

## OPINION 6

GYANVAPI MOSQUE:  
THE ROW RAGES ON

## WORLD 8

RUSSIAN STRIKES KILLED 17  
FOLLOWING BRIDGE ATTACK: UKRAINE

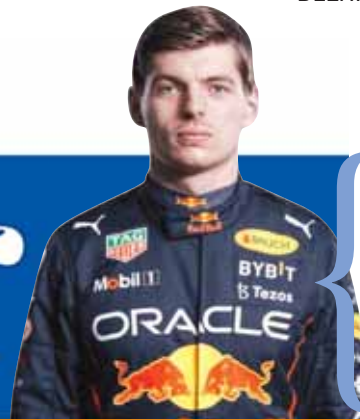
## MONEY 10

GROSS DIRECT TAX REVENUE  
JUMPS 24% TO ₹8.98L CR

NEW DELHI, MONDAY OCTOBER 10, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

## the pioneer

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VERSTAPPEN  
RETAINS  
F1 TITLE  
11 SPORTFearing backlash in Guj,  
AAP sacrifices Delhi MinGautam  
quits for  
Buddha's sake

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

AAP leader and Delhi Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam on Sunday resigned from the Delhi Cabinet fearing backlash in poll-bound Gujarat where posters and hoardings have come up in big numbers denouncing AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal as anti-Hindu.

Rajendra Pal Gautam triggered a major controversy over his presence at a religious conversion event where Hindu deities were allegedly denounced by those who took the oath of Buddhism. Gautam shared the details of his resignation and the reasons behind it in a two-page letter dated October 9. Gautam was Delhi's Minister of Social Welfare, Cooperation, SC/ST Welfare, and Gurudwara election.

The conversion event controversy put the AAP and Chief Minister Kejriwal on the back foot just ahead of the forthcoming Gujarat and Himachal



Banners terming Arvind Kejriwal as 'anti-Hindu' surface in various cities across Gujarat. File photo

Pradesh Assembly polls. Significantly, no AAP leader came forward to defend Gautam even when the controversy started.

The BJP slammed Gautam for his alleged anti-Hindu stand and called AAP as a party that hated Hindus.

This was a major embarrassment for Kejriwal who is singing 'Jai Sri Ram' in Gujarat and indirectly calling himself an avatar of Lord Krishna by pointing out that he was born on Janmashtami, the birthday of Lord Krishna. In his resig-

nation letter, Gautam wrote, "I personally attended the Buddhist Dhamma Deeksha Samaroh organised by Mission Jai Bhim and Buddhist Society of India on the occasion of Ashok Vijayadashami on October 5, 2022, at Ambedkar Bhavan Rani Jhansi Road as a member of society.

"This had nothing to do with the Aam Aadmi Party and my Council of Ministers. Babasaheb's great-grandson Rajratna Ambedkar repeated 22 vows of Babasaheb which were repeated by more than

10,000 people as well as me. After that, I see that the BJP is targeting our leader Arvind Kejriwal ji, and the Aam Aadmi Party, it is very sad for me."

He added, "The 22 pledges made by Babasaheb were also published by Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot, former Union Minister of the BJP Government (Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) in 'Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings and Speeches, Vol-17'. These pledges are repeated every year by crores of people at thousands of places in every corner of the country.

"The BJP has objections to these 22 pledges made by Babasaheb and him. Hurt by BJP's dirty politics, I am resigning from my ministerial post."

"I don't want any kind of attack on my leader Arvind Kejriwal ji, and Aam Aadmi Party because of me. As a true soldier of the party, I will carry out the just and equitable constitutional values shown by The Tathagata Buddha and Babasaheb for life.

"I will fight for the rights of my sisters and daughters and the people of the community with utmost strength throughout my life" he said.

Continued on Page 2

Delhi soon to be a  
city that never sleepsTo boost nightlife,  
L-G has allowed  
over 300 business  
establishments to  
run round-the-clock

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi will now be a 24x7 city for diners, shoppers, and transporters among others. In a move that will boost Delhi's nightlife, Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena has allowed more than 300 establishments, including those engaged in running online shops and delivery shops, hotels, restaurants, transport facilities, logistics, and other essential commodities, to carry on with their business on a 24x7 basis in the national Capital.

However, the services do not include Knowledge Process Outsourcing (KPO) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). Ahead of Diwali, Saxena has approved a proposal to grant exemptions under the Delhi Shops and Establishment Act, 1954 to 314 such establishments.

The applications of some of them were pending since 2016. The L-G also directed the officials that the notification to this effect should be issued within seven days.

"The decision, providing



exemption under Sections 14, 15 and 16 of the Delhi Shops and Establishment Act, 1954, is expected to boost employment generation and promote a positive and a favourable business environment that is a prerequisite for economic growth," sources said.

According to Raj Niwas, the decision will also provide a fillip to the much-desired 'nightlife' in the city. Exemptions that are made under Sections 14, 15, and 16 of the Act enable commercial establishments to operate on a 24x7 basis, subject to certain conditions that entail welfare of labour and security, they said.

Approving the proposal, Saxena took a "very serious view" of "inordinate delay, adhocism, randomness and unjustified discretion" on part of the Labour Department in

disposing of applications made by the firms for these exemptions, officials said.

Saxena noted that out of total 346 pending applications, 18 applications from 2016, as many as 26 applications from 2017, a whopping 83 applications from 2018, and 25 from 2019, four applications from 2020, and 74 applications from 2021 had not been processed by the Labour Department on time, they claimed.

"These applications were kept pending for no reason even as just two applications, one of 2017 and another of 2021 were processed and sent for approval, in a display of unexplained discretion on part of the Labour Department, which strongly indicated the prevalence of corrupt practices," sources said.

Continued on Page 2

## Sun will power Sun Temple village Modhera 24x7

Inaugurating India's first fully-solar-powered village, PM says  
double-engine Govt will speed up Gujarat's development

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday inaugurated the country's first fully solar-powered village in Mehsana district in poll-bound Gujarat saying it would "generate employment, bring major environmental change and make the region a tourist hub."

Inaugurating India's first 24x7 solar-powered village, Modhera, Modi said that "with Narendra (Modi) and Bhupendra (Patel), Gujarat has a "double-engine sarkar" and a "promise of speedy development."

He said the solar project at Modhera will generate employment, attract environmentalists from all over the world and become a tourist hub of the State. "It is a dream come true", he said.

Modi added that Modhera, known for the historic Sun Temple will now also be known as a fully solar-powered village." The Sun Temple is located along the Pushpavati River and Bhima-I of the Chalukya



Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone and dedicates development works at Modhera village in Mehsana district on Sunday

PTI

dynasty built it around 1026-1027 AD.

Both the Central and State Governments have invested over ₹80 crore in this solar-development project in two phases, with the State allotting 12 hectares of area for the

project. People in the village can save 60 per cent to 100 per cent on their electricity bills with this move.

Modi said, "Today, a new energy of development has been infused into Modhera, Mehsana and the whole of

North Gujarat. From electricity, water to road and rail. Many projects related to dairy, skill development and health-care have been inaugurated and foundation stones have been laid today."

Continued on Page 2

FinMin mulls auto debiting other a/cs  
of issuer to curb cheque bounce cases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry is mulling several steps like dipping into other accounts of a cheque issuer and prohibition of opening of new accounts of offenders to effectively deal with cheque bounce cases clogging the legal system.

Earlier, peeved at the large number of pending cases of cheque bounce, the Supreme Court had constituted a committee with a mandate to suggest steps for early disposal of about 35 lakh pending cases across the country. During the hearing, the Centre had "in principle accepted" the need for creating additional courts to deal with such cases.

Recently, many suggestions were made at a high-level meeting called by the Ministry to deal with the high incidence of cheque bounce cases.

Some of the steps suggested before taking legal recourse



included debiting other accounts of the cheque issuer if his or her account is short of funds to honour the instrument, sources said.

The other suggestions were treating cheque bounce as default of loan and thus reporting it to credit information companies for necessary downgrade of score, the sources said, adding a proper legal view would be taken before these suggestions are accepted.

If these suggestions are

implemented, it would help enforce cheque honouring by the payer without the matter going to court and also compel him/her to make payment by creating a deterrent through technology.

These measures would help promote ease of doing business and dissuade people from wilfully indulging in issuance of cheques even though their accounts have insufficient funds.

Continued on Page 2

## VHP rally turns into hate fest

Guru Yogeshwar  
asks Hindus to  
cut hands, necks  
of attackers; no  
plaint yet says  
Delhi Police

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad's (VHP) rally, Virat Hindu Sabha, in the national Capital turned into a hate speech arena where Jagat Guru Acharya Yogeshwar openly asked people to take the law into their own hands, and cut off the hands and necks of those who attacked them.

Mahant Naval Kishore Das also advised Hindus to openly take up arms to protect the religion. BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, who also attended the event, did not object to the controversial statements

and even gave a call to boycott Muslims.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police said that they have received no complaints so far.

The Virat Hindu Sabha (Jan Akrosh Rally) was organised in Northeast Delhi in protest against the murder of a 25-year-old youth by three men in Sunder Nagri, northeast Delhi.

Addressing the rally, Acharya Yogeshwar said, "If needed, cut their hands, behead them. At maximum, you will go to jail. But the time has come to teach these elements a lesson. In *logo ko chun chun ke maaro* (identify and beat these people)." He said that Hindus have started migrating from the beautiful city because of jihadis.

Speaking at the occasion, Mahant Naval Kishore Das said that now is the time to carry arms and scriptures together. For these weapons, whether licenced or non-licenced, should be kept by everyone, Hindus have not

taken the onus to follow the country's law. "Get guns. Get licences. If you don't get licences, don't worry. Those who come to kill you, do they have licences? So why do you need a licence? he said. "If we all come together, even the Delhi Police Commissioner will offer us tea and let us do what we want," he added in a brazen display of power and authority.

BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma said that such incidents will keep happening till all the Hindus are not united. In a purported video from Sunday's event, Verma can be heard saying, "Wherever you see them, if you want to set them straight there is only one solution — total boycott. Do you agree? Raise your hands if you agree."

"Say with me: 'We will boycott them. We will not buy anything from their shops, we will not employ them. Just do this. This is the solution.'"

Continued on Page 2

Dalit woman abducted,  
gangraped by family  
priest, others in Ajmer

AGENCIES ■ AJMER

A 25-year-old Dalit woman was allegedly repeatedly raped by a group of men, including her family priest, in Rajasthan's Ajmer. The woman was confined for several days by the main accused Sanjay Sharma, who was also the family priest of the victim and used to perform pooja for her family. Sanjay Sharma is also accused of recording a video of the crime.

Sharma raped the woman for the first time when she was alone in the house and made an objectionable video of the woman. Later, he also extorted money from the victim on the basis of this video and then raped her again along with some people, Ajmer North Deputy Superintendent of Police, Chhavi Sharma said.



The accused had given some sedatives to the woman, DSP Sharma said, adding that she was unable to say how many people gangraped her.

The woman said in her complaint that she was forcibly confined by the accused for the past few days, and was gang-raped several times.

The priest had allegedly threatened the woman that he would kill her husband and child. He had also said he would make the video that he had taken of her viral.

Continued on Page 2



# Ensure financial discipline of NE States: Shah to CMs

PTI ■ GUWAHATI

Financial discipline of Northeastern states is essential to make the Indian economy the second largest in the world, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday. Addressing the 70th plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) here, Shah said insurgency, lack of connectivity and failure of previous governments to focus on the Northeast hampered the region's development for decades.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government tried to understand the core problems and evolved ways to permanently solve the issues to take the region to the path of development," he said. During the last eight years of the Modi government, many efforts were made to bring peace to the region, enhance connectivity and give priority to development, he added.

Shah, the chairperson of NEC, asked the chief ministers of the region to ensure financial discipline of their states which, he said, was essential to make the country's economy the second largest in the world. He also urged the states to make full use of the North East Space



Application Centre (NESAC) for flood control, irrigation, tourism, afforestation and agriculture. All the chief ministers of the region must appoint a nodal officer for NESAC in their respective states so that its maximum and better utilisation can be done, he said.

Chief ministers, governors and officials of the eight Northeastern states were present at the meeting that was held at Administrative Staff College in Guwahati.

Shah said that the Centre was giving priority to organic farming, use of digital technology in the field of agriculture and certification of nat-

ural products. The Centre under the leadership of Modi is also committed to flood-free and drug-free Northeast, he said.

He urged the chief ministers to keep the states free from single-use plastics. Referring to hydropower projects in the region, he said their purpose is not only to generate energy but also can be used in flood prevention.

Shah said the rest of India considers the languages, cultures, cuisines and attires of the Northeast as its heritage, and the Centre was striving to preserve and promote the identities of the region.

## Pharmexcil suspends Maiden pharma's membership

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the wake of the ongoing WHO probe against the Haryana-based Maiden Pharmaceuticals whose cough syrups are under the scanner following the death of 66 kids in the Gambia after they allegedly consumed it, the Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) has suspended its membership. The suspension means that the company's exports will become ineligible for incentives under the Market Access Initiative Scheme.

The suspension came after the council warned the firm of suspension of its authorization certificate if it failed to share details of its licensees and importers with Pharmexcil by October 7.

"The council is not in receipt of any inputs/report on the adverse events and hereby state that the membership of Maiden Pharmaceuticals with Pharmexcil... is suspended with immediate effect," the council said in a letter dated October 7, to the company.

"The council is not in receipt of any inputs/report on the adverse events and hereby state that the membership of Maiden Pharmaceuticals with Pharmexcil... is suspended with immediate effect," the council said in a letter dated October 7, to the company.

## Food delivery boy, security guard held after scuffle

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

A private security guard of a housing society and an executive of a food delivery company were arrested here on Sunday after a fight between them. The arrests came after a purported video of the incident surfaced on social media, showing the delivery executive and the security guard exchanging blows and thrashing each other with sticks amid drizzles.

This comes as the latest episode in a string of incidents of conflicts and fights caught on camera in recent months involving private security guards of housing societies in the city.

"The fight broke out around 12 pm at the main gate of the Gardenia society under Sector 39 police station limits over an argument about entry of the food delivery executive," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Noida) Ashutosh Dwivedi said.

"Both of them have been taken into police custody in a preventive action under CrPc section 151 (prevention of commission of cognizable offence) and are being produced before the local magistrate," Dwivedi said.

He said the police are further investigating in detail the root cause of the argument which blew into a fight. Delivery executive Sabi

Singh and security guard Ram Vinay Sharma have also been booked under CrPc sections 107 (related to maintenance of peace and public tranquillity) and 116 (magistrate's inquiry into the truth of information upon which action has been taken), officials said.

On Saturday, two women below the age of 30 years were taken into police custody after a purported video of them manhandling a private security guard of Ajnara Homes society in Sector 121 went viral. The women, who were allegedly drunk at the time of the incident, were furious at the guard over entry of their car, which did not have a society sticker on it.

On Friday, a bank manager and a security guard of Supertech Capetown in Sector 74 were arrested by the police following a conflict under CrPc section 151.

On Wednesday night, a food delivery executive was assaulted by four private security guards at Sector 62's GAIL society. While the police were alerted about it, the matter was resolved with a compromise between the two sides, according to officials.

Last month, a woman resident of Cleo County society in Sector 121 was arrested for assaulting a security guard over a delay in opening of the entry barrier.

## 4-year-old dies, 8 injured in building roof collapse



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Four-year-old girl died and eight others were injured after the roof of a building collapsed in north Delhi's Lahori gate area on Sunday evening. Police said that 9 to 10 people were rescued who got trapped under the debris. According to Atul Garg, the Director, Delhi Fire Service (DFS), said a call was received about a roof collapse in the Lahori Gate area around 7.30 pm following which five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Beside the fire department, the police teams and NDRF team reached the spot and rescued the people trapped under debris, who were rushed to local hospital for treatment.

## Dalit woman abducted, gangraped for days by family...

From Page 1

When she did not return home for a few days, her husband, who had been searching for her, lodged a missing person complaint, after which the accused dropped her outside a police station on September 27.

An FIR was registered on the basis of a complaint on October 7, and the police are looking for the accused priest and his accomplices. The case is from the Civil Lines area of Ajmer.

# Fearing backlash ...

From Page 1

Some people with the Manu-wadi mindset are threatening on social media and on phone, to harm my life and property, my family, and my colleagues but I am not afraid of all this. I will fight for the rights of our community with utmost courage, honesty, and strength. Even if I have to sacrifice myself in this fight for the rights of the community, I will not let this fight stop," read the letter.

In a tweet, Gautam said, "Today is the manifestation day of Maharishi Valmiki ji, and on the other hand, it is also the death anniversary of Manyavar Kanshi Ram Saheb. In such a coincidence, today I have been

freed from many shackles and today I have been born again. Now I will continue to fight for rights and atrocities on society more firmly without any restrictions."

Gautam found himself in the middle of a controversy on Friday after a video went viral, showing him attending the event on October 5. The controversial event, organised by the Buddhist Society of India, was conducted at the Dr. BR Ambedkar Bhavan in Jhandewalan in New Delhi. A video of the event shows a monk, sharing the dais with Gautam, administering an oath to the gathered Hindus: "I will have no faith in Brahma, Vishnu

and Mahesh, nor will I worship them as God. I will have no faith in Rama or Krishna, nor will I worship them. I will have no faith in Gauri, Ganapati, and other Hindu gods, nor will I worship them." Gautam was seen taking the oath as well.

A Delhi BJP delegation met the New Delhi Deputy Commissioner of Police and filed a complaint against the Minister. A person aware of the matter said that Kejriwal was "extremely displeased" with Gautam.

In a statement on Friday evening, Gautam said he said he did not speak against anyone's faith and accused the BJP of "propaganda".

## Bodies of three missing girls found in Jhansi dam

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Mystery shrouds the death of three girls, including two sisters, whose bodies were found in the Kurecha dam (Sapara dam) in Mauranipur tehsil of Jhansi late Saturday evening. The cops sent the bodies for autopsy and started the investigation.

Speaking to reporters, Senior Superintendent of Police Rajesh S said that after the first body of a woman aged around 25 years was fished out, two more bodies were recovered and the victims appeared to be aged between 18 and 20.

The SSP said that no injury marks were visible on the bodies. "It is likely that they were swept away from Tikamgarh district," he said. Reports said that the employees of the Irrigation department posted at the dam saw the body of a girl in the dam.

On receiving information, the police reached the spot and brought out the body from the dam and sent it to hospital for autopsy.

## UP farmers stare at heavy losses due to unseasonal rain

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh farmers are staring at heavy losses. The unseasonal excessive rainfall has led to water-logging in cities and towns across the state but it has been worse for farmers in rural areas. The rains have inundated fields, causing damage to standing paddy, maize and newly-cultivated potato crops. Millets like bajra and pulses like Urad have also been affected.

With less than normal rains during monsoon and excess rainfall after it, farmers in Uttar Pradesh are staring at heavy losses and an uncertain future. According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, 67 out of 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh recorded excess rainfall last week (after September 30).

Even as Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to take measures to provide assistance to farmers hit by the adverse weather conditions, many believe the efforts might be too little, too late.

A potato farmer in Etawah, said, "We sow the early potato varieties by the end of September. But this year, around seven hectare of our potato farm has been affected by heavy rains. The fields are filled with water which causes rotting of the sown potato tubers."

He said if excess rains continued, it would be difficult to sow the late variety of potatoes.



Etawah recorded 81 mm of average rainfall in the first week of October which is 876 per cent more than the long period average (LPA) of 8.3 mm.

Gonda district recorded 248.6 mm rainfall in the same period which is 883 per cent higher than the long period average of 25.3 mm. The farmers in the district are worried about the fate of the paddy crop as the standing crop of paddy has fallen to the ground due to heavy rains. The farmers fear total loss of the crop if the rain continues.

Relief Commissioner of Uttar Pradesh, Prabhu Narayan Singh, said, "The rains recorded in the state have been excess as compared to the LPA. We have asked the districts to submit data related to the impact of rains on farmers and their crops. The damage to the crops is also being assessed."

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STANDALONE AUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022			
Sl No.	Particulars	For the Year Ended March 31 2022	For the Quarter Ended March 31, 2022
		Audited	Audited
1	Total Income from Operations	20,397.98	6,331.21
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(11,305.92)	(2,525.49)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(17,413.96)	(6,549.50)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(13,503.23)	(5,336.86)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period (Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	(13,503.23)	(5,336.86)
6	Paid up Equity Share Capital(Face Value of Rs. 10 per share)	1,636.17	1,636.17
7	Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve)	(10,890.62)	(6,633.95)
8	Securities Premium Account	1,739.02	1,739.02
9	Net Worth	(7,515.42)	(4,571.05)
10	Paid up Debt Capital / Outstanding Debt	52,234.59	52,235
11	Outstanding Redeemable Preference Share	-	-
12	Debt Equity Ratio*	-7.99	-7.99
13	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)		5.35
	Basic	(82.53)	(32.62)
	Diluted	(82.53)	(32.62)
14	Capital Redemption Reserve	-	-
15	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR)*	1,210.24	1,210.24
16	Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR)*	(0.30)	(0.30)
17	Interest Service Coverage Ratio (ISCR)*	(0.30)	(0.30)
* Note 1: Adopted definitions for Ratios			
Ratios have been computed as follows:			
a) Debt Equity Ratio = Total Debt / Total Equity			
b) Total Debt = Non-Current Borrowings + Current Maturities of Non-Current Borrowings			
c) Total Equity = Equity Share Capital + Other Equity + Compulsory Convertible Instruments to Equity			
d) Interest Service Coverage Ratio (ISCR) = (EBDIT - Current Tax - Exceptional Items) / Gross Interest			
e) Debt Service Coverage Ratio (DSCR) = (EBDIT - Current Tax - Exceptional Items) / (Gross Interest + Principal Repayment of Long Term Debts excluding repayment from refinancing of Debt)			
Note - 2			
a) The above is an extract of the detailed format of annual financial results required to be filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulation 52 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (as amended). The full format of the annual financial results is available on the Bombay Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com and on the Company website www.feedbackinfra.com			
b) For the items referred in Regulation 52(4) of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the pertinent disclosures have been made available to the Bombay Stock Exchange website www.bseindia.com and on the Company website www.feedbackinfra.com			
c) The above financial results as at and for the year ended March 31, 2022 have been reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on October 6, 2022.			
d) The Statement has been prepared in accordance with the Indian Accounting Standards ("Ind AS") as prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with relevant rules issued thereunder and in terms of Regulation 52(2) of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015 (as amended) and SEBI's circular no. SEBI/HO/DDHS/CIR/2021/0000000637 dated October 5, 2021.			
e) The Company is primarily in the business of consultancy. The Board of Directors of the Company, which has been identified as being the Chief Operating Decision Maker (CODM), evaluates the Company's performance and allocates resources based on the analysis of the various performance indicators of the Company as a single unit. Therefore, the Company's business activity falls within a single business segment in terms of Ind AS 108.			
For and on behalf of Board of Directors			
Sd/-			
Priyanka Saini			
Director			
Date : Gurugram			
Place : 06th October 2022			
DIN: 09676215			

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CONVERSION ROW

BJP seeks Kejriwal's resignation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

After Delhi Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam's resignation due to his video going viral over his presence at a religious conversion event, the Delhi BJP has launched a massive campaign demanding the Delhi Chief Minister's resignation over the conversion event. The BJP leaders claimed that Gautam's resignation was accepted as Arvind Kejriwal's "fear of losses" in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh elections and demanded removal of Manish Sisodia and Satyendar Jain over corruption allegations.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri said Gautam resigned due to pressure from the BJP after he attended October 5 "anti-Hindu" event.

