POLE 11 SPORT

60 dead in Guj cable bridge collapse

Many missing after old bridge that had recently reopened after repairs snapped

PTI ■ MORBI (GUJARAT)

At least 60 people were killed and scores were missing after a nearly century-old suspension bridge on the Machchhu river in Gujarat's Morbi city collapsed on Sunday evening, officials said. There was a rush of people on the bridge, which was reopened for the public just four days back following the renovation work, when it snapped around 6.30 PM, they said. "At least 60 people have died in Morbi suspension bridge collapse as our hospital has so far received that many bodies," Superintendent of Morbi Civil Hospital Dr Pradip Dudhrajia said.

Gujarat Minister Brijesh Merja confirmed that around 60 people have died in the tragedy.

Eyewitnesses said that there were several women, children and others on the hanging bridge when it snapped, plunging them into the water below. Due to the Diwali vacation and being a tourist attraction, there was a rush of tourists on the bridge, a major tourist attraction.

A private operator had carried out the repair work of the bridge for nearly six months before it was reopened to the public on the Gujarati New Year day celebrated on October 26. A fire department official said that boats were being used to rescue people from the river.

"We are carrying out res-



The collapsed portion of an old suspension bridge over the Machchhu river, in Morbi district on Sunday

cue work using boats. There are around 40-50 people in the river," the official said.

In a tweet, Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel said he was saddened by the tragedy.

"Relief and rescue operations by the administration are going on. The administration has been instructed to arrange immediate treatment for the injured. I am in constant contact with the district administration in this regard," he said.

The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in a tweet

that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is currently in Gujarat, spoke to Patel and officials regarding the mishap.

"He (PM Modi) has sought urgent mobilisation of teams for rescue operations. He has asked that the situation be closely and continuously monitored, and extend all possible help to those affected," the PMO said. Union Home Minister Amit Shah said the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) will soon reach the site of the collapse.

'Aerospace, Def to be pillars of self-reliant India'

'Make-in-India', 'Make-for-World' boosting strength: Modi at C-295 aircraft building facility launch

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that in the coming years, the Defence and aerospace sectors will be the two important pillars for making India 'Atmanirbhar' and that by 2025 the country's Defence manufacturing scale would cross \$25 billion.

"India with 'Make-in-India, Make for the Globe' approach is enhancing its strength further," he said. Modi was addressing the gathering in Vadodra after laying the foundation stone of the manufacturing facility for the production of C-295 medium transport aircraft for the Indian Air

Force (IAF) by a consortium of aerospace major Airbus and the Tata Group at a cost of ₹22,000 crore.

Modi, who is on a three-day tour to Rajasthan and Gujarat, where elections will be announced in the next few days, said that 'Made-in-India' passenger planes would soon be a reality as his Government had helped increase the 'Ease of Doing Business' in the country. The Prime Minister has been launching a slew of developmental projects across poll-bound Gujarat over the last few months. His ongoing visit will be no different. He is also scheduled to address BJP workers across all 182 Assembly constituencies.

The inauguration of the C-295 aircraft manufacturing plant was attended by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Airbus Chief Commercial Officer Christian Scherer and Tata Sons Chairperson N Chandrasekaran. "The Defence corridors being established in States like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu would power the Defence exports.

Post-Galwan, ITBP reskilling its men in unarmed combat



RAKESH K SINGH ■ NEW DELHI

After the Galwan incident of 2020, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) that secures the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China has changed its basic training modules and so far trained as many as 20,000 combatised and non-combatised personnel in a range of new unarmed combat techniques to immobilise and incapacitate the adversaries.

The reskilling move comes after the Galwan Valley incident in eastern Ladakh on May 5, 2020, in which 20 Indian Army personnel suffered casualties at the hands of the Chinese PLA that resorted to medieval tactics to inflict fatal injuries on the Indian

troops. The new unarmed combat tactics will comprise 15-20 manoeuvres as part of the basic training course for the new recruits as well as refresher course for the already serving personnel. The ITBP has a strength of 98,000 personnel. The unarmed combat techniques will empower the troops to channelise their raw physical power in such a manner that can inflict a deadly punch to the opponent, officials said.

While the basic training course is of 44 weeks duration, the refresher courses are 24 weeks. Both the training courses are compulsory for all ranks up to the level of Commandants.

T'langana 10th State to nix general consent to CBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telangana has become the 10th State to withdraw the general consent to CBI, which means the agency has to take prior consent for probe from the State Government on a case-to-case basis.

In fact, the Telangana Government had withdrawn the general consent in an order issued on August 30 itself but it came to public knowledge only after the State's Additional Advocate General (AAG)

informed the Telangana High Court about it during arguments on a petition filed by the BJP seeking a CBI probe into the TRS MLAs poaching case.

The development comes after the BJP and TRS have indulged in a war of words over several issues in the recent past leading to much acrimony between the two.

The three persons, who allegedly tried to "poach" four TRS legislators, were arrested and remanded to judicial cus-



tody on Saturday.

The Government's Home (Special) Department had issued an order-GO Ms No 51 on August 30 withdrawing all previous general consents issued by it under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (for short the Act)," the High Court said in its order.

...The learned Additional Advocate General submitted that the petitioner does not have locus standi to file this writ petition. GO Ms No 51, Home (Special) Department, dated 30.08.2022 was issued by

the Government of Telangana withdrawing all previous general consents issued by the State Government under Section 6 of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 (for short the Act)," the High Court said in its order.

Before Telangana, nine other States that have withdrawn consent to the CBI are namely Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, and Mizoram.

In Bargarh 4 of family found dead in closed house

PNS ■ BARGARH

Four members of a family were found dead in their house at Jamdol village under Bheden block in Bargarh district on Sunday evening.

The deceased included an old couple and their son and daughter. The neighbours informed police after they found foul smell being emitted out of the house, which was closed for the last two days.

A police team which arrived

at the spot found the door of the closed from inside. But it was yet to be ascertained whether it was a case of suicide or murder.

However, the neighbours said the family was peace-loving and they don't know them of having any enmity with anyone.

Police said the house would be opened on Monday in the presence of a magistrate and the bodies would be sent for postmortem.

2 cars fall as bridge collapses in K'handi

7 persons rescued

PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

At least six persons travelling by two cars were trapped on Sunday after a portion of a bridge collapsed at Thuamul Rampur under the Bhawanipatna police station in Kalahandi district. The vehicles were crossing the bridge when the incident happened.

Getting information, a team of Fire Service along with police rushed the spot and

launched a rescue operation. After hours of efforts, all the trapped persons were rescued and admitted to the District Headquarters Hospital. Among the injured was a child. Miraculously, there was no casualty and the passengers escaped with minor injuries. Following the incident, the vehicular communications were disrupted. The incident has triggered resentment in the area as hundreds of vehicles pass through the dilapidated bridge daily.

Take action against Chinese loan apps: MHA to States

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has sought urgent strict action by law enforcement agencies against predatory lending apps as harassment, blackmail and harsh recovery practices by such Chinese-controlled entities have led to multiple incidents of suicides.

In a communication to all States and Union Territories, the Home Ministry said the issue has caused a serious impact on national security, economy and citizen safety.

It said a large number of complaints have been reported across India related to illegal digital lending apps that provide short-term loans or micro-credits at exorbitant interest

rates with processing or hidden charges, especially to vulnerable and low-income group people. The lenders use the borrowers' confidential personal data like contacts, location, photos and videos for blackmail and harassment.

"Harsh recovery practices followed by these illegal lending apps have claimed many lives across India. "This issue has caused a serious impact on national security, economy and citizen safety," the communication said.

The Home Ministry said these illegal lending apps that may not be Regulated Entities (RE) by the Reserve Bank of India are using bulk SMS, digital advertisement, chat messengers and mobile app stores

on a massive scale. The borrower has to provide mandatory access to contacts, location, and phone storage in order to avail loans.

"This data is misused to harass and blackmail the citizens using morphed images and other abusive practices by recovery agents located in India as well as overseas violating RBI's Fair Practices Code," the States and UTs were told.

The Home Ministry said after investigation it has been found that this is an organised cybercrime executed using disposable emails, virtual numbers, mule accounts, shell companies, payment aggregators, API services (account validation, document verification), cloud hosting, cryptocurrency,

etc. Hence, it is advised to involve domain experts during an investigation.

The Home Ministry said law enforcement agencies can avail the services of the National Cyber Crime Forensic Laboratory (NCFLL), one of the verticals of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center (I4C), CIS Division for technical assistance on loan app analysis, malware analysis and crypto transaction tracing.

"All States and UTs are requested to take strict legal action in this regard. Further, all States and UTs are also requested to spread mass awareness in all districts against the risks of using such apps," it said.

On city outskirts Man crushed to death by BMC garbage truck

Dumping at Bhuasuni stopped

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Tension prevailed at Daruthenga village on the outskirts of the capital city when a local resident was mowed down by a garbage truck of the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Sunday. Hundreds of irate locals blocked the Cuttack-Khordha road for hours.

The deceased was identified as Ramchandra Gagrai. As per reports, the vehicle engaged in transporting garbage hit Gagrai while he was going by a bicycle.

As the news spread, hundreds of residents came onto the road and staged the block-



ade demanding a permanent solution to the garbage dumping problem.

Notably, two months ago, a BMC truck had also killed a

ers are engaged to run the vehicles, the agitating locals alleged.

Terming the accident as a 'murder,' they accused the BMC of conspiring to kill residents of Daruthenga one after the other.

Getting information, BMC Mayor Sulochana Das and Commissioner Vijay Amruta Kulange reached the spot and held a discussion with the locals.

The locals lifted the blockade after the Mayor announced an assistance of Rs 5 lakh to the deceased's family and a contractual job to one of the family members.

The BMC also decided to temporarily suspend dumping of garbage at the Bhuasuni yard.

Man's body not allowed burial in N'rangpur

As deceased only Christian in Hindu village

MONOHAR MOHANTY

■ NABARANGPUR

Once again, a dispute over burial of a body of a converted Christian at a Hindu cemetery has occurred in Nabarangpur district.

Tension erupted over burial of Jitru Bhatra (70) of Gulibodona village under Jharigaon block who died on Friday morning. Jitru and his family had converted to Christianity from Hinduism five years ago.

The villagers could know it three years after the conversion and requested the family to return to Hinduism but the deceased did not pay heed to



them. As there are no Christians except the family of the deceased in the village, there is no burial ground for the Christians in the village.

So the villagers didn't allow the burial in the village cemetery meant for the Hindus. On the other hand, the villagers demanded the administration to take the body elsewhere for cremation.

Getting information, Jharigaon Tehsildar

Chinmaya Sagar and Umerkote IIC Deepak Kumar Jena rushed to the spot and discussed with the villagers. But the situation did not improve. Finding no other way, the administration allotted another place adjacent to Gulibodona village for burial of the body but that too was opposed by thousands of people from Gulibodona, Nirapodora and Gobri villages who gathered at the spot op-

posing the administration and didn't allow the burial to go on.

Later, the administration shifted the body to the mortuary of Umerkote CHC. As the deceased had not registered his name in JELC Church, Umerkote, there were talks that his body may not be allowed in the Christian cemetery.

Contacted, Jharigaon Tehsildar Chinmaya Sagar said it would be decided on Monday where the body would be cremated.

It is noteworthy to mention here that in a similar row over burial, aggrieved people in Umerkote had blocked the State highway in September. The police had to resort to baton charge to disperse the agitators.

'Odisha is a pocket-friendly tourist destination'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR
Odisha is a pocket-friendly tourist destination having quality infrastructure and a diversified product portfolio comprising forests, sea, wildlife, tribal groups and hills, said State Tourism Principal Secretary Surendra Kumar on Sunday.
Speaking during a programme on the second day of Odisha Travel Bazaar (OTB) 2022, he rated Odisha amongst top States having quality roads and connectivity. Kumar said, "Odisha has many things to offer to tourists. In some parameters, we are far ahead of others. Our people are nice and hospitable. Our roads are very good. The most important aspect of this

is that the State is very pocket-friendly as you don't need to think much about budget.
Director of Odisha Tourism Sachin Ramchandra Jadhav said, "Two boat clubs are operational in the State. Two beachfront promenades at Ramchandi and Tampara lake are already operational. Tampara lake is gaining great importance as a tourist destination for people coming from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. Our plan is to add 24 cottages which are to be managed by reputed private operators. We are also promoting investment in tourism sector. In last four years we have cleared 76 projects worth more than Rs 2,700 crore which will create 3,000 direct and 10,000 indirect



employments. As many as 3,000 local entrepreneurship are also being promoted through these projects."
Talking to foreign tour operators, co-chairman of FICCI Tourism, Travel and Hospitality Committee JK Mohanty discussed the rich Buddhist culture in Odisha.

Comparing Odisha with other States, he said people who visit Rajasthan only see palaces and desert; but in Odisha, they get chance to stay in lavish royal palaces and can visit forests and see wildlife animals. People who are going to Agra only see Taj Mahal; but in Odisha, they can see the iconic

Konark Temple and many other beautiful temples across the State.
Among others, Gayatri Devi Group Director Nirupama Biswal, Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) Chairman Lelin Mohanty and Hockey India President Dillip Tirkey also

spoke at the event.
The three-day Odisha Travel Bazaar 2022 is organised by the Department of Tourism and the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
About 25 foreign tour operators from countries like Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, Tanzania, Thailand, Vietnam and 83 buyers from cities like Aurangabad, Bangalore, Bhopal, Chandigarh, Chandrapur, Chennai, Dehradun, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kochi, Kolkata, Ludhiana, Mangalgi, Mumbai, Nagpur, Nasik, New Delhi and NCR, Panjim, Pune, Raipur, Rohtak, Siliguri, Surendra Nagar, Trivandrum, Varanasi and Visakhapatnam took part in the event.

IN BRIEF

JAGATSIINGHPUR DCPC MEETING HELD
Jagatsinghpur: The District Consumer Protection Council's (DCPC) first meeting was held on Saturday with Collector Parul Patwari in the chair. The meeting aimed to educate consumers on their civil rights and obligation with regard to the consumer protection Act and Rules. Government Chief Whip in the State Assembly Prasanta Muduli, MP Dr Rajashree Mallick, the Zilla Parishad President, the Paradip Municipality Chairman, DSP Subash Chandra Panda, District Civil Supplies Officer Sujata Mishra, ADM-cum-District Consumer Protection Officer Satchidananda Sahoo spoke.



DISASTER REDUCTION DAY CELEBRATED IN JSPUR
Jagatsinghpur: The Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day and the National Day for Disaster Reduction were celebrated by the Jagatsinghpur district administration on Saturday. Awareness rallies, public meetings, essay and debate competitions among students and mass lighting of lamps were conducted. Speakers at a public meeting recalled the memories of the Super Cyclone of 1999. MLA Prasanta Muduli, Collector Parul Patwari, ADM Chinmayee Biswal, District Emergency Officer Devi Prasad Mohanty, DIPRO Kaminiranjan Pattnayak spoke.



EX-DAO GETS 2-YR RI FOR BRIBERY
Rourkela: Special Judge, Vigilance, Sundargarh, Rajalaxmi Patnaik on Saturday sentenced ex-District Agriculture Officer (DAO), Bonai of Sundargarh district, Daitayari Satpathy (62) to two years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5,000 for demanding and accepting bribe of Rs 3,000 from Junior Agriculture Officer Gayadhar Sahu 13 years ago.

ATHMALLIK BLOCK RANKS THIRD IN FLOOD MGMT
Athamallik: During the floods last monsoon, the Athmallik block administration achieved the third position in the State in management of the situation. The flood-affected people were brought to safe places and provided food and clothing. Due to the cooperation of MLA Ramesh Chandra Sai, local administration, police, ODRF, Fire Service, Health Department, the whole process was smooth. At a function organised by the State Disaster Management Department in Bhubaneswar, a trophy and a certificate were given to block Chairman Dushasan Raul and the BDO.



IHCL-ASSAM GOVT MOU FOR HOSPITALITY SKILLS CENTRE
Bhubaneswar: The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) has signed an MoU with the Assam Government to establish a hospitality-focused skills training centre in the North East in line with the company's ESG+ framework, Paathya. The state-of-the-art residential Centre of Excellence will be developed in collaboration with Assam Tourism Development Corporation Limited, Tata STRIVE Skill Development Initiative of Tata Community Initiative Trust (TCIT) and Union Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

Youth held for posing as MKCG doc

PNS ■ BERHAMPUR
Police arrested a youth, who was allegedly impersonating as a doctor of the MKCG Medical College Hospital here and duping patients.
The youth was identified as Deepak Kumar Nahak, who was carrying a forged ID card mentioning his credentials as "Dr Deepak Kumar Nahak, OPD Supervisor, MKCG, MCH, Berhampur".
The BN Pur police nabbed Nahak who was luring patients on the pretext that he could facilitate better treatment for them by hospital staffs.
Police said Nahak had procured the forged I/D card from a printing firm, Rabi Arts. Rabi Arts owner Rabindra Kumar Majhi and a worker SK Abdul Sattar have knowingly abetted the offence of cheating



by providing the forged ID card to Nahak.
Previously, the MKCG Medical College had engaged Rabi Arts to issue ID cards to its doctors. Hence, the firm had access to the original ID card format and also the signature of Dean of the MKCG Hospital which was used to make the fake doctor ID card. However since the last one year, the MKCG management has not given work to Rabi Arts. Nahak, who is pursuing an engineering course in a private college, is staying in Ankuli in a rented apartment.
During investigation, all the accused persons were arrested and forwarded to court, said Brahmapur SP Saravana Vivek M.

