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COAL TO BE BACK AGAIN AS GAS BECOMING
UNAFFORDABLE: SITHARAMAN

NEW DELHI, MONDAY OCTOBER 17, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3

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REAL BEAT
BARCELONA
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Choice between chalk and cheese for Cong

Rebel Tharoor, loyal Kharage make last minute pitches on eve of party presidential poll

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The much-hyped Congress presidential polls scheduled on Monday saw a last-minute positioning from the candidates — Mallikarjun Kharage and Shashi Tharoor.

Kharage vowed not to shy away from taking diktats from the Gandhis if elected to the post, while Tharoor lashed out at colleagues who were “indulging in ‘netagiri’ and telling party workers” that they know whom Sonia Gandhi “wants” elected.

Tharoor, who has been casting aspersions right from day one on several individuals, including his opponent and the Congress election authority, remarked that for those having any “fear or doubt” in their mind the party has made it clear that it will be a secret ballot.

On his part, Kharage chose to strike an emotional chord with the delegates saying he would have no shame in taking advice and support from the Gandhi family in running the



Congress workers prepare for the election of the party's new president, at DPCC in New Delhi on Sunday

PTI

party's affairs, in case he becomes the president.

“There is no shame in it. If something benefits from your (media) advice, I will take it as well. They have worked for this party and taking their advice is my duty,” Kharage said.

Asked about his message for Tharoor, he said, “I don't want to get into any controversy. He (Tharoor) is airing his thoughts, I don't want to debate on his thoughts. I'm sharing my thoughts. It is our organisation

or a family matter. He has the right to say what he wants to, similarly I, too, have it. It is an internal friendly fight.”

Appealing to party delegates to vote for him, Tharoor emphasised on “decentralisation” in the organisation so that “all decisions are not taken in Delhi.”

In an apparent rebuff to the Gandhis, Tharoor said there should be “ready access” to the party president

In a veiled dig at the

Kharage camp, the former Union Minister said, “I know that some of my colleagues are indulging in ‘netagiri’, and telling the party workers that they know what Sonia Gandhi wants and whom she wants.

“This type of ‘netagiri’ is not confined to this State (Uttar Pradesh), it was in many States. Don't you (party workers) have faith in Sonia Gandhi's words, who has been running our party?”

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Chinese military will fight to win: Prez Xi

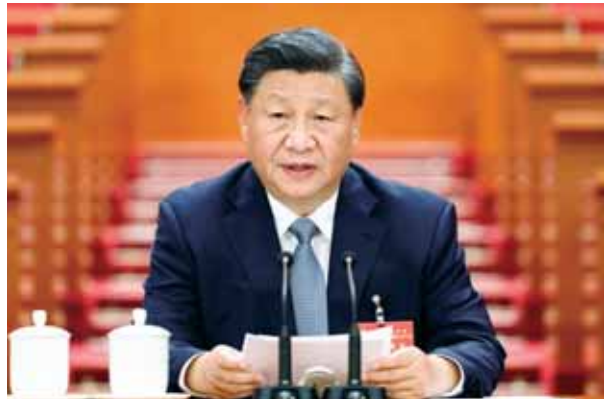
Will intensify troop training, PLA combat readiness, says Jinping

PTI ■ BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping said on Sunday that the Chinese military headed by him will intensify troop training and combat preparedness to “fight and win” besides creating a strong system of “strategic deterrence.” Xi said this while presenting his work report to the once-in-a-five-year Congress of the ruling Communist Party which began its week-long session here on Sunday.

“We will intensify troop training and enhance combat preparedness across the board to see that our people's armed forces can fight and win,” he said. In the 63-page report, Xi, who also heads the Central Military Commission (CMC) — the overall high command of the two million-strong People's Liberation Army (PLA) — devoted a special section to the military titled “Achieving the Central Goal of the PLA and Further Modernising National Defence and Military.”

The plans outlined by him acquire significance for the



Indian military forces considering the frictions at the Sino-Indian border, especially in eastern Ladakh since May 2020 triggered by offensive actions by the PLA that had strained bilateral ties. Both sides resolved some of the issues through 16 rounds of talks and agreed to hold more talks to resolve the pending issues.

In his report, Xi said achieving the goals for the centenary of the PLA in 2027 and more quickly elevating China's People's armed forces to world-class standards are strategic tasks for building a modern socialist country in all respects.

“We will establish a strong system of strategic deterrence, increase the proportion of new domain forces with new combat capabilities, speed up the development of unmanned, intelligent combat capabilities and promote coordinated development and application of the network information sys-

tem,” he said.

“We will improve the command system for joint operations and enhance our system and capacity for reconnaissance and early warning, joint strikes, battlefield support and integrated logistics support,” he said. Xi said the PLA will intensify military training under combat conditions, laying emphasis on joint force-on-force training and high-tech training.

Xi's remarks also assume significance amid China's rising military manoeuvring in the resource-rich Indo-Pacific region. China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installations in the South China Sea. China also has territorial disputes with Japan in the East China Sea.

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CAPSULE

PUNJAB EX-MIN OFFERS BRIBE TO OFFICIAL, HELD

Chandigarh: Former Punjab minister Sunder Sham Arora was arrested by the state vigilance bureau for allegedly offering a bribe of ₹50 lakh to one of its officers to “settle” the ongoing inquiries against him, a senior official said on Sunday. Arora, who joined the BJP after quitting the Congress in June, was arrested on Saturday night in Zirakpur in Mohali.

ALUMINIUM GOODS TRAIN RAKE FLAGGED OFF

New Delhi: Lighter than its predecessors, but with more freight carrying capacity, the railways first indigenously manufactured aluminium goods train rake was flagged off from Bhubaneswar in Odisha on Sunday. **P4**

THREAT TO BLOW UP TEMPLES, RLY STATIONS

Haridwar: Police and Intelligence agencies have gone on an alert after a letter threatening to blow up several railway stations and religious places in Uttarakhand, including the Himalayan temples of Kedarnath and Badrinath, was received at the Haridwar railway station. **P2**

SHAH RELEASES BOOKS IN HINDI FOR MBBS COURSE

Bhopal: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday released textbooks in Hindi of three subjects for MBBS students as part of an ambitious project of the Madhya Pradesh Government to impart medical education in the Hindi language. Shah termed it as a historical event and said Madhya Pradesh has become the first State to start the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) course in Hindi. **P2**

TV actor Vaishali Thakkar hangs self in Indore home

PTI ■ INDORE

Noted TV serial actor Vaishali Thakkar allegedly committed suicide on Sunday by hanging herself in her house in Indore city of Madhya Pradesh, police said. She was 29.

After being alerted by residents in the vicinity, the police opened the door of her house in Saibag Colony and found her hanging from the ceiling fan with a stole in her room, police officer RD Kanwa said.

“She was rushed to MY Hospital where doctors declared her dead on arrival. The body has been sent for postmortem. A suicide note was found in her room but its contents cannot be divulged now as it is a matter of probe,” he informed.

However, news agency ANI reported Indore Assistant Commissioner of Police M Rahman as saying that they recovered a suicide note which suggests that she was stressed and was being harassed by a



former boyfriend.

Starting her career with ‘Yeh Rishta Kya Kehlata Hai’, Thakkar became a star while acting in ‘Sasural Simar Ka’. She had worked in more than a dozen serials. Thakkar was a native of Mahidpur town in the Ujjain district. She had been living in Indore for the last three years with her father and brother. They, however, said they had no clue that she would take such a drastic step.