He said resignation is not enough but legal action should also be taken against him and he should be expelled from the party for condemning Hindu gods and goddesses.

"Apart from this, resignations should also be taken from Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Satyendra Jain involved in corruption," he said. He accused Kejriwal and his Ministers of not hesitating from condemning Hindu gods and goddesses for their political ambitions.

"Gautam's resignation does not mean that there has been any improvement in Kejriwal's ideology, but it is because Kejriwal fears loss in the Gujarat and Himachal elections. That is why he has taken the resignation from Gautam," he demanded.



Describing the resignation of Gautam, Delhi BJP President Adesh Gupta said the way Delhi Minister insulted Hindu gods and goddesses at the behest of Kejriwal, only resignation is not enough. rather than the countrymen You should also apologise.

He said when there is elections in Gujarat and Kejriwal has realised his defeat there well, so he is afraid that the Hindus of Gujarat are never going to vote for him, so now he took resignation from his Minister.

"Gautam is merely a pawn. Kejriwal is the brain behind it. After Gautam's resignation, mastermind Kejriwal must resign as well," Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said. Tiwari led the campaign seeking the Delhi Minister Gautam's resignation.

Amit Malviya, in charge of the BJP IT cell, wrote, "Rajendra Pal was Kejriwal's 'Breaking India' project gone horribly wrong, at a time when Gujarat election is just round the corner. Gautam's resignation is nothing but damage control. Make no mistake, there

are several Gautams lurking in the AAP and Kejriwal is their face..." he tweeted.

Parvesh Sahib Singh, MP West Delhi, BJP, also wrote, "Resignation of Kejriwal's special Minister Gautam, who insulted Hindu deities, is nothing but damage control, because Gujarat elections are near, so pretended, there are many people hidden in AAP like Gautam and Kejriwal whose main face is. AAP's PAAP will not hide."

"Hindu haters lose. Gujarat wins. Bowing to pressure, mohra (pawn) has resigned, but when will the kingpin who orchestrated this hate attack on Hindus resign? Its too little, too late. What about those who opposed Ram Mandir, who tweeted against Swastik, who mocked Kashmiri Hindus? tweeted Shehzad Poonawalla.

"Look at the condition of six Ministers in the Kejriwal Government Cabinet, in a prison, the second was caught doing the conversion, in preparation for going to jail in the third liquor scam, fourth is implicated in DTC scam.

CM forced Gautam to resign but spared Sisodia, Jain: Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress on Sunday said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has forced his Social Welfare Minister Rajinder Pal Gautam to resign on Valmiki Jayanti Day but he has not asked for resignation of his Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who is the number one accused in the liquor scam; Satyender Jain who is in jail for a money-laundering case and Transport Minister Kailash Ghehot in the DTC bus purchase and maintenance scam, as they bring him commissions from various corrupt deals.

Delhi Congress president Choudhury Anil Kumar said Kejriwal has once again exposed due to his anti-Dalit stand. Why he is protecting Sisodia, Jain and Gehlot? They gives commission to him," Kumar asked.

Kumar said Gautam's anti-Hindu Gods remarks at a Bhuddist function put a spoke in Kejriwal's political ambition in Gujarat with the



Assembly elections in the State round the corner, and he had no guilt in asking for Gautam's resignation, though only recently, he had created a big political stunt by inviting a Dalit family from Gujarat to Delhi to have lunch with him, but refused to meet a delegation of Delhi Congress Dalit leaders who wanted to discuss the problems facing Dalits in Delhi. He said that Kejriwal was following the BJP agenda of dividing people on the basis of caste and religion to create animosity among the people while Congress party's stated policy has always been to respect all religions and castes in equal measure, allowing people to practice the religion they believe in.

Traders welcome LG's move to allow establishments to remain open 24x7, raise concerns about security

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Restaurateurs and traders on Sunday welcomed the Delhi LG's decision to allow more than 300 establishments to function 24x7, but raised concerns about the infrastructure and the security arrangements to handle the situation.

Manpreet Singh, treasurer of the National Restaurant Association of India, said their industry had been asking for this for a long time. "With this coming through, we can only hope that the business will go up. It augurs well for the industry that was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic," Singh said.

While the move drew positive reactions from almost all quarters, traders voiced concerns about the security aspect in a city like Delhi.

"The Delhi Police is already overburdened. Do they have the additional staff to handle the situation? If restaurants stay open 24x7, there will be a mixed crowd that will be there and we know how some people can behave. There can be brawls and other untoward incidents," said Anil Bhargav, president of the New Delhi Traders' Association. Bhargav welcomed the move but said it might lead to concerns over the security arrangements.

"Many a times it happens that the police personnel deployed here are moved for VVIP arrangements. So we wonder how will this be implemented," he said. Sanjiv Mehra, president of the Khan Market Traders' Association,



**"There is a shortage of police personnel and the infrastructure is also not in place, plus transportation is also an issue in the national Capital"**

said before implementing it, the concerns surrounding law and order, infrastructure and transportation should have been addressed.

"There is a shortage of police personnel and the infrastructure is also not in place, plus transportation is also an issue in the national capital," he said. A trader, requesting anonymity, said people in Delhi are not "civilised" and there might be a spike in the number of cases of crime in the national capital as a fallout of the decision.

"We see instances of road rage and drunken driving killing people. Don't you think it could lead to an increase in the number of such cases? Also, shoppers will only visit markets till about 9 pm. There will only be a handful of shoppers beyond the regular hours. In my view, it would lead to an increase in the costs for the shopkeepers for additional

staff, additional electricity charges and water charges," he said.

In a move that will boost Delhi's night life, Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved more than 300 establishments, including online shopping and delivery outlets, hotels, restaurants and transport facilities, to operate round the clock, officials at the LG's office said on Sunday. The LG has approved a proposal to exempt 314 applications, some of which have been pending since 2016. He has directed that a notification to this effect be issued within seven days.

Approving the proposal, Saxena took a "very serious view" of the "inordinate delay, ad-hocism, randomness and unjustified discretion" on the part of the labour department in disposing of applications submitted by the firms for these exemptions, the officials said.

City received 74mm rainfall in 24 hrs: IMD

'Second-highest precipitation in October since 2017'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department data showed that Delhi received 74 mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending 8:30 am on Sunday, the second highest precipitation on a day in October since 2007. In 2021, the Capital had logged 87.9 mm of rainfall on October 18.

The IMD said the ceaseless spell of rain brought down the difference between minimum temperature (20.8 degrees Celsius) on Friday and maximum temperature (23.4 degrees Celsius) on Saturday to 2.6 degrees Celsius -- the lowest since 1969. Earlier, the lowest such margin was recorded on October 19, 1998 at 3.1 degree Celsius, the IMD added.

The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, recorded another 7.4 mm of rainfall between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm on Sunday. The Palam observatory recorded 64.9 mm of rainfall in 24 hours ending 8:30 am. The Lodhi Road, Ridge, and Ayanagar weather stations received 87.2 mm, 60.1 mm, and 85.2 mm rainfall respectively, the IMD said.

The difference between



Vehicles plying amid heavy rain in national Capital



Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

minimum temperature (20.8 degrees Celsius) on Friday and maximum temperature (23.4 degrees Celsius) on Saturday was 2.6 degrees Celsius -- the lowest since 1969, an IMD official said.

The incessant rain in the capital also yielded the second "good" air quality day of the year, with the 24-hour average air quality index settling at 48. Delhi had recorded a 24-hour average AQI of 47 on September 16.

The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's primary weather station, recorded another 7.4 mm of rainfall

between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm on Sunday.

The current rains in Delhi are not monsoon showers, which had receded from the city on September 29 after giving 516.9 mm of rainfall against a normal of 653.6 mm, the IMD said. According to the Met department, the interaction of a western disturbance, which lies as a trough in mid and upper air, with a deep trough of easterly wind at a lower level led to the post-monsoon rain in the Delhi-NCR region.

Mahesh Palawat, vice president (meteorology and climate change), Skymet Weather,

said easterly winds brought moisture from the Bay of Bengal with a trough running from Andhra Pradesh to north-west Uttar Pradesh. Easterly winds carried moisture from the Arabian Sea due to another trough extending from Delhi to east Rajasthan.

"In October to March, we get 3 to 5 such intense interactions," an IMD official said. Palwat said these weather systems will weaken over the next two-three days. Sporadic light to moderate rain is likely on Monday, but not much precipitation is expected the day after, he said.

Delhi traffic cops issue alert amid non-stop rain

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi traffic police on Sunday issued an alert for the commuters, warning them about waterlogging, potholes, road cave-ins and uprooting of trees following incessant rainfall in the National Capital Region (NCR) in the last 24 hours. There was waterlogging, uprooting of trees and even potholes on the roads across the city which led vehicular movement at snail's pace. Vehicles also broke down at several places leading to traffic chaos.

There was massive traffic chaos at Mathura Road, Punjabi Bagh Chowk, Anand Vihar, Red Fort, Mathura Road, ITO and Chhawla areas of the city with vehicles moving at snail's pace.

With rain spell throughout the day, the Delhi Traffic Police has advised commuters to plan their journey accordingly.

"Traffic is affected on Mathura Road in the carriage-way from Sarita Vihar towards Badarpur due to breakdown of two trucks near CNG pump Mohan co-operative Estate.



Kindly avoid the stretch," it tweeted.

While sharing details regarding waterlogging, potholes and uprooting of trees on roads of the Capital, traffic police tweeted, due to incessant #DelhiRains in the last few days, some roads have been affected by water logging, potholes, uprooting of trees and cave-ins. Commuters advised to plan their journey accordingly and avoid these stretches for their convenience.

As per traffic police, there are potholes on Ashram towards Kilokidi on Mathura Road, roundabout Rail Bhawan, Moti Bagh Gurudwara, Barafkhana Chowk, Peeragarhi Chowk, IIT to PTC on Aurobindo

New PHQ gate no-3 on Ashoka Road, Peeragarhi Chowk, Lajpat Nagar Metro station, near metro pillar 422 to 427 on Rohtak Roads, roundabout Bagga link on Panchkuian Road, several other areas on Rohtak Road, Dhaula Kuan flyover, GT Karnal Road and few parts of Outer Ring Road," traffic police said.

The trees were uprooted at outer ring road near Palam Flyover and Benito Juarez Marg near Ring Road.

Delhi Cong starts 'Shobha yatra' on Valmiki Jayanti

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Sunday inaugurated the procession 'Shobha Yatra' based on the life of Maryada Purushottam Lord Ram, following the occasion of Adi Maharishi Valmiki's manifesto, the author of the epic Ramayana, from the Red Fort in the national capital.

Delhi Congress president, Anil Kumar and vice president Jai Kishan, along with members of Valmiki samaj, started the Shobha Yatra by lighting a lamp at the feet of Maharishi on Valmiki Jayanti.

In the procession, many chariots, elephants, and horses were involved.

The Shoba Yatra was given a huge reception from place to place. Prasad and Bhandara were arranged at many places. The yatra ended at Maharishi

Valmiki Mandir, Pachkuiyan Road, after passing through different parts of the capital.

In the procession, Durga Pandit Ramesh Choudhary and Chand Chautala, etc along with followers of Maharishi were present.

Speaking at the occasion, Jai Kishan said that Sita was given initiation in the ashram of Maharishi Best Muni Valmiki ji, her sons were also educated by Maharishi in the same ashram.

Jai Kisan also appealed to the people of Valmiki Samaj to follow the ideals of Guru Valmiki Maharaj and follow the path shown by him.

Give good education to your children.

He appealed Valmiki samaj members to continue their support to Congress party as both AAP and BJP have failed to fulfil their aspirations and upliftment.

MCD threatening to seal shops in name of conversion tax: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Sunday alleged that MCD is threatening to seal shops across the national Capital in name of conversion tax by sending notices to traders and unnecessarily harassing the businessmen. AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak said MCD changed the payment system of conversion tax without consulting the businessmen of Delhi and hiked the taxed rate arbitrarily.

"BJP-ruled MCD has waged a war against the people of Delhi and especially against the businessmen of Delhi. BJP leaders and MCD officers have been threatening the traders of Delhi since last week. Notices are being sent to them, threatening to seal their shops," said Pathak.

"In 2010, BJP-ruled MCD came up with a new rule that whoever is doing commercial activities in the industrial area will have to pay a tax in the form of conversion tax. Most of the traders had adopted the 10-

15 year installment formula because they were small traders and they did not have a huge income. Everyone used to submit their conversion rate whenever on time at the end of the year," said Pathak.

"This rule started in 2010 and came into force in 2011. It was supposed to run till 2020-2021 since people had opted for the 10 years formula. But in 2018, MCD came up with a new rule through a backdoor entry. They said that from now on, instead of paying Rs 8 thousand per sq mtr, they will have to pay ₹21 thousand per sq mtr and that too for the entire plot," said Pathak.

"Now, since the past one week, BJP leaders and MCD officials are calling each and every businessman. Those who were supposed to pay ₹10 lakh are now given notices of ₹1 crore to ₹2 crore. They have been ordered to deposit this money within 15 days failing which their shops will be sealed.

Allegation baseless: MCD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Speaking on the issue, a senior MCD official said the corporation has come to notice that a new fake allegation has been made against the civic body regarding conversion charges levied by the MCD in industrial area.

"It has been claimed in the allegation that traders were asked to pay conversion tax either in one go at ₹8000 per sq metre or in installments at ₹1000 per sq metre for 10-15 years. The Corporation would like to make it clear that this is not true in facts," he said.

"The rates for use conversion charges from industrial to commercial were notified by DDA on the basis of built-up area per sq metre.

The rate fixed for Central, South and Dwarka area was ₹12,508/- per sq metre of built up area while that of North,

East, West and Rohini was ₹8,097/- per sq metre of built up area and Narela at ₹1300 per sq metre," he said.

"Later on DDA revised the rates for use conversion charges from Industrial to commercial based on plot area basis and the rates were decided Industrial Estate wise. The revised rate for nine Industrial Estates of Delhi as notified by DDA varies from ₹30,971 per sq metre to ₹17,910 per sq metre across these industrial estates," MCD official said.

"The use conversion charges were never ₹1000/- per sq. metre any time in the past as claimed. The Corporations finds such claim malicious.

There is no retrospective effect of the revised rate. The revised charges are to be paid with the date of its coming into effect in 2018," MCD official added.

6 children drown in pit filled with rainwater in G'gram

PARVESH SHARMA ■ GURUGRAM

In a shocking incident, six children drowned in a pit filled with rainwater located on the outskirts of Bajghera village of Gurugram district, the police said on Sunday. The children had gone to take bath in the pond, which got filled due to the incessant rainfall in the national Capital region.

The incident occurred on Sunday afternoon between 3 and 4 pm. All the victims were residents of Shankar Vihar colony located near Bajghera village. The deceased have been identified as Piyush, Varun, Rahul, Ajit, Deva and Durgesh. All were aged between 8 to 13, the police said.

Soon after receiving information about the incident, a team from the Bajghera police station, civil defence, the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), and Fire Department reached the spot and fished out the bodies after three hours of operation. It is being said that the children may have gone to this pit for a bath and drowned. The police have also recovered the six years of clothes and slippers of the victims from the spot.

Deputy Commissioner Gurugram, Nishant Yadav also reached the incident spot to take information about the incident.

"Preliminary probe suggested that all the victims had gone to this pit for a bath and drowned. A child who was also present at the spot raised an

alarm and informed the kins of the victims after that the rescue teams reaches the spot and started the rescue operation," Yadav said.

Yadav said the administration had also installed a water pump to fish out water from the pit to search for any other body. "All the bodies have been recovered and shifted to the mortuary for an autopsy. The police have asked the residents if any other child is missing in their locality. Further probe is on," Deepak Saharan, DCP (west) said. Yadav said chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each for the families of the deceased. "This is a very unfortunate incident. We will identify such temporary ponds and drain their water so that such an accident does not happen in future," Yadav said.

Delhi-NCR has been receiving incessant rain for the past 3-4 days. The interactions of a western disturbance, which lies as a trough in mid and upper air with a deep trough of easterly wind at a lower level, is the reason behind post-monsoon rain, India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.





# Bharat Jodo Yatra successful, BJP scared of Rahul: Cong

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI/BENGALURU

Top Congress leaders on Sunday asserted that the party's ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra is a huge success and BJP is scared that Rahul Gandhi, who is leading the padyatra, will emerge in a new avatar.

Party's presidential candidate Mallikarjun Kharge said as huge numbers of people are associating themselves with Rahul Gandhi, BJP is getting scared. Another senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh said the former party chief will be seen in a new avatar after Bharat Jodo Yatra.

"As Rahul Gandhi's popularity is increasing, these (BJP) people's (popularity) is reducing," Kharge said in Jammu.

Digvijay Singh said Rahul

Gandhi has become a symbol of "Bharat jodo" (unite India) and will be seen in a new avatar post the Congress' pan-India march.

Singh, who has been a part of the Bharat Jodo Yatra since it started from Kanyakumari, said that the march has definitely impacted the Congress positively as it is for the first time after many years that the grand old party is being discussed in remote areas, villages and people are very impressed that Rahul Gandhi is walking all the way.

The yatra will help strengthen the party, he said while noting that the commitment to ideology and leadership is missing in the Congress at present.

Rahul Gandhi is spearheading the yatra that began

from Kanyakumari and will end in Jammu and Kashmir. A host of Congress leaders will walk 3,500 km during the march.

"In this country, if anyone does 'tyag' (sacrifice), he is always revered. Sonia Gandhi did 'tyag' of the prime minister's post. And here, Rahul Gandhi is walking, sweating in the heat, standing in the rain, fighting all kinds of fake news and defamation. He has become a symbol of Bharat jodo," the former Madhya Pradesh chief minister said.

He said he has known Rahul for a long time, and once he decides to do something, nothing can stop him from achieving that.

"Frankly, I have always seen him as a very highly committed and ideologically com-

mitted person with a highly inquisitive mind. He would not let you go until he has his answers. And, he is a prolific leader and very spiritual too," the veteran Congress leader said.

Singh, who has dropped out of the race for the post of Congress president and became proposer for party veteran Mallikarjun Kharge, noted that the Congress is "extremely poor" as an organisation as compared to the BJP organisation, which is a cadre-based party.

"Obviously, new leadership will emerge from the party," he said, adding those who are taking part in the march have left their homes and showing their commitment.

Elections for the Congress

president's post will take place on October 17 and results will be announced on October 19.

"One of the major weaknesses of the Congress is that it works in silos. There is no horizontal integration of all Congressmen at the cutting edge, which is the grassroots at the ground level. We have attempted this in this yatra. This is the format that we are preparing," he said.

Talking about the yatra, he said they have appointed coordinators for every state and district and the party's frontal bodies and cells are also doing so, which will help strengthen the organisation structure at the grassroots level.

He said party leaders have been assigned identifiable tasks to fill in and visit many households and provide feedback.



The biggest achievement of the yatra is that the media is looking at us now, he said, adding Congress workers are out of their homes, in the streets and on the roads now. Singh also hit out at some Congress leaders, saying there are some leaders who are experts in all India politics but have not ventured out of their homes in Delhi.

## BSF seizes consignment of 317 mobile phones floating in Pagla river

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Border Security Force (BSF) has seized a consignment of 317 mobile phones floating in the Pagla river on the international border in the Malda district of West Bengal. The sized items are worth Rs 38.83 lakh.

"On 8th October 2022, at 1730 hrs, the troops of the Border Out Post Lodhia, 70 Battalion under South Bengal Frontier, seized 317 mobile phones while floating in the Pagla River," the BSF said in a statement.

On the basis of accurate information received from BSF intelligence sources, the troops



of Border Out Post Lodhia noticed that some plastic containers tied to banana stems in the Pagla river are floating along the river towards Bangladesh, the BSF said.

The paramilitary said vigilant jawans immediately took out the above containers from the river and when they opened them, 317 pieces of mobile

phones of different companies were recovered from them estimated to be worth Rs 38,83,000.

The seized goods were handed over to the Police Station English Bazar for further legal action, it said.

"The Commanding Officer of the 70 Battalion stated that the Border Security Force is taking strict measures to prevent smuggling along the Indo-Bangladesh Border. Due to this people involved in activities like smuggling are experiencing a lot of difficulties and some of them are getting apprehended, who are also being punished according to the law," it added.

## NSG holding multinational joint anti-terror drill

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The National Security Guard (NSG) is holding a multinational joint anti-terror exercise (JATE) at its campus at Manesar in Gurugram under the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) framework.