In Kandhamal Man gets life for rape, murder of minor

PNS ■ PHULBANI
POCSO Court Judge Bhaskar Chandra Sahu here convicted one Gagan Pradhan in a case involving rape and murder of a minor girl and awarded him life imprisonment.
He pronounced the judgement on the basis of 21 witnesses, doctor's report and scientific report.
On September 22, 2018 at about 2pm when the victim went to attend the nature's call in a field, Pradhan dragged her

to a secluded place and raped her. When the victim shouted for help, the accused killed her.
When the victim did not return home, her parents searched for her all around but in vain. Later, the father of the victim lodged an FIR at Kotagarh police station. The police arrested Pradhan later.
The Judge also directed the authorities to give Rs 5 lakh to the family of the victim as compensation. From the Government side, Special Public Prosecutor Banamali Behera conducted the case.

Raja Swain's nephew held for thrashing man on road

PNS ■ CUTTACK
The Cuttack Sadar police on Saturday arrested Amarendra Pratap Swain, nephew of Minister Ranendra Pratap (Raja) Swain for allegedly thrashing a man on road and forcing him to kneel down. He is also the General Secretary of the Biju Yuva Janata Dal (BYJD). Efforts were on by cops to apprehend others involved in the offence.
According to reports, Amarendra and his associates

had on October 27 thrashed the victim and forced him to kneel down at Pratap Nagari of Cuttack over an issue related to vehicle overtaking. A video of the incident had gone viral on social media.
The victim had lodged a complaint in this regard with police. Acting on the complaint, police examined the available CCTV footage and apprehended the accused under Sections 341, 294, 232, 506 and 34 of the IPC and later forwarded him to court.



4-day Chhath Puja begins in J'suguda dist

'Nahay-Khaye' ritual performed
RAJ KUMAR SHARMA ■ JHARSUGUDA

The four-day celebrations of Chhath Puja have begun with ritual of Nahay-Khaye. The devotees, especially women, in the district took dip in the Ib river and other water bodies. After that they took cooked rice and bottle gourd as prasad on Friday. The river Ib ghats, Choukipara and Mandalia ponds were specially cleaned on the occasion of the Chhath festival.



On Saturday, another ritual Khana was observed, which marked beginning of a 36 hours long fast. The rituals of Chhath festival include fasting and abstaining from drinking water, offering prayers to the setting and rising sun, popularly known as Arghya and offering prasad. The prasad prepared for the auspicious occasion includes fruits and rice pudding.
A devotee, Sanjana Yadav

(75), dressed in a new cotton sari, said, "We first took bath to clean ourselves before preparing food to mark the beginning of the Chhath festival." She said the age-old ritual of 'Nahay-Khaye' is a symbol of purity and strict discipline.
Since the industrial district has got a huge population of

migrants, the puja was performed at Jharsuguda, Brajrajnagar and Belpahar township areas by the devotees. Not only Hindus of various castes and creeds, but also people of other religions joined hands with the devotees to mark the festival of harmony.
On Sunday, the evening

obligations will be offered to the setting Sun on the Chhath ghats. Every year, the festival commences with paying obeisance to the setting sun and concludes with the rising sun. The Chhath festival will be concluded on Monday with devotees offering prayers to the rising sun in the morning.

Samaleswari Temple project Evicted residents to be rehabilitated in modern colony

NIMAI CHARAN SAHU ■ SAMBALPUR

The residents of the Ghunghitipada, close to the Samaleswari Temple, who are losing their homes due to the Samalei Yojana would soon be shifted to a new colony with all facilities.
"Total 54 houses have been completed and more will come up shortly," informed Sambalpur Municipal Corporation (SMC) Commissioner Pradeep Kumar Sahoo on Sunday.
Of the total 220 families of Ghunghitipada, 140 were evicted earlier for the project

and they had been paid compensations. They are now staying in rented houses and constructing their own houses. But 80 families moved the High Court without accepting the package. They have been protesting eviction although they were staying in Government land of Ghunghitipada.
"But for the interested persons, Government has provided Rs 3 lakh each for construction of houses. Besides, they have been paid the cost of the houses they were staying in. This is sufficient to build their houses as they have been

given free land at Durgapali, just 1.5 km from their old houses," said Sahoo.
"While the Government is giving Rs 2 lakh for a Pradhan Mantri Awas, the evicted people are paid Rs 3 lakh for it and many other benefits. Still, some people are protesting and coming in the way of development," Sahoo lamented. Further, those staying in rented houses are paid Rs 2,500 per month for house rent till completion of their houses in the new place, he added.
Houses built at Durgapali have all facilities with two living rooms, attached

kitchen and toilets. There are also common toilets to meet extra requirement.
Notably, for beautification of the Samaleswari Temple in line of other shrines in the State, the Government has sanctioned Rs 200 crore and this may be enhanced as per the need. Under the plan, 108 acres of land around the temple will be developed with all modern facilities, for which some people are to be evicted. While a good number of people welcome the decision, only a few protest it although they are staying in Government land.

23 yrs after Super Cyclone Scars still fresh in mind of K'pada survivors

Recount horror of losing family members
RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

Though it has been 23 years since the Super Cyclone hit the coastal Odisha on October 29, 1999, the scars still remain fresh in the mind of the family members who lost their near and dear ones.
About 387 people were killed in the storm in Kendrapada district alone. As many as 1,308 villages from nine blocks, besides two urban local bodies, had borne the brunt of the nature's fury.
The State Government provided Rs 44 crore as ex-gratia and rehabilitation measures after the cyclone, but

the loss in terms of human life and property was colossal.
Octogenarian tribal widow, Parbati Kisko, a resident of Panikhia under Lanjuda panchayat of Mahakalapada block is yet to get over the trauma of losing four members of her family, including her husband, daughter and two grand children.
"The storm blew away everything at a stroke. I was witness to a tragedy that unfolded right before my eyes. My husband, daughter and grand children met watery grave following an eight feet high tidal wave swept away all my family members when they were trying to ride on a rooftop," she recounted. "I survived as I luckily was already on the roof top,"



Parbati said with teary eyes.
As many as 12 people had died in her panchayat under Mahakalapada block in the gale.
Similarly, for Rajaram Pal and Malati Patra of Sandhakuda slum, life has come to a full circle after the Super Cyclone. While Rajaram lost his eight family members, including father, mother,

his eldest son. As a result, the villagers of Sandhakuda arranged the marriage of Rajaram with Malati.
Another victim, 37-year-old Tapaswini Senapati of Tentulikanda village under Barkanda gram panchayat recounting the fateful night said she lost her uncle, aunt and her sister in the storm. The tidal water swept away her family members all at once. "As we have a building, so the villagers rushed to the rooftop to take shelter. Apprehending that the building might cave in, I, my sister, my uncle, aunt, their daughter and four others came out from the house to move to a safer place in the village. But as ill luck would have it, tidal water swept away my uncle, aunt and my sister. I and my uncle's daughter

TARINI PRASAD PANDA ■ PARALAKHEMUNDI

The ASHA Workers of Gajapati district held a rally and submitted a memorandum in Paralakhemundi here. Led by Gajapati district ASHA Workers Association president Samikhya Gamango, they protested the manner they are defamed.
The protestors said that they were forced to collect money from relatives of the pregnant women while facilitating their institutional delivery. They alleged that the higher authorities ask them to do so and refuse to give their counter signature if not paid some amount of money. As a result, they were collecting Rs 3,000 per patient.
Particularly, while admitting maternity care



patients the ASHA workers' signatures are required on the specified documents. So for that signature, they are asked to bargain with the patients for Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 per case. "If we cannot collect the sum of money, the higher authorities refuse to give their counter signatures," alleged an agitator.
She further added that the ASHA workers are also forced to refer cases to Brahmapur or Vishakhapatnam for vested interests of the higher-ups in which the patients have had to face financial strains.

New Paradip Port labour trustees



PNS ■ PARADIP
In the Paradip Port Trust Board Member (Trustee) election which ended on October 28, Shrikant Roy, general secretary of Paradip Bandar Majdoor Sangha affiliated to Bharatiya Bandar Majdoor Sangha (BMS), has been elected as the first trustee and Sunil Kant Das, member of Paradip Erasama Industrial Workers Union, has been

elected as the second trustee.
A total of eight candidates from different labor unions contested the election. Out of a total of 392 employees, 382 voted. One vote was rejected. Out of 381 valid votes, Roy got the highest 107 votes while Das got the second highest with 76 votes. Narsingh Prasad, general secretary of the Panchanan Kanungo-led Paradip Port Workers' Union finished third with 55 votes.

Bid to humiliate Opp, disturb federal structure, says Didi

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With a galaxy of her senior cabinet colleagues and party leaders coming under the scanner of the judiciary and central investigating agencies Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday once again cried conspiracy to subvert the Indian federal fabric but congratulated Chief Justice of India UU Lalit for "his efforts to restore public confidence on judiciary."



for that matter a section of Judges in the Calcutta High Court, the Chief Minister said "Today all the powers are being used by a section of people today to unnecessarily humiliate and harass others others ... I call upon the judiciary and the readers of law to see that the federal structure should not get disturbed in this manner ... because if this (trend) goes on then things may move towards the presidential form of Government ... where will be the democracy then ... I request you all to please save

the democracy." Though a section of the higher judiciary had often come under attack from the Trinamool Congress leadership --- particularly after the Calcutta High Court passed a series of orders directing Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation to investigate the school level recruitment scam, coal and cattle smuggling cases --- Banerjee however praised Chief Justice of India UU Lalit for his effort to "restore public confidence on the judiciary." She said "though I do not know whether it would be the right place to say this I must congratulate Chief Justice Lalit because he has shown what judiciary is ... though he is retiring shortly I think ... he has restored confidence on

judiciary." Banerjee's ruling Trinamool Congress has been under intense pressure in the wake of the arrest of her senior cabinet minister Partha Chatterjee, TMC MLA and former primary education board chairman Manik Bhattacharya and Trinamool national executive member Anubrata Mondal for their alleged involvement in school recruitment scams and coal and cattle smuggling in that order. Reacting to her veiled attack on the Centre Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said "the Chief Minister has become afraid in the wake of the actions being taken against corruption and so she used the NUJS platform to express her insecurity?"

Modiji, speak on fuel price rise, unemployment: Rahul

PTI ■ SHADNAGAR (TELANGANA)

Slamming Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "price rise and unemployment" in the country, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday asked as to why the Prime Minister is not addressing the issues.

Speaking at a meeting as a part of 'Bharat Jodo Yatra,' Gandhi alleged that government schools, colleges and universities in Telangana are being privatised by the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao-led TRS government. "Narendra Modiji, say something. Gas cylinder's cost is now Rs 1,000. Petrol price used to be Rs 70 (per litre). Narendra Modi used to mention in every speech that petrol cost has gone up to Rs 70. Now, it has crossed Rs 100. Diesel

used to be Rs 56 (per litre). Now, it has become Rs 100, but Narendra Modi does not say anything on that," Gandhi charged. Alleging that BJP and TRS are trying to suppress people's voices, the Congress leader said his ongoing march replicates true India wherein public concerns are heard.

Gandhi alleged that BJP toppled governments in Goa and other States by using money power. Describing BJP and TRS are the same and create drama during elections, he claimed that both spend hundreds of crores during polls. He alleged that Modi ensures that his three or four industrialist-friends get all the business. The Gandhi scion said no force can stop his yatra from



reaching Kashmir. He said Telangana students have informed him that schools, colleges and universities in the State are being privatised and assured that if Congress comes to power here, it would stop the privatisation and more funds would be pumped into government educational institutions. According to him, demonetisation in 2016 and goods and services tax (GST) negatively impacted small and medium-scale businesses. Alleging that Dharani, Telangana's integrated land records management system, is faulty, Gandhi said when his party comes into power the problems would be solved. Health and education are neglected in the State and all the money spent on Dharani and irrigation projects so that KCR family gets good commission, he further alleged.

Yatra proved Rahul Gandhi's leadership abilities: Shatrughan

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has proved his leadership abilities through the Bharat Jodo Yatra, TMC MP Shatrughan Sinha said.



In an interview to PTI, Sinha said Gandhi's 3,570-km-long march that began in Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu will help the Congress double its tally in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Congress won 52 seats in 2019 elections. "Bharat Jodo Yatra is getting a very good response. Rahul Gandhi's charisma has started working, and he is getting an excellent response from the people. I feel that Gandhi's yatra will help double the tally of the Congress in Parliament in the next Lok Sabha polls," he said. "This is a 'yatra' in a true sense as Gandhi is walking unlike 'Rath yatras' by BJP leaders. Lakhs of people are coming out in his support. He has proved his leadership qual-

ities. People have accepted him as a leader. And, those who made fun of him as 'Pappu' and didn't take him seriously have been proved wrong," Sinha added. The actor-turned-politician won the Asansol Lok Sabha seat on Trinamool Congress ticket in a bypoll in April this year. Before fighting the election on a TMC ticket, he had switched over to the Congress from the BJP in 2019. "BJP leaders are making fun of Gandhi, but let them also conduct a similar yatra on foot if they have the fire in their belly. The magic spell of Rahul Gandhi will work in the next elections, I feel and I want it to happen," Sinha said. Speaking on the Gujarat

Port Blair homestay raided in gang rape case involving ex-Chief Secy

PTI ■ PORT BLAIR

A homestay in Port Blair's Dollygunj was searched by the police on Sunday as part of the investigation into the gang rape of a 21-year-old woman in which former chief secretary of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Oran Narain is an accused, officials said.



The gang rape survivor accompanied members of the Special Investigation Team (SIT), formed to probe the case, to the homestay during the search, they said. The SIT along with a forensic team and the survivor reached the homestay around 12.30 pm for the search operation, they added. The room where the woman was taken to by the homestay's owner was examined by the investigators, officials said. Besides Narain, the homestay's owner, Labour Commissioner RL Rishi and a

police inspector were named in the police case lodged in connection with the gang rape. The team was seen coming out of the homestay with envelopes. When approached by journalists, the investigators refused to make any comment. "The survivor was asked to identify the place and the room where she was taken to by the homestay's owner," said a relative of the woman who was accompanying her. Narain, who was questioned on Friday and Saturday, is likely to be interrogated on Monday as well, a source said. He is unlikely to leave Port Blair till Friday as the airport on

Guj Assembly polls: Former Patidar quota agitation leader Kathiriya joins AAP

PTI ■ BHAVNAGAR

Apesh Kathiriya, a prominent Patidar leader who was part of the 2015 agitation for reservation to the community in Gujarat, on Sunday joined the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in the state, where the Assembly polls are due this year-end.



He joined the AAP along with his friend and PAAS co-convenor Dharmik Malaviya and other members of the organisation. Kathiriya said all of them feel that the AAP will provide them the right forum to work for the cause of nation-building through social work. "All of us will have to come forward in this struggle for the community, for our pride, for the nation, for better education, health and corruption-free good governance. Your support is required," Kathiriya said in his address at the election rally following his induction.

BJP trying to buy 20-30 TRS MLAs, topple Govt, alleges Telangana CM

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Sunday accused the BJP of 'trying to buy' 20 or 30 MLAs of the ruling TRS and topple his government and claimed that 'brokers' from Delhi offered the sitting legislators Rs 100 crore each. Addressing a poll rally at bypoll-bound Munugode segment, Rao said, however, the legislators, who are 'sons of the soil', rebuffed the offer. Hitting back, the BJP said the MLAs were not worth Rs 100 crore and asserted it had no intention of toppling the TRS government.

Rao said, "You have seen yesterday. (BJP thinks) there is one KCR who is talking loudly. Let's see his (political) end. They have sent brokers to buy each MLA for Rs 100 crore. They wanted to buy 20 or 30 MLAs and topple KCR's government and encroach Telangana so that they can implement privatisation as per their will." His statement comes a day after three people who tried to "poach" four TRS legislators were arrested and remanded to judicial custody. The CM paraded all the four legislators during the public meeting, praising them that such people were required in

politics. Based on a complaint by P Rohith Reddy, one of the TRS legislators, cases under relevant sections - criminal conspiracy, offering bribe and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 - were filed against Ramachandra Bharati alias Satish Sharma, Nanda Kumar and Simhayaji Swamy -- on October 26 night. According to the FIR copy, Rohith Reddy alleged that the accused offered him Rs 100 crore and in return the legislator had to leave the TRS and contest as a BJP candidate in the upcoming Assembly elections. "Four sons of soil (MLAs)

came with me (today for the meeting). Day before yesterday some Delhi brokers came to buy our Telangana self-respect and offered Rs 100 crore. But our sons of soil hit them with their left footwear saying they were not for sale," the CM said, adding they wanted to purchase the legislators like "cattle" in the open market. Rao sought a reply from Prime Minister Narendra Modi on whether such things were good for society. "Who provided Rs 100 crore that was offered to the MLAs? Inquiry has to be done into this. Who is behind the issue? Are they (whoever mas-termined the issue) entitled to

continue in their respective posts?" Rao asked. He further said people's silence on these 'poaching' issues will become a curse one day. Urging people to vote for TRS candidate Prabhakar Reddy in the bypoll, Rao alleged that the BJP was mandating installation of electricity meters for agriculture pump sets and asking domestic consumers to replace their electricity meters, which would cost Rs 30,000 each. According to Rao, there is no country in the world, except India, that has 50 per cent irrigated land and a conspiracy was being hatched to handover farmlands to corporates,

though the nation has sufficient manpower and other resources. Rao also promised that all pending works in Munugode will be completed on time. PTI GDK SA Responding to Rao's charges, senior BJP leader and Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy said: "Today you call them Delhi brokers. I am asking. Through brokerism (sic) only you encouraged all the MLAs who have joined your party earlier." He sought to know if any of the BJP leaders had gone to TRS MLAs' farmhouse or promised money to them. "Do we have so much money? Are they such great MLAs so that



each one would cost Rs 100 crore?" he asked. "I am conveying one thing. KCR garu, we have no intention of toppling your government. You may have the idea of toppling your own government and acquire sympathy so that it becomes an agenda in the elections. Our party does not have such intentions. Already you have lost your respect among people. People are loathing you and your party," Reddy told a press conference.