The police have started investigating the case after recovering the suicide note. Her mobile phone has also been collected and statements of family members are being recorded.

AAP cries foul as CBI calls Sisodia in excise case

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has summoned Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia asking him to appear before it for questioning at 11 AM on Monday in connection with a corruption case linked to the alleged excise policy scam.

Sisodia is one of the 15 accused named by the agency in its First Information Report (FIR) registered on August 17, alleging multiple irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the now-withdrawn excise policy.

Sisodia said he will appear before the CBI and give full cooperation to the agency, while AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh claimed that the summon was a ploy to arrest Sisodia because the BJP wants to prevent the AAP leader from campaigning in Gujarat.

“The CBI raid was conducted at my house for 14 hours, nothing came out.



Searched my bank locker, nothing came out in it. They did not find anything in my village. Now they have called me to CBI headquarters at 11 AM tomorrow. I will go and give my full cooperation. *Satyameva Jayate*,” Sisodia tweeted on Sunday.

Standing by his partymen, AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal com-

pared Sisodia and jailed Minister Satyendar Jain to Bhagat Singh and termed his Government's fight with the Centre the “second freedom struggle.” “Jail bars and hanging noose could not deter Bhagat Singh's resolute intentions. This is the second fight for freedom. Manish and Satyendar are today's Bhagat.

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TN CM flays ‘Hindi for jobs proposal’ of Parl panel

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying “the aggressive attempts of the Union Government” to impose Hindi are “impractical and divisive in character”, and put non-Hindi-speaking people in a very disadvantageous position in many respects. Stalin staunchly opposed what he called a Parliamentary panel's “recommendation” that for specific jobs, aspirants should have learnt the Hindi language.

Writing to Modi, Stalin referred to media reportage on a report of the Parliamentary



Committee on Official Languages.

Stalin said: “It has been reported that the Committee, chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, submitted its report to the President of India, wherein inter-alia, has recommended that Hindi should be the compulsory medium of instruction in educational institutions of the Union Government such as IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and central universities and Hindi should replace English.”

It also includes a recommendation that Hindi shall be

made as the medium of instruction in all technical, non-technical institutions and all the Union Government institutions including Kendriya Vidyalayas.

The Chief Minister, who is also the president of the ruling DMK said that it has been recommended by the panel that, “youth would be eligible for certain jobs only if they had studied Hindi, and removal of English (is proposed) in recruitment exams. Such proposals are against the federal principles of Constitution and would only harm the nation's multi-lingual fabric, he said.

Efforts to “impose” Hindi in various ways as recommended in that report should not be taken forward and the “glorious flame of unity of India may be held high forever,” the Chief Minister requested. Stalin demanded that all languages should be accorded the status of official language of the Union Government.

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PM dedicates 75 Digital Banking Units to 75 districts of India

DBU a big step in direction of Ease of Living for citizens: Modi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dedicated 75 Digital Banking Units (DBUs) across 75 districts to the nation, including two in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), and asserted that his Government has given top priority to ensure that banking services reach the last mile.

“Today the number of branches per one lakh adult citizens in India is more than countries like Germany, China,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during dedication of 75 Digital Banking Units across 75 districts to the nation, via video conferencing on Sunday

PTI

and South Africa,” Modi said adding “The IMF has praised India's digital banking infrastructure.”

The Prime Minister pointed out that paper and ink for

currency printing are imported, and by adopting a digital economy “we are contributing to a self-reliant India while also benefiting the environment by reducing the consumption of

Continued on Page 2

Don't run against Rutuja Latke, MNS chief Raj urges BJP ahead of bypoll

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In keeping with the political traditions of Maharashtra, MNS chief Raj Thackeray on Sunday not only extended his party's support to the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena's candidate Rutuja Latke but also made an unusual request to the ruling BJP not to field its nominee against her in the Andheri (East) Assembly by-poll scheduled for November 3.

Hours after BJP leader Asish Shelar met him and requested him to support his party's nominee Murji Patel in the November 3 by-poll, the MNS chief shot off a letter to Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister and senior State BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, urging the latter not to put up his party's (BJP's) candidate against the Opposition Shiv Sena MLA



Rutuja Latke in the by-poll.

The Andheri (East) by-poll has been necessitated by sitting Shiv Sena MLA Ramesh Latke's death. Rutuja Latke is the widow of Ramesh Latke who passed away on May 11

this year. Latke was a Shiv Sena MLA before the party split in June this year in the wake of rebellion by the MLAs led by current Chief Minister Eknath Shinde.

In the by-poll Rutuja is

taking on the BJP's Murji Patel, who had unsuccessfully contested the 2019 Assembly poll from Andheri (east) constituency as an independent candidate. Patel subsequently joined the BJP which has now fielded him as its candidate.

The Opposition NCP and Congress, which are part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA), have extended their support to Rutuja.

Addressing Fadnavis as “My dear friend Devendra” in his letter and asking him not to field the BJP's candidate in the by-poll, the MNS chief wrote: “Ramesh (Latke) was an efficient worker who began his journey up from being a shakha pramukh.

I have witnessed his journey and growth in the political arena.

Continued on Page 2

Shah releases textbooks in Hindi for MBBS students in MP

PTI ■ BHOPAL

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday released textbooks in Hindi of three subjects for MBBS students as part of an ambitious project of the Madhya Pradesh government to impart medical education in the Hindi language.

Terming it as an important day in history, Shah said Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to start the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) course in Hindi.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi speaks in Hindi on the international platforms to send across a message to the world. This boosts the confidence of the young people in India," Shah said addressing a gathering after unveiling the textbooks of medical biochemistry, anatomy and medical physiology subjects in Hindi for the MBBS students at a function in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal.



In the 21st century, some forces adopted the "brain drain" theory (migration of skilled professionals), but Prime Minister Modi has changed it to the "brain gain" theory, he said.

"This day will be written in the history in golden letters," Shah said after releasing the MBBS course textbooks in Hindi at the function where Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister

Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Medical Education Minister Vishvas Sarang were also present.

The Chief Minister also said that students from rural areas who were unable to get medical education because of lack of knowledge of English will not lag behind and will be able to pursue the MBBS course in Hindi.

Letter threatening to blow up railway stations, temples in Uttarakhand triggers alert

PTI ■ HARIDWAR

Police and intelligence agencies have gone on an alert after a letter threatening to blow up several railway stations and religious places in Uttarakhand, including the Himalayan temples of Kedarnath and Badrinath, was received at the Haridwar railway station.

The letter, sent by ordinary post, was received by the Haridwar railway station superintendent on October 10, Additional Superintendent of Police, Government Railway Police (GRP), Aruna Bharti said on Sunday.

The writer claimed to be Jameer Ahmad, the so-called "area commander" of the terror outfit Jaish-E-Mohammad, and vowed to avenge the killing of "Jihadis" in Jammu and Kashmir.

The letter claimed the attacks would be carried out on October 25 and 27.

Authorities in Uttarakhand have received similar threat letters in the past but for the first time a case has been registered in this connection, the official said, adding it is being ascertained whether the threat is real or just a hoax.

One such letter was received by authorities in Roorkee during the Kanwar Yatra this year, she said.

"We are also coordinating with our counterparts in states where letters with similar content have been received," she said. The police and intelligence agencies are on the alert, she said.

The letter threatened attacks on railway stations in Uttarakhand on October 25, including Haridwar, Dehradun, Roorkee, Najibabad, Kashipur and Kathgodam.