The JATE "Manesar Anti-Terror 2022" is aimed at exchanging expertise and best practices and building synergy between the Counter Terrorism Forces of the SCO RATS member countries to enhance capabilities for conducting anti-terrorist operations and countering other security threats collectively, the NSG said in a statement.

Regional Anti-Terrorist

Structure (RATS) is one of the permanent organs of the SCO and IS Headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

"The objective of SCO RATS is to facilitate cooperation and coordination against Terrorism, Extremism and Separatism. India assumed the chairmanship of the Council of SCO RATS in Oct 2021. JATE is an annual Counter Terrorist Exercise held within the framework of the SCO RATS," it said.

The Stage 1 of the Exercise was conducted from July 27 to August 1 by the National Counter Terrorist Forces of SCO member countries in their respective territories.

The Stage 2 of the Exercise is being conducted from October 8 to October 13, at NSG Manesar Garrison, in which eight representatives

from National Counter Terrorism Forces of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Uzbekistan, Russian Federation and NSG of India are participating.

During the exercise, nuances of planning, preparation and conduct of Counter Terrorist Operations will be discussed and deliberated upon. The Exercise will be witnessed by four "observers" from the Executive Committee of RATS, SCO and one observer from the State Committee for National Security of Tajikistan.

The Exercise will provide a platform to the participating member countries to enhance their operational capabilities and exchange experience in combating terrorism, separatism and extremism, which are common regional security



challenges.

The Exercise will culminate in a closing ceremony which will be attended by high-level delegations from EC RATS SCO including Permanent Representatives, delegates from SCO member countries, representatives of the diplomatic missions of the SCO member countries in India, representatives of International organisations collaborating with RATS SCO and national delegates from India.

"During the Closing Ceremony, besides presenting the outcome of Stage-1 and Stage-2 by all SCO Member Countries, tactical demonstrations highlighting the operational capabilities of NSG to mitigate the terrorist threats will be showcased," it added.

# BJP's journey from 2 to 303 seats will start reversing from 2024: RJD

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Lalu Prasad-led RJD on Sunday said the Opposition has started to come together in several parts of the country and the BJP's journey from two to 303 seats will start reversing from 2024 as a collective alternative would trump the "self-centered" politics of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rule.

The RJD made this assertion on the first day of its two-day national executive meeting that was attended by the top leaders including Bihar deputy chief minister Tejashwi Yadav. RJD recently joined JD(U) and Congress to form a Mahagathbandhan government in Bihar led by Nitish Kumar who quit NDA.

In the context of Opposition unity, Lalu Prasad, Tejashwi Yadav, and Sharad Yadav said that all will sit

together and issues will be discussed.

The meeting, which was addressed by Lalu Prasad, Tejashwi Yadav, and senior party leader Sharad Yadav, saw a discussion on three resolutions.

"Three important resolutions were put forward -- a political resolution which is crucial as it comes at a time when the country is being taken in an abyss of darkness, another one on foreign policy, and the third one on the economic situation of the country," said party spokesman and a member of Rajya Sabha, Manoj Jha.

He said the thrust of the speeches by Lalu Prasad, Tejashwi Yadav, and Sharad Yadav was that the country's situation is very serious with unemployment at its highest in five decades.

In between the meeting

also saw some sparks as an upset Tej Pratap Yadav, a minister in the Bihar government and Lalu Prasad's elder son, left the meeting in a huff and accused party leader Shyam Rajak of abusing and mistreating his staff.

"The government has no blueprint. If you talk of unemployment, they talk of bulldozers and hijab. Where there should be a willingness to strengthen communal harmony, there they (BJP) are doing Hindu-Muslim. The country in its 75th year needs a new direction," Jha said briefing the media on the meeting outcomes.

"They (the three leaders) pointed out that the change in Bihar is not an ordinary one. We have come together putting aside differences and egos. Now, this has to be replicated in the whole country. The opposition will sit together,



there will be talks and a progressive document will be prepared against unemployment, and inflation and in support of communal harmony so that in the 75th year of independence our heritage is not destroyed," he said.

Jha said the change that is needed has begun from Bihar and Opposition parties are sitting together in different parts of the country.

"When we sit together, a better alternative will emerge and it would not be an 'atma-mugdh (self-centered)' person. We have seen the results of self-centered politics in the last eight years which have destroyed all things dear to us," the senior RJD leader said.

Asked if any names were discussed for leading the Opposition camp to take on the BJP in 2024, Jha said it's not the

individual but collectivity that was important.

"We are not buying sham-poo, that this will not work but this will work. Democracy is about collectivity, when collectivity is ended in democracy, it gives rise to Narendra Modi," the RJD leader said.

Will the alternative to Narendra Modi be a bigger Narendra Modi or the alternative will be collectivity? he asked.

"Those who say how can an alternative come about, they should recall 2004, was there a face then, how the 'Shining India' came down. Their (BJP's) journey from two seats to 303, will start going in reverse from 2024," he said.

Jha claimed that the BJP has been rattled with the Opposition joining ranks.

Elaborating on Lalu Prasad's remarks at the meeting, Jha said he talked of his

history of social justice, challenges posed by the RSS-BJP that could destroy the fabric of the country, and the roadmap ahead.

Lalu Prasad said that every person has to unite 20 other people and take real issues to villages, according to Jha.

On the CBI filing a charge sheet against Lalu Prasad and his wife Rabri Devi in connection with the alleged land-for-railway jobs scam, Jha said "this is BJP's charge sheet".

"We don't want to act on their directions, so a closed case is reopened and you create characters on your own and then you file a charge sheet. We charge the BJP that you have destroyed the character of these institutions," he said.

On Mohan Bhagwat's remarks that the caste system should be discarded, Jha said such remarks do not behove those who promote the caste

system.

"Look at the RSS structure, what social justice is there? RJD chief (Lalu Prasad) quoted from MS Golwalkar's book 'Bunch of Thoughts' that what he thought of Kashi Vishwanath temple, the Constitution, and reservation," he said.

RJD's Bihar unit chief Jagdanand Singh, who is said to be upset with the party ever since his son Sudhakar Singh was forced to resign from the Nitish Kumar government, skipped the meeting though Sudhakar attended.

Asked about Jagdanand Singh's absence, senior party leader and Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha said he has close ties with the party's top leadership and his absence on Sunday cannot undermine the fact of his constant presence over the years.

## Nadda likely to get extension as BJP looks for continuity till next Lok Sabha polls

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

BJP president J P Nadda is likely to continue at the helm at least till the 2024 Lok Sabha polls as the party brass believes that a sense of organisational continuity will help it in a string of key assembly polls in the coming months before the general election.

Nadda's three-year term will end in January next year, and the BJP parliamentary board, its apex body, is expected to endorse an extension for him before that, sources said.

With organisational polls in BJP state units yet to start, it is obvious that he will continue at the helm, they noted.

The party rules stipulate that organisational polls should be over in at least half of its state units before the election of its national president.

His predecessor Amit Shah also got an extension as the party wanted him to continue during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

It was only after the parliamentary elections were over that the organisational polls began and Nadda was elected unopposed with Shah joining the Union Cabinet during Narendra Modi's second stint as the prime minister.

A Modi confidant who also shares warm ties with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh leadership, he is seen to have maintained the organisational



momentum and dynamism that the BJP was infused with under his predecessor.

The low-key and affable personality of the Himachal Pradesh leader (61) is seen as an asset in terms of the BJP's organisational functioning and coordination that requires navigating a fresh set of challenges every now and then, with the state poll cycle always on the move, party sources said.

With the prime minister keenly invested in the BJP's organisational functioning and Shah also playing a critical role, especially in some of the more politically crucial states, Nadda is credited for driving the coordination and implementing strategies for its expansion, they added.

The BJP has notched up several important poll successes with Nadda at the helm, including retaining power in states like Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and putting up an impressive show in Bihar.

The big loss in West Bengal last year was, however, a low, while it has emerged as a strong force in Telangana.

## Many who survived Covid suffering from mental disorders, say experts

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Close on the heels of World Mental Health Day which is on Monday, health experts have said that the pandemic has taken a heavy toll not only on the physical health of people but also on their mental well-being.

"A significant proportion of patients in India who survived acute Covid-19 in the last three years are now suffering from some type of mental disorder, with depression and anxiety being the most common," said Dr. Vikas Gaur, Head of the Psychiatry Department at Amrita Hospital, Faridabad.

To corroborate his point, Dr Gaur cited his recent research conducted among people from the general population who suffered from Covid in the last two to three years. It revealed that about 50 percent of them are now suffering from mental symptoms of some kind such as depression or anxiety.

"About 26 percent of people who were ill with Covid are now suffering from sleep disorders and an equal number from anger-related issues. Sadly, there is also a substantial rise in the onset of new cases of psychosis, a trend not seen earlier."

Dr. Gaur said many Covid-19 survivors are now seeking medical help for cognitive



problems related to memory and concentration, which was not seen in the pre-Covid times. "Elderly people above the age of 60 years are especially affected. About 50 percent of them are now reporting symptoms of significant anxiety, compared to only 2-3 percent before the pandemic," he said.

Dr Rajendra Prasad, Senior Consultant Neurosurgeon & Spine Surgeon at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals, Delhi talked about a wide group of mental disorders including a lot of conditions including neurodevelopmental disorders which is present in childhood, schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, depression which affects anxiety disorders, OCD which affects so many young adults and middle-aged people.

"Then there is trauma-related head injury Post Traumatic Stress Disorders, and it may include eating disorders for which treatment may be required. And then to a large percentage of patients,

almost 20 per cent of the population which is elderly, some of them would suffer from neurocognitive disorders and neurodegenerative disorders resulting in conditions like dementia and Parkinson's and other neurodegenerative disorders," he added.

"So we have to focus our efforts towards creating facilities and to a large extent, this will be government-given facilities such as wide spectrum age groups of patients right from childhood to the very senior citizens for a whole lot of disorders for which enough attention has not been paid. And hence people have to seek out-of-pocket treatment," Dr. Prasad pointed out.

Also, there are no long-term neuro-rehabilitation centers available in India that would cover all the needs of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, mental health disorder treatment like counseling and more importantly support for family members and caregivers, Dr Prasad rued.

## 'Covid mRNA vaccines significantly increase cardiac arrest threat'

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■**  
NEW DELHI

Experts have advised that people with certain heart-related ailments should consult their physician before taking these jabs.

Both Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines are mRNA vaccines encoding the stabilised prefusion spike glycoprotein of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Unlike vaccines that put a weakened or inactivated virus in your body to activate an immune response, these two Covid-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna) used messenger RNA or mRNA to deliver a message to the immune system.

Florida Surgeon General Dr. Joseph A Ladapo said, "Today, we released an analysis on COVID-19 mRNA vaccines the public needs to be aware of. This analysis showed an increased risk of cardiac-related death among men 18-39. FL will not be silent on the truth, tweeted Ladapo.

The analysis was conducted by the Florida Department of Health (Department) through a self-controlled case series, which is a technique originally developed to evaluate vaccine safety.

The study found a sharp 84% increase in the relative



incidence of cardiac-related death among males 18-39 years old within 28 days following mRNA vaccination.

Patients with pre-existing cardiac conditions, such as myocarditis and pericarditis, should be extra cautious when considering vaccination and discuss it with their healthcare provider.

It reads, with a high level of global immunity to COVID-19, the benefit of vaccination is likely outweighed by this abnormally high risk of cardiac-related death among men in this age group.

Non-mRNA vaccines were not found to have these increased risks.

"Studying the safety and efficacy of any medications, including vaccines, is an important component of public health," said Surgeon General Dr Joseph Ladapo.

"Far less attention has been paid to safety and the

concerns of many individuals have been dismissed - these are important findings that should be communicated to Floridians," added Ladapo.

According to officials at Genova, the trial data showed that the vaccine was safe and well-tolerated. Immunogenicity measured at 2 weeks post-dose showed that GEMCOVAC-19 is non-inferior to Covishield.

The two-dose vaccine will have to be administered intramuscularly, 28 days apart.

Meanwhile, India's first mRNA Covid-19 vaccine Gennova's GEMCOVAC-19 will be available soon for emergency use. The company has conducted phase 2 and phase 3 data trials on 4000 participants to evaluate vaccine safety, immunogenicity and tolerability. India's drug regulator Drugs controller general of India (DCGI) is expected to give EUA to the vaccine soon.



# UP parties start preparations for urban body elections

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Political parties are busy drawing plans for door-to-door campaigning for the upcoming urban local body elections in Uttar Pradesh scheduled to be held in November and December. The polls, besides being the test of the parties seven months after the UP Assembly elections, will also be an opportunity to prove their mettle in the run-up to the 2024 general elections.

As per the data of State Election Commission, there are 438 nagar panchayats, 199 nagar palika parishads and 17 municipal corporations in Uttar Pradesh. The last elections to the urban local bodies were held in October-November 2017 when the Bharatiya Janata Party won 14 out of the 16 mayoral seats while the Bahujan Samaj Party bagged two — Aligarh and Meerut. Later, Shahjahanpur was also given the status of municipal corporation, taking the total number of municipal

corporations in the state to 17. The ruling BJP has set its eyes on capturing all 80 seats in the state in the 2024 elections, party's state media in-charge Manish Dixit said.

"We are taking the urban body elections very seriously and treating them at par with the general elections. A meeting of the in-charges and co-in-charges of every urban body of the state was held on Saturday to prepare an action plan", Dixit said.

As part of the Har Ghar Abhiyan, the BJP will visit every household and seek people's support, he added.

Dikshit said the BJP registered a comprehensive victory in the recent assembly polls in the state and would repeat its performance in the civic polls.

BJP state president Bhopendra Singh Chaudhary, state in-charge Radha Mohan Singh and organisation general secretary Dharampal had recently prepared a strategy for the elections in a virtual meeting with the party's district presidents, district in-charges

and conveners of civic elections, he highlighted.

Meanwhile, the focal point of the main opposition party — the Samajwadi Party — will be ground level management, its spokesperson Rajendra Chaudhary said.

SP president Akhilesh Yadav had appointed in-charges in all municipal areas about two months ago and the organisation was working at the ground level to win these elections, he said.

In-charges have been appointed at the booth level and after the work of delimitation and reservation of municipal areas by the State Election Commission, the selection of SP candidates will also be made by early next month, Chaudhary added.

Although there was a difference between both the elections, the level of preparedness and popularity of the party among the masses would definitely be gauged by the results of these polls, Chaudhary said.

The Bahujan Samaj Party, which was wiped out in the

assembly polls winning just one seat in the 403-member UP Assembly, is keen to make a strong comeback through the urban body elections.

As part of the Har Ghar Dastak campaign, the party will take the ideology of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar,, BSP founder Kanshi Ram and other Dalit leaders to the people, a BSP leader said.

"We had launched a membership drive on June 1. Now, we are focussing on connecting the people with the BSP's ideology and several other campaigns will be launched soon," he said. The Congress, which is arguably going through its worst phase in Uttar Pradesh, is looking to make a fresh start by planning to spring a surprise in the local body elections, party's media in-charge Lalan Kumar said.

As the party's new state president Brijlal Khabri and his associate provincial presidents had taken charge, the preparations for the civic polls had begun in full swing, Kumar said.

# Many BJP cadres in Gujarat secretly support AAP: Kejriwal

PTI ■ DHARAMPUR (GUJ)

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday claimed that many leaders and workers of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Gujarat secretly support his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and want to see the defeat of their own party in the upcoming Assembly elections.

Targeting the BJP over the posters that surfaced in several Gujarat cities on Saturday in which he was termed as "anti-Hindu", the AAP's national convener said those behind the posters were "demons and descendants of Kans".

"Many BJP leaders and workers meet me and secretly ask me to do something to defeat the ruling party. I would like to tell all the BJP workers and leaders who want to defeat their party to work secretly for AAP," he said at a rally in tribal-dominated Valsad district in Gujarat, where Assembly polls are slated to be held in the next couple of months.

"We have to break 27

years of their (BJP's) arrogance. I know you have your businesses, if you join us they will damage your business. You stay there, but secretly work to defeat it. Congress workers need not fear, you can leave your party and join AAP. Forget your party," Kejriwal said.

He called upon the voters to support AAP in the upcoming election in order to "wipe out the demons".

Everyone should get united for a new Gujarat. Do not care about the party, work for Gujarat, work for the country, he said, and claimed that AAP will usher in a "new storm, new politics, new party, new faces, new ideas, and new dawn".

The Delhi CM also slammed the BJP workers, saying, "They go around and whisper that 'While Kejriwal is good, he will not win in Gujarat this time, but next time'. If anyone tells you so, then know that he is from the BJP. Tell him that not next time, but (Kejriwal will win this time)."

On the banners calling him "anti-Hindu", he alleged,



"Those who insult god are called 'rakshas' (demons). Those who insult gods are called 'Kans ki aulaad' (descendants of Kans). What would demons do in ancient times? They would enter any village, indulge in hooliganism, tease and rape women."

Calling himself a devotee of Lord Hanuman, Kejriwal said he was born on the day of Janmashtami and Krishna was his nickname at home.

"And Lord Krishna has blessed me and sent me with a special task to finish off these descendants of Kans. Public is god. I need you support. Will you support me to complete

the work of god, to finish the demons?" he asked.

"We have to wipe out these demons for the peace of the public. We have to finish those corrupt goons, those who insult gods.

Inflation has made life impossible. Price of everything rises while the salary does not," he said.

Kejriwal promised that if AAP comes to power in Gujarat, it would provide clean administration and eliminate corruption. He also reminded people of his party's promises including providing free electricity, 15 lakh jobs, unemployment allowance, in Gujarat.

# Prashant takes jibe at Nitish, says age catching up with him



PTI ■ PATNA

Poll strategist-turned-activist Prashant Kishor on Sunday alleged that age was catching up with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, who was also feeling "politically isolated, after being surrounded by people whom he did not trust".

Kishor made the stinging remarks in response to the statement by 71-year-old Kumar the day before that the former was working for the BJP and had once advised him to merge the JD(U) with the Congress.

"Slowly, age seems to be catching up with Nitish Kumar and he seems to be growing delusional," said Kishor, who has earlier worked with the Bihar CM both as a professional and a party colleague.

"Kumar starts speaking one thing and ends up speaking

something altogether different. If he believes I am working for the BJP, why would I suggest a move that could strengthen the Congress," the 45-year-old activist, who is currently on a 3,500-km-long 'pada yatra', covering every nook and corner of Bihar, said in a short video statement.

Kumar keeps uttering things which have no meaning, the founder of political consultancy firm I-PAC claimed.

"The English word delusional fits Nitish Kumar perfectly. He is feeling politically isolated as he is surrounded by people whom he does not trust. This has left him fearful and in trepidation he keeps saying things that have no meaning," added Kishor, who has been critical of the JD(U) leader's frequent change of alliance partners.

# Nitish should resign, has grown indifferent towards EBCs who support PM: Sushil Modi

PTI ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has grown indifferent towards Extremely Backward Classes who are, by and large, supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, senior BJP leader and former deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi alleged.

At a press conference here, Modi demanded the resignation of his ex-boss whom he squarely blamed for the adverse judgement of Patna High Court that declared as "illegal" quotas for OBCs and EBCs in urban local body polls, which has caused the election process to hang in balance.

"The state's Advocate General Lalit Kishor had through communications dated February 4 and March 12 advised the state government to set up a Commission to fulfil the Supreme Court's triple test criteria for such quotas. On March 22 and May 11, the State Election Commission also sought instructions from the government on the matter," claimed Modi.

The triple test required the state government to set up a dedicated commission to gather data on the backwardness of OBCs in every local body, to specify the proportion of reservation in each local body in



light of the commission's recommendations, and ensure that such reservation does not exceed 50 per cent of the total seats reserved for SC/ST/OBC together.

"But, because of the obstinacy of the Chief Minister, the Advocate General had to change his own opinion. However, the State Election Commission, mindful of the Supreme Court order which impacted recently held municipal polls in Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, still held the view that triple test must be fulfilled in Bihar too," claimed the Rajya Sabha MP.

The Advocate General could not be reached for his comments. Sushil Modi asserted that contradictory stances of the SEC and the state government resulted in the High Court striking down the reservations on October 4.

"Kumar knows that EBCs are supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi so he has given up on them. We

demand that municipal polls be held at the earliest by fulfilling all the necessary criteria for OBC and EBC quotas. Candidates who have lost their money in campaigns be compensated by the state government, Modi said.

He also demanded that Kumar take moral responsibility for the "humiliation" of the EBCs and tender his resignation.

Modi recalled that he was the state's minister for urban development when quotas for EBCs were introduced in urban local bodies in 2007.

"The Supreme Court order for the triple test has been in force for the last 12 months. Nitish Kumar remained adamant, labouring under the impression that just because elections were held without the triple test in 2007, 2012 and 2017, these will be allowed this time too. The result has come in a judgement that deprives the EBCs of their rights," alleged the BJP leader, whose party lost power in the state two months ago.

The Patna High Court on October 4 ruled that reservations for OBCs and EBCs in the state's urban local body elections were "illegal" and ordered that the process be held by "re-notifying" reserved seats as general category ones.

# Shinde camp 'colluding' with BJP to finish Shiv Sena: Uddhav

## Uddhav dares rebel Sena's MLAs to contest poll without invoking late Bal Thackeray's name

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Charging that rebel Shiv Sena MLAs led by current Chief Minister Eknath Shinde had "colluded" to with the BJP to "finish" his party, Shiv Sena President Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday dared the Shinde faction MLAs to contest the forthcoming polls without invoking the name of late Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray.

Interacting with the people across the state on Facebook live a day after the Election froze the Shiv Sena's party "bow and arrow" party symbol, Uddhav singled out the rebel Sena MLAs who joined Shinde in rebelling against his leadership for an attack, and questioned their motive behind joined hands with the current chief minister and the BJP to "finish" the "original" Shiv Sena.

In his interaction that came hours after his party party suggested three options of a trident, rising sun or mashaal (burning torch) as its poll symbol for the Andheri East Assembly by-poll scheduled on November 3, Uddhav said: "What do these



gaddar (traitor) Shiv Sena MLAs want to achieve? With the help of the BJP, the rebel MLAs are out to finish the Shiv Sena that brought them to a state what they are today. You (Shinde) did not want me -- being the son of late Balasaheb Thackeray -- to continue as the chief minister, you sought the help of the BJP and got me removed from the post. Till that point, it was alright. Now he wants to become the president of the Shiv Sena. This is too much."