5 killed, 2 hurt in building collapse in Amravati

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

At least five persons were killed and two others injured when a two-storey dilapidated building located near Prabhat Cinema chowk at Amravati in eastern Maharashtra collapsed on Sunday afternoon. The building, which once housed Rajendra Lodge, had been declared as "dangerous" and served an eviction notice to the occupants by the Amravati Municipal Corporation (AMC) four years ago. Most of the occupants had vacated the place, while bag selling shops were open on the ground. The work of pulling down the two upper damaged floors was on for the past two days, when the structure collapsed all of a sudden at 1 pm on Sunday. All the five bodies were recovered from under the debris by the evening. "The building was eighty years' old. The occupants had repeatedly been told by the authorities to vacate the place as it was on the verge of collapse. However, a few of the occupants had not vacated the



building despite the warnings," a local shopkeeper Jitendra Singh said. Tweeting about the Amravati building collapse, Maharashtra's deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said: "The debris clearance is currently on. I am in touch with the Amravati district collector. The divisional commissioner has been directed to hold a comprehensive inquiry into the incident." Mourning the death of five persons in the mishap, Fadnavis said: "I share the grief of the bereaved families. An assistance of Rs 5 lakh is being given to each of the families of those killed, from the chief minister's relief fund. The state government will bear the expenditure of the medical treatment to be given to those injured in the incident," the deputy chief minister said.

J&K Police recovers arms dropped by drones from Pakistan; 2 arrested

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir police claimed to have arrested two persons after recovering an arms consignment airdropped from across the International Border with Pakistan through a drone in the Baspur Bangla area of RS Pura. This is the fourth incident of recovery of arms consignment airdropped using a drone in the region. A case FIR no. 196/2022 U/S 13,16,18 ULAP has been registered in police station RS Pura. The arms consignment consisted of Pistol -4, Magazine -8, P/rounds- 47, police spokesman said. According to a police spokesman, a suspicious movement of a drone was observed in the general area of Baspur Bangla, RS Pura on the intervening night of October 27-28. With the help of technical surveillance mounted on the border area the police teams reportedly picked up a few suspects and subjected



them to sustained questioning regarding their unauthorised movement in the border area during the same time when the drone movement was observed. According to a police spokesman, Chander Bose S/O of Vasdev, R/O Doda picked up the arms consignment at the behest of a person named Shamsheer Singh S/O Prem Singh R/O Camp Gole Gujral Jammu. According to police, both were in touch with an OGW namely Balvinder R/O Jammu (Now settled in Europe). Police spokesman said, "all the arrested persons and the OGW are working for a banned terrorist organisation. Balvinder was coordinating with both the accused in India and the handlers of the consignment in Pakistan".

Nitish in talks with Kerala, TN's local parties to make pan-India presence ahead of 2024

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI/CHENNAI

Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar, and the Opposition's likely candidate for the post of Prime Minister is certain to get footprints over the southern States of Kerala and Tamil Nadu soon. The Janata Dal (U)'s top leadership is holding hectic discussions with former socialists, secularists and liberals heading fringe parties in these States for a possible merger so that Nitish Kumar would get a pan India presence, according to Saleem Madavoor, Kerala general secretary of Loktantrik Janata Dal. The LJD in Kerala is headed by Shreyams Kumar, son of late M P Veerendra Kumar, a member of Rajya Sabha and owner of Mathrubhumi daily. Veerendra Kumar who had merged the JD(S) in the State with JD(U) was forced to quit his membership of Rajya Sabha following Nitish Kumar's liaison with the BJP. After quitting his membership in Rajya Sabha, Veerendra Kumar had joined the LJD and the Left Democratic Front. K Krishnan Kutty, the LJD's lone



member in the Assembly is the minister for power in the CPI(M)-led Government. "Our party is against communalists like the BJP, dynasty politics and any kind of compromise with the Sangh Parivar. Since Nitish Kumar ended his ties with the Hindu communalist elements and the Sangh Parivar, there is a consensus among the party members that we should accept the former as our national leader," said Saleem Madavoor. Though Veerendra Kumar and former Prime Minister H D Deva Gowda were in the JD(S), Gowda's secret parleys with the BJP led the former to come out of the Gowda Dal and cast his lot with Sharad Yadav. "Sharad Yadav is not a popular leader and people in Kerala do not have any idea

about him. Hence we prefer Nitish Kumar who is the man of hour," said a senior LJD leader in the State. Tamil Nadu too would see a major shift towards Nitish Kumar in months to come. Since Chief Minister M K Stalin has made it known that he is not interested in the top job of the country, chances are that the DMK would opt for Nitish as Prime Minister. The JD(U) makes its appearance in the State only during the time of election but this time some of the letter-head parties would come together so that Nitish gets a launching pad from Tamil Nadu. Moreover the stance of PMK, the political outfit of the Vanniyar community, which has a considerable vote share in the State is likely to dump the BJP and join Team Nitish Kumar. Dr Ramdoss, the party founder, is getting impatient as his dream of anointing his son Anbumani Ramadoss as chief minister is getting delayed. Even if Chief Minister Stalin may decide to call it a day, the first family of the DMK has made it clear that Uthayanidhi, son of Stalin, would be the heir.

PM, TN Guv, Stalin pay tributes to Thevar



Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar was remembered on Sunday on the occasion of his 115th birth anniversary, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi and Chief Minister M K Stalin among a host of leaders paying rich tributes to the late freedom fighter. Rival AIADMK leaders K Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam were among those who paid tributes to Thevar. "I bow to the great Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar on the occasion of his Guru Pooja. I also recall his outstanding contribution to our nation, particularly in furthering social empowerment, farmer welfare and removing poverty. His ideals will always inspire us," Modi tweeted.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Is AAP saffronised?

With its version of Hindutva, Kejriwal is challenging the BJP's monopoly over Hindutva

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's suggestion a few days ago about printing the pictures of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi on fresh currency notes doesn't appear to be a one-off remark. It looks like the Aam Aadmi Party chief is consciously working on an agenda—the agenda of Hindutva. The Bharatiya Janata Party has promised in poll-bound Gujarat that it would constitute a committee, under a retired high court judge, on the implementation of the uniform civil code (UCC). Kejriwal has lambasted and lampooned the promise, saying that the saffron party is bluffing. The BJP had pledged the same thing before the Assembly election in Uttarakhand, he said. But, he added, after winning the election, "the committee went back home." Now, just before the Gujarat poll, it talks about another committee. This committee will also go back home after the election, he quipped. He is entering a territory, that of Hindutva, over which the BJP claims to have proprietorship. For decades, the BJP had three 'core issues'—building the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, abrogation of Article 370, and UCC. No other party showed much interest in these issues, for these were regarded as 'communal.' Of course, there is the Shiv Sena but it has never been focused on the core Hindutva issues; besides, it has always been a regional outfit. AAP, on the other hand, is on an expansion drive—how successful it becomes is another matter.



Further, AAP was born as a 'secular' party, comprising a lot of Left-leaning progressive intellectuals and progressives; most of them are out of the party though; like all other parties, AAP is also heavily centralized, Kejriwal being the centre. This is the reason that public intellectuals and liberals were shocked by his view on the pictures of gods and goddesses on currency notes; but Kejriwal doesn't care two hoots about their fulminations; now he is a politician, not an activist; realpolitik rather than radicalism guides his path. Angrier than the liberals are BJP leaders, for they have been the sole votaries of Hindutva so far. In Kejriwal and AAP, they may see not just a political rival but also an ideological adversary. They faced the quandary when responding to his gods-goddesses-on-notes gimmick; and now this guy is trying to score brownie points even on the core issue of UCC. It has become clear that he is not like other non-BJP leaders who shy away from UCC. So, what would the BJP do with the problem called Kejriwal? The saffron party may find some comfort from the fact, as we mentioned in earlier edits, that non-BJP parties playing the Hindutva card have not fared well. But then many things that have happened in the last few years never happened before; never before, for instance, did a ragtag rainbow coalition of activists and idealists coalesce into a successful political party running two state governments. But AAP did that—and now it's getting saffronised. The BJP is rightly worried.

PICTALK



Devotees offer prayers to the Sun god on the occasion of Chhath Puja, at Dadar Beach in Mumbai

Shinde losing sheen

With big ticket projects making a beeline to Gujarat, the new dispensation is under the attack

Maharashtra losing one project after another has enraged the state and raised the political temperature. The latest to go is the TATAs project to aircrafts with Airbus. All these projects have been shifted or relocated to the prime minister's home state Gujarat which is going to the hustings shortly. Gujarat state elections are indeed big reason for the BJP's focus shifting to it and ignoring the newly gained Maharashtra. Now with these mega projects coming in, the Gujarat BJP unit has something up its sleeve to showcase to the electorate. Its development plank is seriously eroded and the new entrant in the state AAP is making life difficult for it. The prestige of the prime minister is at stake and so the central government would do anything in its power to win the state. BJP state units claim that the center supports it is reinforced with such projects falling in its lap; doesn't matter if they are at the cost of neighboring state. This has precariously placed the Shinde government which was installed by the BJP by breaking the Shiv Sena. It is embarrassment for him as he is unable to defend the interests of Maharashtra. Sensing the vulnerability of Shinde Shiv Sena's Udhav faction has upped its ante and attacked Shinde for being left out in the cold by his mentors.



To add to the woes of Shinde disgruntled Union minister Nitin Gadkari has made a common cause with Shiv Sena. He has sought investments from the Tata Group in and around Nagpur, citing strengths like infrastructure, land availability, and connectivity in his home city after two mega projects have been taken away to Gujarat. In a letter to Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran, Gadkari appealed to him to make investments in Nagpur especially those engaged in businesses like steel, auto, consumer products, IT services, and aviation. The letter shared with the media comes after Maharashtra lost several big-ticket projects to neighbouring Gujarat, including Rs 1.5 lakh crore Foxconn-Vedanta project on chip manufacturing and the ₹22,000 crore Tata's aircraft manufacturing project. This also gives credence to stories of differences between Fadnavis and Shinde on several counts. That even senior leaders like Gadkari are pained about Maharashtra's loss would be difficult for the state unit of the BJP to brush aside easily. It is time for Shinde to think out of the box to regain his lost ground else he might lose it all.

Re-energizing the education system

In ancient India Guru was divine and education a pious profession. We must inculcate that culture to revamp our present education system



JS RAJPUT

Some two decades ago, I was invited to deliver a keynote address at a UNESCO Conference attended by over 200 delegates from around 35 countries. I presented a picture of how India has progressed along in eradicating illiteracy and enhancing its literacy rate despite daunting challenges faced in terms of inadequate human and financial resources, social inhibitions, linguistic variations, diversities of varied kinds, and much more that lead to rather insurmountable impediments. The challenging circumstances required determined efforts to offer access to education to every child. The most critical consideration in assessing India's progress in education is a four-fold increase in its population. Despite it, India has moved upwards of the 18 percent literacy rate to around 80 percent at this stage. It is a global experience that as the literacy rate moves upward, extra efforts are needed to bring the remaining groups within the fold of education. India had already entered that phase over a decade ago. The post-independence journey in education has also confronted numerous social and cultural inhibitions, including serious reservations about achieving an attitudinal transformation that is best described in realizing the transition from 'why educate girls' to the universal demand for good quality education, coupled with appropriate skills in a good school! For the educated young, it is competition all around and hence quality is the crucial requirement.

We have gone through serious futuristic initiatives aimed at quality enhancement, achieving excellence in learner attainments, vocationalization and skill orientation, assimilation of information and communication technology, and allied advancements. In that particular presentation, one also emphasized how moral, ethical, and humanistic values; as also the democratic and constitutional values were integrated into the process of teaching and learning. One gentleman insisted on making some observations based on his last couple of years in India,



mostly with some voluntary organizations. He painted a picture of "darkness all around in Indian educational policies and initiatives", finally concluding that the Indian system of education is on the verge of collapse. He wanted me to elaborate on why it has not already collapsed! Though posed by a foreigner in a foreign land, such 'onslaughts' were not new for me.

Seasoned critics are indeed very helpful in generating fresh ideas for improvement and refinements in educational policies and programs. On that particular occasion, the core and kernel of my response were that India is now conscious of its inheritance of a great ancient tradition of knowledge quest, its utilization for the welfare of the people; and transfer to the generations ahead. And this tradition has shown the strength to withstand the worst of onslaught for thousands of years. Yes; it was bruised and weakened, but has never withered away. It places the learned, the wise, and the dispenser of knowledge on the highest pedestal in society. This tradition persists in the teaching community of India even today. The Guru is given the dignity of divinity. Guru - the dispenser of knowledge, wisdom, and values - shapes the society, and creates the future of the country.



THE PLAN FOR CREATING A TRANSFORMED SYSTEM OF LEARNING AND TEACHING, ACQUIRING SKILLS AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN ONE'S CAPACITY TO INNOVATE, ENVISION, AND CREATE HAS BEEN BEFORE THE NATION FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS

Even in times of globalization, no one once appointed as a teacher could ignore the essence of the traditional expectations from him. That his life, conduct, and devotion to duty must be worth emulation. As teachers, they become part of a value system that exhorts them to perform with competence, and commitment. And therefore, my friend the Indian education system shall never collapse.

The plan for creating a transformed system of learning and teaching, acquiring skills and self-confidence in one's capacity to innovate, envision, and create has been before the nation for the last two years. Over the years my conviction that finally, it is the teacher that determines the extent of success or failure of any new policy initiative, no matter how brilliant and pragmatic it may be. India has around 96.8 Lakh school teachers, and 15 Lakh College and University teachers. This is the huge transformational force that - one is sure - would lead India to its destined place in the comity of nations.

I must concede that they are serious aberrations in role perception amongst teachers at each stage which are unacceptable and deserve to be remedied. Take the case of vacancies of teachers in schools and colleges. It is unthinkable and unacceptable in any education-

ally alert and active education system. We have schools without teachers, and central universities with more than half of their sanctioned academic posts remaining vacant, but the system works. It must be conceded that the public trust and faith in public-funded schools, colleges, and universities have suffered - exceptions apart - serious erosion of credibility. It would be unwise to attribute it to the huge expansion of several institutions at each stage which was necessary and inevitable. It would reveal the astonishing levels of commitment and dedication of teachers working even under trying situations.

The master key to educational reorientation revolves around pragmatic comprehension of what MK Gandhi wrote after reading "Unto This Last": "A lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from work." Give the teacher of every stage due respect and dignity in dealing with him, let the bureaucracy treat teachers as VIPs, and one could guarantee visible enhancement in the work culture, and hence in learner attainments.

(The writer works in education, social cohesion, and religious unity. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORE PERKS FOR THE WOMEN'S TEAM

Sir — We are all happy to hear the Indian women's cricketers will now receive Rs 15 lakh per Test, Rs 6 lakh per ODI, and Rs 3 lakh per T20, the same as their male counterparts. They deserve it because Indian women have had significant success in recent months. They followed their silver-medal finish at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in August with a record 3-0 ODI series sweep of England in England in September. In October, India beat Sri Lanka to clinch a record seventh Asia Cup crown in Bangladesh.