Goal is to win 2024 LS polls, help form non-BJP Govt at Centre: Stalin

PTI ■ CHENNAI

The DMK's first goal is to emerge victorious in all the 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone Puducherry segment as well in the 2024 Parliamentary election, party President and Chief Minister M K Stalin said here on Sunday.

The next goal is to facilitate formation of a new government at the Centre that is committed to the principles of social justice and federalism, he said.

"During the run-up to the (Lok Sabha

election (in 2024), we will take political steps aimed at it," he said in a video-message. It is the first edition of DMK's public outreach initiative through a video-message series titled, "Answers of one among you." (Ungalil Oruvanni Pathilgal in Tamil).

The DMK has come with a Tamil political slogan, "Narpatham Namathe, Nadum Namathe." It could be roughly translated as, "All the 40 Parliamentary constituencies are ours, the country is ours as well."

"The outreach programme's objective is to respond to queries raised in social media plat-

forms by the people on matters like Dravidian ideology, Dravidian model regime, administration and so on, the DMK said. Party president and Chief Minister Stalin would answer questions. To a question on NEET, Stalin said he is confident that Tamil Nadu could get an exemption from the test. "Do not come to a conclusion that it will not happen simply because there is a delay."

The DMK top leader slammed the BJP-led Centre for the "NEET-injustice," and said people would teach a fitting lesson to the Saffron party in the next LS elections.

Modi to launch PMJAY-MA Yojana Ayushman cards' distribution in Gujarat today

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Monday attend an event to distribute Ayushman cards to beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-Ma Amrutam (PMJAY-MA) scheme in Gujarat, an official said on Sunday.

Modi will join the programme organised in Gujarat capital Gandhinagar at 4 pm in the presence

of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel via video conference, and will also interact with three beneficiaries, an official release said.

The Ayushman PVC cards (made of polyvinyl chloride material which can be carried easily) are to be distributed to more than 50 lakh beneficiaries under the PMJAY-MA scheme in Gujarat, the release said.

The Centre's PMJAY scheme of providing healthcare facilities to the

economically weaker sections was integrated with Gujarat's Mukhyamantri Amrutam (MA) and Mukhyamantri Amrutam Vatsalya (MAV) healthcare schemes in 2019. As a result, all beneficiaries of the state schemes were eligible to get PMJAY-MA cards, the release said.

Since the integration of the two schemes, PMJAY-MA cards were issued to 1.58 crore beneficiaries in Gujarat, the state government

said. "From September 2021 till date, more than 50 lakh cards have been issued under the chief minister's leadership.

Newly printed Ayushman PVC cards will be given to these beneficiaries," the release said. Gujarat's Minister of Health and Family Welfare Rushikesh Patel will attend the state-level programme.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will join the event virtu-

ally.

The Ayushman PVC cards are being given to beneficiaries as per the National Health Authority (NHA) guidelines.

At least 50 lakh PVC cards have been printed in Gujarat and delivered to the respective chief district health officers/medical officers. The Ayushman PVC cards will be distributed at the village level, it was stated.

Don't run against Rutuja Latke, MNS chief Raj urges BJP ahead of bypoll

From Page 1

After his death, to see his wife become an MLA in his constituency will be a solace to his departed soul. I sincerely request you not to enter this by-election and put up a candidate against Rutuja Latke. Whenever, there has been a situation, wherein a sitting MLA passes away and his family member has contested the by-election in place of the deceased MLA, our party has refrained from fighting the by-poll. This is our way of paying our reverence to the depart-

ed soul."

"I appeal to you with these sentiments in mind. Sentiments such as these are part of our Maharashtra culture. I hope you will consider my appeal," the MNS chief wrote.

Responding to the MNS chief's letter, Deputy chief minister Fadnavis said that he would have to discuss the request made by the MNS chief with his party leadership and also his party ruling alliance partner Eknath Shinde-led Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena said that he would have to

discuss it with the party leadership before taking a decision.

"I have received the letter from Raj Thackeray. His intentions are good. But I alone cannot take decisions at my party. We have filed the nomination and the announcement has come from above. We will have to speak with our leadership before giving a reply to this letter. We will also have to discuss this with our ally Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena. Only then I can comment on this," Fadnavis said.

Interestingly enough, BJP leader Ashish Shelar had met the MNS chief at the latter's residence and requested Raj to support the BJP's candidate in the bypoll.

Alluding to the meeting between Shelar and Raj, Fadnavis said: "Raj urged Shelar not to contest the Andheri (East). Now, he has written to me as well."

Notwithstanding the political traditions that the MNS chief has referred to in his letter, this is not the first time that the BJP has gone against the tradition.

In the by-election to the Kolhapur North Assembly seat, the BJP had put up its candidate against the widow of a sitting MLA Jayshri Chandrakant (Anna) Jadhav, in April this year.

The Kolhapur North Assembly by-poll had been necessitated by the death of Congress' sitting MLA Chandrakant Jadhav. His widow Jayshri Chandrakant (Anna) Jadhav trounced the then Opposition BJP nominee Satyaajeet (Nana) Kadam by a comfortable 19,307 votes.

Chinese military will fight...

From Page 1

"We will become more adept at deploying our military forces on a regular basis and in diversified ways and our military will remain both steadfast and flexible as it carries out its operations. This will enable us to shape our security posture, deter and manage crises and conflicts and win local wars," Xi said.

Besides increasing the Communist Party's supervision over the military, he said reforms will be carried out in military universities and colleges to build a strong system of training "new type of military personnel and develop new ways to manage military human resources". The Chinese military also will improve national defence mobilisation capacity and development of reserve forces and will "continue to modernise our border, coastal and air defence".

"We will consolidate and boost unity between the military and the government and between the military and the people," he said.

AAP cries foul as CBI summons Sisodia...

From Page 1

After 75 years, the country got an Education Minister who gave good education to the poor and gave hope for a bright future. Prayers of crores of poor are with you," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.

Earlier, the CBI had questioned a number of suspects, including Sameer Mahendru, the

owner of Indo Spirits, Amit Arora, the director of Buddy Retail Private Limited in Gurugram, and India Ahead News managing director Mootha Gautam, in connection with the case.

The agency has also arrested Vijay Nair, an AAP worker and the former CEO of Only Much Louder, an entertainment and event manage-

ment company, and Hyderabad-based businessman Abhishek Boinpally.

In August, the CBI had registered an FIR against Sisodia and 14 other individuals and entities under various sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including 120-B (criminal conspiracy) and 477A (falsification of records), and section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act,

which deals with taking undue advantage to influence a public servant by corrupt or illegal means or by the exercise of personal influence.

Delhi Lieutenant Governor VK Saxena had recommended a CBI probe into alleged irregularities in the formulation and implementation of the Delhi excise policy, which was brought out in November last year.

rency in the coming times, or digital transactions in today's time, apart from the economy, many important aspects are associated with them". He listed the savings, elimination of the hassle of physical currency and environmental benefits as key advantages.

The Prime Minister pointed out that banking today has gone beyond financial transactions and has also become a medium of 'Good Governance' and 'Better Service Delivery'. Today, this system has given rise to immense possibilities for growth for the private sector and small-scale industries as well. He further added that there is hardly any area in India in which product and service delivery through technology is not creating a new startup ecosystem.