"Today I dare all these gaddar (traitor) MLAs to contest the forthcoming elections without taking the name of late Balasaheb Thackeray and get elected," Uddhav said.

Accusing Shinde of trying to "doing things against the Shiv

Sena that even former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi did not do even during the Emergency period", Uddhav said: "You (Shinde) are attempting to do things that even Indira Gandhi did not do during Emergency. At that time, a proposal was made to Indira Gandhi to ban the Shiv Sena. But she did not ban the Shiv Sena. Even at that the Shiv Sainiks were being harassed and many party were externed from their cities of residence. But, at no point in time, the then ruling Congress tried to finish the Shiv Sena."

"You accuse me of giving up the Hindutva cause. But you people are sitting in the lap of the BJP that is out to finish the Shiv Sena. Tell me who is the sinner --the Congress or the BJP?," Uddhav asked.

# PDP's Mufti praises Rahul, taunts Amit Shah over 'dynasty' in BJP

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Praising Congress party leader Rahul Gandhi, who is currently touring different parts of the country in connection with his "Bharat Jodo yatra", Chief of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti Sunday taunted Union Home Minister Amit Shah by dragging name of his son, other BJP Ministers and their children over the allegations of practising 'dynastic politics'.

Constant bashing by the Union Home Minister during his recent visit to J&K and painting the Kashmir based regional political parties in bad light apparently provoked Mehbooba Mufti. Hitting back she went on to accuse the BJP of itself practising 'dynastic' politics. Mufti was addressing a day long convention of party workers here in Jammu.

Cozying up to the Congress party and positioning herself as someone closer to some of the prominent Dogra families of Jammu, Mehbooba asked Amit Shah to explain, "Why he skips references of his own party men when he talks about 'dynastic' politics".

"Political parties namely Congress, PDP, National Conference, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janta Dal and others may be having dynastic leaders but BJP's tally is 10 times bigger than these leaders' ,

Mehbooba charged

She bluntly questioned Amit Shah, "when you talk about 'dynastic' politics, when you talk about 'Shahzada' (referring to Rahul Gandhi) why don't you talk about your own 'Shahzada'. Why don't you mention his name? You don't mention the names of Arun Jaitley's son, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Anurag Thakur, younger son of Sahib Singh Verma and others". She explained, "why am I mentioning all these names. They are heading different sports bodies and enjoying the perks and privileges".

In a sarcastic tone Mehbooba Mufti even asked the audience to tell her, "Have they ever seen Jay Shah handling a cricket bat? I want to ask if Arun Jaitley's son really knows how to play a game? She alleged, "since several hundred crores of rupees are involved it is for this reason these people have been saddled there". But all they remember is Shahzada (Rahul Gandhi). They ridicule him. But he (Rahul Gandhi) is touring different parts of the country to preserve the 'political legacy' of his family. She appealed to the people of Jammu and Kashmir to unite in order to save the secular fabric of India.

Launching a scathing attack on the BJP Mehbooba Mufti said, BJP talks about rampant corruption in Jammu and Kashmir but today i want to ask who is indulging in cor-



rupt practices. Why the Union Territory administration has cancelled the selection lists of different competitive exams conducted for filling vacant posts in the different departments. Who is involved in these irregularities? We want to know the identity of those people allegedly behind these recruitment scams? Mehbooba also accused the BJP of unleashing different central agencies to topple elected governments and destroying the spirit of Democracy.

Reaching out to the people of Jammu region, where she claimed she had spent long years of her youth, Mehbooba said before the abrogation of Article 370 these leaders used to propagate that the kashmiris were siphoning off their share of developmental funds and depriving them (people of Jammu). Hence it was necessary to Abrogate Article 370. And now they are saying they will make a CM from Jammu. Mufti claimed, "the decision to

elect a Chief Minister will be taken by the common masses. If BJP really wanted they could have made a Lieutenant Governor (LG) from Jammu but instead, they made the LG of Jammu and Kashmir from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other places". Didn't anyone from Jammu deserve to be the LG or even his advisor?" Mufti asked. They could have made a Chief Secretary from Jammu or even the Chairman of the J&K Bank from the Jammu region. She claimed the people of Jammu region which elected the maximum number of BJP legislators were feeling suffocated and can't even share their angst. "They are even taunted for bringing them to power but they are helpless. Even Mufti Mohd Sayeed decided to join hands with the BJP because people of Jammu region had voted them to power".

The Former Chief Minister winded her speech by asking people of J&K to get united like people of Ladakh to secure their land and jobs.

# Stalin elected again as DMK chief, sets sight on winning 2024 LS polls in TN

PTI ■ CHENNAI

DMK stalwart and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin was unanimously elected as party president at the party's general council meeting held here on Sunday.

In his address following his election, Stalin asked office-bearers to take a vow to work towards securing a landslide victory for the party in the 2024 Lok Sabha (LS) polls and emerge in national politics as an unassailable force.

The party should win all the 39 Parliamentary constituencies in the state and the lone seat in neighbouring Puducherry as well, he said.

This is the second time Stalin is being elected unopposed as party chief.

Exuding confidence that the DMK would win all the 40 Parliamentary segments, he tasked party functionaries to begin work right away to set up booth committees to face the polls and complete the work in two months.

Targeting both the BJP and the AIADMK,



Stalin said the saffron party is attempting to do politics in Tamil Nadu against the DMK through defamatory propaganda as it has no achievements to list.

"The BJP is trying to do politics by stoking religious and spiritual sentiments," he claimed.

Since the people of Tamil Nadu have never mixed politics with spiritualism, the "BJP is suffocating". The AIADMK is a divided house, riddled with factional feud, and the national party is trying to use it to its benefit. "Do not forget that the BJP would go to any extent of cheap politics to win the next LS polls," he alleged.

# Youth saying no room for hate politics in India: Rahul on 32nd day of Bharat Yatra

PTI ■ TUMKUR (K'TAKA)

Holding banners against "rising" unemployment and communal divide in society, a group of youths met Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday and joined him in the Bharat Jodo Yatra which, the party said, seeks to highlight their issues.

On the 32nd day of the yatra that started on September 7, Gandhi said some political parties were trying to spread hatred in the country by mis-leading youngsters.

The former Congress president, who was accompanied by senior leader Siddaramaiah and Karnataka PCC president D K



Shivakumar, interacted with many people, including children, women and a local singer, during his 20-km yatra on Sunday.

He appealed to the youth to join the yatra to spread the mes-

sage of peace and brotherhood and unite India.

Sharing a picture of his interaction, Gandhi said these youths are saying that there is no room for hate in our beloved India.

# Take effective steps to control communicable diseases: UP CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Stepping up precautionary measures against diseases like malaria, dengue and chikungunya, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday directed officials to effectively implement the ongoing Communicable Disease Control Campaign in the state and set up dedicated isolation wards in medical colleges and district hospitals while ensuring proper cleanliness.

While giving these instructions during a high-level review meeting with senior officials at his official residence here, Yogi Adityanath said, "Even as Covid-19 remains in effective control, there is a need to remain vigilant and increase testing.

He said the spread of communicable diseases should be prevented in view of the rains and festive season and proper control measures should be put in place.

He said public address systems should be widely used to create awareness among the people about Covid-19 and communicable diseases.

The chief minister was reviewing the Covid-19 situation in a high-level meeting called at his official residence here on Sunday. He said that in view of festivals, it was natural that movement of people would increase and in such a situation, vigilance and caution towards Covid-19 was very important.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

# Unsurprising

Delhi Minister's resignation was on the cards, given Kejriwal's Hanuman *bhakt* image

Rajendra Pal Gautam's resignation as a Delhi Minister should not come as a surprise, for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal wants to present his Aam Aadmi Party as a Hindu alternative to the BJP. Or at least an alternative that is not anti-Hindu. This is the reason that AAP leaders have shied away from slamming the saffron brigade in a phraseology that is usually employed by self-proclaimed secular parties. Of course, all parties in India are secular but some are more secular than others. The AAP seems to have chosen the less secular path; some may even call it 'soft Hindutva'. Last year, he and his Deputy, Manish Sisodia, along with their wives, offered prayers at the Akshardham temple in the Capital and performed Lakshmi Puja on Diwali. They were accompanied by their Cabinet colleagues. He also tweeted, "As two crore Delhiites will together perform Lakshmi Puja, marvelous vibes will be created across Delhi and all the visible and invisible forces will bless them." In February 2020, during the run-up to the Assembly election in Delhi, Kejriwal proudly announced that he is a 'Hanuman *bhakt*' and even recited the Hanuman Chalisa in front of an audience. Eager to become a major political force in Gujarat, he recently promised "free visits to the Ayodhya Ram Temple" to "all people from Gujarat" if his party wins the forthcoming Assembly election. He even chanted 'Jai Shri Ram,' which is kind of BJP's war cry.



In this *sanskari* symphony, Gautam's presence at an event in which 10,000 people converted to Buddhism was a discordant note. The converted people took BR Ambedkar's 22 vows and pledged that they won't pray to Hindu gods and goddesses. A video of the event that went viral showed a monk, who shared the dais with Gautam, administering the oath: "I will have no faith in Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, nor will I worship them as God. I will have no faith in Ram or Krishna, nor will I worship them. I will have no faith in Gauri, Ganapati and other Hindu gods, nor will I worship them." Gautam also took the oath. Unsurprisingly, the BJP came down on him and the AAP like a tonne of bricks. For much less, the saffron party and its fellow travellers hit the roof; now there was audio-visual evidence of the AAP Minister hurting the sentiments of Hindus. The saffron brigade sought his resignation; the AAP didn't defend him. All this may incense liberals, for they must be seeing this as betrayal by one of their comrades; after all, Kejriwal had begun as an anti-establishment activist whose pronouncements often appeared Left leaning. From anarchist to Hanuman *bhakt* has been quite a journey. But that happens when a person or a group of persons enter politics with good intentions but without a sound political philosophy. So, the only policy AAP can offer is freebies. It has become a floating mass without the ballast.

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Dancers perform during the upcoming Diwali celebration, in Trafalgar Square, London

PTI

## Bhandari's legacy

Bhaichung Bhutia lays claim to flag and legacy of Nar Bahadur Bhandari's party

L looks like former Indian football captain Bhaichung Bhutia is going to be a serious full-time politician. His Hamro Sikkim Party (HSP), formed in 2018, has adopted the flag of the Sikkim Sangram Parishad (SSP). The party is one of five Sikkim political parties that were delisted by the Election Commission in September. He is now taken the mantle of SSP founder Nar Bahadur Bhandari who was the first chief minister of Sikkim and expired in 2017. The Hamro Sikkim Party or HSP holds Bhandari in high esteem and would like to take his legacy forward. The takeover is going to heat the political climate of Sikkim and lead to new permutations and combinations. Most parties who once came to power remained in power for long. Sikkim Democratic Front (SDF) led by Pawan Chamling is a strong contender and biggest challenger to the ruling SKM. Pawan Chamling ruled the state for 34 years and is credited with several revolutionary policies like turning it into an organic state and making it the first state in the country with zero kuchcha houses.

Though Bhaichung Bhutia's celebrity status helps but he will have to show to bring about a radical change in Sikkim which is at the moment reeling under high inflation and unemployment rate and the present Golay government is drawing flak for it. After Sikkim became India's 22nd state in 1975, it held its first assembly election in 1979. Bhandari became chief minister for the first time and later formed SSP. He merged SSP with congress but later left it. The SSP went on to win the 1985 and 1989 Sikkim assembly elections. The party finally lost power to the Sikkim Democratic Front in 1994. However, the SSP in the 2004 election, supported a new party, the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha, with which Bhandari was associated. SKM is presently in power. The HSP, meanwhile, was started by footballer-turned-politician Bhutia in 2018. In the 2019 assembly election, the party nominated candidates in 24 constituencies but lost all of them. In the 2019 by-polls for the Gangtok and Martam-Rumpteck assembly seats too, HSP fielded two candidates including Bhutia (for Gangtok) but didn't win either. So as things stand today Pawan Chamling seems to be having a good shot at the 2024 assembly elections. But can he get past Golay and Baichung only time will tell?



# Gyanvapi mosque: The row rages on

The mosque litigation deepens divisions in the society as Hindus want to correct historical discourse while Muslims want to latch on to it



BRIENDER SINGH PANWAR



Rejecting the plea of the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee citing the Places of Worship Act, 1991 as an argument to set the case aside, the Varanasi district court upheld the maintainability of the Gyanvapi suit and has decided to continue hearing a petition seeking daily worship of Hindu deities. The case has already generated a lot of heat and dust in political circles and society at large. It has opened floodgates for litigation concerning disputes between religious communities over places of worship and would have a far-reaching impact. These developments have evoked mixed reactions amongst various sections of society. Many devout Hindus cite "Medieval History" and feel that the historical wrongs must be undone at any cost.

They support the "Cultural Nationalism" of the BJP. The opposition parties harp on secular credentials opposing the communal politics of the BJP and speak against righting historical wrongs. However, a large section of the majority community feels that we are taking the religious issues too far which is creating unnecessary conflict and tension between the otherwise peaceful communities living in perfect harmony. To grasp the issue, we need to understand the chronology of events. Last year, a civil suit was filed by five women seeking enforcement of their right to worship deities within the Gyanvapi mosque complex. In April, the civil judge allowed a video survey of the mosque in which "shivling" was said to have been found in the "wazukhana". This led to Anjuman Intezamia filing a case in the Supreme Court on the plea that the proceedings were an attempt to change the religious character of the mosque. The places of Worship Act, of 1991 bars the conversion of the religious character of a place of worship from how it existed on August 15, 1947. On May 20, the Supreme Court realized the "complexity of the issue involved in the civil suit" and transferred the case to the District Judge saying that

it would intervene only after the District Judge had decided on the preliminary aspects of the case. After hearing the case, the District Judge ruled that he did not find any law which barred the petitioners from filing such a suit. Now, after acceptance of the case, the onus of proving the claims would be on the plaintiffs.

As claimed by the mosque side, the argument for barring the suit rests under three specific laws- The places of Worship Act, 1991, The Wakf Act, 1995, and the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Act, 1983. According to Section 4 of the Provision of The places of Worship Act, 1991, & "any suit, appeal or other proceedings concerning the conversion of the religious character of any place of worship existing on (that day) ...is pending before any court, tribunal or other authority, the same shall abate. No suit, appeal, or another proceeding concerning any such matter shall lie on or after such commencement in any court, tribunal, or other authority". The Muslim side argued that the mosque is in existence for over 600 years and that allowing the Civil suits would alter the character of the mosque whereas the counterargument of the Hindu side was that until 1993, reg-



AS CLAIMED BY THE MOSQUE SIDE, THE ARGUMENT FOR BARRING THE SUIT RESTS UNDER THREE SPECIFIC LAWS- THE PLACES OF WORSHIP ACT, 1991, THE WAKF ACT, 1995, AND THE KASHI VISHWANATH TEMPLE ACT, 1983

ular prayers were offered inside the mosque complex and since 1993 prayers were allowed on a designated day, every year. Based upon this argument, the Varanasi Court concluded that the Places of Worship Act does not bar the civil suit.

Before deciding on the issue, the court will have to look into evidence on the situation in 1947. This has led to the tricky reading of the law and has opened the door for a wider religious divide in the country. Quoting section 85 of The Wakf Act, 1995, the Muslim side argued that only Wakf Tribunal, Lucknow can decide the suit. They submitted that Varanasi Gazette says that the mosque is built on Wakf land and that Allahabad High court has held that the land is being used from time immemorial for mosque or Muslim burial and would be treated as Wakf property. But, the court overruled the arguments and decided that the suit is not barred by the Wakf Act. Another plea taken by the Muslim side is the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Act, 1983, which states that "temple land" was demarcated and the Board of Trustees appointed under the law did not interfere in the case. The court cited section 4 (9) of the Act, which defines "Temple" to hold that it does

not bar the mosque premises.

While the legal battle will continue in court, it is clear that the crux of the matter lies in politics and not in law. Although RSS Chief, Mohan Bhagwat had emphasized on many occasions that the Sangh joined the Ram Janambhumi movement due to historical reasons and it would no longer be associated with any other demand for conversion of a mosque to a temple, it is clear that the Hindu claim to mosques at Kashi and Mathura is part of the political agenda of the BJP and other Sangh Parivar outfits in court and on the street. The Supreme Court in its 2019 Ayodhya Ramjanambhoomi order described the Places of Worship Act as a "legitimate instrument designed to protect the secular features of the Indian polity". Following this approach, we need to work out a way through which the majority assures minorities about the sanctity of their other places of worship so that the environment of mutual trust is created and maintained.

(The writer is a senior journalist and Chairman, Panwar Group of Institutions, Solan, Himachal Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TOUGH FIGHT IN ASSEMBLY BYPOLL

Sir — The order of the Election Commission not to allow use of the Shiv Sena's party name and election symbol in an upcoming Assembly bypoll is unfortunate and surprising despite giving all the documentary proof, but it does not mean the Uddhav Thackeray-led group was weak or demoralised. The Election Commission barred both the Shiv Sena factions from using the party name and its election symbol in the Andheri East Assembly bypoll on November 3. In an interim order, the commission asked the factions to suggest three different name choices and also as many free symbols for allocation to their respective groups.

The Congress and the NCP have decided to support Ramesh Latke's wife Rujuta Latke, the candidate of the Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena, their coalition partner in the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA). The BJP, an ally of the Shinde faction, has decided to field Murji Patel, a corporator in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation. The Shinde-led (Sena) camp is not contesting the byelection, still the use of the party name and symbol was restricted. The Shiv Sena (Thackeray faction) along with the NCP and Congress will give a tough fight to the BJP.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### TAMIL NADU IS SHOWING THE WAY

Sir — Tamil Nadu's model is built on small wins instead of big hits while Gujarat's model is from star power from policies of PM Narendra Modi and others. Both States could learn from each other. The politics is governed by movie actors/writers and the State is ranked as "very highly corrupt" by Transparency International. It is also muddled in external conflicts (Sri Lankan issue). Other than having retained Madras, Tamil Nadu doesn't have as many natural advantages. It is quite dry and dependent on water from neighboring States. It is also quite energy deficient with few natural resources.

## Free hand to new Cong chief?



With the Congress presidential poll a week away, its former president Rahul Gandhi, on the sidelines of his ongoing 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', has tried to contest the public perception that either of the two candidates in the fray for the AICC presidency will actually be a rubber stamp in the hands of the party's *de facto* powerhouse comprising the Sonia-Priyanka-Rahul triumvirate. Instead,

Rahul eulogised both the candidates, Mallikarjun Kharge and Shashi Tharoor, for their tall stature being endowed with broad perspective and vast sagacity.

Notably, the Congress chief's election is going to be held on October 17. The counting of votes takes place the same day and the result would be declared on October 19. Interestingly, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot being the first choice of the Congress leadership for the top job notwithstanding, he had to out-of-the-blue withdraw following an unsavoury misunderstanding suddenly cropping up between the party's central leadership and himself over the chief ministership of Rajasthan. He did not at any cost want to surrender his chief ministership in compliance with the 'one-man, one-post' commitment which Rahul Gandhi had made at the party's Udaipur Chintan Shivir earlier!

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Despite a long coastline, shipping cannot easily use the coast due to it being shallow, leading the Government to consider the Sethu Samudram project to dredge the ocean floor. Compared to Gujarat, it also has a weaker entrepreneurial culture. Mid-day meal scheme, a landmark scheme started by the Madras Corporation in 1925, provides free meals to Government school kids. It has markedly improved school attendance and kids' development. Gujarat followed it 60 years later, but quickly abandoned it the first time. A bright future for Tamil Nadu is on the cards.

CK Subramaniam | Chennai

### POOR DRUG REGULATORY SYSTEM

Sir — It is a sad commentary on the drug regulatory system in India that spurious drugs are flooding the market. Shockingly, cough syrup manufactured in Haryana claimed the lives of 66 children. The development highlights the pain and agony of the parents who gave their children the syrup to cure their disease but, unfortu-

nately, caused their death. Such incidents bring a bad name to the country and its pharmaceutical industry. It will take India a long time to rebuild its lost image and credibility. It will tarnish India's reputation of being a global pharma hub.

The drug regulatory authority should have been on its toes to see that no sub-standard and adulterated drug rolls out into the market, local or global. Otherwise, it will undo whatever good work has been done in the past by Indian pharmaceutical companies. PM Modi recently stressed that Indian drugs had earned the world's trust and that India could be called the 'pharmacy to the world'. However, such negative reports on the quality and safety of our medicines will be a massive blow to the country's image. The Government should take strict action against such drug manufacturers.

Vishal Mayur | Tumkur

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

## SOUND BITE

Is humanity only for those pelting stones? Aren't there any human rights for those children and women who are hit by stones?



Gujarat Minister —Harsh Sanghavi



Everything illegal must be destroyed, everything stolen must be returned to Ukraine, everything occupied by

Russia must be expelled. Ukraine's presidential advisor —Mykhailo Podolyak

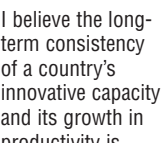
My GK is widely known to be weak. But my emotional intelligence is something that I have worked really hard to cultivate.



Actor —Alia Bhatt



I'm sad for him. As a replacement, I'd look at someone who can qualify with similar experience. Shami is probably the guy I would go with. South African cricketer —Dale Steyn



I believe the long-term consistency of a country's innovative capacity and its growth in productivity is linked to the number and quality of its centres of higher learning. Industrialist —Anand Mahindra



FIRST COLUMN

DIVERSITY, ACCEPTANCE  
KEY TO TECH COMPANY

Diversity, equity and inclusion, all come together to drive global growth



PIYUSH GOEL

More companies are now aware than ever that promoting diversity and inclusion benefits more than just the company's image. Diversity in the workplace can help teams better understand customer needs in a globalized, digital, and changing consumer demographic environment. Diversity at work in this age of globalization means that people from different backgrounds, races, ages, and abilities are treated equally.