Hence BCCI's decision is a significant step forward for women's cricket and the game overall. Particularly when the women cricketers do not get revenue on par (the tickets are not sold at an equal rate, and the sponsorship rates are not equal) with men it is correct to encourage women with more fees as this would attract more and more women to play cricket which would definitely increase the standard in the long run. So, paying the same match fee for the women's team is a tricky but good step ahead. Don't forget as things stand, there are no changes to the BCCI's annual retainers for women players. Currently, those in the highest retainer bracket take home INR 50 lakh, while Grade B and Grade C are valued at INR 30 lakh and INR 10 lakh respectively. In comparison, the male cricketers are divided into four categories with Grade A+ players taking home INR 7 crore, and those in Grades A, B, and C collecting INR 5 crore, 3 crore, and 1 crore respectively. Compared to the money standard the women cricketers' Grade A player's standard is 50% below the C player's status. Even then it is correct to encourage women with more fees as this would attract more and more women to play cricket which would definitely increase the standard in the long run.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

SHINDE LOSES FOUR PROJECTS

Sir — After getting slammed by opposition parties Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde said that the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister have assured

One nation, one police uniform policy



Prime Minister Narendra Modi has raised the pitch for a one nation, one police uniform policy. Earlier, Modi had batted for one nation, one election. The response from the opposition parties was negative. One nation, one ration card was launched on August 9, 2019. With this, the ration card holders are enjoying the advantage of buying ration in any part of India without any hassles. Identical uniform for police in all the states is not bad. Law and order are on the State list. It is the prerogative of the states to take a call on uniform policy. As such non-BJP-ruled states cannot be expected to fall in line. Good or bad, the opposition parties are accustomed to opposing anything that comes from the ruling party. As such its implementation is not

him of full support for the development and growth of the state. Addressing hundreds of Shiv Sainiks on Monday night during his first visit to his hometown Thane after taking over as the CM, Shinde said the risk that he took (referring to political developments over the last fortnight) has been appreciated by people, despite criticism from certain quarters. With this Shinde is under pressure for losing three big projects to Gujarat for which the people of Maharashtra are very angry with him and his government. And may teach him and his MLAs a lesson in future elections.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

very easy. As a first step, all BJP-ruled states can do it. Because the same party governments in states are amenable to accepting the proposal of the central government. Since more states are ruled by BJP than opposition parties, more states can have the same police uniform. In due course of time, if the non-BJP ruled states are handed over to BJP from the future election results, those states can also prescribe the same uniforms.

The apprehension of opposition parties taking over the BJP-ruled states in the future elections and reverting the police uniforms to the earlier ones or with some changes must be put on the back burner. Being skeptical about the opposition parties accepting his suggestion, Modi has asked the states to think over the proposal. Decisions are taken by the government of the day according to the changing times and needs. The ruling dispensation of the states where 5 years have not been completed must be ready for some compromise to go for a new experiment. Common uniforms will give a common identity to law enforcement as citizens will recognize police personnel anywhere in India. However, a badge denoting the name of the state to which the police belong can be at display on the uniform.

KV Seetharamaih | Bengaluru

welcome move by UGC and AICTE to clarify these PhD programs because if they are not recognized then it is both a waste of time and money for the students who enroll themselves for these courses. It is also good that GoI is in the process of regulating the Ed-Tech sector because this sector is growing amidst huge demand for online courses under the current scenario. So ideally it should be a win-win proposition for all stakeholders, Ed-Tech companies, and students. When technology is becoming a critical part of our lives it is essential that companies do not engage in abusing the power they have.

Bal Govind | Noida

NO RECOGNITION OF ONLINE PHD Sir — It refers to "Online Ph.D. offered by Ed-Tech firms with foreign varsities not recognized: UGC, AICTE". It is a

SOUNDBITE

Azam Khan has been bearing the brunt for strongly opposing and challenging communal forces inside the Assembly and Parliament and outside as well to secure the secular credentials of Indian Constitution.

SP chief — Akhilesh Yadav

We have warned of Russia's plans to ruin the Black Sea Grain Initiative. Now Moscow uses a false pretext to block the grain corridor. I call on all states to demand Russia to stop its hunger games.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister — Dmytro Kuleba

In our times we couldn't experiment but today the generation does and why shouldn't they?

Actor — Jaya Bachchan

It's my responsibility to make sure that I'm in the crease and leave at the right time... the bowlers are well within their rights to take off the bails if the non-striker is backing up.

New Zealand batter — Glenn Phillips

Kejriwal opposed Ram Mandir, insulted Hindu deities, and had to sack a minister. Kejriwal stoked new propaganda so that his corruption isn't discussed.

Union Minister — Anurag Thakur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

GOD OUR ONLY HOME, REST IS TEMPORARY

God is the only home one can aspire for with spirituality



AJIT BISHNOI

What do you call a home? Is it a place where one lives permanently? If so, no place will qualify to be called a home, because we don't live permanently at any one place. Suppose someone has a nice three-bedroom home in a posh colony. Is this a place where one can really find shelter? If one could, why would so many of us remain lost in thoughts even after we have settled in our so-called home? Because, this home is a shelter in the lower sense, i.e., from the elements or which provides us all types of comforts.

What should be called a home then? God of course. Lord Krishna explains in the Bhagavad Gita verse #9.18. "He is the goal, maintainer, Lord, witness, home, shelter/refuge and friend." If we have a home, we would like it to be maintained very nicely. What is a home if the essentials are missing? From my personal experience, I can emphatically state that God has been my maintainer wherever I have lived. Everything we see is owned by Him only. Yes, God is the real owner of everything. God maintains 'sannyasis', who have renounced pursuing material goals. They lack nothing as they busy themselves in spiritual activities. To qualify for such privilege, one must be linked with God or who will do so in future, which God knows already.



Lord Krishna says He is our 'Swami'. The real Lord states about Himself, "Whatever there is opulent, effulgent or even energetic, all that you should know as produced from a fragment of My splendour." (#10.41) God is my Swami in every sense; I turn to Him for everything I need like guidance, Him being omniscient; help, because He is omnipotent; and 'shakti' of all kinds like 'atmabala' (inner strength) intellectual power; mental strength; physical strength, power to tolerate, etc. We need all these to have a meaningful life.

God is also a witness to whatever we do or not do, i.e., our duties. Only then He decides whether we deserve His special attention or not. Is God not omnipresent? God has eyes, ears, etc., in this world pervading all. (#13.13) Then, we come to Lord's statement that 'He is our home'. Wherever we live will be God's property only, which He allowed us to use temporarily. That is the material part. A real home is not that only, which gives us shelter in the material sense, but which gives us in the spiritual sense also. God is the only one who we can really call our refuge. Only when we have taken shelter of God, will we feel safe. Those who have done so will vouch for this fact. Others do not feel safe, no matter what they do to make them feel safe.

Now we come to the last word, which explains everything. God is our friend, a real friend, who is waiting for us to turn to Him. He won't force us, because we enjoy free will; we must take His shelter willingly. Then, all the words of the verse quoted earlier begin to make sense. Our real goal has to be God only. God is our real home. We have been waiting for life after life. He is the only shelter worth taking refuge in. And, lastly, God is the only friend who can help in all kinds of situations.

Therefore, become a friend of God with spirituality as instructed by Him in spiritual texts. Then, your so-called home will become your real home, not just a shelter from elements.

(The author is a spiritual teacher)

Tax surge a cushion to bear hit from subsidies

But tax collection buoyancy has been slowing down since the last year, which calls for tightening slippages



UTTAM GUPTA

In the past, a shortfall in tax receipts of the Union government vis-à-vis the budget estimate (BE) and excess of expenditure over BE led to high fiscal deficit (FD) year after year. To rein in FD, it often took recourse to non-tax receipts such as dividend from public sector undertakings (PSUs), proceeds from selling government shares in one PSU to another, transfer of surplus by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), proceeds from sale of spectrum for telecom services, etc.

This was unsustainable as reliance on non-tax receipts is unreliable. For instance, dividend from a PSU depends on a host of factors specific to the undertakings and there is no certainty that it will deliver a target amount. For instance, during 2017-18, ONGC, an upstream oil and gas exploration and production company in the public sector was asked to buy 51.11 per cent of government's shares in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL), helping it to garner over ₹30,000 crore and, thus, achieve its FD target. In the process, ONGC was burdened with an extra debt.

Since 2021-22, the situation has changed drastically with tax collections exceeding the target by a substantial margin even as slippage in expenditure has continued unabated. The good thing is that the surplus in tax collection has offset the excess in expenditure over BE, thereby helping the government keep FD within the target – not having to rely much on the non-tax receipts.

During 2021-22, the gross tax revenue (GTR)—including total direct tax collection, proceeds from Goods and Services Tax or GST, customs and excise duty—net of refunds were ₹27,10,000 crore, which was higher than the budget estimate (BE) of ₹22,20,000 crore by a whopping ₹490,000 crore. The collection was even higher than the revised estimate (RE) of ₹25,20,000 crore (as given by FM Nirmala Sitharaman in the budget for 2022-23 on February 1, 2022) by ₹1,90,000 crore.

As per the Finance Commission (FC) formula 41 per cent of tax receipts of the Union government – excluding cess collections, which are not part of the divisible pool – are shared with states. After these mandatory transfers to states, the net tax revenue (NTR) of the Centre was around ₹18,50,000 crore, which was Rs 300,000 crore higher than the BE of ₹15,50,000 crore. It was even higher than the RE of ₹17,65,000 crore by ₹85,000 crore.

The excess of ₹300,000 crore in actual NTR of the Centre over the BE helped in making up for the slippage of about ₹284,500 crore in other areas of revenue and expenditure viz. proceeds from disinvestment in CPSUs: ₹161,500 crore (actual: ₹13,500 crore minus BE: ₹175,000



ACCORDING TO REVENUE SECRETARY TARUN BAJAJ, THE AIM IS FOR 30 PER CENT GROWTH IN DIRECT TAX COLLECTION AGAINST 16 PER CENT GROWTH ASSUMED PREVIOUSLY. IN THAT SCENARIO, THE ADDITIONAL GTR WOULD BE ₹425,000 CRORE

(The author is a policy analyst)



crore); fertilizer subsidy: ₹80,000 crore (actual: ₹160,000 crore minus BE: ₹80,000 crore); food subsidy: 43,000 crore (actual: ₹286,000 crore minus BE: ₹243,000 crore).

As a consequence, the FD for 2021-22 at 6.7 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product) turned out to be even lower than BE at 6.8 per cent. For 2022-23, Sitharaman set the GTR target ₹27,60,000 crore. Against this, the collection during the first six months of the year was ₹13,49,000 crore (this includes direct tax proceeds up to October 2, 2022, central GST collection up to September 30, 2022 and customs and excise duty or CED till August 31, 2022). Deducting devolution to states of ₹376,000 crore, NTR of the Centre works out to ₹973,000 crore against BE of ₹19,35,000 crore for the year.

Of the year's targeted tax revenue, already, the government has collected a little over 50 per cent during the first half. Normally, the second half shows greater buoyancy in collection because of substantial pick up in economic activity during the festival season (Oct-Nov) as also the fact that most persons pay their tax liability towards the year end [for instance, 16 per cent of the taxes (pre-devolution) collected during 2021-22 were paid in March 2022]. Considering these factors and including September 2022 figure for CED, the GTR during 2022-23 is estimated to be around ₹30,50,000 crore (but for the loss of revenue due to cut in central excise duty on petrol and diesel affected in

May 2022 – estimated at ₹90,000 crore, this would have been even higher at ₹3140,000 crore), which is ₹290,000 crore higher than the BE. Correspondingly, the NTR of the Centre, (post-devolution) is expected to be about ₹21,00,000 crore – ₹165,000 crore more than BE.

According to Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj, the aim is for 30 per cent growth in direct tax collection against 16 per cent growth assumed previously. In that scenario, the additional GTR would be ₹425,000 crore. Correspondingly, the NTR would be ₹250,000 crore more.

On the other hand, the government faces massive slippage in the expenditure on various subsidies. On fertilizer subsidy, it is expected to spend ₹250,000 crore against BE of ₹109,000 crore, leading to excess of ₹141,000 crore. The food subsidy is likely to overshoot the BE ₹207,000 crore by about ₹130,000 crore, thanks to the continuation of the delivery of free foodgrains under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) till December 2022.

Add to this ₹22,000 crore given to the state-run oil marketing companies (OMCs) to compensate them for the under-recoveries on supply of domestic LPG between June 2020 and June 2022 (during this period, against increase in the international prices of LPG by around 300 per cent, the OMCs were allowed hike of only 70 per cent in domestic LPG prices, leading to under-recovery), this leads to an additional subsidy payment of

₹293,000 crore.

In the non-tax receipt area too, against the target of ₹65,000 crore from proceeds of the disinvestment of government's shareholding in Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs), so far, it has realized only ₹25,000 crore. Considering that the big ticket sale of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has been put on hold and sale of the LIC stake in IDBI is stuck, the year is expected to end with a shortfall of about ₹30,000 crore.

Overall, the government could be staring at a slippage of over ₹320,000 crore. Of this, around ₹250,000 crore is expected to be neutralized by excess tax collection over BE, leaving an uncovered gap of just ₹70,000 crore. This works out to a mere 0.25 per cent of the GDP. But, for the excess tax cushion, the slippage from the BE of FD (6.4 per cent) would have been 1.25 per cent.

The turnaround in tax collection is undoubtedly a creditable achievement of the Modi government. However, there is a dire need for prudent management of subsidies keeping in mind the fact that the tax cushion is not unlimited (during 2022-23, tax buoyancy – growth in collection against nominal GDP expansion – at 1 is much lower than 1.7 during 2021-22).

In major areas viz. food, fertilizers, fuel, substantial savings is possible by restricting coverage, cutting costs, improving efficiency, etc. For instance, free foodgrains under PMGKAY during April-December 2022 was uncalled for.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

BJP IS PREPARING TO PUT THE PHOTOS OF SAVARKAR AND MODI ON THE NOTES. THAT IS WHY IT IS OPPOSING THE PHOTO OF LORD GANESHA-LAKSHMI —AAP LEADER SANJAY SINGH



HOW CAN WE DENY MODI JI (A PHOTO ON CURRENCY) WHO IS EPITOME OF GREATNESS. HIS EFFORTS TO MAKE INDIA GREAT WOULD BE REMEMBERED FOREVER —BJP LEADER RAM KADAM

Demand for gold, cars, houses grew in Diwali

The Diwali consumer data shows that the Indian economy may shine with a revival in demand

While newly-elected British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is being celebrated with great glee, it is not he but the Indian consumers who are adding glory to India. They have taken enough strides this Diwali to turn the corner for the Indian economy after gloomy years of the pandemic shut country.

Indian consumers are back with enthusiasm but there are grey areas indicative of the post-Covid bumps. Amid such a scenario, gold, housing and automobiles made a significant mark. Consumers purchased 39 tonnes of gold and billions of rupee purchases of housing units, cars, white and brown goods, textiles, garments, and other purchases.



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The author is a senior journalist)

Demand for gold grew by 80 per cent in the domestic market in the July-September quarter following a strong pick-up in economic activity and improved consumer demand, said Pankaj Arora, president of All India Jewellery and Gold Federation. As per its estimates, sales of gold and silver coins, notes, sculptures, and utensils in the country peaked at Rs 25,000 crore. The Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA) pegs it at Rs 19,500 crore a little higher than 2021.

There are indications of economic buoyancy coming back. The ANAROCK July-September housing sales data are up 41 per cent, possibly touching three lakh units as the trend was for 2009-2014. Since that year sales dropped

by almost 68 per cent in Delhi and NCR and 27 per cent around Mumbai. The worst was 2016 when unit sales dropped drastically due to demonetisation followed by the unveiling of RERA and GST. The housing is double-taxed. It has stamp duty and now also GST, which should better be waved off. The housing sales rise despite interest rate hike is encouraging.

Similarly, car sales jumped by 10.94 per cent to 1,464,001 during Navaratri and Diwali against 2021 sales of 1,319,647 units, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations of India (FADA). Sales rebounded as semiconductor shortages eased. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers

(SIAM) said that the production for the month also rose 88 per cent to 372,126. Sales of entry level passenger cars grew by 38.4 per cent or 1,026,309 units, while two-wheeler sales rose by 13 per cent at 1,735,199 units.

Though gold purchases considered auspicious may have taken place almost uniformly across, there has been subdued sales of FMCG products in the rural areas with retail inflation holding firm. The Marico group noted that the sales in the rural areas are much below the norm.

Confectionery sales declined 10.3 per cent and beverages and home care slumped by 2.5 and 5.5 per cent owing to change of preferences and quality complaints about the products.

Neighbourhood political relations also have an impact on dry fruits and spices. The machineries have been careful and slow in clearing the dry fruit packages of raisins, pistachios, apricot, figs, asafoetida and shah jeera coming from Afghanistan transiting through the Wagah border.

The textile segment also had an average business. Surat's textile mills could have about Rs 8000 crore or 50 per cent less sales. The retail demand has been low indicating that people at large are avoiding purchases. Wholesalers are not picking up garments, sarees and other fabric because of a market singed by high prices and miserly consumer behaviour, according to Confederation of All India Traders. Huge inven-

tory from the last two years with retailers has cut overall sales.

Often it is alluded that e-commerce led by global giants has affected the retail business. According to the World Bank, e-commerce is only 1.6 per cent of the total Indian retail business. The e-commerce firms expected that their sales would reach \$11.8 billion, according to Shopify, before Diwali but so far they have not come out with a figure of the final sales. Softbank-propelled Meesho claimed there have been low-ticket purchases and two majors -- Flipkart and Amazon -- clocked the larger share of the \$5.7 billion or Rs 40,000 crore festive sales, with mobile phones leading the sales.

Global instability, infla-

tion, and the Ukraine war are hitting the country despite efforts at a higher growth trajectory. This growth is now swinging below 7 per cent with over 7.4 per cent (cumulative 23.6 per cent) inflation. It is beyond the RBI comfort zone.

Does it mean that by volume India could surpass Britain? Not unlikely but a lot remains to be done to be actually becoming the fifth largest economy as during covid certain hardships increased and indicators plummeted. Indian per capita GDP is \$2,277.43 and the UK's \$49,761. The UK has a robust trade balance. Diwali has given hopes that by the coming year India would get rid of the glitches and make its journey more meaningful.