"Digital economy today is a great strength of our economy, of our startup world, of Make in India and of self-reliant India," he said. "Today our small industries, our MSMEs are also participating in government tenders through a system like GEM. They are getting new business opportunities. So far, orders worth Rs 2.5 lakh crore have been placed on GEM. Many more new opportunities will now arise in this direction through digital banking units", he added.

"The economy of any country is as progressive as its banking system is strong", the Prime Minister

remarked. He informed that the country has shifted from the pre-2014 'phone banking' system to digital banking in the last 8 years, and as a result, India's economy is moving forward with a continuum. Recalling the old ways, the Prime Minister pointed out that before 2014, the banks used to get phone calls to decide their functioning.

He further added that phone banking politics had made the banks unsafe and made the country's economy insecure by sowing the seeds of thousands of crores of scams.

Throwing light on how the present government had transformed the system, the Prime Minister informed that transparency has been the main focus. He continued, "After bringing transparency in the identification of NPAs, lakhs of crores of rupees were brought back into the banking system. We recapitalized banks, took action against willful defaulters, and reformed the Prevention of Corruption Act."

He noted that the resolution of NPA-related issues was expedited with the help of IBC while promoting the use of technology and analytics for loans, for the creation of a transparent and scientific system.

"Decisions such as the merger of banks were victims of policy paralysis and the country took them boldly. The results of these decisions are before us today", he added.

He informed that a new self-driven mechanism is now being created for the banking system through new initiatives like digital banking units and innovative use of Fintech.

Centre's bid ...

From Page 1

The Centre's recent attempts to "impose Hindi" are impractical and divisive in character puts non-Hindi speaking people in a very disadvantageous position in many respects. "This will not be acceptable not only to Tamil Nadu but also to any State that respects and values their mother tongue."

All the regional languages, including Tamil, should be treated equally and that is the way to ensure the principle of unity in diversity. There are 22 languages including Tamil in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution. All such languages have equal rights and there are several demands that some more languages should also be included under the schedule.

"I would like to point out that the number of people speaking languages other than Hindi is numerically more than Hindi-speaking people in the Indian Union. I am sure you would appreciate that every language has its own specialty with its uniqueness and linguistic culture."

He recalled Tamil Nadu's consistent opposition to Hindi "imposition", the massive agitations in 1965 in the State and former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's assurance that English would continue to be one of the official languages as long as the

non-Hindi speaking people wanted.

"Subsequently, the resolutions passed in 1968 and 1976 on official language, and according to the rules laid down thereunder, ensured the use of both English and Hindi in Union Government services. This position must continue to remain as the cornerstone of all discussions on official language."

On October 10, Stalin appealed to Modi to give up attempts to "make Hindi mandatory" and uphold the nation's unity. "Do not force another language war by imposing Hindi," the DMK chief had said. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan also had taken exception to the panel's recommendation. DMK and CPI(M) are allies in Tamil Nadu.

On Saturday, the ruling DMK's youth wing secretary and Stalin's son, Udayanidhi Stalin warned the Centre that his party would stage a protest against it in Delhi if Hindi was thrust upon Tamil Nadu.

A parliamentary panel has recently recommended that the medium of instruction in technical and non-technical higher education institutes such as the IITs in Hindi-speaking states should be Hindi and in other parts of the country, the respective regional languages.

From Page 1

It will also simplify the banking procedure while also providing a robust and secure banking system.

"People living in small towns and villages will find benefits like transferring money to availing loans. Digital Banking Units are another big step in that direction which is going on in the country to make the life of common man of India easier", he added. Modi said that the aim of the Government is to empower the common citizen and make them powerful, and as a result, policies were made keeping in mind the last person and the entire Government moving in the direction of their welfare.

He pointed out the two areas on which the Government worked simultaneously. First, reforming, strengthening, and making the banking system transparent and second financial inclusion.

Recalling the traditional ways of the past where people had to go to the bank, the Prime Minister said that this Government transformed the approach by bringing the bank to the people.

"We have given top priority to ensure that banking services reach the last mile", he said. A huge change from the days when it was expected that poor will go to the bank to a scenario when the banks were going to the doorstep of the poor. This involved reduction of distance between the poor and the banks.

"We not only removed the physical distance but, most importantly,

PM dedicates 75 Digital Banking ...

we removed the psychological distance", he said.

The highest priority was given to covering far-flung areas with banking.

The Prime Minister informed that today more than 99 per cent of villages in India have a bank branch, banking outlet or a 'banking mitra' within 5 km radius.

Extensive Post Office network too was harnessed via India Post Banks for providing the banking needs to the common citizens", he said. "Today the number of branches per one lakh adult citizens in India is more than countries like Germany, China and South Africa", he added.

Despite initial misgivings in certain sections, the Prime Minister said, "today the entire country is experiencing the power of Jan Dhan Bank accounts." He informed that these accounts enabled the government to provide insurance to the vulnerable at a very low premium.

"This opened the way for loans for the poor without collateral and provided Direct Benefit Transfer to the accounts of the target beneficiaries. These accounts were the key modality for providing homes, toilets, gas subsidy, and benefits of schemes for farmers could be ensured seamlessly", he said.

The Prime Minister acknowledged the global recognition for India's digital banking infrastructure.

"The IMF has praised India's digital banking infrastructure. The credit for this goes to the poor, farmers and labourers of India, who have adopted new technologies, made it a part of their lives", he emphasised.

"UPI has opened up new possibilities for India," the Prime Minister continued, "When financial partnerships are combined with digital partnerships, a whole new world of possibilities opens up. A huge example like UPI is before us. India is proud of this as it is the first technology of its kind in the world."

He said today 70 crore indigenous Rupay cards are in operation, a vast change from the days of foreign players and the elite nature of such products.

"This combination of technology and economy is enhancing the dignity and affordability for the poor and empowering the middle class, while at the same time it is also eliminating the digital divide of the country", he said.

He also praised the role of DBT in eliminating corruption and said that more than 25 lakh crore rupees have been transferred in various schemes via DBT.

Referring to the government's announcement of the launch of a digital currency based on blockchain technology, the Prime Minister pointed out that "Be it digital cur-

While party chief Sonia

AAP has broken records of corruption set by Cong: Nadda

BJP prez addresses 'Panch Parmeshwar Sammelan' in city ahead of MCD poll

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda on Sunday lashed out at the Arvind Kejriwal Government saying the AAP has become a party of scams and it has broken all records of corruption set by the Congress. Addressing the "Panch Parmeshwar Sammelan", held at the Ramlila Maidan ahead of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) polls which are likely to be held in December, BJP chief lambasted the Kejriwal Government saying the AAP had promised to provide a clean Government in Delhi, "but it has committed scams in the excise department, in the purchase of DTC buses, in the construction of toilets and in the Delhi Jal Board".

"The court has sent three AAP MLAs, including a Minister, in jail. Five of their MLAs are out on bail. That is their record," he added. "We need to keep in mind that people who have been oscillating between jail and bail are MLAs in the AAP," Nadda said.

Taking a dig at Delhi education model propagated by the AAP, BJP chief said there are no principals in 745 schools run by the Delhi Government, while 70 per cent of such schools do not teach science and commerce to students, he alleged. "We fail to understand how you will make poor children doctors. Spreading lies and giving false figures to people has become your nature, Kejriwalji," the BJP chief said.

Chief Minister Kejriwal had said he would enforce prohibition in Delhi if his party came to power, but has opened liquor shops in every neighbourhood after his party formed Government, Nadda said. Lambasting on the pathetic public transport system, Nadda said Delhi had 6,600 buses when Kejriwal became Chief Minister and he promised to increase the tally to 11,000 but it has reduced to 3,680. "They wanted to bring in Lokpal Bill, sat on hunger strike, made lofty statements of giving a healthy administration. They are now even embarrassing those who had an unhealthy Government," he said.