For tech companies, better hiring and retention practices that focus on diversity and inclusion can go a long way in making the workplace even more ethical and can also directly affect how products are made.

Because technology is a big part of everyone's daily lives, different kinds of people can work together to create a product that works for everyone. Diversity leads to innovation and creativity, which drive the tech world to make products and services that are useful and relevant.

In terms of gender, women make up less than one-third of the tech workforce. Adapting policies that are friendly to women is a necessity for organizations.

In a 'WeAreTechWomen' survey about the problems women face in the tech industry, 58 per cent of them said that seeing visible role models is one of the things that makes them want to join an organization.



In situations like these, it's crucial to hire people from different backgrounds and take care of them once they're employed through things like mentorship, chances to lead, and promotions that are fair and clear.

Today, businesses that hire, promote, train, lead, and manage teams in a way that includes everyone do up to 30 per cent better than their competitors in terms of revenue per employee and profitability.

Also, companies like 'Beyond Key' have expanded to international markets because their diverse team knows how to meet the needs of different customers. Different people at work bring different kinds of skills to the table, which helps the company in the long run.

Citizens globally are more vocal and proud about who they are outside of work. Since tech is an appealing field of work for many people of different identities, it must be open to a wide range of talent.

One way to bring in diversity is with the people in leadership roles. They can encourage different kinds of talent and be sensitive to the needs of other employees by offering remote work to those who need it and getting rid of unconscious bias.

Additionally, companies must use inclusive practices and raise awareness for diversity among their team. To help a workforce with people from different generations, similar methods must be used. Leaders should develop different ways to work with and appreciate employees of all ages.

It's also time for organizations to take steps to support the mental health of their diverse talent pool. Not only does this mean putting in place good policies, but it also means improving small things like how supervisors, managers, and coworkers talk, act, and show empathy for each other.

Many workplaces today pay more attention to DEI than D&I. (Diversity and Inclusion). Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are what DEI stands for. Equity is a reminder that not everyone starts on the same level playing field. To build a fair workplace, you need to act quickly and carefully. With a culture that doesn't favour anyone based on who they are or where they come from, an organization can grow a lot. Now more than ever, training and education, judging performance, and accessing resources must be fair and equal.

*(The author is founder and CEO, Beyond Key)*

# Unyielding Opposition derails power reforms



UTTAM GUPTA

## Power reforms have taken the backseat and promises of reforms and competition have been given up by the Centre

The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2022 proposing amendments to the Electricity Act, 2003, with the stated objective of transforming the power sector, was introduced in Lok Sabha on August 8, 2022. Facing stiff resistance from the opposition parties, it had to be referred to a Standing Committee.

The Opposition parties especially those ruling the State governments opposed the amendments on two major grounds: (i) these would result in over-centralization of the power distribution (Under the Constitution, distribution is a State subject even as generation and transmission (G&T) are under the purview of the Union Government); (ii) these curtail powers of the States to give subsidy to farmers – an allegation denied by RK Singh, the Union Minister for Power and New & Renewable Energy.

The irony is that proposed amendments in the Bill (2022) are nowhere near the de-licensing of the electricity distribution business – as proposed in the draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill or EAB, 2021 – which was intended to bring in competition, and give the consumer power to choose suppliers (or “open access”).

For a better understanding as to why the bill doesn't come up to the mark, let us capture some basic facts about the architecture of the power sector in India. Under the extant arrangements, an overwhelming share of power generated by public sector undertakings (PSUs) such as the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), etc., and independent power producers (IPPs), besides generating stations of State Electricity Boards (SEBs) is procured by power distribution companies or discoms (these are mostly owned and controlled by State governments) under power purchase agreements (PPA). Most of these PPAs are long-term contracts up to 25 years.

A mere 5 per cent of the electricity is traded. Under instruction from the top political brass in the State establishment, discoms sell a major slice of electricity – thus procured – to some preferred consumers, viz., poor households (PHHs) and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of purchase, transmission, and distribution, or even free. On the units sold to these target groups, they incur colossal under-recovery. This is aggravated by aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses – most of it is plain theft.

In a bid to offset the loss, discoms charge high tariffs on supplies to industries/businesses besides non-poor HHs (NPHHs). The former are the sole suppliers of electricity; hence, the latter have no option but to pay. It is a different matter that despite this cross-subsidization, overall discoms continue to incur huge losses.

There is a need for strengthening discoms as competition and resultant benefit to the consumers is possible only when all players are strong.

This in turn, will require that (a) dis-



UNDER THE 2003 ACT, THE STATE ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION (SERC) SPECIFIES THE CEILING FOR TARIFF CHARGED BY LICENSEE. AS PER THE 2022 BILL, THE SERC WILL ALSO SPECIFY A MINIMUM TARIFF FOR SUCH CASES

*(The author is a policy analyst)*



coms are unshackled from State control and are free to set tariff on supplies to all their consumers – including poor households (HHs) and farmers based on their cost of purchase, wheeling and distribution and negotiate PPAs; (b) States give subsidy directly to the target groups using DBT (direct benefit transfer) instead of riding piggy-back on discoms.

**Does the Bill match these expectations?**

The provision for multiple distribution licensees in an area of supply existed even in the 2003 Act with a caveat that all licensees would distribute electricity through their own network. The Act also had a provision for ‘open access’. But, this didn't deliver. This is because another provision in the Act required such customers to pay an ‘open access surcharge’ (OAS) to the discom that they wanted to leave. By fixing the surcharge at a high level, the States ensured that post-switch, the effective cost of power – tariff charged by the new supplier plus OAS – was higher than what they paid to the discom.

That rendered the switch uneconomical. The Centre will prescribe the criteria for deciding who will get the license to supply in a given area. The licensees will have to share the power and associated costs as per the existing PPAs of the existing discom. To meet any additional requirements, a licensee may enter into additional PPAs but only after meeting the obligations of existing PPAs. Such additional power need not be shared with other discoms. Under the 2003 Act, the State Electricity Regulatory Commission (SERC) specifies the ceiling for tariff charged by licensee. As per the 2022 Bill, the SERC will also specify a minimum tariff for such cases.

The proposed dispensation doesn't make things any better. There is no de-licensing of power distribution even in wild imagination. Besides, a private player will merely be roped in to complement what the existing discom is doing (instead of giving an alternative). The former will get shackled as much as the latter even as the tariff – floor as well as the ceiling – and other modalities will be decided by the bureaucrat in the power ministry.

The private firm may get some leeway when it comes to purchasing additional power which it doesn't have to share with other discoms. Here again, charges payable to the existing discom for using its network is the elephant in the room. Setting these at high level – on the lines of OAS charged by States under the Electricity Act (2003) – will undermine its ability to keep costs low.

The Bill (2022) also provides for the state government to set up a Cross-Subsidy Balancing Fund (CSBF). Any surplus with a distribution licensee on account of cross-

subsidy will be deposited into the fund. The fund will be used to finance deficits in cross-subsidy for other discoms in the same area or any other area. This shows that neither there is an effort to stop using discoms/licensees from giving subsidized power to farmers/PPHs nor put an end to charging high rates from the industry and businesses.

The Bill talks of the SERC fixing minimum tariff or simply, charging some amount from the preferred groups instead of giving them free. But, it seems highly unlikely. Long back, the State chief ministers had vowed to charge a minimum 50 paise per unit from farmers. Sadly, this is yet to see the light of the day.

In effect, the Bill maintains the status quo. Suppliers other than State owned/sponsored discom won't come; even if they do, they will be hamstrung by controls. There won't be any competition and industries and businesses (besides NPHHs) are unlikely to get any relief in tariff.

Yet, losses of discoms will continue unabated as there are no plans to disband subsidy to PHHs or farmers. Meanwhile, the Bill has several provisions which will lead to the Union Government appropriating to itself more power in selection of licensees, tariff setting, appointment of the members of the SERC and Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL).

POINT COUNTERPOINT

LALUJI'S SON HAS STUDIED TILL CLASS 9 AND IS ASPIRING TO BECOME CM. YOUR SON IN SIMILAR CIRCUMSTANCES WON'T EVEN GET A PEON'S JOB. —ELECTION STRATEGIST PRASHANT KISHOR



THE BJP IS RELYING ON CONSPIRACIES IN BIHAR. FIRST IT USED RCP SINGH AND NOW PRASHANT KISHOR. BUT WE ARE VIGILANT. —JD(U) LEADER RAJIV RANJAN SINGH

# Time to look at reasons responsible for employee burnout

## On World Mental Health Day, we need to remember that as change is the only constant, it should also reflect at workplaces



FORUM LALKA



MOITRAYEE DAS

*(Forum Lalka is a Senior Psychologist at Mindtemple, Mumbai. Moitrayee Das Assistant Professor of Psychology at FLAME University, Pune.)*

A trend that has gone viral on 'TikTok' has now caught the attention of the people with many relating to it. This is a video that was posted in July 2022 by the username @zkchillin where in the user mentioned “You're not outright quitting your job, but you're quitting the idea of going above and beyond. You're still performing your duties, but you're no longer subscribing to the hustle-culture mentality that work has to be your life; the reality is it's not, and your worth as a person is not defined by your labour.”

It is assumed that the people do their jobs with the highest level of passion, purpose and sincerity without understanding the silent unpopular factors such as

poor economy, degrading job market, lack of opportunities, lack of skills and accessibility to resources and spaces, rampant discrimination at the workplace. All of these get even worse for the under-privileged, vulnerable and marginalized sections.

Anthony Klotz, Associate Professor at University of College London's School of Management, says, “Although this has come from a younger generation and in new packaging, this trend has been studied under different names for decades: disengagement, neglect, withdrawal.” The term ‘coasting’ primarily means the same thing – wherein one does what is expected of them without going above

and beyond their job requirements.

An article titled ‘Rather than quit, more and more employees are happy to just get by and collect their salaries. Is it necessarily a problem?’ by Alex Christian was published in BBC in 2022. It explains the many reasons why employees choose to work the way they do and ‘No’, it has nothing to do with ‘laziness’. Mark Bolino, Director of Management and International Business at the University of Oklahoma, US, explains how multiple reasons could lead to employee coasting, with this phenomenon gaining higher popularity since the pandemic, factors such as burnout, missed promotion, poor match between contribution and reward, poor mental health, mounting deadlines/projects leading to a “natural ebb and flow to work” (Bolino).

While the heat on quiet (or not so quiet) quitting is going on in and out of the digital space, CEO of Bombay Shaving company, Shantanu Deshpande, has come under radar now for his online post that reads, “When you are 22 and new in your job, throw yourself into it. Eat well and stay fit, but put in the 18-hour days for at least 4-5 years. I see a LOT of youngsters who watch random content all over and convince themselves that ‘work life balances, spending time with family, rejuvenation bla bla’

is important. It is, but not that early. That early, worship your work.

Whatever it is. The flex you build in the first five years of your career carries you for the rest of it.”

Deshpande is quickly joined by Harsimarbir Singh, Co-founder Pristyn Care, who has shared a checklist of ‘eligibility criteria’ to get the right people on board, which directly point towards the extremely toxic hustle culture of today's times. Singh in the past has defended the LinkedIn post shared by Shantanu Deshpande and has further added that ‘successful’ people have a list of common factors – long working hours, missed family events, working when others were relaxing.

If we truly want our employees to be healthy, happy and productive at their work, then it is high time we reworked and broke down on what we have built over the years as the so called ‘work-culture’, because clearly this is not serving the right purpose to the people involved as evidently seen in the current times. If change is the only constant, shouldn't that show in the right form at the workplace? Before we acknowledge the quietness levels of quitting, it would be wise to look at the myriad reasons that are responsible for an ever growing and evolving population of constantly burnout, unhappy and unhealthy employees today who are popularly quietly quitting and un-popularly made to ‘quit’ quietly.



# Russian strikes killed 17 after bridge attack: Ukraine

AP ■ ZAPORIZHZHIA (UKRAINE)

A Russian missile barrage that crumbled apartment buildings and houses in Ukraine's city of Zaporizhzhia killed at least 17 people and wounded dozens, Ukrainian officials said on Sunday as Moscow strained to enforce its takeover of illegally annexed territory.

The blasts that collapsed at least one high-rise residential building and blew out the windows of others came from six missiles launched in Russian-occupied areas of the Zaporizhzhia region, the Ukrainian air force said.

The region is one of four Russia claimed as its own this month, but the regional capital remains under Ukrainian control.

The multiple strikes came after an explosion on Saturday caused the partial collapse of a bridge linking the Crimean Peninsula with Russia.

The Kerch Bridge attack damaged an important supply route for the Kremlin's faltering war effort in Ukraine and a towering symbol of Russia's power in the region.

Stunned residents watched from behind police tape as



emergency crews tried to reach the upper floors of a building that took a direct hit.

The attack collapsed several floors, leaving a smoldering chasm at least 40-feet wide where apartments had stood.

Several hours later, the top floors caved in as well.

In an adjacent apartment building, the barrage blew windows and doors out of their frames in a radius of hundreds of feet.

At least 20 private homes and 50 apartment buildings in all were damaged, and at least 40 people were hospitalised, city council Secretary Anatoliy Kurtev said.

Zaporizhzhia resident

Mucola Markovich, 76, said he and his wife hid under a blanket when they heard incoming rockets and booms from blasts. "There was one explosion, then another one," he said.

Then, in a flash, their

fourth-floor apartment was gone, Markovich said, holding back tears.

"When it will be rebuilt, I don't know," he said. "I am left without an apartment at the end of my life."

Russian officials did not immediately comment on the strikes. Following Russian President Vladimir Putin's annexation of the Zaporizhzhia region last week, Russia has repeatedly bombarded the city of the same name.

At least 19 people died in Russian missile strikes on apartment buildings in the city on Thursday.

"Again, Zaporizhzhia. Again, merciless attacks on civilians, targeting residential buildings, in the middle of the night," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy wrote in a Telegram post. "Absolute meanness. Absolute evil. ... From the one who gave this order, to everyone who carried out this order: they will answer. They must. Before the law and the people," he added.

Tetyana Lazunko, 73, and her husband, Oleksii, took shelter in the hallway of their top floor apartment after first hearing air raid sirens and then an explosion that shook the build-

ing and sent their possessions flying.

Lazunko wept inconsolably as the couple surveyed the damage to their home since 1974, wondering why an area with no military infrastructure in sight was targeted.

"Why are they bombing us. Why?" she said.

While Russia targeted Zaporizhzhia before Saturday's explosion on the Crimea bridge, the attack on the 12-mile-long span was a significant blow to Moscow.

Russia annexed Crimea in March 2014 following a hastily called local vote, a move that drew US and European Union sanctions.

Putin personally opened the USD 3.7 million Kerch Bridge in May 2018 by driving a truck across it in a symbol of Moscow's claims on Crimea.

The bridge, the longest one in Europe, is vital to sustaining Russia's military operations in southern Ukraine.

The Crimean Peninsula is a popular destination for Russian tourists and home to a Russian naval base. A Russian tourist association estimated that 50,000 tourists were in Crimea on Saturday.

Putin signed a decree late

Saturday tightening security for the bridge and for energy infrastructure between Crimea and Russia, and put Russia's federal security service, the FSB, in charge of the effort.

Some Russian lawmakers called for Putin to declare a "counterterrorism operation," rather than the term "special military operation" that has downplayed the scope of fighting to ordinary Russians.

Hours after the explosion, Russia's Defence Ministry announced that the air force chief, Gen Sergei Surovikin, would now command all Russian troops in Ukraine.

Surovikin, who this summer was placed in charge of troops in southern Ukraine, had led Russian forces in Syria and was accused of overseeing a bombardment that destroyed much of Aleppo.

No one has claimed responsibility for damaging the bridge. Zelenskyy, in a video address, indirectly acknowledged the bridge attack but did not address its cause.

"Today was not a bad day and mostly sunny on our state's territory," he said. "Unfortunately, it was cloudy in Crimea. Although it was also warm."

## War crime: Industrial-scale destruction of Ukraine culture

AP ■ KYIV

The exquisite golden tiara, inlaid with precious stones by master craftsmen some 1,500 years ago, was one of the world's most valuable artifacts from the blood-letting rule of Attila the Hun, who rampaged with horseback warriors deep into Europe in the 5th century.

The Hun diadem is now vanished from the museum in Ukraine that housed it — perhaps, historians fear, forever.

Russian troops carted away the priceless crown and a hoard of other treasures after capturing the Ukrainian city of Melitopol in February, museum authorities say.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, now in its eighth month, is being accompanied by the destruction and pillaging of historical sites and treasures on an industrial scale, Ukrainian authorities say.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Ukraine's culture minister alleged that Russian soldiers helped themselves to artifacts in almost 40 Ukrainian museums.

The looting and destruction of cultural sites has caused losses estimated in the hundreds of millions of euros (dollars), the minister, Oleksandr Tkachenko, added.

"The attitude of Russians toward Ukrainian culture heritage is a war crime," he said.

For the moment, Ukraine's government and its Western backers supplying weapons are mostly focused on defeating Russia on the battlefield.

But if and when peace returns, the preservation of Ukrainian collections of art, history and culture also will be vital, so survivors of the war can begin the next fight: rebuilding their lives.



"These are museums, historical buildings, churches. Everything that was built and created by generations of Ukrainians," Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, said in September when she visited a Ukrainian museum in New York.

"This is a war against our identity." Workers at the Museum of Local History in Melitopol first tried hiding the Hun diadem and hundreds of other treasures when Russian troops stormed the southern city.

But after weeks of repeated searches, Russian soldiers finally discovered the building's secret basement where staff had squirreled away the museum's most precious objects — including the Hun diadem, according to a museum worker.

The worker, who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity, fearing Russian punishment for even discussing the events, said the Ukrainians don't know where Russian troops took the haul, which included the tiara and some

1,700 other artifacts.

Dug up from a burial chamber in 1948, the crown is one of just a few Hun crowns worldwide.

The museum worker said other treasures that disappeared with Russian soldiers include 198 pieces of 2,400-year-old gold from the era of the Scythians, nomads who migrated from Central Asia to southern Russia and Ukraine and founded an empire in Crimea.

"These are ancient finds. These are works of art. They are priceless," said Oleksandr Symonenko, chief researcher at Ukraine's Institute of Archaeology. "If culture disappears, it is an irreparable disaster."

Russia's Culture Ministry did not respond to questions about the Melitopol collection.

Russian forces also looted museums as they laid waste to the Black Sea port of Mariupol, according to Ukrainian officials who were driven from that the southern city, which was relentlessly pounded by Russian bombardment.

## Xi briefs senior Communist Party leaders ahead of its key Congress to endorse record 3rd term for him

PTI ■ BEIJING



years to be submitted to the once-in-five-year National Congress, official media here reported. Wang Huning, Standing Committee member of the CPC besides being its leading theorist and a close confidant of Xi, gave explanatory remarks on a draft amendment to the CPC Constitution.

China's constitution has already been amended in 2018 by National People's Congress (NPC) - the country's parliament - removing two five-year tenures for the President and paving the way for Xi to continue in power beyond his 10-year tenure which will end this year.

## Teen, 15, held in shooting at amusement park that hurt 3

AP ■ WEST MIFFLIN (US)

A 15-year-old has been arrested in last month's shooting at a western Pennsylvania amusement park that wounded three people, including two teenagers.

Allegheny County and West Mifflin police said last week that the teenager is being charged as an adult with aggravated assault, reckless endangering and firearms crimes in the Sept. 24 gunfire at Kennywood Park on the opening night of the park's Phantom Fall Fest.

Park officials said the late Saturday night shooting followed an altercation between two groups of teenagers near the Musik Express ride at the park in West Mifflin, southeast of Pittsburgh. A 39-year-old man and two 15-year-old boys were taken to hospitals with leg wounds, authorities said.

## Kyrgyzstan cancels Russian-led military exercise on its land

AP ■ BISHKEK

The Central Asian nation of Kyrgyzstan on Sunday unilaterally cancelled joint military drills between the six nations comprising the Russia-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), less than a day before they were due to start on its territory.

The Kyrgyz defence ministry did not specify the reason for cancelling the "Indestructible Brotherhood-2022" command and staff exercises, which were set to be held in the country's windswept eastern highlands Monday to Friday.

According to earlier reports, the exercises were set to involve army personnel from CSTO members Russia, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and

focus on securing ceasefires. Observers from five further states, including Serbia, Syria and Uzbekistan, had also been invited.

The move by Bishkek is the latest indication that tensions may be simmering within the alliance, formed in the early 1990s after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Last month, Armenia skipped a two-week drill held by the collective in Kazakhstan, after criticising the bloc for failing to openly side with it after large-scale fighting erupted on its border with non-member Azerbaijan in September.

Russia and other CSTO countries effectively turned down Yerevan's request for military aid, issued hours after hostilities began, and limited their response to sending fact-finding missions to the border.

## Putin now faces grim choices after blast hits prized Crimea bridge

IANS ■ KRYVYI RIH

An explosion that severely damaged parts of the road and rail bridge between annexed Crimea and the Russian mainland early Saturday seems designed to play into President Vladimir Putin's current talent for making bad decisions, local media reported.

It brings forward by a number of weeks the strategic choices he must make about Russia's occupation of southern Ukraine. This entire presence was already poorly supplied, managed and in retreat. And it shows that the key railway route into Crimea and onwards to the frontlines in Kherson is highly vulnerable to future attacks, CNN reported.

While Kiev has not claimed responsibility for the Kerch Strait bridge blast, it has previously taken credit for a series of strikes on targets in Russian-occupied Crimea over the summer. It exposes the staggering 20th century weakness of Russia's armed forces and occupation: They need railways to get around.

Putin now faces a series of expedited and painful decisions, all of which will severely belie his continued poker-face of pride and bombast towards the gathering signs of slow defeat. To the west of the Dnipro river, his army in Kherson is besieged by fast-moving Ukrainian forces. They are already in retreat, partially owing to the same poor resupply that will be accentuated by the Kerch blast.

Putin must choose between feeding his larger ambitions with a dwindling chance of success, or consolidating forces around an objective he has a greater chance of achieving, CNN reported.