Russia suspends Ukraine grain deal over ship attack claim

AP ■ KYIV

Russia announced Saturday that it will immediately suspend its implementation of a U.N.-brokered grain deal that has seen more than 9 million tonnes of grain exported from Ukraine during the war and has brought down soaring global food prices.

Ukraine accused Russia of creating a world "hunger games."

The Russian Defence Ministry cited an alleged Ukrainian drone attack Saturday against Russia's Black Sea Fleet ships moored off the coast of occupied Crimea as the reason for the move.

Ukraine has denied the attack, saying that the Russians mishandled their own weapons.

The Russian declaration came one day after U.N. Chief Antonio Guterres urged Russia and Ukraine to renew the grain export deal, which was scheduled to expire on Nov. 19.

Guterres also urged other countries, mainly in the West, to expedite the removal of obstacles blocking Russian grain and fertiliser exports.

The U.N. Chief said the grain deal — brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July — helps "to cushion the suffering that this global cost-of-living crisis is inflicting on billions of people," his spokesman said.

U.N. Officials were in touch with Russian authorities over the announced suspension.

"It is vital that all parties refrain from any action that would imperil the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is a critical humanitarian effort that is clearly having a positive impact on access to food for millions of people," said Guterres' spokesman, Stéphane



Dujarric.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the Russian move "predictable." He accused Moscow of "blockading" ships carrying grain since September. Currently, he said, 176 vessels are backed up at sea, carrying more than 2 million tonnes of food.

"This is a transparent attempt by Russia to return to the threat of large-scale famine in Africa and Asia," Zelenskyy said Saturday in his nightly video address.

He called for a tough response against Russia from international bodies like the U.N. And the G-20.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, accused Russia of playing "hunger games" by imperiling global food shipments.

In Washington, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the suspension was regrettable and urged "all parties to keep this essential, life-saving initiative functioning,"

"Any act by Russia to disrupt these critical grain exports is essentially a statement that people and families around the world should pay more for food or go hungry," Blinken said in a statement Saturday night.

"In suspending this arrangement, Russia is again weaponising food in the war it started, directly impacting low- and middle-income countries and global food prices, and exacerbating already dire humanitarian crises and food insecurity."

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Saturday accused British specialists of being involved in the alleged attack by drones on Russian ships in Crimea. Britain's Defense Ministry had no immediate comment on the claim.

"In connection with the actions of Ukrainian armed forces, led by British specialists, directed, among other things, against Russian ships that ensure the functioning of the humanitarian corridor in question (which cannot be qualified

otherwise than as a terrorist attack), the Russian side cannot guarantee the safety of civilian dry cargo ships participating in the Black Sea initiative, and suspends its implementation from today for an indefinite period," the Russian statement said.

Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure said that Ukraine has never threatened the Black Sea grain corridor which "is exclusively humanitarian in nature," and would continue to try to keep shipments going.

It said since the first ship left Odesa on Aug. 1, more than 9 million tonnes of food have been exported, including more than 5 million tonnes to African and Asian countries.

As part of the U.N. World Food Programme, it said, 190 thousand tons of wheat have been sent to countries where there is hunger.

Russia also requested a meeting Monday of the U.N. Security Council because of the alleged attack on the Black Sea Fleet and the security of the grain corridor, said Dmitry Polyansky, Russia's first deputy representative to the U.N.

Russia's agriculture minister said Moscow stands ready to "fully replace Ukrainian grain and deliver supplies at affordable prices to all interested countries."

In remarks carried by the state Rossiya 24 TV channel, Dmitry Patrushev said Moscow was prepared to "supply up to 500,000 tonnes of grain to the poorest countries free of charge in the next four months," with the help of Turkey.

Earlier Saturday, Ukraine and Russia offered differing versions on the Crimea drone attack in which at least one Russian ship suffered damage in Sevastopol, a key port on the Ukrainian peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014.



A Russian tank damaged in recent fighting is seen in the field near the recently retaken village of Kamiianka, Kharkiv region, Ukraine, on Sunday. AP Photo

UK police say gas bombs thrown at immigration centre, 1 injured

AP ■ LONDON

British police say one person was injured when gasoline bombs were thrown Sunday at an immigration center in the English port town of Dover.

The Kent Police force said "two to three incendiary devices" were thrown at the facility, and "one minor injury has been reported." The Kent Fire and Rescue Service said its crews had put out fires at the site.

A news photographer at the scene said a man drove up and threw three gas bombs at the facility before driving to a nearby gas station and killing himself. Police said only that "the suspect has been identified and located."



Dover is the arrival point for many migrants who cross the English Channel from France in small boats. The number of people making the hazardous journey across one

of the world's busiest shipping lanes has risen sharply in recent years, with 40,000 reaching the U.K. so far this year, up from 28,000 in all of 2021 and 8,500 in 2020.

Dozens have died, including 27 people in November 2021 when a packed smuggling boat capsized.

Britain and France have wrangled over how to stop the people-smuggling gangs that organize the journeys.

Britain's Conservative government has announced a controversial plan to send people who arrive in small boats on a one-way journey to Rwanda. Critics say the plan is immoral and impractical, and it is being challenged in the courts.

Thousands commemorate Italy's dictator Mussolini at crypt

AP ■ PREDAPPIO, ITALY

Several thousand black-clad fascist sympathisers chanted and sang in praise of Benito Mussolini as they marched to the slain Italian dictator's crypt on Sunday, 100 years after Mussolini entered Rome and completed a bloodless coup that gave rise to two decades of fascist rule.

The crowd of some 2,000 to 4,000 marchers, many sporting fascist symbols and singing hymns from Italy's colonial era, was more numerous than in the recent past, as the fascist nostalgics celebrated the centenary of the March on Rome. On Oct 28, 1922, black-shirted fascists entered the Italian capital, launching a putsch that culminated two days later when Italy's king handed Mussolini the mandate to start a new government.

The crowd in Predappio, Mussolini's birth and final resting place in the northern Emilia-Romagna region, also was apparently emboldened by the fact that a party with neo-fascist



roots is heading an Italian government for the first time since World War II.

Organizers warned participants, who arrived from as far away as Rome, Belgium and the United States, not to flash the Roman salute used by the Fascists, or they would risk prosecution. Still, some couldn't resist as the crowd stopped outside of the cemetery where Mussolini is laid to rest for

prayers and greetings from Mussolini's great-granddaughter, Orsola.

"After 100 years, we are still here to pay homage to the man this this state wanted, and who we will never stop admiring," Orsola Mussolini said to cheers.

She listed her great-grandfather's accomplishments, citing an infrastructure boom that built schools, hospitals and public buildings, reclaimed malar-

ia-infested swamps for cities, and the extension of a pension system to nongovernment workers. She was joined by her sister Vittoria, who led the crowd in a prayer.

The crowd gave a final shout of "Duce, Duce, Duce," Mussolini's honorific as Italy's dictator.

Anti-fascist campaigners held a march in Predappio on Friday, to mark the anniversary

of the liberation of the town — and to prevent the fascists marching on the exact anniversary of the March on Rome.

Inside the cemetery on Sunday, admirers of the Duce lined up to enter his crypt tucked in a back corner, a handful at a time. Each was given a memory card signed by his great-granddaughters with a photo of a smiling Mussolini holding his leather-gloved hand high in a Roman salute. "History will prove me right," the card reads.

Italy's failure to fully come to terms with its fascist past has never been more stark than now, as Italy's new Premier Giorgia Meloni seeks to distance her far-right Brothers of Italy party from its neo-fascist roots. This week, she decried fascism's anti-democratic nature and called its racial laws, which sent thousands of Italian Jews to Nazi death camps, "a low point."

Historians would also add Mussolini's alliance with Nazi Germany and Japan in World War II and his disastrous colonial campaign in Africa to its

devastating legacies.

Now in power, Meloni is seeking a moderate course for a new center-right government including Matteo Salvini's League and Silvio Berlusconi's Forza Italia. But her victory gives far-right activists a sense of vindication even if they see themselves even further to the right.

"I would have voted for Lucifer if he could beat the left," said organizer Mirko Santarelli, who heads the Ravenna chapter of the Arditi, an organization that began as a World War I veterans group and has evolved to include caretaking Mussolini's memory. "I am happy there is a Meloni government, because if there is nothing worse than the Italian left. It is not the government that reflects my ideas, but it is better than nothing."

He said he would like to see the new government do away with the laws that prosecute incitement to hatred and violence motivated by race, ethnicity, religion and nationality. It includes use of emblems and symbols — many of which were present in Sunday's march.

Lebanon Prez leaves with no replacement, crisis deepens



AP ■ BEIRUT

President Michel Aoun left Lebanon's presidential palace on Sunday, marking the end of his six-year term without a replacement, leaving the small nation in a political vacuum that is likely to worsen its historic economic meltdown.

As Aoun's term ends, the country is being run by a caretaker government after Prime Minister-designate Najib Mikati failed to form a new Cabinet following May 15 parliamentary elections.

Aoun and his supporters warn that such a government doesn't have full power to run the country, saying that weeks of "constitutional chaos" lay ahead. In a speech outside the palace, Aoun told thousands of supporters that he has accepted the resignation of Mikati's government. The move is likely to further deprive the caretaker administration of legitimacy and worsen existing political tensions in the country.

Mikati responded shortly afterward with a statement from his office saying that his government will continue to perform its duties in accordance with the constitution.

Many fear that an extended power vacuum could further

delay attempts to finalise a deal with the International Monetary Fund that would provide Lebanon with some USD 3 billion in assistance, widely seen as a key step to help the country climb out of a three-year financial crisis that has left three quarters of the population in poverty. While it's not the first time that Lebanon's parliament has failed to appoint a successor by the end of the president's term, this will be the first time that there will be both no president and a caretaker cabinet with limited powers.

Lebanon's constitution allows the cabinet in regular circumstances to run the government, but is unclear whether that applies to a caretaker government. Wissam Lahham, a constitutional law professor at St. Joseph University in Beirut told The Associated Press that in his view, the governance issues the country will face are political rather than legal. Although the constitution "doesn't say explicitly that the caretaker government can act if there is no president, logically, constitutionally, one should accept that because... the state and institutions should continue to function according to the principle of the continuity of public services," he said.

100 killed in Mogadishu car bomb attacks, says Somalia Pres

IANS ■ MOGADISHU

At least 100 people have been killed over 300 injured in twin car bomb explosions targeting Somalia's Education Ministry building here, Somalia President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said on Sunday. The fatalities in Saturday's car bomb attacks are likely to rise, Mohamud told media after visiting the bombing site early Sunday.

Several government offices, hotels and restaurants are situated near the bombing site, Xinhua news agency reported.

An unspecified number of people, including journalists and police officers were among the casualties, Sadiq Dudishe, spokesperson of the Somali Police Force, said earlier.

The al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab Islamist group, which often targets the capital and controls large parts of the country, claimed responsibility.

Somali Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre, while condemning the attack, said such action by al-Shabab won't stop the government's commitment to eradicating terrorism in any



form. The African Union Transition Mission in Somalia in a statement called for sustained military operations against the insurgents, so as to suppress surging terror attacks in the country.

Extending its condolences to the families of the victims, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia tweeted it "wishes a speedy recovery for those injured, and stands resolutely with all Somalis against terrorism."

The blasts came as the Somali president and leaders of the federal member states, including security officials, were meeting to discuss ongoing offensive operations against al-Shabab.

Labour puts pressure on Sunak over Braverman reappointment

IANS ■ LONDON

Labour is urging the government to publish its assessments of Suella Braverman's security breach following her controversial reappointment as UK home secretary just six days after she was forced out, local media reported.

New Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is under growing pressure over reinstating Braverman as home secretary after a former party chair claimed she had committed "multiple breaches"



of the ministerial code, Sky News reported. He has so far resisted demands to launch an inquiry after she shared a sensitive document with a Tory backbencher from a personal email without permission, Sky News reported.

Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats have raised "national security" concerns over the breach, as well as called for a Cabinet Office probe.

Labour will try to push ministers to share risk assessments of this and other alleged leaks, as well as the information given to Sunak before he reinstated her at the Home Office, with a "humane address" motion in Parliament.

Braverman has so far refused to appear before MPs to explain the circumstances sur-

rounding what happened.

Shadow Home Secretary Yvette Cooper said: "Rishi Sunak and Suella Braverman cannot keep running away from these questions. It is far too serious for that, and raises serious doubts about the prime minister's judgement."

"People need to know they can trust the Home Secretary with highly sensitive information and our national security. Rishi Sunak's decision to reappoint Suella Braverman was deeply irresponsible.

AP source: Pelosi attacker carried zip ties, in Jan 6 echo

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The man accused of attacking House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's husband carried zip ties with him when he broke into the couple's San Francisco home, according to a person briefed on the investigation, in what is the latest parallel to the Capitol riot of Jan. 6, 2021.

The person was not

authorised to publicly discuss the Pelosi case and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Sunday.

The attack on Democratic leader's 82-year-old husband, Paul Pelosi, less than two weeks before the Nov. 8 election that will determine control of Congress was a jarring reminder of the nation's toxic political climate.

Police said the suspect,

identified as David DePape, 42, confronted Paul Pelosi in the family's Pacific Heights home early Friday and, the AP has reported, demanded to know, "Where is Nancy?"

The two men struggled over a hammer before officers responding to a 911 call to the home saw DePape strike Paul Pelosi at least once, police said. DePape was arrested on suspicion of attempted murder, elder abuse and burglary.

He is expected to be arraigned early in the coming week.

Eerie echoes of the Jan. 6 riot were apparent in the Paul Pelosi assault.

Rioters who swarmed the Capitol trying to overturn Joe Biden's election victory over Donald Trump roamed the halls and shouted loud calls demanding "Where's Nancy?" Some in the siege were seen inside the Capitol carrying zip ties.

The violent attack on a congressional leader's family comes as threats to lawmakers and other political officials are at all-time highs today.

Nancy Pelosi was in Washington when he was attacked. She soon returned to San Francisco, where he husband was hospitalized. He had surgery for a skull fracture, and suffered other injuries to his arms and hands, her office said.

"Our children, our grandchildren and I are heartbroken and traumatized by the life-threatening attack on our Pop," she said in a letter late Saturday to colleagues. "We are grateful for the quick response of law enforcement and emergency services, and for the life-saving medical care he is receiving."

Paul Pelosi remains hospitalized and "continues to improve," she told colleagues.

Biden faces 'unpredictable' era with China's empowered Xi

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Joe Biden's administration is taking stock of a newly empowered Xi Jinping as the Chinese president begins a third, norm-breaking five-year term as Communist Party leader.

With US-Chinese relations already fraught, concerns are growing in Washington that more difficult days may be ahead.

Xi has amassed a measure of power over China's ruling party unseen since Mao Zedong, the leader from 1949 until his death in 1976. Xi's consolidation of power comes as the United States has updated its defense and national security strategies to reflect that China is now America's most potent military and economic adversary.

Biden takes pride in having built rapport with Xi since first meeting him more than a decade ago, when they served as their countries' vice presidents.

But Biden now faces, in Xi, a counterpart buoyed by a greater measure of power and determined to cement China's superpower status even while navigating strong economic and diplomatic headwinds.

"We're not back in the Mao era. Xi Jinping is not Mao," said

Jude Blanchette, chair of China studies at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

"But we are definitely in new territory and unpredictable territory in terms of the stability and predictability of China's political system."

Biden and Xi are expected to hold talks on the sidelines of next month's Group of 20 summit in Indonesia, a long-anticipated meeting that would come after nearly two years of tense relations.

The leaders are dug into winning the upper hand in a competition that both believe will determine which country is the leading global economic and political force driving the next century.

"There's an awful lot of issues for us to talk to China about," said National Security Council spokesman John Kirby.

He added that US and Chinese officials have been working to arrange a meeting of the leaders, though one has yet to be confirmed. "Some issues are fairly contentious and some should be collaborative," Kirby said.

Biden and Xi travelled together in the US and China in 2011 and 2012, and they have held five phone or video calls since Biden became president in



January 2021.

But the US-China relationship has become far more complicated since those getting-to-know-you talks over meals in Washington and on the Tibetan plateau a decade ago.

As president, Biden has repeatedly taken China to task for human rights abuses against the Uyghur people and other ethnic minorities, Beijing's crackdowns on democracy activists in Hong Kong, coercive trade practices, military provocations against self-ruled Taiwan and differences over Russia's prosecution of its war against Ukraine.

Xi's government has criticised the Biden administration's

posture toward Taiwan — which Beijing looks eventually to unify with the communist mainland — as undermining China's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Chinese president also has suggested that Washington wants to stifle Beijing's growing clout as it tries to overtake the US as the world's largest economy.

"External attempts to suppress and contain China may escalate at any time," Xi warned in his address before the Communist Party congress.

"We must therefore be more mindful of potential dangers, be prepared to deal with worst-case scenarios, and be ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters

and even dangerous storms."

Dali Yang, a political scientist at the University of Chicago who researches Chinese politics, said there are some potentially stabilising developments emerging in the relationship after months of rancour.