He also asserted that the BJP will "trounce" the AAP in the MCD election and thereafter, in the Delhi Assembly polls. "The BJP will trounce the AAP in the MCD polls and thereafter, in the Assembly election. Tell the people of Delhi about the AAP's corruption," he told BJP workers.

Nadda said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has realised the goal of "sabka sath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas".

"Other political parties are afraid of holding rallies at the Ramlila Maidan due to its sheer size. But even a workers' conference of the BJP is enough to fill the ground. The BJP is the only party in the country that has a mass base," he said.

The BJP chief said the trifurcation of the MCD led to a shortage of funds, but the Delhi unit of the party kept working tirelessly.

Nadda said the Modi Government gave a health cover of ₹5 lakh a year to 10.74 crore poor families across the country under the Ayushman Bharat Yojana, but the AAP



BJP national president JP Nadda addresses 'Panch Parmeshwar Sammelan' at Ramlila Maidan in New Delhi on Sunday



Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

government did not implement it in Delhi. Also, the Kejriwal government has not been able to build a single hospital in the Capital so far, he added.

"Take any scheme of the Modi government — Gareeb Kalyan Anna Yojana, Ujala Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Mudra Yojana, Jan Dhan Yojana, Startup India, Standup India — these are aimed at strengthening Dalits, poor people, women, youngsters, farmers and the deprived sections of the society," Nadda said.

Taking a dig at the Opposition parties that ideologies of rivals have changed over time but the ruling party has held its ground, BJP president said that socialist didn't remain socialists, communists didn't remain communists. "The INC didn't remain National or Congress; it became 'bhai-behen ki party' (a party of brother and sister)," he

BJP has conceded defeat, it only gave garbage mountains to city: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday hit back at the BJP chief JP Nadda saying the saffron party has conceded its defeat ahead of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) polls as the party has had to bring out its National president for a small municipal election. The AAP said Nadda did not say a single word about BJP achievements in the last 15 years in the MCD.

Taking a dig at BJP chief, AAP Chief Spokesperson and MLA Saurabh Bhardwaj said that Nadda should drop his gimmicks and present a report



card of BJP's 15 year long MCD tenure. "BJP's 15 year long MCD tenure ridden by

misgovernance and maladministration, Nadda has no achievement to talk about," he

said while taking a swipe at Rahul Gandhi, and his sister Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. "The

BJP is the only party that said in 1951-52 that there won't be 'Do Nishan, Do Vidhan, Do

Samvidhan' in one country. We took out a series of journeys but we never abandoned

CBI summon ploy to arrest Sisodia: AAP

'BJP wants to stop Dy CM from campaigning in Guj elections'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI



ent him from campaigning. Meanwhile, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday compared his deputy and jailed Minister Satyendar Jain to Bhagat Singh and termed his Government's fight with the Centre the "second freedom struggle".

The reactions from Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) came after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) summoned Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia for questioning on Monday in connection with alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped excise policy. Sisodia

has been asked to appear before it at its headquarters in Delhi at 11 am on Monday.

Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi: "The jail and the gallows could not affect the solid determination of Bhagat Singh. This is the second freedom struggle. Manish and Satyendar Jain (who is in jail in a money laundering case) are today's Bhagat Singh. After 75 years the country got an education minister who provided good education to the poor and gave them the expectation of a bright future. The blessing of crores of poor are with you." Delhi minister Satyendar Jain is under arrest and being probed in an alleged money laundering case.

Soon after the CBI summoning Sisodia, AAP Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh who held a press conference and claimed that the summon was a ploy to arrest Sisodia because the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wants to prevent the AAP leader from campaigning in Gujarat.

AAP doing pressure politics, Sisodia collection agent of Kejriwal: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday accused the AAP of doing "pressure politics" following the CBI's summons to Manish Sisodia and alleged he was more of a "corrupt collection agent" of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal than Deputy CM.

Addressing the media, BJP spokesperson Gaurav Bhatia also hit out at Kejriwal, who he alleged was "kingpin" of scams his Ministers are accused of, for comparing the action against Sisodia and another Minister Satyendar Jain with what the British did to Bhagat Singh.

"Kejriwal these days compare himself to God and his Ministers with freedom fighters. Kejriwal should be ashamed to do so as his corrupt ministers are filling his coffers while Bhagat Singh sacrificed his life for country," Bhatia alleged.

With the AAP claiming Sisodia will be arrested on Monday, when he has been summoned by the CBI for



questioning in the alleged excise scam, Bhatia said the party should refrain from "pressure politics" against probe agencies.

Kejriwal should stop giving certificates to others, he said.

"If you are so much scared of probe agencies, then you should not have done corruption. Sisodia is less a deputy Chief Minister and more a corrupt collection agent of Kejriwal," he alleged.

The BJP spokesperson also made light of the Aam Aadmi Party's claim that the central agencies' actions against its leaders were politically motivated because of its poll cam-

paign in Gujarat.

The AAP's performance has been dismal in most state polls and people have often rejected them, he said.

"The 'paap' party's corruption in framing excise policy has already been exposed after they withdrew it," Bhatia claimed.

The CBI has summoned Sisodia for questioning on Monday in connection with alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the excise policy for the national capital, officials said.

The federal probe agency has asked him to appear before it at its headquarters here at 11 am, they added.

In a tweet on Sunday, Sisodia said: "CBI raid was conducted at my house for 14 hours, nothing came out. Searched my bank locker, nothing came out in it. They did not find anything in my village. Now they have called me to CBI Headquarters at 11 am tomorrow. I will go and give my full cooperation. Satyameva Jayate."

Congress seeks Dy CM's sacking after CBI summon

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hitting hard at AAP, Delhi Congress on Sunday demanded the removal of Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, after the CBI summoned him for questioning in the liquor Scam.

Addressing the media, Delhi Congress president Anil Kumar said Sisodia has lost his moral right and credibility to remain as a Minister, so he should either resign on his own, or Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal should sack him. Kumar said that the CBI is

imminent and long incarceration awaits Sisodia like Satyendar Jain, Kejriwal should sack him forthwith and replace him with an honest man so that governance does not suffer.

"Besides the Liquor Scam, Sisodia was also the kingpin of the Class Room Construction Scam, Toilet Complex maintenance contract scam, Delhi Jal Board scam, and many other corrupt deals of the Kejriwal Government. As the Sisodia came in the light, he cannot escape the clutches of the law," Kumar added.

Asola Bhatti Mines to have 4 artificial waterfalls

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Asola Bhatti Mines to have four artificial waterfalls and 10 floating mountains by October end. The waterfall will cause aeration on the lake water and support the growth of aquatic flora and fauna. To develop Asola Bhatti Mines as a new tourism hotspot, Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena who has inspected the trial of the waterfalls and floating fountains in Neeli Jheel at Asola Bhatti Mines on Sunday also

directing the officials to create safe viewpoints for the visitors in the surroundings of the Neeli Jheel that would provide a clear view of the waterfalls. Saxena has also instructed to refurbish an existing structure belonging to the Forest Department at the site that provides a birds-eye view of the Neeli Jheel.