One carries the risk of cat-



astrophic collapse, for his entire brutal adventure into Ukraine, and quite possibly his rule. The second leaves him with an immediate loss of face, but a stronger chance of sustaining the occupation of smaller parts of Ukraine.

His internal position has not looked weaker since he came to power in 2000. An admission of failure may be unpalatable at this stage, and a greater gamble the easier move. Yet he again tips the war towards a binary moment where his occupation - and even regime - faces a complete collapse or a tiny, madcap prospect of victory, CNN reported.

Nuclear threats and rhetoric have been the horrifying backdrop of this war. Yet still Moscow has not resorted to any doomsday moves while NATO armed Ukraine to an extent that was unthinkable before the war.

Kiev's smart and patient strikes on Russia's ageing transport dependencies has left Putin with a series of existential decisions to make in the hours ahead. He's made a lot of bad ones in the past seven months. Does the Kerch explosion add to that list, or provide a cold bath of reality, and a readjustment of the Kremlin's view of the possible, CNN reported.

## S Korea PM to visit Chile, Uruguay this week

IANS ■ SEOUL

South Korea Prime Minister Han Duck-soo departed for Chile on Sunday for a three-nation trip that will also take him to Uruguay and Argentina, as Seoul seeks to bolster economic cooperation with the Latin American nations.

During talks with leaders of the three nations, Han will also ask them to support South Korea's bid to host the 2030 World Expo in the southern port city of Busan, the Office for Government Policy Coordination has said in a statement.

In particular, Han and leaders of the three nations are expected to discuss measures to deepen cooperation in the field of raw materials and strategic minerals, Yonhap news agency reported.

Han's official visit to Chile will include talks with Chilean President Gabriel Boric.

As South Korea and Chile mark the 60th anniversary of establishing diplomatic ties this year, Han and Boric are expected to discuss measures to deepen bilateral relations, according to the statement.

Han will make an official visit to Uruguay on Wednesday and hold talks with Uruguayan President Luis Lacalle Pou.

During the talks in Montevideo, Han and the Uruguayan president are expected to discuss measures to strengthen bilateral ties.

On the final leg of his nine-day trip, Han will make an official visit to Argentina on Thursday for a three-day stay.

Han will hold talks with Argentina's President Alberto Fernandez, and they plan to discuss measures to improve cooperation in various fields, including economic security, the office said.

## Trump speaks via video at rally of global far-right in Spain



AP ■ BARCELONA

Former US President Donald Trump has thrown his weight behind Spain's far-right in a video shown at a rally in Madrid that also featured messages by the leading stars of Europe's populist right like Italy's Giorgia Meloni and Hungary's Viktor Orban.

In a recording that lasted under 40 seconds made while Trump was on an airplane, Trump thanked Spain's far-right Vox party and its leader Santiago Abascal for what he called the "great job" they do. "We have to make sure that we protect our borders and do lots of very good conservative things," Trump said.

"Spain is a great country and we want to keep it a great country. So congratulations to Vox for so many great messages you get out to the people of Spain and the people of the world." Vox captured national attention on Spain's political landscape in 2019 when it became the third-largest force in Spain's Parliament after an election that led to a national left-wing coalition that still holds power.

Vox's messages include zero tolerance for Catalan separatism, disdain for gender equality, diatribes against unau-

thorised immigration from Africa and embracing both the "Reconquista" of medieval Spain from Islam as well as the legacy of Gen Francisco Franco's 20th-century dictatorship.

Abascal returned the flattery when he took to the stage at the outdoor venue after more video messages by European and South American right-wing politicians and an in-person speech by Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

"My thanks for President Donald Trump, a visionary in the fight for sovereign nations, a visionary in the fight for secure borders, who has had to suffer (attacks) from the most powerful establishment in the world and the largest media attack that any world leader has had to face in recent memory," Abascal told the crowd of several thousand, many waving red-and-yellow Spanish flags.

Despite its spectacular rise, the party led by Abascal failed to meet the expectations it set for itself in regional contests this year and had suffered its first serious bout of in-fighting among its leaders. Vox is now eyeing regional and municipal elections next year as it battles to surpass Spain's traditional conservatives.



# US Sikh family murder suspect terrorised, robbed another family 17 years ago

PTI ■ SAN FRANCISCO

The man involved in the kidnapping and killing of the Indian-origin Sikh family in California, including an eight-month-old baby girl, was previously also jailed for robbery after he held a family he had then worked for at gunpoint and terrorised them 17 years ago.

Jesus Salgado, who was arrested on Thursday on the suspicion of kidnapping and killing the Sikh family of four, 8-month-old Aroohi Dheri, her 27-year-old mother Jasleen Kaur, her 36-year-old father Jasdeep Singh, and her 39-year-old uncle Amandeep Singh, was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 2007 and was released in 2015 and discharged from parole three years later, according to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

He also has a conviction for possession of a controlled substance, the department said. Nearly two decades ago, Salgado worked for a family, which also owned a trucking company, but was fired in 2004 because the family suspected him of stealing money, members of the family told the Los Angeles Times.

Kathy and her daughter Katrina when first saw surveillance images of Salgado, they did not immediately recognise him. Salgado, now 48, had aged significantly,



and Kathy and Katrina weren't sure he was the man who robbed them at gunpoint in their dark garage 17 years ago.

They noticed the methods in the two crimes seemed eerily similar: terrorise a family on their property at gunpoint and force them to follow orders under the threat of death.

On the night of December 19, 2005, he showed up at their home wearing a mask and held a gun to the father's head and bounded his hands with duct tape, recalled his daughter Katrina, who was 16 years old at the time

Salgado rounded up the

family, as well as a friend of Katrina's who was visiting, and took them to the garage, where the family kept a safe with cash and jewelry, she and her mother, Kathy, said.

After robbing them, even taking Kathy's wedding ring, Salgado then led the family to the pool in the backyard and made them jump in as he escaped, Kathy and Katrina recalled. He was caught just a few days later after the family reported him to police.

Salgado was convicted in early 2007 of home invasion robbery with a gun, attempted false imprisonment and witness intimidation, Merced County prosecutors said. He

served nearly 10 years in prison before getting paroled in 2015.

Video surveillance this week showed that, as with Kathy and Katrina's family, the suspect in Monday's kidnapping held the Singh family at gunpoint, binding the men's arms but not Japanners Kurtas.

On Tuesday morning, Merced County sheriff's detectives learned that a bank card belonging to one of the victims was used at a bank ATM in the nearby town of Atwater.

After reviewing surveillance video from the bank, investigators believed the per-

son making the transaction resembled a man photographed by security cameras at the site of the kidnapping, authorities said.

Salgado was identified as a person of interest in the investigation and "prior to law enforcement involvement" attempted to take his own life, the Sheriff's Office said in a statement. He was taken to a hospital in critical condition.

Salgado was jailed on suspicion of kidnapping and murder on Thursday, after being released from the hospital.

On Friday Salgado's younger brother, Alberto Salgado, was arrested on charges of criminal conspiracy and destroying evidence.

Investigators are still trying to determine a motive, but Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke said he believes it could relate to money, adding there was no evidence to suggest the incident may have been a hate crime.

Salgado was a former employee of the family who had a longstanding dispute with them that "got pretty nasty," authorities said Thursday.

The bodies of the four victims originally from Harsi Pind in Hoshiarpur, Punjab, were found Wednesday in a remote area near the town of Dos Palos, California, about 50 kms south of Merced, California.

Merced County Sheriff

Warnke did not share the condition of the adults' remains and said it was unclear how the baby died. He said the child had no visible trauma and an autopsy will be conducted.

Warnke said he believes the family was killed within an hour of the Monday morning kidnapping.

Jaspreet Kaur, Amandeep's widow, said in a GoFundMe fundraiser that her husband and his brother had been in the United States for 18 years and supported not only their families in California but also their elderly parents back in India.

"This is the story of our shared American dream gone wrong," she wrote. "Our loving family was violently taken away from us on October 3rd," the family's gofundme page said.

Kaur said her husband routinely donated food to the local food bank and never missed Sunday service in the local Sikh temple. They had a 9-year-old daughter and an 8-year-old son.

The family's gofundme page said the two brothers were "the primary bread earners for the family (and) supported their elderly parents."

The sheriff has said he hopes the district attorney pursues the death penalty in the case.

"There's a special place in hell" for the suspect, Warnke said.

# German Min calls for EU sanctions over Iran crackdown



AP ■ BERLIN

Germany's foreign minister is calling for European Union entry bans and asset freezes against those responsible for what she described as brutal repression against anti-government protesters in Iran.

The most sustained protests in years against Iran's theocracy are now in their fourth week. They erupted September 17 after the burial of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman who died in the custody of Iran's feared morality police. Amini had been detained for an alleged violation of strict Islamic dress codes for women.

Since then, protests spread across the country and have been met by a fierce crackdown, in which dozens are estimated to have been killed and hundreds arrested.

"Those who beat up women and girls on the street, carry off people who want nothing other than to live freely, arrest them arbitrarily and sentence them to death stand on the wrong side of history," German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock was quoted as telling Sunday's Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

"We will ensure that the EU imposes entry bans on those responsible for this brutal repression and freezes their assets in the EU," she added. "We say to people in Iran: We stand and remain by your side."

Baerbock didn't name any specific individuals or organisations.

On Thursday, EU lawmakers approved a resolution calling for sanctions against those responsible for the death of Amini and the subsequent crackdown.

Germany, along with fellow EU member France, is among the nations that are part of a 2015 agreement with Iran to address concerns over the Islamic Republic's nuclear program and have been attempting to revive the deal.

Talks on the deal have languished but if it's reinstated, the agreement would provide sanctions relief that would help strengthen the Iranian government.

# Two killed as stir around Iran enters 4th week

AP ■ SULIMANIYAH

Anti-government demonstrations erupted Saturday in several locations across Iran as the most sustained protests in years against a deeply entrenched theocracy entered their fourth week. At least two people were killed.

Marchers chanted anti-government slogans and twirled headscarves in repudiation of coercive religious dress codes.

In some areas, merchants shuttered shops in response to a call by activists for a commercial strike or to protect their wares from damage.

Later Saturday, hackers broke into the evening news on Iran's state TV for 15 seconds, just as footage of the country's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was being broadcast.

The hackers flashed an image of Khamenei surrounded by flames. A caption read "Join us and stand up!" and "The blood of our youth is dripping from your claws," a reference to Khamenei.

A song with the lyrics "Woman. Life. Freedom" — a common chant of the protesters — played in the background.

The protests erupted September 17, after the burial of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, a Kurdish woman who had died in the custody of Iran's feared morality police. Amini had been detained for an alleged violation of strict Islamic dress codes for women.

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# Thai town struggles with sudden loss of so many of its young

AP ■ UTHAI SAWAN (THAILAND)

Paweenuch Supholwong sits on her mother's lap and fidgets with her pigtails as her mother tells the remarkable story of how the 3-year-old wisp of a girl survived Thailand's worst mass killing — the only child to emerge unscathed from a day care after a former police officer massacred preschoolers while they napped.

Two dozen children were among the 36 people shot and slashed to death in an attack that shattered the serenity of the rural township of Uthai Sawan, robbing the small farming community of much of its youngest generation in the blink of an eye.

Paweenuch was deeply asleep and covered by a blanket on the floor when the attacker burst through the front door and killed 22 of her classmates who lay around her — apparently missing her because he thought she was already dead, her mother Panomplai Srithong said. Another child survived with serious injuries and remains

hospitalized.

As the community has come together to share its grief at the scene of the attack and its Buddhist temples, people have also flocked to Paweenuch, tying dozens of white, yellow and red "soul strings" to her wrists in the hope it will help her also spiritually survive the horror, in the belief that when someone suffers such a tragedy, they lose part of their soul. "It is to bring the spirit back into her body," Panomplai explained, holding her daughter warmly. "It's like the spirit had left the body and it is being called back."

Uthai Sawan's 6,500 people are spread across a dozen villages, living in homes scattered among the sugar cane fields and rice paddies that many of them farm. The township in northeastern Thailand was named for two smaller communities merged together administratively, with Uthai meaning "rising sun" and Sawan meaning "heaven" or "happiness" in Sanskrit.

Ninety-two of the town-



ship's preschool-aged children attended the public day care center, which is next to the government's administrative offices and across from a sugar cane field. But flooding from seasonal monsoon rains, a mechanical failure that kept the center's school bus from working and other factors kept many away on Thursday when the gunman attacked.

The township has about 100 more preschool-aged chil-

dren who either go to private care centers or stay at home, said Nanticha Panchom, the teacher who runs the day care.

Nanticha, 43, was in the center's kitchen cooking the children lunch when she heard the first shot from outside — police say it was the attacker shooting a man and a child in front of the building. She heard someone else yell to lock the front door and she ran out to get help.

# Thai police probing CNN crew's coverage of attack

AP ■ UTHAI SAWAN (THAILAND)

Thai police are investigating a report that a CNN crew inappropriately entered the day care centre while reporting on the aftermath of the massacre in the building that left more than 20 preschoolers dead, authorities said on Sunday.

Danaichok Boonsom, head of the local township administration, told reporters that he had submitted his report alleging unauthorised entry onto the government property and that police were investigating.

"Let the legal process run its course, I don't want to disclose all the details," he said as he left the Na Klang district police station in

northeastern Thailand. "Let the police do their work investigating."

Authorities began looking into the incident after a Thai reporter posted an image on social media of two members of the crew leaving the scene, with one climbing over the low wall and fence around the compound, over police tape, and the other already outside.

CNN tweeted that the crew had entered the premises when the police cordon had been removed from the centre, and were told by three public health officials exiting the building that they could film inside.

"The team gathered footage inside the centre for around 15 minutes, then left," CNN said in its tweet.

# Singapore set to lift Covid-19 restrictions for all from next week



PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore is set to lift the Covid-19 restrictions on non-vaccinated individuals from Monday but it is ready to step up such measures when necessary to lower infection rates and protect the unvaccinated, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung said on Sunday.

With vaccination-differentiated measures (VDS) to be fully lifted on Monday, the minister noted that while such restrictions aimed at protecting the unvaccinated in crowded areas, had pushed many to get vaccinated, it is better to step them down given that they are now not as extensive.

"Today VDS is very light and in restaurants is pretty much an honesty system with random sporadic enforcement," Ong said while talking to the media at a club event.

"It's not that VDS doesn't work. In its current form, which

is light, I think it doesn't work as well. So, we might as well step it down with the understanding that we can step up to an appropriate level when we really need it."

In a statement, the Ministry of Health on Friday announced that VDS will no longer be required for events with more than 500 participants, nightlife establishments where there is dancing, and dining at food and beverage establishments, including hawker centres.

When asked if there was any concern that the easing would result in those above 50 not getting their fourth booster shot, Ong said he does not think that it is in their consideration given that VDS is currently not extensive, and he appealed to those in that age bracket to stay up to date with their Covid-19 vaccination.

"When you are fully vaccinated and up to date, your chances of being infected and

leading to a very bad outcome is much lower, much lower. Do it to protect yourself and don't listen too much to the rumours circulating outside," Ong was quoted as saying by The Straits Times newspaper.

Ong said the government has been transparent about the reactions caused by vaccines, with the Health Sciences Authority publishing the severe adverse reaction incidents every three months.

He added that such cases mostly recover by themselves and that while there are risks to every type of vaccination, this has to be weighed against the cost of remaining unvaccinated. "Come December, we don't know what kind of variant will come up or what kind of variant will arrive in Singapore. If it's something dangerous, we don't want to be caught off guard," the minister said.

"So now, while we have the time and the space, get ourselves properly vaccinated with the bivalent vaccines. It is the best protection for us for whatever may come in December," Ong said.

The health ministry has said that it will replace the original Moderna/Spikevax vaccine with the updated bivalent version from October 17, and this will be for all adults aged 18 and above.

In a Facebook post on Sunday, Ong said clinical studies show that the bivalent version has the same safety profile as the original Moderna/Spikevax.

# North Korea launches 2 missiles toward sea after US-South Korea drills



AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea fired two short-range ballistic missiles toward its eastern waters on Sunday, the latest in its barrage of weapons tests in recent days, after the North warned against the US redeployment of an aircraft carrier for a new round of drills with South Korean warships.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement it detected the two missiles launched between 1:48 am and 1:58 am on Sunday from the North's eastern coastal city of Munchon.

It said South Korea's military has boosted its surveillance posture and maintains a readiness in close coordination with the United States.

The Japanese government also said North Korea fired what was possible ballistic missiles.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida instructed offi-

cials to do their utmost to gather and analyze information about the suspected launches and inform the public of any accurate information quickly, while ensuring the safety of aircraft and ships around Japan and preparing for any contingencies, according to his office.

The Japanese coast guard said it has warned ships around the country's coasts about falling objects and urged them to stay away.

The launch, the North's seventh round of weapons tests in two weeks, came hours after the United States and South Korea wrapped a new round of naval drills off the Korean Peninsula's east coast.

The drills involved the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan and its battle group, which returned to the area after North Korea fired a powerful missile over Japan last week to protest the carrier group's previous training with South Korea.

# Pope slams ill-treatment of migrants

AP ■ VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis on Sunday denounced Europe's indifference toward migrants risking their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea as he elevated to sainthood an Italian bishop and Italian-born missionary whose work and life paths illustrated the difficulties faced by 19th Century Italian emigrants.

Francis departed from prepared remarks to slam Europe's treatment of migrants as "disgusting, sinful and criminal". He noted that people from outside the continent are often left to die during perilous sea crossings or pushed back to Libya, where they wind up in camps he referred to as "lager", the German word referring to Nazi concentration camps.

He also recalled the plight of Ukrainians fleeing war, which he said "causes us great suffering."

"The exclusion of migrants is scandalous," Francis said, generating applause from the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for the canonisations of Don Giovanni Battista Scalabrini, an Italian bishop who founded an order to help Italian emigrants in 1887, and Artime Zatti, an Italian who emigrated in 1897 to Argentina and dedicated his life as a lay-worker there to helping the sick.

# Palestinian gunman kills woman Israeli soldier in Jerusalem

AP ■ JERUSALEM

A Palestinian opened fire on an Israeli military checkpoint in east Jerusalem on Saturday night, killing a female Israeli soldier and wounding three other people, Israeli authorities said.

The attack came hours after a pair of Palestinian teenagers were killed during an Israeli military raid in the occupied West Bank.

It was the latest bloodshed in the deadliest round of fighting in the area in seven years. It also came less than 24 hours before Israel was to begin celebrating the weeklong Sukkot holiday, a time when tens of thousands of Jews visit the holy city. Saturday night's shooting occurred at a checkpoint near the Shuafat refugee camp in east Jerusalem. Police said the assailant got out of a car and opened fire, seriously wounding the female soldier and a security guard before running into the camp. The army announced early Sunday that the woman, who was 19, had died.

Police said two members of the paramilitary border police unit were lightly wounded by shrapnel.

Police said they were searching for the attacker, with special forces and a helicopter involved in the search. Police said early Sunday that they arrested one person on suspi-



cion of involvement in the attack, but were continuing the manhunt.

"Our hearts tonight are with the wounded and their families," said Prime Minister Yair Lapid. "Terrorism will not defeat us. We are also strong on this difficult evening."

Israel captured east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war and annexed the area in a move that is not recognized internationally. It considers the entire city, including east Jerusalem, home to the city's most important holy sites, to be its capital. The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

Israel already has been carrying out daily arrest raids in the occupied West Bank since a series of deadly Palestinian attacks inside Israel. Most of the military activity has been focused in the Palestinian cities of Jenin and Nablus in the northern West Bank.



# Gross direct tax revenue jumps 24% to ₹8.98L cr

## Net collections cross 52 pc of Budget target

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The gross collection of tax on corporate and individual earnings jumped nearly 24 per cent so far in the current fiscal year to Rs 8.98 lakh crore, the tax department said on Sunday.

This includes a 32 per cent growth in personal income tax (including Securities Transaction Tax) mop up and 16.73 per cent increase in corporate tax revenues over the same period last year.

After adjusting for refunds, the net direct tax collections between April 1 - October 8 stood at Rs 7.45 lakh crore, which is 52.46 per cent of the Budget estimates (BE) for the full year tax collection target, the department said.

The Budget had estimated direct tax collection at Rs 14.20 lakh crore this fiscal, higher than Rs 14.10 lakh crore collected last fiscal (2021-22). Tax on corporate and individual income makes up for direct taxes.



"Direct Tax collections up to 8th October, 2022 show that gross collections are at Rs 8.98 lakh crore which is 23.8 per cent higher than the gross collections for the corresponding period of last year," the tax department said in a statement.

Refunds amounting to Rs 1.53 lakh crore have been issued between April 1-october 8, an increase of 81 per cent over the corresponding period last year.

After adjusting refunds, net direct tax collection stood at Rs 7.45 lakh crore, 16.3 per cent higher over the year-ago period. This includes a 16.25 per cent increase in PIT (including STT) and 16.29 per

cent in corporate tax.

Tax collection is an indicator of economic activity in any country. But in India, the robust tax collection was despite a slowdown in industrial production and exports. Some analysts believe that the economic growth has lost momentum but corporate profits are keeping the engine running.

Merchandise exports have lost on the momentum of last year's surge and shrunk by 3.5 per cent in September. Trade deficit has nearly doubled in the first six months.

IIP growth was subdued at 2.4 per cent in July while 'core sector' hit a nine-month low of 3.3 per cent in August.

Collection from levy of tax on goods and services sold (GST) has flattened at around Rs 1.45-1.46 lakh crore per month. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) last month cut its production of India's GDP growth in the current fiscal to 7 per cent from 7.2 per cent previously estimated.

Other rating agencies too have lowered the economic growth projection for India citing impact of the geopolitical tensions, tightening global financial conditions and slowing external demand.

Deloitte India Partner Rohinton Sidhwa said with inflation running between 6-7 per cent, it is imperative that tax collections show a healthy growth above the inflation rate.

"Strong economic growth coupled with better reporting seems to be supporting the collection figures. While collections remain strong the same also need to be supported by corporate investment cycles reviving post COVID," Sidhwa said.