Two of China's best-known diplomats in Washington were elevated at the Communist Party meeting. Foreign Minister Wang Yi was selected for the Communist Party's Politburo, the policy-making body made up of the 24 most senior officials. China's ambassador to the US, Qin Gang, is joining its central committee. Their elevation should bring a measure of continuity to the US-China relationship, Yang said.

Yang noted there has also been an effort on the part of the Communist Party leadership to "tone down its warm embrace of Russia." Last month, after meeting with Xi on the sidelines of a summit in Uzbekistan, Russian President Vladimir Putin acknowledged that Xi had expressed "concern and questions" about the war in Ukraine.

With his third term confirmed, "in some ways, Xi is now freer to act and less encumbered in terms of no longer having to always watch what his rivals are doing," Yang said.

"I think that actually may affect his approach and may make him more comfortable in dealing with Biden."

White House officials have played down hopes that Xi's new five-year hold on the Communist Party could give him breathing room to more fully engage on matters where China has some overlapping interests with the US.

Biden, during a meeting with Defense Department officials on Wednesday, stressed that the US was "not seeking conflict" with China. Hours later, Chinese state television reported Xi told members of the national committee on US-China relations that Beijing should find ways to work with Washington on issues of mutual concern.

The conciliatory moment was short-lived. The following day, US and Chinese officials were trading rhetorical shots about the US move earlier this month to expand export controls on the sale of advanced semiconductor chips to China.

"The US has overstretched the national security concept and suppressed China's development, and normal business cooperation has been politicised and weaponised," Wang Hongxia, counselor at the

Chinese Embassy in Washington, told reporters.

Her comments came not long after a top Commerce Department official, Undersecretary Alan Estevez, said at a Washington forum that "if I was a betting person, I would put down money" on the US imposing additional export controls on China.

China's economy is slowing, with Beijing reporting this month that growth for the first nine months of the year was 3 per cent, putting it on pace to fall well below its official full-year target of 5.5 per cent.

The country's economy is also dragging from strict "zero" COVID rules, and Beijing is confronting a deceleration in exports and home prices that fell to a seven-year low in September.

It also faces increased competition from a US and European Union that are investing tens of billions of dollars to compete on semiconductors and other technologies. All of this points to the possibility that China might not eclipse US gross domestic product by 2030 as many economists have forecast.

Ruchir Sharma, chairman of Rockefeller International, recently concluded that with its likely growth trajectory China would exceed the US economy by 2060,

if it manages to do so at all.

At the same time, Secretary of State Antony Blinken as well as the US chief naval operations officer, Adm. Mike Gilday, have recently expressed concern that Beijing may try to step up its timeline to seize Taiwan.

Blinken said China had made "a fundamental decision that the status quo was no longer acceptable."

China has largely refrained from criticising Russia's war in Ukraine, but also has held off on supplying Moscow with arms.

Still, the conflict has raised concerns in Taiwan that China — which has never controlled the island — might be further emboldened to move on its long-stated plan for unification.

US-China tensions have been further enflamed by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's August visit to Taiwan and Biden's remark in May that the US military would defend Taiwan in case of an attack by China, comments the White House later played down.

"What's concerning now is that with Xi's unlimited power and ambition, he may use Taiwan to distract from his internal problems," said Keith Krach, a former undersecretary of state during the Trump administration.

UK politicians seeks probe into Liz Truss phone hack claim

AP ■ LONDON

The British government insisted on Sunday it has robust cybersecurity for government officials, after a newspaper reported that former Prime Minister Liz Truss' phone was hacked while she was UK foreign minister.

The Mail on Sunday said that the hack was discovered when Truss was running to become Conservative Party leader and prime minister in the summer.

It said the security breach was kept secret by then-Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the head of the civil service.

The newspaper, citing unnamed sources, said Russian spies were suspected of the hack. It said the hackers gained access to sensitive information, including discussions about the Ukraine war with foreign officials, as well as private conversations between Truss and a political ally, former Treasury chief Kwasi Kwarteng.



The UK government spokesperson declined to comment on security arrangements, but said it had "robust systems in place to protect against cyber threats," including regular security briefings for ministers.

Opposition parties demanded an independent

investigation into the hack, and into the leak of the information to a newspaper.

"Was Liz Truss' phone hacked by Russia, was there a news blackout and if so why?" said Liberal Democrat foreign affairs spokesperson Layla Moran.

"If it turns out this information was withheld from the public to protect Liz Truss' leadership bid, that would be unforgivable." Labour Party law-and-order spokesperson Yvette Cooper said "the story raises issues around cybersecurity."

"It's why cybersecurity has to be taken so seriously by everyone across government, the role of hostile states," she told Sky News.

"But also the allegations about whether a Cabinet minister has been using a personal phone for serious government business, and serious questions about why this information or this story has been leaked or briefed right now.

Workers leave iPhone factory in Zhengzhou amid Covid curbs

AP ■ HONG KONG

Workers in a manufacturing facility in the central Chinese city of Zhengzhou appear to have left to avoid COVID-19 curbs, with many travelling on foot for days after an unknown number of employees were quarantined in the facility after a virus outbreak.

Videos circulating on Chinese social media platforms showed people who are allegedly Foxconn workers climbing over fences and carrying their belongings down the road.

The Foxconn plant in Zhengzhou, Henan province, is one of the largest factories in China that assembles products for Apple Inc., including its latest iPhone 14 devices.

Not all the videos that showed workers purportedly leaving the facility could be verified.

It is unclear if the workers leaving the facility had escaped or if they were allowed to leave.

Foxconn did not immediately respond to a request for comment.



villages put out food and drinks for the Foxconn workers. One such volunteer, who asked to be identified only by his surname Zhang out of privacy concerns, was put in charge of distributing supplies that his village in Xingyang county had prepared.

He said that the people shown in a video he uploaded to the short-video platform Douyin were Foxconn workers because they would have to take that road if they were leaving the facility.

The workers' exodus comes after reports that Foxconn had placed a number of workers under quarantine following a COVID-19 outbreak in the factory. The Foxconn facility in Zhengzhou can accommodate up to 350,000 factory workers, but it is not clear how many are currently employed by the factory.

It is also unclear how many of them have left, or how many were affected by COVID-19 curbs implemented in the factory prior to their departure.

Earlier this week, media reports said that a "closed-loop" system had been implemented in the factory that largely restricts workers to movements between their residence and the plant.

Local media reports said that Foxconn workers complained of poor food quality and a lack of medical care for those who tested positive amid growing concerns that the infection could be spreading.

The company also denied rumours that 20,000 people in

the plant had been infected with COVID-19.

Cities near Zhengzhou have since urged Foxconn workers to report to local authorities if they have plans to return to their hometowns so they can undergo appropriate isolation measures.

According to posts on the Zhengzhou government's public WeChat account, Foxconn issued notices on Sunday to workers at its factory, pledging to ensure the safety, legitimate rights and income for those willing to stay.

A day after videos circulated of workers leaving the factory, Foxconn and several local governments have also arranged transportation for employees who choose to return home.

It is not clear how much agency the workers had in deciding to leave the factory.

The departure of Foxconn workers from the Zhengzhou plant highlights the growing discontent in China's "zero-COVID" strategy, where governments attempt to stamp out outbreaks by implementing strict isolation and lockdown measures where infections are detected.

Brazil's polarising Bolsonaro-Lula contest goes to voters

AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazilians began voting on Sunday morning in a polarising presidential runoff election that pits an incumbent vowing to safeguard conservative Christian values against a former president promising to return the country to a more prosperous past. The runoff shaped up as a close contest between President Jair Bolsonaro and his political nemesis, former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva.



Both are well-known, divisive political figures who stir passion as much as loathing. The vote will determine if the world's fourth-largest democracy stays the same course of far-right politics or returns a leftist to the top job — and, in the latter case, whether Bolsonaro will accept defeat. More than 120 million Brazilians are expected to cast ballots, and because the vote is conducted electronically, the final result is usually available within hours after voting stations close in late afternoon.

Most opinion polls gave a lead to da Silva, universally known as Lula, though political analysts agreed the race grew increasingly tight in recent weeks. For months, it appeared that da Silva was headed for easy victory as he kindled nostalgia for his 2003-2010 presidency, when Brazil's economy was booming and welfare helped tens of millions join the middle class.

But in the October 2 first-

Imran quashes rumours about abandoning long march

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's former prime minister Imran Khan has quashed "rumours" that he is abandoning the long march to hold talks with the government, saying no dialogue will be held until authorities announced a date for snap elections.

The long march dubbed as 'Haqqeqi Azadi March' began on Friday.

On its second day on Saturday, the marchers failed to reach their promised destination in Kamoke where Khan was scheduled to address his supporters.

The rumours of Khan abandoning the march spread after he returned to Lahore when the long march reached Kala Shah Kaku.



His Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party's Secretary General Asad Umar said that their Khan left for Lahore to attend a "very important meeting".

Khan took to Twitter to quash rumours that a high-level meeting was being held in Lahore between PTI and the government.

"For all those spreading rumours

about my meeting in Lahore, the reason we returned was because Lahore was closer and we had already decided not to move at night. The only demand I have had for six months is a date for early fair and free elections. That will be the only demand if talks are to be held," Khan, the PTI chief, tweeted on Saturday.

PTI leader Fawad Chaudhry told Bol News channel that the movement of protesters was slow because "thousands of people" were walking alongside Khan's container.

"No PTI leader is holding any talks with the government as this task has been entrusted to President Arif Alvi. We will accept the consensus or solution Dr Alvi finds out," he said.

Israel's Haredi voters drift hard right in leadership vacuum

AP ■ JERUSALEM

One of Israel's most extremist politicians, known for his inflammatory anti-Arab speeches and stunts, is attracting new supporters from a previously untapped demographic — young ultra-Orthodox Jews, one of the fastest-growing segments of the country's population.

Itamar Ben-Gvir's sharp rise in popularity in the last three years has transformed him from a fringe provocateur to a central player in Tuesday's parliament election.

Polls indicate his Religious Zionism party could emerge as the third-largest and help return former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to power.

His appeal is a reflection of the ongoing right-ward shift of the Israeli electorate over the years, with Ben-Gvir and his

party also attracting voters who previously supported other right-wing parties.

This shift is particularly noticeable among Israel's 1.3 million ultra-Orthodox Jews who make up 13 per cent of the population.

The community, known in Hebrew as Haredim, is growing at a breakneck rate, with an average birth rate more than twice the national average.

Children make up half of their population, and young adults between 18-35 another quarter. Ben-Gvir's appeal among young Haredim reflects a shift in the political preferences of a community that cleaves to a strict adherence to religious tradition. For decades, the ultra-Orthodox largely voted for two Haredi political parties — United Torah Judaism and Shas. Those parties promoted the



community's interests in exchange for supporting coalition governments with a range of ideological flavours — though the Haredim had a preference for centre-right factions that tended to be more culturally conservative. But several prominent rabbis who served as spiritual leaders for these parties have died in recent years.

Analysts say younger and middle-aged Haredim are growing disillusioned with the old guard. "The majority of relatively younger ultra-Orthodox — under the age of 50 — have turned right-wing, and sometimes staunchly right-wing, something that in the past didn't exist," said Moshe Hellinger, a political scientist at Israel's Bar Ilan University. The Haredi political leadership lacks a strong, charismatic leader "and this vacuum allows (voters) to go in different directions," Hellinger said. Into that void steps Ben-Gvir. Voting records from predominantly Haredi communities indicate that since Ben-Gvir entered politics in 2019, support for him in those areas has increased over Israel's four successive elections — though he still lagged behind the established ultra-Orthodox parties.

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Ro.No.-794 Dated-29.10.2022

Date Extension Notice-1

Due to unavoidable reasons, the dates of tender invited for "Supply/Installation and Rectification/Replacement of outstanding works of monitoring instruments and data acquisition system (DAS) at Dam site of Vyasi HEP in district Dehradun (Uttarakhand)" against e-Tender No. 01/EE(Civil-IV)/VP/TN/2022-23 are hereby extended as follows:-

1. Last date/time for submission of bid on the portal: 14-11-2022 upto 17.00 Hrs.
2. Last date & address for submission of original documents: 15-11-2022 upto 17.00 Hrs. in the office of the Executive Engineer (Civil-IV), Vyasi Project, Lakhwar Bhawan, Dakpathar, Dehradun
3. Date and time of opening of bid on website: 16-11-2022 at 12.00 Hrs.

All other terms and conditions of tender shall remain unchanged. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the website. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal "http://uktenders.gov.in"

Executive Engineer (Civil-IV)
Vyasi Project Dakpathar, Dehradun

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

LICENSE NO. 04 of 2021 DATED 02.03.2021 HARERA REG. NO. 36 of 2021 DATED 16.07.2021

DRAW OF FLATS

General public is hereby informed that e-Draw of flats, under Haryana Affordable Housing Policy 2013 amended from time to time, of the project "Landmark The Homes 81" Sector 81, Gurugram (Project ID - 113), being developed by SRV Automotives Private Limited, shall be conducted on 02/11/2022 at 04:00 PM at Club Florence, Block E, Sushant Lok-II, Sector 56, Gurugram, Haryana -122003.

We have received 22 applications against 74 numbers of units available for draw.

As per MHA guidelines, draw shall be conducted with the maximum strength of 50 persons including draw committee and the staff at site, remaining applicants shall participate in the draw online through below provided link of Youtube live.

YouTube Live link: https://youtu.be/LT_CVA37RWs

M/s SRV Automotives Private Limited, CIN: U70100DL2005PTC131474
Corp. Office: Landmark House, Plot No. 65, Sector 44, Gurgaon, Haryana - 122003 | Please Contact - 0124-4850000

RBI to submit report on its failure to control inflation

PTI ■ MUMBAI

For the first time since the implementation of the monetary policy framework in 2016, the Reserve Bank will submit a report to the Government on its failure to keep the retail inflation rate below six per cent for three consecutive quarters beginning January 2022.

The monetary policy framework, which came into effect about six years ago, mandates the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to maintain retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

In case of failure to maintain the inflation target for three consecutive quarters, the central bank, under section 45ZN of the RBI Act, is required to submit a report to the government explaining the reasons and spelling out the remedial actions it would be taking to check the price rise.

The central bank has called a special meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) on November 3, to prepare its report on missing inflation targets to the government. The six-member rate-setting panel is headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

"Under the provisions of Section 45ZN of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Act... An additional meeting of the MPC is being scheduled on November 3, 2022," the central



bank said in a statement on Thursday.

Section 45ZN of the Act deals with failure to maintain the inflation target.

Governor Das had earlier said the central bank will not make the report public. It is not clear if the government would like to keep the report confidential or make it public for wider discussions and deliberations, he said.

To tackle price rise, the government in 2016 gave a mandate to the RBI to keep retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side for a five-year period ending March 31, 2021.

Section 45-ZA of the RBI Act, 1934 requires that the central government shall, in

consultation with the RBI, determine the inflation target in terms of Consumer Price Index (CPI), once in every five years.

As per a notification issued on March 31, 2021, the central government retained the inflation target at 4 per cent (with the upper tolerance level of 6 per cent and the lower tolerance level of 2 per cent) for the 5-year period April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026.

The MPC held its first meeting in October 2016 and the last meeting, held during September 28-30, 2022, was the 38th meeting of the rate-setting panel.

The retail inflation based on CPI has remained above 6 per cent since January 2022.

Bima Sugam to be a game changer: IRDAI Chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Insurance regulator IRDAI is working on Bima Sugam, which will act as a game changer in the insurance sector by providing a one-stop platform for multiple services including the sale of policy, renewal, and settlement of claims.

This tech-led portal will help in expanding insurance penetration in the country by ensuring a hassle-free experience for customers across the country.

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) chairman Debasish Panda in an interview with PTI said Bima Sugam should be a UPI moment for the insurance industry.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has revolutionised digital payment in the country as common people have started using it for making even small payments. The success of UPI in a short span of time has caught global attention and many countries are trying to replicate it. Launched in 2016, Payment through UPI has crossed a milestone of Rs 11 lakh crore in September this year.

"Bima Sugam will be a one-stop shop for buying and selling insurance, for policy servicing, and also for claim settlement. Insurance companies can onboard the platform. It's going to be plug and play with



API (Application programming interface) interface," Panda said.

He further said all the insurance intermediaries including individual agents, web aggregators will have access to this portal.

And as far as the policyholder is concerned, he said, he or she will be able to buy the product through assisted mode, or directly. "So maybe many people may prefer the assisted mode and can take the help of one of the intermediaries," he added. This platform will provide the policyholder and prospective customer various options for a product, company of their choice and method of payment.

"So it's like a shopping

mall. So you go and shop there. And as far as the KYC is concerned, the moment you enter the portal, type your Aadhaar number, the data will auto populate. The KYC will be done through your Aadhaar number which will be masked for security reasons," he said.

Underwriting of policy would be done through a few easy steps and in a couple of minutes through the portal, he said.

To ensure easy liability servicing, he said, "we are trying to mandate that all the policies should go to insurance repositories who will store details on a permanent basis. It will help in settlement of claims in a paperless manner on the basis of policy number."

Adani group to invest \$150 billion in pursuit of \$1 trillion valuation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Richest Asian Gautam Adani's group will invest over USD 150 billion across businesses ranging from green energy to data centres to airports and healthcare as it chases the dream to join the elite global club of companies with USD 1 trillion valuations.