According to the statement released by the Raj Niwas, for the convenience of the visitors, Saxena directed the officials to make arrangements for a cafeteria and public toilets



using all eco-friendly material so as to avoid any harm to the

environment. Besides, the Delhi government is planning

to construct a 45-km-long peripheral road alongside the Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary boundary, which will function as a patrol passage to boost security.

"The waterfalls have been created by pumping up the water from the lake to the approx. 100 feet high rocky ledges from where the water plunges back into the lake. The waterfall simulated at four different ledges/cliffs not only provide beautiful scenic views but will also support greater saturation of dissolved oxygen

and facilitate growth of flora and fauna in the stagnant water body," the statement informed.

The location of the waterfall is around 5 km inside the Asola Bhatti Mines from Maidangarhi entrance.

The four sites for the waterfalls have been carefully selected as they have no sediments but they are hard rocky patches that have surfaced after erosion of the sediments over the past three decades since the mining activities were banned in the Bhatti Mines.

Man killed after 2 groups clash

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A man was killed while his friend was injured in a fight with another group in Central Delhi's Ranjit Nagar, police said on Sunday. The incident took place on the night of October 12.

According to police, there was a fight between two groups, with three people on each side. The brawl happened when Nitesh, Alok, and Monty stopped three people on a bike and assaulted one of them who fell on the ground. As the bike got disbalanced, the other two



too fell on the ground and a scuffle ensued between the two groups, a senior police officer said. Since no one gave any statement at the time, a case was registered under section 308 (Attempt to commit culpable homicide) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code on DD entry at

Ranjit Nagar Police Station and an investigation was taken up, said Shweta Chauhan, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central). On Saturday night, Nitesh succumbed to his injuries, she said.

Meanwhile, the police have identified the three accused who are absconding, she added. "The footage of the incident reveal that the quarrel was started by Nitesh and Alok. However, in the end, the other party overpowered them and assaulted them. Both Nitesh and Alok have previous criminal records," the DCP said.

Air quality slips to poor category

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Days after the national Capital was reported to have seen the cleanest air following an unusual spell of rain in October, the Air Quality Index (AQI) on Sunday slipped into the poor category, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Sunday asked agencies to strictly implement measures under Stage I of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) as the air quality in Delhi and neighbouring areas slipped to the poor levels. Delhi's 24-hour air

quality index (AQI) stood at 232 at 4 pm, worsening from 186 at 4 pm on Saturday. It was 286 in Ghaziabad, 229 in Faridabad, 258 in Greater Noida, 231 in Gurugram and 258 in Noida.

The AQI of Anand Vihar on Sunday turned 'severe' as it was recorded at 426, while the AQI of Shadipur dipped to 303, which falls under the 'very poor' category.

The capital city has 34 Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPPC) stations for real-time monitoring of air quality.

Most of the stations in the city recorded the AQI in the 'poor' category including, Alipur-245, Anand Vihar -427, Bawana - 263, CRRI Mathura Road - 232, Dwarka-Sector 8 - 247, ITO - 262, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium - 216, Major Dhyani Chand National Stadium - 231, Mundka - 269, NSIT Dwarka - 257, Narela - 234, Nehru Nagar - 227, North Campus (Delhi University) - 286, Patparganj -252, Punjabi Bagh - 263, R K Puram - 278, Rohini - 267, Sirifort - 209, Sonia Vihar - 255, Vivek Vihar - 251, and Wazirpur - 265.

Sisodia writes to L-G over Capital's deteriorating law & order situation

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Sunday wrote to Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena over worsening law and order situation in the national Capital where a series of murders have taken place recently. "It seems Delhi has now become the crime capital. Criminals have no fear of the law. The Constitution has given you the responsibility of upholding law and order in Delhi.

"The Delhi Police reports to you directly. I request you to please pay some attention to this too... it would benefit the people of Delhi," Sisodia said in the letter.

Citing five murder cases, the Deputy Chief Minister said that there have been a number incidents of rape and murder over the last few days.

One of them is the death of a 27-year-old, who succumbed to injuries on Saturday, days after being beaten up by three men in Ranjit Nagar.

Sisodia also cited Sunder Nagri murder case where a 25-year-old man Manish was brutally stabbed to death. In the third case which Sisodia mentioned in his letter was of Jahangirpuri murder where a boy Shivam (17 yrs) was stabbed to death.

"A week before the Jahangirpuri incident, a tragic incident of gang rape with a girl child in a Kendriya Vidyalaya campus was reported," it stated.

Cong ready for 6th poll contest for party president in its history

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The election to the Congress president on Monday will make a history of sorts.

This is the only the sixth time that an election is taking place to decide the top decision-maker of the grand old party. Also, the polls on Monday is taking place after 24 years during which the Gandhis held the top post without any elections.

About the significance of the polls, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said "This is actually the sixth time that the Congress is having internal elections for its president in its 137-year-history."

"The media has highlighted 1939, 1950, 1997 and 2000. In fact, there had been elections too in 1977 when Kasu Brahmananda Reddy was elected," he pointed out.

Ramesh said he has always believed in the Congress model of evolving a consensus for such positions, noting that the most famous practitioner of this approach in the post-Nehruvian era was K Kamaraj.

"As we approach E-Day tomorrow this belief has become even more stronger. The reasons for this are pretty obvious," he said.

It was way back in 1939, when an electoral contest decided who would be Congress president and in fact, Mahatma Gandhi's candidate P Sitaramayya had lost to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Then in 1950 came the Congress' first election post-Independence for the post of party president when Purshottam Das Tandon and Acharya Kripalani faced off for the top post. Surprisingly, Tandon, seen as a Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel loyalist, had won the contest trumping the



then PM Jawaharlal Nehru's choice.

In 1977, following the resignation of Dev Kant Barooah as party president in the wake of the defeat in the Lok Sabha polls, K Brahmananda Reddy defeated Siddhartha Shankar Ray and Karan Singh in the party's polls for AICC chief.

The next election that needed a contest came 20 years later in 1997 when Sitaram Kesri squared off in a triangular contest with Sharad Pawar and Rajesh Pilot.

Except for Maharashtra

and parts of Uttar Pradesh, all state Congress units had backed Kesri. He had posted a landslide victory getting 6,224 delegates' votes against Pawar's 882 and Pilot's 354.

The third contest came in 2000 and this was the only time a Gandhi family member was challenged in the elections with Jitendra Prasad taking on Sonia Gandhi. Prasad suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Sonia Gandhi who garnered over 7,400 votes, while Prasad reportedly polled a paltry 94.

CRPF seeks views for proposed action plan for next 25 years

RAKESH K SINGH ■
NEW DELHI

The CRPF has sought views/suggestions on a proposed action plan for the next 25 years from all its formations across the country by October 25 following prodding from the Union Home Ministry.

The move is part of Special Campaign 2.0 and actionable points derived out of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech emphasising "Panch Pran" to make India a developed country by 2047, the centenary year of the country's freedom from British rule.

The decision follows a meeting on October 7 under the chairmanship of the Additional Secretary (Police II) Division in the Union Home Ministry to review the progress of Special Campaign 2.0 and actionable points of the Prime Minister's speech on Independence Day. Following this, the Home Ministry asked

the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) to furnish an Action Taken Report on the issue, a senior Union Home Ministry official said.

The Action Plan for the next 25 years is to be drawn based on the "Panch Pran" concept of the PM's Independence Day speech, in respect of the CRPF as an organisation, which will contribute to making India a developed nation by 2047, according to a CRPF communication sent to all the formations on Friday.

The action plan should have clear and defined goals of one year, three years, five years, ten years, 15 years, 20 years, and 25 years.