## SBI lines up NPAs over ₹746 cr for sale in Oct-Nov



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The State Bank of India (SBI) has lined up various non-performing assets up for sale this month and the next, including the fraud account of Sintex BAPL, to recover over Rs 746 crore.

In an auction scheduled for November 4, SBI will put up NPAs for sale to asset reconstruction companies (ARCs)/ financial institutions (FIs), banks or Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs).

The auction of NPAs will include accounts of Sintex BAPL with an outstanding of Rs 197.74 crore; Surat Hazira NH6 Tollway Pvt Ltd of exposure of Rs 335.54 crore and Shreebhav Polyweaves Pvt Ltd (Rs 20.20 crore). In case of Sintex BAPL, SBI said only ARCs are eligible in the e-auction as it is a fraud account. The outstanding of Rs 197.74 crore against the company includes bank guarantee of Rs 6.10 crore. The company's business is manufacturing injection moulded plastic components for the automotive industry.

SBI said the proposed acquisition of these assets should not be funded and backed by promoters/company/guarantors or any of their related parties.

Later this month on October 31, e-auction of three accounts will take place: VVF India Ltd with loan outstanding of Rs 154.37 crore; Ashok Magnetics Ltd (formerly AML Steels) Rs 23.82 crore and Agarwalas Polytrade (Rs 15.03 crore)."

## Govt to kick off FY24 Budget making exercise on Monday

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Monday will kick off its annual Budget making exercise for financial year 2023-24, that is expected to look at measures to revive growth amid a gloomy global outlook.

The meeting would start with consultations with various ministries and departments on the revised estimates (RE) of expenditure for ongoing financial year and the fund requirement for 2023-24.

On the first day on Monday, RE meetings with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Ministry of Labour And Employment, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports would take place.

Most of these discussions to finalise RE for ongoing financial year (2022-23) and Budget Estimate for 2023-24 would be chaired by the Finance Secretary and Expenditure Secretary.

The month-long deliberations would end on November 10, with consultations with Ministry of Cooperation, Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Department of Agricultural Research



and Education, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, as per a notification of Budget Division of the finance ministry.

The Budget Estimates for 2023-24, will be provisionally finalised after completion of pre-Budget meetings.

These meetings would take place against the backdrop of many institutions, including the Reserve Bank and the World Bank slashing India's growth forecast to 7 per cent and 6.5 per cent, respectively.

It will be the fifth Budget of the Narendra Modi 2.0 government and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and the last full Budget before the general elections due in April-May 2024.

## India has nano demographic window to achieve developed country status: Fin Secy

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India has a nano demographic window to achieve developed country status, and if it misses, it may not reach there, Union Finance Secretary T V Somanathan said on Saturday.

The country has to grow at a rate of 8-8.5 per cent to reach developed country status, he said at an event here.

"In the first decade of this century, China grew at approximately 9.5 per cent per annum and growing growth rates were witnessed in countries like South Korea and Taiwan" Somanathan said. The finance secretary made the comments while delivering a lecture .

The other thing which we often hear and it is an important point that a lot of people make is that we have nano demographic window in which to achieve developed country status, and if we don't catch this window or if we do not use this window, we may never get there," he said.

## FPIs invest ₹2,400 cr in Indian equities in first week of Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

After withdrawing over Rs 7,600 crore last month, foreign investors have resumed buying Indian stocks and have invested more than Rs 2,400 crore in the domestic equity markets in the first week of October.

FPI flow is expected to remain volatile in the coming months on a slew of global and domestic factors, experts said.

"The fall in job openings in the US and lower-than-expected rate hike by the Australian central bank imbued hope among investors that global rates may peak soon. However, till then it seems FPI flows will remain volatile in the coming months," said Shrikant Chouhan, Head-Equity Research (Retail) at Kotak Securities.

According to data with the depositories, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) invested a net Rs 2,440 crore in equities during October 3-7, after pulling out over Rs 7,600 crore in September, on hawkish stance by the US Federal Reserve and sharp depreciation in rupee.

Prior to this, FPIs made a



net investment of Rs 51,200 crore in August and nearly Rs 5,000 crore in July. Before July, foreign investors were net sellers in Indian equities for nine months in a row from October last year.

FPIs have turned marginal buyers in early October but there is no consistency in their activity, said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

They will turn sustained buyers only when dollar peaks and shows a sustained downward trend, he added. "With the pick-up in government expenditure on the back of higher GST and direct tax collections, growth is expected to accelerate. This has led to positive stance by FPIs on Indian markets," said Anita Gandhi of Arihant Capital.

## HUL, Godrej Consumer cut soap prices by up to 15% as raw material rates soften

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

FMCG firms Hindustan Unilever Ltd and Godrej Consumer Products Ltd (GCPL) have cut prices of some soap brands by up to 15 per cent amid palm oil and other raw materials turning relatively cheaper.

HUL has reduced prices of its offerings under popular soap brands Lifebuoy and Lux by 5 to 11 per cent in the western region.

Godrej Group arm GCPL, which owns soap brand Godrej No 1, has also reduced prices of soaps by 13 to 15 per cent.

Analysts opine that the reduction in prices would help drive growth in volumes in the second half of current fiscal year, especially since overall demand remains sluggish due to high inflation.

One of the reasons for the price reduction is the decline in global prices of palm oil and other raw materials, they added.

Commenting on the development, GCPL CFO Sameer Shah said: "With commodity prices coming down, GCPL is one of the first FMCG companies to pass on the price reduction benefit to consumers."



"For soaps specifically, GCPL has reduced prices between 13 to 15 per cent. We reduced the price of the bundle pack (five units of 100 gm each) of Godrej No.1 soap from Rs 140 to Rs 120," he added.

An HUL spokesperson told PTI: "For Lifebuoy and Lux, there has been a price drop in the West region," he said without elaborating on the quantum of reduction and whether similar cuts will be made in other regions also.

However, according to reports, prices of these soap brands have been reduced by 5-11 per cent.

The spokesperson however denied reports about reduction in

prices of other brands such as Surf, Rin, Wheel, and Dove.

Commenting on the price cut by HUL, Edelweiss Financial Services Executive Vice President Abneesh Roy said it is a proactive step by the company to retain a market share in an era of falling raw material prices. "When raw material prices fall, regional players tend to come back."

He expects this to drive volume growth for HUL in H2FY23 and FY24. "In the past one year, volume growth for HUL was impacted due to grammage cuts and price hikes. Now the reverse is happening with grammage increase/price cuts," Roy said.

## India will stand out with 7% growth rate amid global gloom: EAC-PM member



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Amid fears of the world slipping into recession, India will perhaps emerge as the strongest major economy with 7 per cent growth rate in FY23, Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) member Sanjeev Sanyal said on Sunday.

Sanyal observed that India can grow at 9 per cent in an external conducive environment like in early 2000s when the global economy was growing.

"We are clearly entering an environment where many countries around the world will be facing much slower growth or even slipping into recession."

"This is due to a combination of factors ranging from tighter monetary policy to higher energy costs, as well as disruptions caused by the Ukraine war," he told PTI in an interview.

The World Bank on October 6 projected 6.5 per cent growth rate for the Indian economy for 2022-23, a drop of one percentage point from its June 2022 projections, citing deteriorating international environment.

"Under those circumstances, India's performance will stand out as being perhaps the strongest of any major economy in the world with around 7 per cent GDP growth rate in current fiscal year nonetheless," Sanyal said.

He emphasised that the cumulative impact of supply side reforms over many years by the Modi government has meant that India's economy is currently much more flexible and resilient than it used to be. Sanyal noted that if India gets an external environment like the one it had during 2002-03 to 2006-07 when the global economy was growing, global inflationary pressures were muted, then its economy is capable of delivering 9 per cent growth.

"But obviously, we are not in that environment right now. So given that situation 7 per cent GDP growth rate is a good performance," he said.

The EAC-PM member however cautioned against pushing growth unnecessarily "when the highway has so many bumps and hurdles in the way".

## IOC, HPCL, BPCL may post 2nd consecutive quarterly loss in July-Sept

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned oil marketing companies IOC, BPCL and HPCL may for the first time ever post the second consecutive quarterly loss with a combined loss of Rs 21,270 crore in July-September, on holding petrol and diesel prices below the cost of production.

The three state-owned firms -- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), had in the first quarter of the current fiscal year (April-June) posted a combined loss of Rs 18,480 crore due to erosion in the marketing margin on petrol, diesel and domestic LPG.

The three oil marketing companies IOC, BPCL and HPCL remain trapped in the quagmire of weak marketing losses and there is not enough traction in refining margins," ICICI Securities said in a sector report. The three firms are to announce second quarter earnings later this month or in early November.

In the first quarter, record refining mar-



gins were wiped away by losses booked on not revising petrol and diesel prices daily in line with cost. While the difference between cost and retail selling price of petrol and diesel has narrowed, refining margins have fallen in the second quarter (July-September), worsening finances of the three firms.

The "Q2 may see the trend worsen, with USD 5.6-15.9 per barrel quarter-on-quarter dip in gross refining margins (GRMs) which is compensated only partly by improvement in blended retail fuel losses (Rs 9.8 per litre in in Q2 versus Rs 14.4 a litre in Q1)," the broker-age said.

## SRM AP celebrates 2nd convocation

Amravati: SRM University-AP celebrated its second convocation. Former Chairman of ISRO, Dr K Radhakrishnan, addressed students as the day's chief guest in APJ Abdul Kalam Auditorium on campus. Dr S Chandrasekhar, Secretary, DST, was conferred an honorary doctorate at the ceremony. "Your inventive and fertile minds are the bedrock for realising Vision India 2047", said Dr S Radhakrishnan in his Convocation Address, appreciating the Class of 2022.

He further expressed his delight in witnessing the Pan-India reach of SRM and emerging as a world-class educational hub.

The Guest of Honour Dr S Chandrasekhar, in his acceptance speech, congratulated the graduates and talked about his vision of a sustainable planet where India becomes an innovation-driven country in next 20 years. PNS

## India steel output up 2.5% at 30 MT in Jul-Sep: Report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's crude steel output rose by 2.56 per cent to 30.06 million tonne (MT) during the July-September period of the ongoing financial year.

As per research firm SteelMint, the top six steel makers -- SAIL, Tata Steel, JSW Steel, JSPAL, AMNS India and RINL -- produced 18.29 MT steel, the rest 11.77 MT came in from the secondary sector.

The country had produced 29.31 MT of steel during the same quarter in the preceding 2021-22 financial year, according to the data shared by SteelMint.

During the said quarter last fiscal, large producers had jointly manufactured 18.39 MT steel, while the secondary industry produced 10.92 MT, it said. During the quarter ended September 30, 2022, steel exports fell to 1.41 MT from 4.20 MT in the year ago period, registering a year-on-year

(y-o-y) fall of 66.43 per cent. The domestic consumption was 11.33 per cent higher at 27.52 MT, as against 24.72 MT in July-September 2021. On the outlook for the sector during the running October-December quarter, SteelMint said "the production is expected to increase in the quarter as mills have resumed production after a brief maintenance shut down taken in the last quarter."

According to SteelMint exports will continue to remain low in the third quarter owing to the export duty and subdued global market because of high energy cost and inflation.

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.

It also waived customs duty on the import of some raw materials, including coking coal and ferronickel, used by the steel industry.

## Clouds of resolution period delay, NCLT manpower crunch over IBC 'sheen'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The insolvency law might have helped resolve more than 500 cases in six years but manpower shortage at the NCLT and average resolution period being much higher than the stipulated 330 days pose challenges in tackling stressed companies in a time-bound manner.

While the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) timeframe for resolution is 330 days, inclusive of time taken for litigation, the 517 cases that yielded resolution plans took an average of 460 days for conclusion till the end of June. And the recovery rate for creditors against the claims made was around 31 per cent. Delay in admission of a case as well as the resolution period also results in erosion in value of the assets.



Experts opined that litigations, shortage of manpower at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) benches, infrastructure woes and the pandemic-induced disruptions have adversely impacted the envisaged time-bound resolution process, resulting in delays.

Amid concerns in various quarters over the delays and recovery levels under the IBC, Corporate Affairs Minister

Nirmala Sitharaman last week said that one can neither afford to have the legislation "lose its sheen" nor let early stress warnings go unnoticed.

A total of 5,636 Corporate Insolvency Resolution Processes (CIRPs) have commenced till June this year under the IBC that came into force in December 2016. Out of the total, resolution plans were approved for 517 cases by the NCLT, according to the data from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

As efforts continue to address stressed assets in the system, the shortage of manpower at NCLT, which is currently functioning with less than half of the sanctioned strength of 63 members and inadequate number of other support staff, has come to the fore.

## Nomura says India's optimism misplaced, sharply moderates FY24 GDP growth forecast to 5.2%

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Japanese brokerage Nomura has projected a sharp moderation in India's growth rate for FY24 to 5.2 per cent as compared to FY23, saying Indian policymakers are "misplaced" about their optimism on the country's growth prospects.

After a week-long meetings with policymakers, corporates, commercial banks and political experts, its economists said its FY23 GDP growth estimate is at 7 per cent -- at par with the RBI's revised down forecast -- but it expects a "sharp moderation" to 5.2 per cent in FY24.



"While we broadly agree with our interlocutors on the growth prospects in FY23, we believe the optimism in FY24 may be misplaced and that the spillover effects from the global slowdown are being underestimated," its economists Sonal Verma and Aurodeep Nandi

said in a note.

The RBI has hiked repo rate by 190 basis points since May to tame inflation and is expected to do more, especially amid faster rate tightening by the US Fed, which is bound to impact growth.

The economy grew at 4 per

cent in FY20 in a multi-year low. The estimated slowdown in growth in FY24 will come ahead of the next general elections.

Indian policymakers have frequently spoken about the need to have a sustained growth of over 7 per cent for achieving long-term economic ambitions.

The brokerage said the mood in the country is "relatively positive" with risks seen emanating from weaker global demand, and added that domestic recovery is getting broad-based as seen through pick-up in investments and higher credit growth.



# Red Bull's Verstappen retains F1 title

AP ■ TOKYO

Max Verstappen said it was a "crazy feeling" to retain his Formula One world championship on Sunday in dramatic fashion after winning a rain-shortened Japanese Grand Prix and then seeing his nearest rival Charles Leclerc relegated to third by a five-second penalty.

The result gave Red Bull driver Verstappen an unassailable 113-point lead in the championship, making him only the third driver after Michael Schumacher and Sebastian Vettel to clinch the title with four races to spare.

Ferrari's Leclerc crossed the line second in front of Red Bull's Sergio Perez, but he was hit with a penalty after squeezing Perez in the final chicane and being deemed to have gained an advantage by leaving the track.

Verstappen was only informed he had retained his title midway through the post-race TV interview, and even the driver himself was not sure if he had sealed the deal.

"It's a crazy feeling of course as I didn't expect it when I crossed the line," said a surprised Verstappen.

"Was it going to be half points? I didn't know how many points I was going to get. I was happy with the race we had."

The race got off to a chaotic start in heavy rain.

Leclerc was quicker off the line than pole sitter Verstappen, who admitted he made "a terrible start", before the Dutchman regained the lead with a brave overtake around the outside of turn one.

"It was very close but that's what



people like to see," Verstappen said.

Ferrari's Carlos Sainz spun out on the first lap and the Williams of Alex Albon broke down prompting a safety car.

A red flag soon followed and forced the drivers back to the pit lane for more than an hour before

the action restarted at the second time of asking under a safety car rolling restart.

Verstappen resumed with a lead over Leclerc and Perez and extended it with ease once the safety car period ended and track conditions gradually improved.

**'CONGRATULATIONS TO MAX'**

"It was very difficult and they made the right call," Verstappen said of the red flag.

"The first time they tried to restart it was not right. Once we got going it was fine."

Verstappen took the chequered

flag but there was a furious battle for second behind him, with Leclerc cutting across a corner while jostling for position with Perez.

Leclerc beat Perez to the line but later conceded that his penalty was "the right thing to do".

"I don't have much to say -- I

## Max targets F1 domination

AP ■ TOKYO

Max Verstappen said he was capable of dominating Formula One for years to come after clinching his second straight world title at the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday.

The flying Dutchman said it was a "crazy feeling" to lift the trophy for a second time -- then set his sights on ruling the sport for years to come.

"If I have a competitive car, I'm confident that we can keep this going," said the 25-year-old, who has won 12 of 18 races this season.

"It also depends on what the competition is going to come up with. I really believe in this group and I really hope that in the coming years we can enjoy a lot more wins and potentially of course championships."

The Japanese Grand Prix was staged for the first time since 2019 because of the pandemic, but the race got off to a chaotic start in heavy rain.

Verstappen was 46 points



behind Leclerc after three races but went on to dominate, winning 11 of the next 15 grands prix. And he is hungry for more.

"I still want to try to win more races because with the car that we have now, you have to try to take advantage of that because you don't know if you're ever going to have that again in the years to come," he said.



## Italy to face England in Euro 2024 qualifying

AP ■ FRANKFURT

Reigning champions Italy were drawn on Sunday to face England, the team they beat in the final last year, and Ukraine in qualifying for the 2024 European Championship.

Euro 2024, hosted by Germany, will be Italy's chance to regain some pride after they failed to qualify for the World Cup finals which kick off in Qatar in six weeks' time.

Italy beat hosts England in a penalty shootout at Wembley last year after the match ended 1-1 following extra time.

After the draw in Frankfurt, Italy coach Roberto Mancini said: "I knew that we'd get either England or France, but that's OK. It's a decent five-team group, no easy matches, all ones we can have a go at."

Italy will also play North Macedonia, the country which knocked them out of the World Cup in the playoffs in Palermo in March.

"It's one of those matches that you get every now and again, and as we saw in Palermo we have to take every match seriously, even those that seem the simplest," Mancini told RAI Sport.

France, who will defend their world title in Qatar, were drawn to face the Netherlands and the Republic of Ireland in Group B while Spain's oppo-

nents in Group A will include Scotland and Erling Haaland's Norway.

France have bad memories of playing the Irish, who they only beat to reach the 2010 World Cup finals thanks to what appeared to be a handball by Thierry Henry.

"It's a pretty heavy group, a group with value," France coach Didier Deschamps said.

"We'll have to win and be better than our opponents, as usual."

Portugal and Cristiano Ronaldo, who will be 39 by the time the finals kick off, go into a Group J including Bosnia-Herzegovina and Iceland.

Croatia, the losing World Cup finalists in 2018, are in Group D with World Cup qualifiers Wales as well as Turkey.

Denmark, another team going to Qatar, have Finland, Slovenia and Northern Ireland among the teams in their Group H.

Russia is excluded from the competition because of its invasion of Ukraine.

As hosts, three-time European champions Germany qualify automatically.

The Euro 2024 finals will be played in 10 German cities from June 14 to July 14 as the tournament returns to being hosted by a single country following the multi-country format used for Euro 2020.

AP ■ MILAN

AC Milan bounced back from their midweek humbling at Chelsea by comfortably seeing off Juventus 2-0 on Saturday and moving level on points with Serie A leaders Napoli.

Italian champions Milan showed no signs of a European hangover as they beat fierce rivals Juve in front of a packed San Siro thanks to goals either side of half-time from Fikayo Tomori and Brahim Diaz.

"We were timid in London... today we were more of a team and we worked really hard together. That's what we need to do in all our matches," said Pioli.

Stefano Pioli's team are one of three on 20 points with Napoli and also Atalanta, who travel to Udinese on Sunday afternoon with the chance to claim the outright lead.

Milan sit third after a dominant display which should give them some cause for optimism ahead of Tuesday night, when they try to gain revenge on

Chelsea in Champions League Group E.

For Juve it was yet another poor performance and result, a second league defeat of the campaign which leaves them in eighth, seven points off the pace.

"I think there's little to say after a match like that," said Juve coach Massimiliano Allegri.

"We played all right in the first half and then we capitulated. There were too many basic errors."

Theo Hernandez, who missed Milan's Stamford Bridge hammering, was key to Milan taking the lead.

His challenge on Cuadrado led to a corner which the France full-back took, and Tomori lashed in his first goal of the season after Olivier Giroud's effort thwacked him in the chest.

It was as much as Milan deserved. Rafael Leao had



already struck the post twice for the hosts, and although Juve did look menacing on the break they lacked the delicate touch of

suspended Angel Di Maria.

Dusan Vlahovic was particularly out of sorts and it was his poor pass which led to Diaz

doubling the hosts' lead eight minutes after the break.

Diaz pounced on Vlahovic's lazy ball and charged up the field

on a lightning run, skipping past Adrien Rabiot and Leonardo Bonucci before forcing a powerful finish past Wojciech Szczesny.

Diaz was scooped up onto Leao's shoulders while the more than 70,000 fans packed into football's La Scala celebrated with the fervour of a crowd who knew they had as good as claimed the points.

Juve tried to fight back as Pioli switched things up ahead of the Chelsea rematch but the best they could muster was a Moise Kean shot which was deflected for a corner.

Milan would have finished even more emphatic winners had Szczesny not done well to stop a marauding Pierre Kalulu from crowning a commanding display with his first goal of the season.

Milan are also five points ahead of local rivals Inter Milan.

## PSG frustrated by Reims

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain salvaged a point with 10 men as they drew 0-0 at struggling Reims on Saturday but still increased their Ligue 1 lead after Marseille lost 2-1 at home to last-placed Ajaccio.

Both PSG and Marseille rested starters with an eye on midweek Champions League games and their showdown next Sunday.

Marseille came a cropper despite Dimitri Payet's 100th Ligue 1 goal. PSG escaped with a draw despite Sergio Ramos' 28th career red card.

PSG coach Christophe Galtier made five changes from the team that drew 1-1 away to Benfica in midweek, and his side spent much of the first 40 minutes on the back foot.

Reims pressed but struggled to create clear-cut chances, while PSG were dangerous on the counterattack. "I know Sergio Ramos well, I am



not convinced that the insult that came out was in the direction of the referee. It is a training-ground insult that you hear a lot on the field in Spain. The referee took it personally

and sent him off," said Galtier.

Reims, who had collected six red cards, comfortably the most in Ligue 1 this season, struggled to exploit their advantage.