On October 10, Adani Group Chief Financial Officer Jugeshinder 'Robbie' Singh detailed the growth plans of the group, which started off as a trader in 1988 and expanded rapidly into ports, airports, roads, power, renewable energy, power transmission, gas distribution and FMCG and more recently into data centres, airports, petrochemicals, cement and media, at an investor meet organised by Ventura Securities Ltd in New Delhi.

The group plans to invest USD 50-70 billion in green hydrogen business and another USD 23 billion in green energy over the next 5-10 years, he said. It will invest USD 7 billion in electricity transmission, USD 12 billion in transport utility and USD 5 billion in the road sector.

Its foray into data centre business with cloud services would entail an investment of USD 6.5 billion in partnership with Edge ConneX and another



USD 9-10 billion is planned for airports, where it is already the largest private operator. Its foray into the cement sector with the acquisition of ACC and Ambuja cement entailed USD 10 billion investment.

It is foraying into the petrochemical business with plans to set up a 1 million tonnes per annum PVC manufacturing facility at an investment of USD 2 billion and would enter the copper sector with a 0.5 million tonnes a year smelter at an investment of USD 1 billion, he said.

The healthcare sector foray that will include insurance, hospitals and diagnostic and pharma would see an investment of USD 7-10 billion, with some coming from Adani Foundation.

Road transport & highways sector has max number of delayed projects: Govt report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The road transport and highways sector has the maximum number of delayed projects at 262, followed by railways at 115 and the petroleum sector at 89, showed a government report.

In the road transport and highways sector, 262 out of 835 projects are delayed.

In railways, out of 173 projects, 115 are delayed, while for petroleum, 89 out of 140 projects are delayed, as per the latest flash report on infrastructure projects for September 2022.

The Infrastructure and Project Monitoring Division (IPMD) is mandated to monitor central sector infrastructure projects costing ₹150 crore and above based on the information provided on the Online Computerised Monitoring System (OCMS) by the project implementing agencies.

The IPMD comes under the Ministry of Statistics and

Programme Implementation.

The report showed that the Muneerabad-Mahaboobnagar rail project is the most-delayed project. It is delayed by 276 months.

The second-most delayed project is the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail project which is delayed by 247 months. The third-most delayed project is Belapur-Seawood-Urban Electrified Double Line, which is delayed by 228 months.

About the road transport and highways sector, the report stated that the total original cost of implementation of 835 projects when sanctioned, was ₹4,94,300.45 crore.

This was subsequently anticipated at ₹5,26,481.88 crore, implying a cost overrun of 6.5 per cent.

The expenditure incurred on these projects till September 2022 is ₹3,21,980.33 crore, which is 61.2 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects.

Exports necessary for steel players expanding their capacities: AMNS India CEO

PTI ■ HAZIRA

To maintain higher capacity utilisation, exports are necessary for local steel players expanding their capacities, as demand is not directly proportional to production, according to a top industry executive.

"Since expansion happens... There will be a certain stage where you necessarily will have to export, if we have to be on high capacity utilisation," Dilip Oommen, CEO of ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel (AMNS) India told PTI.

His comments assume significance as steel players are looking up to the government for relief in the form of roll back of the duties levied on steel exports.

On May 21, the government hiked the duty on exports of iron ore by up to 50 per cent and for a few steel intermediaries to 15 per cent.



In line with the government's 300 MT steel making capacity target, other steel players like Tata Steel, JSW Steel, SAIL and JSPL are also expanding their capacities to meet the goal.

AMNS India on Friday commenced a ₹60,000-crore expansion project to scale up its Hazira plant capacity to 15 million tonne (MT) from 9 MT at present.

The project will add another 6 MT capacity and suddenly one can not increase its market share proportionally, the CEO said.

'Key management personnel of Indian auto firms have poor understanding of compliance obligations'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Key management personnel in Indian automobile companies have a poor understanding of compliance obligations that can range from several hundred acts to thousands of rules depending on the size of the business, according to a report by TeamLease Regtech.

A small automobile manufacturing company operating in a single state in India deals with at least 900 one-time and ongoing compliances in a year. As the company grows its geographical footprint, the number of compliances multiply.

In its report 'Simplifying compliance management for automobile industry', TeamLease RegTech, a regulatory technology solutions firm, said with applicability of compliances changing based on location of manufacturing units, use of specific equipment and end-products, most organisations in India find it really

challenging to track adherence to the mandatory requirements.

"...It was discovered that the KMPs (key management personnel) in Indian automobile companies have a poor understanding of compliance obligations in over 80 per cent of the instances," the report said, citing a survey conducted by TeamLease Regtech.

As a result, it said, "They are often unpleasantly surprised in the events of show cause notices, instances of financial fines and penalties, cancelled licenses, revoked permissions and leaked revenue." Most executives were found to have very poor handle on the status of key compliances, dates, documentation and residual risk of non-compliance, the report said.

The survey, conducted between April and May 2022, found that 95 per cent agreed to have missed at least one critical compliance during the 12-month period and 92 per cent agreed to pay fines and penal-



ties during the same period.

Another 97 per cent believed that they do not have the required visibility and control in their organisations compliance program. The survey had interviewed management people across 34 automobile companies.

The report further said 78 per cent agreed that their compliance needs a serious rethink, while 52 per cent believed that keeping track of regulatory updates is challenging.

According to the report, compliances in India are broadly divided into one-time and ongoing compliances.

"On an average, an automobile company is easily sub-

ject to around 80 odd one-time registrations and approvals across four stages: setting up; pre-commissioning stage; post-commissioning stage and post-production stage."

These approvals range from incorporation of the entity, to land allotment, project related approvals, construction-related approvals, approvals related to labour, safety and health, tax-related registrations, industry-specific approvals, among others.

In addition to one-time registrations and approvals, automobile companies are frequently saddled with a host of compliances split across the central, state and local/municipal levels, the report said.

"For example, labour laws fall in the concurrent list where both the Union and state are entitled to legislate. This means that at any given point a company would have to ensure compliance with a parent legislation drafted by the Centre and accompanying state legislation and rules," it said.

UBL plans ₹350 cr capex in 2023 to meet expected volume growth

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Beer maker United Breweries Ltd, controlled by Dutch multinational brewing company Heineken, plans to infuse around ₹350 crore as capital expenditure in 2023 to meet the expected volume growth in the country, according to a top company official.

The company has "good capex plans" in place for its breweries to meet anticipated volume growth going into 2023, said its Chief Financial Officer Radovan Sikorsky in its latest earnings conference call.

"We remain optimistic on the long-term growth of the industry," he said adding the evolving consumer trends will



drive premiumisation.

When asked about the Capex plan, the CFO replied: "For the coming January to December the capex spend we are looking at somewhere in the region of ₹350 crore."

Moreover, the leading beer maker expects inflationary pressure to continue and it would pursue price increases, in combination with cost measures to mitigate these cost

impacts.

"Inflation pressure on the cost of goods sold will most likely continue in the foreseeable future and hence we will continue to pursue with further price increases to strengthen our earning, in combination with cost measures to mitigate these cost impacts," he said.

However, he also said there seems to be some softening on some of these components, but going forward it is still too early to comment on that.

"... I still think that pressures on margins will remain and it is a little dependent on our ability to increase prices and also manage our cost to try and mitigate any of that," Sikorsky added.

Will first bring down delinquency in corporate loans before restarting finance: PNB Housing

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Going ahead with its stated objective to downsize its corporate loan exposure, city-based PNB Housing Finance wants to bring down the delinquency levels before it starts financing the sector again, its MD and CEO Girish Kousgi said.

The housing finance company, promoted by state-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB), has been bringing down its corporate loan exposure over the last few years and has adopted a retail-first strategy to fuel growth.

In the second quarter ended September 2022, the company's corporate loan book share reduced to 10 per cent with an exposure of ₹5,708



crore. The retail segment loan book stood at ₹52,124 crore, constituting 90 per cent of its overall loan book.

The company's gross non-performing assets (GNPA) at the end of Q2 FY23 stood at 6.06 per cent. While the retail sector GNPA was at 3.39 per cent, that of the corporate

book stood at 30.37 per cent.

"It is not about bringing down the percentage but to bring down the delinquency in corporate loans. Today the corporate loan book is over ₹5,700 crore, it is less than 10 per cent of the portfolio.

"As of now the focus would be on the retail segment and may be in the next few quarters, once we bring down the delinquency in the corporate book, then we will restart (financing the sector)," Kousgi told PTI in a post-earnings interview.

Kousgi, who took charge as the head of the Delhi-based housing finance company (HFC) last week, said as of now the focus would be on retail loans, with affordable housing as one of the key contributors.

Nine of top 10 firms add ₹90,319 cr in market valuation



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nine of the 10 most valued domestic firms together added ₹90,318.74 crore in market valuation last week amid a positive trend in equities, with Reliance Industries emerging as the biggest winner.

Last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 652.7 points or 1.10 per cent.

Markets had a special one-hour Muhurat trading session on Monday to mark the beginning of Hindu Samvat year 2079. Stock markets were closed on Wednesday for 'Diwali Balipratipada'.

Barring Hindustan Unlevers, rest nine companies witnessed addition in their market valuation, including

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HDFC Bank, Infosys and State Bank of India (SBI).

The market valuation of Reliance Industries rallied ₹36,566.82 crore to reach ₹17,08,932.42 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank advanced ₹11,195.61 crore to ₹8,12,378.52 crore.

Bharti Airtel's market valuation jumped ₹10,792.67 crore to ₹4,54,404.76 crore and that of SBI climbed ₹8,879.98 crore to ₹5,09,372.21 crore. TCS added ₹8,617.06 crore, taking its valuation to ₹11,57,339.65 crore.

The mcap of HDFC surged ₹8,214.27 crore to ₹4,36,240.27 crore and that of Infosys zoomed ₹5,259.92 crore to ₹6,36,476.13 crore.

India, GCC group likely to start free trade pact talks next month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries are expected to start negotiations for a free trade agreement next month with an aim to boost economic ties between the two regions, an official said.

GCC is a union of six countries in the Gulf region -- Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Bahrain.

"Terms of reference for the agreement are being finalised and we expect to launch the negotiations next month," the official said.

India has already implemented a free trade pact with the UAE in May this year.

According to experts, the GCC region holds huge trade potential and a trade agreement would help in further boosting India's exports to that market.

Rakesh Mohan Joshi, Director, Indian Institute of Plantation Management, Bangalore, said the GCC market is unexploited by domestic exporters and it holds huge potential. "GCC is a major import dependent region. We can increase our exports of food items, clothing and several other goods. Duty concessions

under a trade agreement will help in tapping that market. It will be a win-win situation for both sides," Joshi said.

Mumbai-based exporter and founder chairman of Techno-craft Industries India, Sharad Kumar Saraf said the GCC has emerged as a major trading partner for India and there is huge potential for increasing investments between the two regions.

"FTA will have a major benefit for both the sides," Saraf said. Sharing similar views, Federation of Indian Exports Organisation (FIEO) Vice Chairman Khalid Khan

said sectors like chemicals, textiles, gems and jewellery and leather will get a major impetus by this agreement.

India imports predominantly crude oil and natural gas from the Gulf nations like Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and exports pearls, precious and semi-precious stones; metals; imitation jewellery; electrical machinery; iron and steel; and chemicals to these countries.

India's exports to the GCC increased by 58.26 per cent to about USD 44 billion in 2021-22 against USD 27.8 billion in 2020-21, according to data of the commerce ministry.

FPIS SELLOFF AT SLOW PACE; PULL OUT ₹1,586 CR FROM EQUITIES IN OCT

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After withdrawing over ₹7,600 crore last month, foreign investors have slowed down the pace of equity selling in India in October so far, as they pulled out ₹1,586 crore from capital markets. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers of ₹51,200 crore in August. The month of November is expected to have net inflow of more or less similar to this, K Dileep, Head of PMS at Geojit Financial Services, said.

According to the data from the depositories, FPIs withdrew Rs 1,586 crore from equities in October (till 28). The one trading session is left for the month. However, in the last few days, FPIs slowed down on selling substantially. In fact, they invested more than ₹6,000 crore in the last four trading sessions. Shrikant Chouhan, Head-Equity Research (Retail) at Kotak Securities, attributed October's outflow to higher cost of capital, ongoing geo-political risk among others.

ARSENAL BACK ON TOP

AP ■ LONDON

Reiss Nelson was the unlikely hero as Arsenal retook top spot in the Premier League with a 5-0 thrashing of Nottingham Forest on Sunday.

Nelson was introduced for the first time in the Premier League this season after Bukayo Saka was forced off with a concerning injury for England boss Gareth Southgate just weeks ahead of the World Cup.

Saka set up the opening goal for Gabriel Martinelli after just five minutes before being replaced due to an ankle injury.

Nelson struck his first Premier League goal since July 2020 early in the second half to give Arsenal breathing space.

He added a second just three minutes later and then tied up Thomas Partey to curl into the top corner.

Martin Odegaard rounded off a performance that shrugged off doubts over Arsenal's ability to contend for the title by firing high past Dean Henderson 13 minutes from time.

Victory lifts Mikel Arteta's men a point above Manchester City at the top of the table.

The Arsenal players came together to show support to teammate Pablo Mari before kick-off.

Mari, who is on loan at Monza, was stabbed during a knife attack in an Italian supermarket this week that left one person dead.

That incident put Arsenal's bad week on the field into perspective after a 1-1 draw at Southampton last weekend was followed by a 2-0 defeat to PSV Eindhoven in the Europa League.

Any fears that the Gunners were beginning to feel the fatigue of a packed schedule were blown away in a blistering opening.

Martinelli ducked to meet Saka's



inviting cross with his head to open the floodgates.

The Brazilian saw another effort cleared off the line, while Gabriel Jesus, Takehiro Tomiyasu and Odegaard also had chances.

But Saka's departure is a major worry for Arteta ahead of Arsenal's trip to Chelsea next weekend.

Forest had begun to find some form on their return to the top flight for the first time in 23 years in recent weeks, including a famous 1-0 win over Liverpool last weekend.

But only towards the end of the first half did they ever threaten to cause the hosts problems as Tomiyasu threw himself in front of Jesse Lingard's effort.

Leeds beat Liverpool at Anfield

AP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool were beaten at home in the Premier League in front of a crowd for the first time in over five years as Crysencio Summerville's 89th minute goal gave Leeds a 2-1 win at Anfield.

The visitors began the night second bottom of the table but climbed out of the relegation zone thanks to their first win in nine games.

Liverpool gifted Rodrigo an early opener before Mohamed Salah levelled for the Reds.

Jurgen Klopp's men had not tasted a league defeat in front of their own supporters since losing to Crystal Palace in April 2017, although they did lose six in a row during the 2020/21 season when crowds were banished due to the coronavirus pandemic.

But that proud record came to a shocking end when Summerville wriggled free inside the area and fired into the far corner.

A fourth defeat in their opening 12 league games of the season leaves Liverpool 13 points off the top of the

table and eight adrift of even the top four.

Leeds boss Jesse Marsch had been fighting to save his job after previously failing to win since August.

However, the American could not have wished for a more generous gift from the hosts than for the opener after just four minutes.

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson Becker stumbled as he tried to reach Joe Gomez's backpass, allowing Rodrigo an easy finish into the unguarded net for the Spaniard's sixth goal of the season.

Messi helps PSG fight back to beat Troyes

AP ■ PARIS

Lionel Messi starred with a goal and an assist as all of Paris Saint-Germain's front three scored in a 4-3 victory over Troyes on Saturday which restored their five-point advantage at the top of Ligue 1.

The league leaders responded to second-placed Lens' win over Toulouse on Friday by twice coming from behind to see off a spirited Troyes at the Parc des Princes. The attacking trio of Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe have scored 43 goals between them already this season.

PSG coach Christophe Galtier can now turn his attention to Wednesday's match at Juventus, which the French club have to win to be sure of finishing top of their Champions League group.

In Paris, Troyes forged ahead with a shock opening goal inside three minutes, as Rony Lopes stabbed the ball back for Mama Balde to lash a fine volley into the net past PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

The hosts hit back midway through the first half, as Neymar's clipped pass found the run of Carlos Soler and the midfielder slotted in to level.

The reigning champions then started to dominate, with Troyes' keeper Gauthier Gallon forced into a good save to keep out a Messi header.

But the visitors stunned the home crowd again early in the second period, with Guinea-Bissau forward Balde netting his second with a low

strike on the turn.

Any thoughts of PSG suffering their first defeat of the season were quickly put to bed in the space of seven Messi-inspired minutes.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner hammered home his 12th goal of the campaign with a wonderful strike from 25 yards out which arched into the corner.

PSG took the lead for the first time in the game just after the hour mark, as Messi threaded a perfect pass through the Troyes defence for Neymar to fire past Gallon.

Mbappe should have made it a two-goal advantage, but he shot too close to Gallon after Neymar followed a mazy run through midfield with a remarkable flicked pass.

The France striker did get himself on the scoresheet with 14 minutes left, drilling a penalty high into the net.

Ante Palaversa pulled one back for the away team late on, but PSG held on.

Galtier though warned his team could not show the same sloppiness on Wednesday.

"The team thought much more about attacking, but it can't be like that. There is a balance to respect," he said.