While preparing the action plan, suggestions from various ranks of the Force are likely to be taken to make Vision a realistic, constructive and achievable plan so that the contribution of every member of the paramilitary is counted towards making India a developed



nation.

The proforma of the proposed action plan under the Panch Pran will include consolidated goals from one, three, five, 10, 15, 20 and 25 years that the CRPF envisions for itself, they added.

The Panch Pran (five pledges) of Amrit Kaal (75th year of Indian Independence) entail the goal of a developed India, remove any trace of colonial mindset, take pride in our roots, unity and sense of duty among citizens.

Conceding that there is a need of a structural reform within the CRPF to cope up with the present and emerging

challenges, paramilitary veterans anticipate it to be a cosmetic exercise as preparation of a holistic vision document within a period of less than a fortnight is effectively impossible especially when there is no policy planning and perspective division in the paramilitary.

The current problems like stagnation and lack of camaraderie across the ranks is not being addressed, and the CRPF is now heavily dependent on the police forces for infrastructure, mobility, operational plans, intelligence and even winter clothing in areas like Jammu and Kashmir, the veterans added.

Min: India capable of giving befitting reply if threatened

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

India is a peace-loving nation but is capable of giving a befitting reply if threatened, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Sunday. He also said the Government is giving top priority to providing state-of-the-art weapons manufactured indigenously to the armed forces to meet any challenge.

Making these assertions in his address at a virtual event 'Shaheedon Ko Salaam,' Rajnath emphasised that strict vigil is being maintained at the borders and that the country is ready to deal with all challenges.

"India is a peace-loving nation which has never tried to hurt any country, but if any attempt is made to disrupt peace and harmony in the country, a befitting reply will be given," he said.

He also urged the citizens



to contribute to nation-building by transcending sectarian barriers and imbibing the qualities of national pride and patriotism, found in abundance in every Indian soldier and freedom fighter, according to the defence ministry. The event was organised by an NGO named "Maruti Veer Jawan Trust".

Rajnath said the armed forces personnel, rising above the barriers of region, religion, caste and language, serve the nation selflessly and protect people from various kinds of threats, the same way the "revolutionary" freedom fighters laid down their lives for the country's independence.

Terming the support to the family members of the fallen heroes a national responsibility, the defence minister asserted that the government is committed to ensuring the welfare of the next of kin of the serving as well as the retired security forces personnel.

He described the family as the biggest strength and support system of a soldier and said the government is leaving no stone unturned to strengthen that support system.

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Rajnath to host African counterparts during IADD in Gujarat

Meet on sidelines of 12th Def Expo
PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will host his counterparts from African Nations during the India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) on Tuesday on the sidelines of the 12th DefExpo in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

The broad theme of the dialogue is 'India-Africa: Adopting Strategy for Synergising and Strengthening Defence and Security Cooperation.

India and Africa share close and historical ties. India's approach towards Africa is guided by the Kampala Principles enunciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018. India's engagement rests on African priorities as outlined by Africans themselves, defence ministry officials said here on Sunday.

The first-ever India-Africa Defence Ministers Conclave was held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh in conjunction with DefExpo in 2020. A Joint Declaration - 'Lucknow Declaration' - was adopted at the end of the conclave as an outcome document.

In continuance of the 'Lucknow Declaration' and in consultation with stakeholders, the IAAD has been institutionalized to be held once every two years on the sidelines of DefExpo. The IADD will explore new areas of convergence for mutual engagement, including in areas like capacity building, training, cyber security, maritime security and counter-terrorism. Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA) is the knowledge partner for the India-Africa Defence Dialogue, they said.

Two Bharat Jodo Yatris suffer minor electric shock in Ballari

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/BENGALURU



In a minor accident, two Bharat Jodo Yatris suffered a minor electric shock after they came in contact with a live electric wire while waving a Congress flag tied to a rod at Moka village in Ballari district on Sunday.

They were immediately rushed to a local hospital in New Moka. Hospital sources said the patients were fine as they had not suffered any major injuries.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who is leading the Bharat Jodo Yatra, met the patients in the hospital.

"An unfortunate incident occurred during the Yatra today. A few of our friends suffered an electric shock while tying flags to a pole.

"They have been tended to in the Civil Hospital, New Moka, Ballari. I am happy that they have not suffered any

major injuries and their morale continues to remain high... I would like to take this opportunity to tell all those involved in the Yatra to take safety precautions and utmost care while they go about fulfilling their duties as we forge ahead in our mission to unite India," Rahul Gandhi said in a Facebook post about the incident.

Rahul and other Bharat Jodo Yatris had stayed in Saganakallu village on Saturday night after participating in a public meeting which was organised in Ballari to mark the completion of 1,000 km of the 3,570-km Bharat Jodo Yatra which was launched in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, on September 7, 2022.

Anti-BJP atmosphere in Gujarat, but Cong doesn't look serious: Vaghela

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



visit the state at least twice," Vaghela added.

The veteran leader has also shown interest in returning to the Indian National Congress (INC).

He told PTI that he may rejoin the party if Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi say so before the schedule for the state assembly elections is announced.

The Election Commission on Friday announced the Himachal Pradesh Assembly Election Schedule. The schedule for the Gujarat Assembly

elections will be announced in the next few days.

In Gujarat, BJP has been in power for the last 27 years.

When asked about one of his recent statements indicating a return to the Congress, the 82-year-old Vaghela said, "I said if the party, Sonia ji and Rahul ji are interested, then there will be a talk. I have said it as a wish. If they meet me, it will be a matter of what is on their mind and what I want to say."

He said he has spoken to Congress' Gujarat in-charge Raghu Sharma, senior leader Bharat Singh Solanki and some other party leaders and they all are interested in his return to the party.

"The decision has to be taken by the high command," he added.

Indian Navy deployed submarine for 9 months in Indian Ocean Action in view of China increasing its Naval presence in region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy deployed its submarine for more than nine months in the Indian Ocean in view of China increasing its naval presence in the region,

The Indian submarine patrolled the crucial sea lanes from January onwards before returning to its base in Mumbai last Saturday.

It is the first time that the Navy made public operations of the submarine fleet on Sunday in an apparent message to adversaries about the capabilities and reach of the force in the strategically important Indian Ocean.

The indigenously designed and built diesel-powered sub-

marine INS Vela returned to its base after active deployment for 8.5 months, a tweet message by the Western Command of the Navy said on Sunday.

It said the submarine recorded many achievements through her sustained operations at sea and completed an extremely successful mission-based deployment across the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). However, the navy refrained from giving more details of the nature of operations and pattern of deployment including patrolling.

INS Vela is the fourth submarine of the first batch of six Kalvari-class submarines for the Indian Navy. It is a diesel-electric attack submarine based on the Scorpene class, designed by the French naval defence

and energy group DCNS and manufactured by Mazagon Dock Limited, Mumbai. It was inducted into the Navy in 2021. Three other submarines including Kalvari, Khanderi, and Karanj commissioned earlier.

The previous avatar of INS Vela was commissioned on August 31, 1973, and bid adieu after 37 years, of service in 2010.

The latest submarine possesses advanced stealth and combat capabilities. Attacks from INS Vela can be carried out using torpedoes and tube-launched anti-ship missiles at the same time, be it on the surface or underwater. The submarine weighs about 1,770 tons and has a speed of 20 knots underwater.



The Indian Ocean region is vital for India as more than 70 per cent of its export and import passes through the sea lanes in the region.