## Madrid win without Benzema

AP ■ MADRID

Eder Militao's early goal earned Real Madrid a comfortable 1-0 win over Getafe on Saturday to take them provisionally top of La Liga.

Carlo Ancelotti's side now leads Barcelona by three points ahead of Celta Vigo's visit to Camp Nou on Sunday.

Elsewhere, Angel Correa's brace gave Atletico Madrid a 2-1 win over Girona, while Sevilla coach Jorge Sampaoli earned a creditable 1-1 draw against third-place Athletic Bilbao.

Benzema did not train on Friday and was not included in Real Madrid's match-day squad, with the club hoping the French forward will be at full strength for the Clasico next weekend.

The striker failed to score in the two matches he has played since his return from a thigh injury, and it didn't take Los Blancos long to move in front without him. Militao headed home from Luka Modric's perfect corner in the fourth minute.

Borja Mayoral should have levelled against his former side but was unable to turn home Fabrizio Angileri's cross-shot as Getafe bit back after Madrid's intense start.

Madrid put together a slick team move before the break which ended with David Soria saving a Rodrygo header, before Vinicius Junior drew a penalty, or so he thought.

The Brazilian was clumsily felled in the area by Luis Milla, but VAR spotted the ball had gone out of play in the build-up.

Madrid were foiled again before the hour mark when Rodrygo dinked the ball over Soria following a ricochet into his path, but the goal was disallowed for offside.

Getafe did their best to keep Madrid at arm's length, with Vincius at his silky best on the ball, albeit too far from goal to do more damage.

With Rodrygo showing his talent, too, it will be hard for Ancelotti to work out whom he might drop to fit Benzema back into the side.



## Real Madrid, Juventus & Barca not giving up on Super League

MADRID: The main advocates of the Super League are not giving up.

Barcelona chief Joan Laporta on Sunday followed Real Madrid president Florentino Perez and their Juventus counterpart Andrea Agnelli in defending the project to his club's supporters. "It's a competition that's necessary, to choose our destiny. We, the clubs, will rule," Laporta told the club's annual general meeting. "I'm optimistic. Given the inaction of UEFA, regarding the distortion which the financial doping by state-owned clubs generates, we have to react." Perez led a group of 12 major European clubs into the Super League project in April 2021 but it vanished a few days later after pressure from fans and authorities. Real, Barcelona and Juventus are the only clubs that have tried to keep alive a project that would be direct competition with the Champions League. AP

AP ■ MUNICH

Honorary Bayern Munich President Uli Hoeness has slammed his side's performance in Saturday's 2-2 draw with Borussia Dortmund as 'not Bayern-like'.

Dortmund came back from 2-0 down to snatch a draw, with under-fire striker Anthony Modeste scoring in the fifth minute of injury time.

Hoeness, who played 239 games for Bayern and later served as manager and president as the club established itself at the forefront of German football, said letting Dortmund come back from 2-0 down to draw the match in the last seconds was at odds with the club's ethos.

"It's actually not Bayern-

like. If you lead 2-0, then you should win the game," Hoeness said on German television on Sunday morning.

When asked what being 'Bayern-like' meant, Hoeness said the club should have had "a lot of self-confidence and said to the opposition, we're going to score against you a third time".

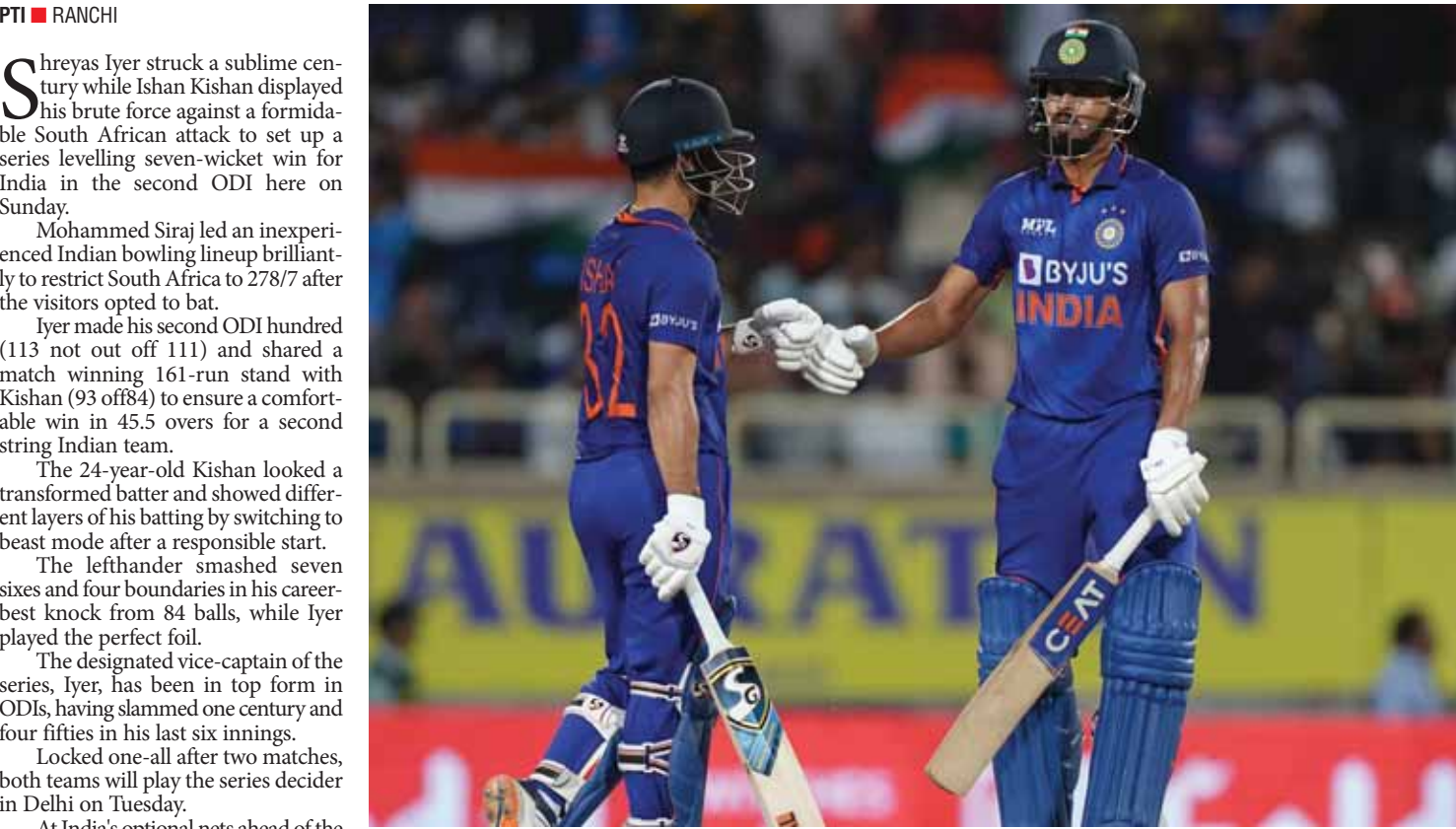
While crediting Dortmund as "probably the second best club in Germany", the former striker said Bayern "let the game go a bit too much and gave Dortmund another chance."

Hoeness said he felt the club was feeling the loss of star striker Robert Lewandowski, who departed for Barcelona in the summer, but that coach Julian Nagelsmann had the





# Iyer, Ishan help India level ODI series



**PTI ■ RANCHI**

Shreyas Iyer struck a sublime century while Ishan Kishan displayed his brute force against a formidable South African attack to set up a series levelling seven-wicket win for India in the second ODI here on Sunday.

Mohammed Siraj led an inexperienced Indian bowling lineup brilliantly to restrict South Africa to 278/7 after the visitors opted to bat.

Iyer made his second ODI hundred (113 not out off 111) and shared a match winning 161-run stand with Kishan (93 off 84) to ensure a comfortable win in 45.5 overs for a second string Indian team.

The 24-year-old Kishan looked a transformed batter and showed different layers of his batting by switching to beast mode after a responsible start.

The lefthander smashed seven sixes and four boundaries in his career-best knock from 84 balls, while Iyer played the perfect foil.

The designated vice-captain of the series, Iyer, has been in top form in ODIs, having slammed one century and four fifties in his last six innings.

Locked one-all after two matches, both teams will play the series decider in Delhi on Tuesday.

At India's optional nets ahead of the game, Ishan had made his intentions clear when he clobbered a loose ball with brute force, ramming into the grill of the MS Dhoni pavillion.

On match day, the stage was just perfect for the diminutive batter to boss at his homeground. India needed 231 from 41.1 overs when a classy-looking Shubman Gill (28; 26b) perished to a gravity-defying low catch by Rabada on his follow through.

Kishan came in and was at his vigilant best. He ran hard for singles and overcame a hostile bowling spell from Nortje when he was clocking 145-plus clicks on a slow Ranchi wicket.

The lefthander however did not panic as he reached 29 off 46 balls.

South Africa then started operat-

## Need to follow process and routine for success: Suryakumar

**PTI ■ BRISBANE**

He has enjoyed a lot of success in his short international career, but star India batter Suryakumar Yadav believes following his process and routine will be key to a good campaign in his maiden T20 World Cup outing in Australia.

Since making his T20I debut in March last year, Suryakumar has evolved as one of the most destructive batters in the format and has risen to the No.2 spot in the ICC T20I rankings.

"I was really looking forward to

come here and attend the first practice session, go on the field, have a run, have a feel how its like here. The first net session was also really amazing, just wanted to see how the pace of the wicket is, how the bounce is," the 32-year-old said in a video posted by the BCCI.

Suryakumar had his first practice session Down Under here on Sunday, and the batter said his main focus going into the nets was to judge the conditions.

"Started a little slow. Obviously, there were some butterflies in my stomach and lot of excitement as well

but at the same time you need to look for ways to blend with the atmosphere and pick at the right time. I am just assessing that right now." Excitement is there but at the same time you need to follow your process and routine as well," he said.

"During practice the pace and bounce of the wicket, the dimension of the grounds as people say the grounds here are big. So you need to be ready with your game, how you plan to make runs here, all these things are very important. Good conditions really looking forward to it."

ing with spinners with stand-in skipper Maharaj looking to dismiss Kishan for a second successive time.

But Kishan took the attack on the left-arm spinner and smashed him for three sixes including two in four balls.

The only blip in his innings was when he mistimed one to Rabada but this time he dropped a sitter.

In the next delivery, Kishan took a blow on his elbow that seemingly unsettled him before he fell agonisingly short of a maiden century.

Earlier, Aiden Markram (79 off 89 balls) and Reeza Hendricks (74 off 76) looked in control of the proceedings in the middle overs.

But Siraj triggered the collapse and also took a stunning forward running catch to dismiss a dangerous looking Heinrich Klaasen (30).

He mixed up the slower ones intelligently, bowled with a tight line and length and did not even give the in-form David Miller (35 not out) a chance to put him away. He conceded only three runs in the 50th over to end with figures 10-1-38-3.

From being 169/3, which came courtesy a 129 run-a-ball partnership by Hendricks and Markram, South Africa lost three quick wickets with some clever field placements and bowling rotation by India skipper Shikhar Dhawan.

Even the in-form Miller struggled to get going at the death and Siraj came out on top as they scored just 57 runs from the last 10 overs with the loss of two wickets.

Debutant Shabaz Ahmed jumped in joy after bagging his maiden international wicket as he trapped Janneman Malan in front of the stumps.

It seemed a perfect start for India with the visitors' score reading 40/2 after 10 overs which had just seven boundaries on a dull and dry JSCA wicket.

But what followed was a composed and calculative approach by the middle-order duo of Markram and Hendricks who were happy to bide time, play out dot balls and forge a partnership.



## Experimental India to face plucky Thailand

**PTI ■ SYLHET**

With a semifinal berth already sealed, India will look to continue experimenting with their playing XI when they take on a plucky Thailand in the Women's Asia Cup here on Monday.

India have fielded a different playing XI in all their matches in the tournament so far in order to give the fringe players time in the middle ahead of the T20 World Cup next year.

The batting order has also been continuously rejigged with skipper Harmanpreet Kaur dropping down to number seven against Pakistan. And while the move didn't work as the new-look middle order crumbled under pressure, the team has continued to give game time to its fringe players.

However, after an underwhelming display that led to their first loss in six years to arch-rivals Pakistan, the 'Women in Blue' came back strongly in all three departments to thrash defending champions and host Bangladesh.

India are performing as a cohesive unit, the bowling department has been consistent all throughout the tournament while the batters have also played their part.

The biggest positive will be the flamboyant Shafali Verma's return to form. The young opener struck a much-needed fifty in the previous match which would have done wonders to her confidence.

Smriti Mandhana too got some runs under her belt as the tournament enters the business end.

Skipper Harmanpreet Kaur was rested in the last match due to a niggle and it remains to be seen if she makes a comeback for the team's last group game.

Jemimah Rodrigues, who is returning from injury, is having a stellar tournament and is the

leading run scorer.

Deepti Sharma has shone with both bat and ball. The spin all-rounder is the leading wicket-taker alongside Rumana Ahmed of Bangladesh and Thailand's T Putthawong. All three have eight scalps each.

Richa Ghosh has made a strong case for her inclusion in the T20 squad and the young wicketkeeper will look to continue in the same vein.

Thailand, on the other hand, are on a roll, having won their last three games, including a surprise win against Pakistan.

They are currently fourth in the table with six points. They would be eager to make the final push for that last semifinal spot.

They have hosts Bangladesh right on their tails with four points and a game in hand.

India, who lead the table with eight points, will be wary of the Thai team which is capable of springing a surprise.

Last time these two sides met, India registered a comfortable win at the Asia Cup in 2018.

**TEAMS (FROM)**

**India:** Harmanpreet Kaur (c), Smriti Mandhana, Deepti Sharma, Shafali Verma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Sabineni Meghana, Richa Ghosh (wk), Sneh Rana, Dayalan Hemalatha, Meghna Singh, Renuka Thakur, Pooja Vastrakar, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Radha Yadav and KP Navgire.

**Thailand:** Naruemol Chaiwai (c), Nattaya Boochatham, Nattakan Chantham, Sunida Chaturongrattana, Onnichia Kamchomphu, Suwanan Khiaoto, Nannapat Koncharoenkai, Suleeporn Laomi, Banthida Leephatthana, Phannita Maya, Nanthita Boonsukham, Thipatcha Putthawong, Chanida Sutthiwang, Aphisara Suwanchonrathi and Sornnarin Tippoch.

## Dennerby says India ready for FIFA U-17 Women's WC



**PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR**

India are clearly one of the underdogs of the FIFA women's U-17 World Cup beginning on Tuesday, but head coach Thomas Dennerby on Sunday said that the hosts have nothing to lose and they are ready for the age-group showpiece.

India begin their campaign against USA at the Kalinga Stadium here on Tuesday and Dennerby said it is time the team shows that it can compete against the best in the world.

"It's not only about the result now. It's about the performance to show that Indian girls can play football. But of course, inside the group, we have our own goals, and we are ready to fight for them," Dennerby said.

"Against the USA, Brazil or Morocco, we are determined to earn points and score goals. And we're going to show to the Indian fans that we have a good team."

India play Morocco and Brazil on October 14 and 17 in their other group matches. The top two teams in each of the four groups will qualify for the quarterfinals.

"We want to dish out a good performance. So, they can feel that India really can challenge the best teams in the world. And it's good for the younger girls to have

role models to look up to.

"And hopefully, some of these girls, in a couple of years from now, can take the next step to the senior team and so on - you can keep on having them as role models for many years. Young girls should know they can have a successful career in football."

The Swede said his team had good preparations ahead of the tournament with exposure tours in Italy, Norway and Spain.

"I hope we are ready now," the coach said.

Asked if he is under pressure to deliver the goods, Dennerby said, "Of course, all coaches are under pressure when it comes to World Cups or other big tournaments. Because everybody expects you to have a successful team and so on.

"I think sometimes you put more pressure on yourself - but I have gone through this before. So, I don't get stressed. Whatever happens, you have to stay cool, you have to follow your plan.

"Don't change anything, even if you lose the first game - stay by your plan, don't panic and start changing everything. These are things you learn from being in this business for many years. And, of course, I would be lying, if I start saying that there is no pressure."

## NZ beat B'desh by 8 wickets

**AP ■ CHRISTCHURCH**

Captain Kane Williamson and Copener Devon Conway shared an 85-run partnership for the second wicket that helped steer New Zealand to an eight-wicket win over Bangladesh on Sunday at the New Zealand T20 Tri-Series.

Conway struck his third T20 half century from 36 balls and eventually carried his bat for 70 from 51 while Williamson struggled at times with the pace of the wicket and made 30 from 29 balls as New Zealand chased down Bangladesh's 137-8 with 13 balls to spare.

After two rounds Pakistan has two wins, New Zealand has a win



and a loss and Bangladesh two losses in the tournament that is a warm-up for the T20 World Cup that begins in Australia later this month.

The next match is between New Zealand and Pakistan on Tuesday.

New Zealand reversed the strategy of its match against Pakistan on Saturday that it lost by six wickets after batting first. Williamson decided to bowl first and the tactic worked as the Bangladesh bowlers struggled to contain New Zealand on a slow, low pitch in a match played in cold conditions.

"We had a really good first half and some really good partnerships in the second half to get across the line," Williamson said. "Our spinners were outstanding throughout the first 20 and the seamers complemented them really well."

## Buttler, Hales & bowlers script England's 8-run win

**AP ■ PERTH**

England went one up in their three-match T20I series against Australia with a thrilling eight-run win in Perth on Sunday.

After Australia were set an imposing 209 for victory, the home side at one stage looked like pulling off an unlikely win on the back of a fine 73 from David Warner and some big hitting from Marcus Stoinis.

But some inspired fast bowling in the latter stages from Mark Wood (3-34) and Sam Curran (2-35) saw England home as Australia finished their 20 overs eight runs short.

Earlier, England openers Alex Hales and captain Jos Buttler smashed a new-look Australian attack to all parts of the ground in a brutal display of power hitting as they helped England to 208-6.

While Australia threatened



several times, the English were able to strike at key moments to stay on top.

"Australia played really well -- they put us under a lot of pressure," Buttler said.

"We were favourites for large parts of that chase and we needed to take wickets, which is what we did."

Hales blasted 84 runs from 51 balls and Buttler 68 from 32

deliveries as Australia rested pace trio Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood and leg spinner Adam Zampa.

Their replacements failed to come to terms with the powerful

stroke play of the England opening pair, who hit 20 fours and seven sixes between them.

Buttler, back in the side after a two-month injury lay-off, showed no signs of rust as he and Hales smashed 50 off the first five overs and brought up the 100 in just the ninth over.

Nathan Ellis was the pick of the bowlers, taking 3-20 on a batting-friendly wicket with a lightning-fast outfield.

Australia got away to a poor start when Cameron Green was caught behind off Reece Topley in the second over.

Warner and Mitchell Marsh took up the attack and stayed on target, but on 36 Marsh was beaten by an Adil Rashid wrong'un and was bowled, leaving Australia 86-2 after 8.3 overs.

"We got ourselves in a position where we should have won the game, but the disappointing thing is we just couldn't finish it off," Finch said.

## Djoker takes 90th career title with Astana win

**AP ■ ASTANA**

Novak Djokovic claimed the 90th title of his career and the fourth of 2022 with a dominant straight-sets victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas in the ATP final in Astana on Sunday.

The 35-year-old Djokovic triumphed 6-3, 6-4 in 75 minutes to add to the trophies he won this season in Israel, Rome, and at Wimbledon.

It was the ninth consecutive match victory for the fourth seed, who guaranteed himself a spot at the 2022 ATP Finals as a result of the win.

The Serb won in Tel Aviv a week ago, his first singles tournament since wrapping up a seventh Wimbledon crown and 21st Grand Slam title in July.

For Tsitsipas, it was the ninth time he played in an ATP Tour final and the ninth time he has finished runner-up.

Djokovic got off to a flying start, winning the first game at love in a little over



one minute.

With Tsitsipas serving at 3-4, Djokovic took the only break point of the first set.

Djokovic earned another break in the fifth game of the second set when a Tsitsipas drop shot fell into the net.

The Serb converted his third match point with a backhand winner into an open court.

## FRITZ WINS JAPAN OPEN IN CLOSE BATTLE WITH TIAFOE

**AP ■ TOKYO**

Taylor Fritz beat his friend and US rival Frances Tiafoe in two closely fought sets to win the Japan Open on Sunday, saying "I had to play my absolute best to beat him today."

Third-seeded Fritz claimed the title 7-6 (7/3), 7-6 (7/2), and will break into the top 10 for the first time on Monday with a new ranking of eight.

The 24-year-old described his victory as "really crazy", coming immediately after a week of Covid-19 hotel quarantine in Seoul that forced him to withdraw from the Korea Open.

But his first words on court after winning were for fourth-seeded



Tiafoe, also aged 24, who has been in the spotlight since he stunned Rafael Nadal to reach the US Open semifinals. "First off, I wanna congratulate Frances on a great week, I mean, he's been on fire recently, and I had to play my absolute best to beat him today," Fritz said.

## Edris, Kipkoech and Cheptai headline Delhi Half Marathon

**PTI ■ NEW DELHI**

Two-time 5,000m world champion Muktar Edris of Ethiopia and Kenya's Felix Kipkoech are among the top names in a strong men's elite field for the Delhi Half Marathon race on October 16.

Reigning world 3,000m indoor champion Lemlem Hailu of Ethiopia, this year's TCS World 10K Bengaluru winner Irine Cheptai of Kenya and 2018 Commonwealth champion in 10,000m Stella Chesang, headline the women's elite field.

The \$268,000 prize money World Athletics elite label road race, to be flagged off from the



Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on October 16, will see tens of thousands of amateurs join the best global elite runners in one of the fastest courses in the world.

The international elite winners in the men's and women's categories will take home \$27,000 each and the prize fund includes the top 10 finishers in both. There is also an event record bonus of \$12,000 as an incentive.

Edris finished fourth on debut in Delhi in 2020 with an impressive 59:04 as the top four broke the previous course record in a sensational race that saw just four seconds separate the podium finishers.