"We have a lot of things to correct. If you concede three goals in the Champions League, you have little chance of winning."

Another team with the Champions League on their mind, Marseille, threw away a two-goal lead at Strasbourg as they allowed the home side to force a point with a thrilling comeback.



AP ■ VALENCIA

Barcelona, bruised after Champions League elimination in midweek, snatched a late 1-0 victory at Valencia on Saturday in La Liga, with Robert Lewandowski stretching to convert a 93rd minute winner.

The Polish forward managed to divert Raphinha's cross home at the death to pull Barcelona level on 31 points with Real Madrid at the top of the table, before the champions host Girona on Sunday.

It was a hard-fought win -- the Catalans lost centre-backs Jules Kounde and Eric Garcia to injury, and they will be worried for their national teams, France and Spain respectively, ahead of the Qatar World Cup which starts in under three weeks.

Valencia saw Uruguayan Edinson Cavani go off injured with an ankle problem too, with the game billed as a shoot-out between him and fellow veteran marksman Lewandowski, who came out on top with his late goal.

Gennaro Gattuso said he and Barcelona counterpart Xavi Hernandez played almost different sports in their playing days, but their teams were evenly matched at a feisty Mestalla.

The visitors had the upper hand from the start, although Valencia's tricky forward line caused them concern at the back, with Samuel Lino and Justin Kluivert particularly hard to handle.

Valencia thought they had broken the deadlock early in the second half when Lino slid

Lewandowski snatches Barcelona's win

IN THIS HARD FOUGHT WIN THE CATALANS LOST CENTRE-BACKS JULES KOUNDE AND ERIC GARCIA TO INJURY

isher Lewandowski spared his blushes with a goal when Barcelona needed it most.

Earlier Ruben Sobrino bundled home a dramatic last gasp winner to earn Cadiz a remarkable 3-2 win over Atletico Madrid, piling the misery on the visitors in a harrowing week for Diego Simeone's team.

It looked like Joao Felix had salvaged the Rojiblancos a point from two goals down, with a stunning impact off the bench, forcing an own goal and scoring another effort himself, stemming the bleeding after their Champions League elimination on Wednesday.

Jorge Sampaoli's Sevilla, 17th, fell to a disappointing 1-0 defeat at home against Rayo Vallecano, while Almeria beat Celta Vigo 3-1.

home but Marcos Andre handled a cross into his path and the goal was disallowed.

Barcelona could have won the match with five minutes remaining but substitute Torres fluffed his lines in front of goal, kicking the ball against his other leg when he only had the goalkeeper to beat.

Luckily for him, master fin-

Flamengo win Copa Libertadores

AP ■ GUAYAQUIL

Flamengo won the all-Brazilian Copa Libertadores final on Saturday with a 1-0 victory over Athletico Paranaense in the Estadio Monumental.

Gabriel Barbosa grabbed the decisive goal on the stroke of half-time, slotting home a fine cross from Everton Ribeiro at the back post.

The goal came just minutes after Athletico central defender Pedro Henrique was sent off after picking up a second yellow card for a late challenge on Ayrton Lucas.

Down to ten men for the remainder of the game, Athletico, coached by veteran former Brazil national team coach Luiz Felipe Scolari, struggled to create enough



chances to mount a comeback.

The victory earns Rio club Flamengo their third Libertadores title following their successes in 1981 and 2019 and is the fourth straight year that a Brazilian team has been crowned champions of

South American club football.

For the 73 year old Scolari, who is expected to retire from coaching at the end of the Brazilian domestic season in November, there was to be no fairytale end to his 40 year coaching career.

Verstappen takes Mexico GP pole position

AP ■ MEXICO CITY

Two-time world champion Max Verstappen gave Red Bull reason to smile again on Saturday when he secured pole position for Sunday's Mexico City Grand Prix with an authoritative late qualifying lap.

After 24 hours of arguments and derision following the announcement of Red Bull's penalty for breaching Formula One's \$145 million cost cap last year, it was a sweet return to success with his sixth pole this year and the 17th of his career.

The 25-year-old Dutchman clocked a best lap of 1min 17.775sec to finish 0.304 seconds ahead of George Russell and his Mercedes' team-mate, seven-time champion Lewis



Hamilton.

Verstappen took control on his first run in Q3 and then trimmed his time to resist the

threat from the much-improved Mercedes team. He will be hunting a record 14th win in a single season on

Sunday.

"That was a good qualifying," the Dutchman said. "It was a close one, but we made a few adjustments to the car and got into a better rhythm so to be on pole here is, of course, amazing."

"It's a very long run down to Turn One here, so we need a good start, but I think we have a quick car and that's what is most important. The passion of the fans here is really incredible and, in the stadium, it is just amazing to drive there."

His Red Bull team-mate and local hero Sergio Perez was fourth ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and a resurgent Valteri Bottas of Alfa Romeo.

Verstappen said he was sure Perez "will be there in the fight tomorrow".

Charles Leclerc, who

crashed heavily on Friday, was seventh in the second Ferrari ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and the Alpines of two-time champion Fernando Alonso and Esteban Ocon.

Russell was disappointed. "Sorry, sorry, sorry," he said on his team radio, after running wide on his final lap. "The team deserved more today. They've produced a really great car this weekend and it felt like our pole to have and I did a terrible lap at the end."

Hamilton, who had harboured hopes of doing better, was philosophical.

"This is the best qualifying we've had all year. It just shows that perseverance and never giving up can pay off. I'm quite happy with that position -- it's a long way to Turn One."

No.1 Swiatek looks to cap big year with WTA Finals crown

AP ■ FORT WORTH

Reigning US and French Open champion Iga Swiatek of Poland seeks her ninth WTA title of the year and her 12th career crown when the season-ending WTA Finals begin Monday.

The \$5 million indoor hardcourt event will feature the world's eight top-ranked women's singles players and doubles teams with group-stage matches through Saturday setting up semi-finals on November 6 with the title matches on November 7.

An unbeaten run to the singles crown is worth \$1.68 million, but after making her Finals debut last year, top-ranked Swiatek knows it's a unique challenge compared to the usual WTA tournaments. "It's just going to be a chal-



lenge to play against the top players day-by-day, not have time to have these easier first two rounds," Swiatek said. "So

I'm curious if I'll be able to play my top tennis from A to Z."

Swiatek, the only reigning Grand Slam champion in the field, has won eight titles this year, two at Grand Slams plus Qatar, Indian Wells, Miami, Stuttgart, Rome and at San

Diego only two weeks ago.

Her three highest-ranked rivals at Fort Worth -- second-ranked Ons Jabeur of Tunisia, third-ranked Jessica Pegula and fourth-ranked US 18-year-old Coco Gauff -- are all making their WTA Finals debut.

"It's a totally different experience, so having qualified before will help a lot," Swiatek said. "I'm curious how physically I will be able to play this tournament after such a long season."

"It will be a test for me. Last year, mentally and physically I felt I didn't have much power. This year we did some things differently to have the energy at the end, so I'm curious to see if it actually worked."

It's also the second WTA Finals singles appearance for Greece's fifth-ranked Maria

Sakkari, France's sixth-ranked Caroline Garcia and seventh-ranked Aryna Sabalenka while eighth-ranked Daria Kasatkina is making her debut.

Gauff is the youngest player in the singles field while Garcia, at 29, is the oldest.

Pegula and Gauff are doing double duty as a doubles pairing and contenders for the singles crown.

Sabalenka, from Belarus, and Kasatkina, from Russia, are not allowed to compete for their homelands due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Czech defending doubles champions Barbora Krejickova and Katerina Siniakova, who won three Grand Slam titles this year, return as top seeds, but 2021 singles champion Garbine Muguruza of Spain did not qualify in this year's season points race.

Ledecky sets 1,500 free short course WR in Toronto

AP ■ MONTREAL

American Katie Ledecky set a world short-course record in the 1,500-meter freestyle on Saturday at a FINA World Cup meet in Toronto.

Ledecky, in her first event of the season, won the final in 15mins 8.24secs to break the old mark of 15:18:01 set by Germany's Sarah Wellbrock in 2019 at Berlin.

Brazil's Beatriz Dizotti was second in 15:48.82 with Canada's Laila Oravsky third in 16:16.86.

Ledecky set the long-course world record in the 1,500 free of 15:20.48 in 2018 at Indianapolis.

On Saturday, Ledecky also finished second in the 200 free to Hong Kong's Siobhan Bernadette Haughey, who won



in 1:51.13 with the 25-year-old US star next in 1:52.31.

Ledecky has won seven gold medals at the Olympics and taken 19 world titles in her career, the most for any female swimmer in history.

SURYA SHINES BRIGHT BUT SA 'OUT-BOUNCE' INDIA

PTI ■ PERTH

Suryakumar Yadav played the best knock of his short international career but South Africa exposed India's inadequacies against extreme pace and bounce to win a low-scoring thriller by five wickets in the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

While Surya's 68 off 40 balls will easily qualify as one of the most accomplished knocks in adverse conditions, India's defence of a below-par total of 133 for 9 was always going to be a challenge.

Arsheep Singh, the lion-hearted left-armed, did bowl another dream first spell but Aiden Markram (52 off 41 balls) and David Miller (59 not out off 46 balls), one of the best T20 finishers in the game, ensured the target was achieved in 19.4 overs.

While South Africa (5 points 3 games) are now on top of group 2, India (4 points from 2 games) with upcoming matches against Bangladesh (Nov 2 in Adelaide) and Zimbabwe (Nov 6 in Melbourne) are well within striking distance of a semi-final berth.

The team that may pay the price for India's defeat is Pakistan, who now have an uphill task at hand.

India made a match of it on tournament's spiciest track in cold conditions but Virat Kohli's costly miss of Markram at deep mid-wicket off Ravichandran Ashwin's bowling along besides some close run-out chances cost India dearly.

But certainly not more than inept show from top-order save Surya, who was once again the saving grace and shining light.

Eerily, former India head coach Ravi Shastri, while watching the



match with scribes in the press box commented that 14th over being bowled by Ashwin will be make-or-break. Markram and Miller hit a six each and 17 came off that over which sealed India's fate.

Ashwin (1/43 in 4 overs) lost his confidence after the dropped catch and it showed in subsequent overs as Miller devoured on his length deliveries.

But if there was one silver lining from the game, it had to be

Surya, whose little gem in terms of pure impact would have been on par with Virat Kohli's brilliance at the MCG.

Perhaps the world's most decorated T20I batter in recent times, Surya's pulled six and a bowler's back-drive boundary off Lungi Ngidi to complete his half-century will be remembered for times to come.

His knock will be in ICC's T20 'Hall Of Fame' and how he looked

like batter from another planet was evident with the second best score being 15.

Those were the only boundaries scored off Ngidi, who enjoyed a wonderful evening with figures of 4 for 29 that laid bare the frailties of the Indian top-order when there is pace off the track and the ball starts rearing up from back of length.

On a track where good technique and steely temperament was

We were not good enough: Rohit

PTI ■ PERTH

Conditions in Perth were very difficult for batting but India captain Rohit Sharma said that cannot be an excuse for the team's five-wicket loss to South Africa in the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

"We expected the pitch to have something in it, with the weather around. We knew there will be help for the seamers. Which is why you saw that 130 was not an easy chase. I thought we fought well till the end but South Africa played well in the end," Rohit said at the presentation ceremony.

"The pitch is such that the wicket can come any time for the seamers. It was a match-winning partnership from Miller and Markram. But we were not good

enough on the field. We have played in such conditions so conditions are not an excuse. We want to be consistent in that department."

On the day, India's fielding also left a lot to be desired with even the normally safe Virat Kohli spilling a fairly simple chance in the boundary off Ravichandran Ashwin's bowling. Markram was the batter on that occasion.

"We could not hold on to our chances, we missed a few run-outs including myself. We were a little poor on the field, we gave so many chances in the field and we weren't clinical. We were just not good enough."

"The last two games, we were pretty good in the field. We need to keep our heads high and take a

learning from this game."

In the 14th over being bowled by Ashwin, Markram and Miller hit a six each and 17 came off that over, which sealed the game's fate. Ashwin (1/43 in 4 overs) lost his confidence after the dropped catch and it showed in the subsequent overs.

Man of the Match Lungi Ngidi, who ended with excellent figures of 4/29, said he will cherish his performance for a long time.

"It was pretty nerve wrecking when games get down that close, as a bowler you can't do much and just have to believe in the boys. This is one of my biggest dreams, to get something like this (award) at the World Cup and help the country win a game, will cherish it for a long time," Ngidi said.

needed, Surya added another component to it - swagger.

At 49 for 5, India looked deep down the barrel as some of the top-order players were failing to get their bats down in time as the ball reached the keeper's gloves.

In a stand of 52, he shielded veteran Dinesh Karthik (6 off 15 balls), who is not exactly known for sound technique on bowler friendly tracks.

On a bouncy track, the key element is to shuffle and come inside the line of deliveries and ride the bounce. The Mumbaikar exactly did that time and again on Sunday night.

He didn't try to counter the

pace but used it to play behind the square mostly. When the lone spinner Keshav Maharaj came into operation, he used the extra bounce to first play the late cut and then a lap sweep over deep fine leg for a maximum.

Rohit Sharma's (15) decision to bat first on a spicy deck looked brave and while all eyes were on Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje, it was reserve pacer Ngidi who did bulk of the damage.

But it all started when an out-of-form KL Rahul (9 off 14 balls) played a maiden over off Wayne Parnell's bowling. The windy and cold conditions helped Parnell to pitch it full and get enough devia-

tions to beat Rahul's bat multiple times.

That increased the pressure on skipper Rohit, who first tried to relieve pressure with a hooked six and flicked boundary off Rabada but Ngidi bowled the 'heavy ball' that was pitched back of length and climbed on him.

His lean run continued as Test match length, shade away movement and extra bounce outside the off-stump became his undoing.

Virat Kohli (12) had first low score in the tournament.

It was Surya who saved India from blushes with a knock that had six fours and three sixes but couldn't save the night.

B'desh survive dramatic last over to edge past Zimbabwe

PTI ■ BRISBANE

Bangladesh survived a dramatic final over to pull off a narrow three-run win against Zimbabwe in T20 World Cup, where the officials, in a rare incident, called the players back from dug out to complete the contest after realising that Nurul Hasan's stumping in the final ball was not clean, here Sunday.

Bangladeshi players were celebrating after Zimbabwe's Blessing Muzarabani, who was required to hit a six in the final ball for a famous win, missed the ball and was stumped by Nurul Hasan.

However TV replays showed that Hasan had collected the ball in front of the wicket, which is against the rules, hence Zimbabwe were awarded a free hit and all the players were called back for final action.

Zimbabwe now needed four runs to win.

The nonplussed players, who had walked off the field after shaking hands, thinking that Bangladesh had won, assembled again.

Zimbabwe could not cash in on the



chance and no further drama followed as Muzarabani again missed the ball again and finally Bangladesh rejoiced the victory.

Zimbabwe were chasing 151 and fell short by three runs. It was opener Najmul Hossain Shanto

who smashed seven fours and one maximum in his 55-ball 71-run knock and single-handedly powered Bangladesh to a competitive 150 for 7.

In reply, Zimbabwe lost too many wickets to find themselves in the dumps at 35 for 4 in the sixth over but Sean Williams conjured up a magnificent 42-ball

64-run innings to revive the chase.

He was dismissed in the 19th over, leaving Zimbabwe to get 16 in the last six balls.

Hossain then bowled the most important over of his career as he dismissed Brad Evans (2) in the second ball but Richard Ngarava slammed him for a four and a six

in the next two balls to keep them in the hunt.

Hossain, however, had Ngarava stumped in the next ball as Zimbabwe needed five off the last ball.

The unprecedented scenes followed after that but eventually Bangladesh survived.

Extremely weird: Sean on no-ball drama



PTI ■ BRISBANE

Veteran Zimbabwe batter Sean Williams described the last-ball drama as "extremely weird" after Bangladesh pulled off a win in a game of changing fortunes in the T20 World Cup.

"It was extremely weird. Obviously I've never experienced something like that in a cricket match before, but again, it just goes to show in a T20 game, there's always a little bit of hope; anything can happen," Williams said.

Williams added: "The first time I realised that there was a no-ball was actually when we were walking out to shake the umpire's hands, and they told us to stop and the replay came on the big screen, and then we all noticed that it was a no-ball. Very interesting times that."

As per the Rule 27.3.1: "The wicket-keeper shall remain wholly behind the wicket at the striker's end from the moment the ball comes into play until a ball delivered by the bowler touches the bat or person of the striker or passes the wicket at the striker's end or the striker attempts a run."

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2	Estimated cost	::	Rs. 10.08 Lakhs to Rs.39.50 Lakhs
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5	Last Date/ Time for receipt of Bids in the Portal	::	18.11.2022 up to 5.00 PM
6	Name and address of the Officer Inviting Bid	::	Superintending Engineer, Rural Works Division, Phulbani

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75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
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75 Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
National Unity Day
31st October Day

Nation pays tribute to
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Tribute to Sardar Patel and inauguration of Ekta Diwas Parade by Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Place: Statue of Unity, Kevadia, Gujarat

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-Narendra Modi

Today on 31st October, be a part of the 'Run for Unity' to be organized from 7:00 am to 8:00 am at 75,000 locations in all districts of the country