Moreover, China since 2008 has increased its naval forays into the Indian Ocean and at any given time now three to four of its warships including submarines are operating in the region thereby posing a challenge to Indian interests.

The Indian Navy sees the region as its area of responsibility and has increased its presence in the last few years through mission-based deployments.

Moreover, India has further strengthened its ties with the nations located on the rim of the Indian Ocean region. It warships regularly visit the countries as part of maritime diplomacy.

Rly gets first desi aluminium goods train rake

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/BHUBNESHWAR

Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday flagged off India's first indigenously manufactured aluminium goods train from Bhubaneswar. The rakes are lighter than its predecessors, but with more freight carrying capacity.

Manufactured in collaboration with Besco Limited Wagon Division and aluminium major Hindalco, the aluminium rake has a lower carbon footprint for every 100 kg of weight reduction in wagons, the railways said.

The lifetime carbon saving is eight to 10 tonnes and this means, savings of more than 14,500 tonnes of carbon for a single rake, it said.

The rake is 180 tonnes lighter than existing steel rakes, resulting in increased speed and lower power consumption for the same distance, the national transporter said.

"This is a proud moment for the country and our drive for indigenization as these lightweight aluminium wagons are a big innovation for the Indian Railways," the minister said.

"These wagons save 14,500 tonnes of CO2 emissions, have more carrying capacity, consume less energy and are corrosion-resistant. They are 100 per cent recyclable and even after 30 years, they will be as good as new. These aluminium wagons will enable us to achieve our climate goals," he said.

Hindalco in a statement said that with the railways planning to deploy more than one lakh wagons in the coming years, the potential annual CO2 reduction could be to the tune of over 25 lakh tonnes, with around a 15 to 20 per cent shift to aluminium wagons. This is a notable contribution to the country's sustainability goals, it said.

The new generation wag-

ons fabricated by Besco, based on RDSO-approved designs, are made from high-strength aluminium alloy plates and extrusions indigenously manufactured at Hindalco's rolling facility at Hirakud in Odisha, leveraging its global technology, the statement said.

The new rake can carry 180 tonnes extra payload per trip over conventional rakes and being corrosion resistant, will reduce maintenance costs, it said, adding that fully bolted construction was used to build these wagons with no welding on the superstructure.

The railways said that the aluminium rakes have a 80 per cent resale value and a 10 year longer lifespan as compared to normal ones. But the manufacturing cost is 35 per cent higher as the superstructure is all aluminium, it said.

The iron and steel industry consumes a lot of nickel and cadmium which are imported. So the proliferation



of aluminium wagons will result in less import and at the same time, this is good for the domestic aluminium industry, an official said.

Hindalco is also planning to participate in the manufacturing of aluminium coaches for high-speed passenger trains. The company said that aluminium trains command the lion's share in the United States, Europe and Japan because of sleek, aerodynamic designs and their ability to tilt at high speeds without

going off the rails.

Satish Pai, Managing Director, Hindalco Industries said, "The launch of India's first aluminium freight rake is a testimony to our capability and commitment to offer intelligent and sustainable solutions for nation-building. Hindalco is steadfast in bringing together the best of global technologies with local resources to make Indian Railways' logistics more efficient and contribute to the vision of an Atmanirbhar Bharat.



Indian Air Force's Sarang helicopters display aerobatics skills during a rehearsal ahead of DefExpo 22, at Sabarmati river front in Ahmedabad on Sunday. DefExpo-2022 will be held from Octoner 18-22.

PTI

Emotions run high at cremation of yet another Kashmiri Pandit

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Before bidding final adieu to her beloved father Puran Krishan Bhat, Shriya kept patting his mortal remains and kissed him "profusely" while her younger brother, Shanu, shaken by the tragedy, silently stood by her side staring at the corpse. The young siblings were speechless. With moist eyes they stood clinging to each other by the side of their deceased father.

As the rush of mourners started trickling in to pay their tributes the kids said last goodbye to their father and were whisked away by the

close relatives in a separate corner.

Though the mood was sombre at the cremation ground in Bantalab area of Jammu yet emotions ran high as some of the agitated Kashmiri pandit youth shouted anti government slogans even as the long funeral procession reached there escorted by the local policemen. The members of the Kashmiri pandit community were aghast over another incident of targeted killing and failure of the UT administration in preventing such 'barbaric' incidents.

Earlier the mortal remains

of Bhat reached Jammu late Saturday night. Wailing relatives assembled at the residence of Puran Bhat consoled each other. During the day he was killed in cold blood by the terrorists outside his residence in the Chowdhari Gund area of South Kashmir's Shopian district.

Since last evening the close relatives and other loved ones have been raising the issue of security provided to the members of the minority community in the Kashmir valley and how vulnerable they are even in their own houses despite the presence of security camps and dedicated

security apparatus to guard them round the clock.

The top brass of the different political parties skipped the cremation ceremony while some of the junior leaders were seen paying tributes before the pyre was lit. A large number of members belonging to the Kashmiri pandit community and others attended the cremation ceremony. Referring to the prevailing security situation in different parts of the Kashmir valley some of the angry members raised serious concerns over the assurances doled out by the Union Territory administration from

time to time.

The representatives of the PM Package (displaced) employees, agitating for over 155 days in Jammu in support of their single point demand have decided to continue their struggle and also demanded adequate compensation and an assurance of government job for one of the kin of the deceased family.

Senior civil and police officials of the Jammu district also attended the cremation ceremony. Chairman of Panun Kashmir Ajay Chrungoo said they are caught between genocidal war unleashed on them by jihadi forces with the state

of Pakistan as its prime abettor and the denial of genocide by government of India.

The government must pass the 'Prevention of Genocide and Atrocities Bill' as proposed by the Panun Kashmir, he said.

Panun Kashmir convener Agnishekhar said all claims of normalcy in Kashmir have fallen flat in view of the continued killings of the members of the minority community.

"Tourist arrivals and shooting of films are no signs of normalcy. The real normalcy will be when we (Kashmiri pandits) are able to move freely and re-settle there with-



out any fear," he said. Members of the civil society in different parts of Kashmir valley also staged protest demonstrations against the civilian killings,

especially members of the minority community and urged the UT administration to provide them fool proof security.

Police probe cannibalism, organ trade angles in Kerala human sacrifice case

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Interrogation of Mohammed Shafi, Bhagawal Singh and Laila, the three accused in the human sacrifice at Pathanamthitta has given new leads to the police which are inquiring into the possibilities of cannibalism and human organ trade.

Sources in the investigation team disclosed that many internal organs from the two slain bodies have gone missing. "There were no lungs, livers, kidneys in the bodies of Roseli and Padma, the women who wer sacrificed as part of the rit-

ual," said a member of the investigating team. The post mortem reports say that the dead bodies have been cut by a person who is familiar with human anatomy. Though Shafi conceded that he had worked as a mortuary assistant and was versed in handling dead bodies, the cops do not rule out the possibilities of an outsider in the "mission".

Yet another factor that has caused anxiety among the police is the revelation by the husband-wife of Bhagwal and Laila that Shafi had assured them that they would get lakhs by selling human flesh. The hacked bodies were preserved in the refrig-



erator in the residence. The refrigerator has stains of human blood in it. The investigators also came across pressure cooker which had been used to cook the flesh.

The police are also taken aback by reports going around

Kochi that Shai could have sold cooked human flesh through the eatery owned by him in Ernakulam. Organs could be harvested from the bodies only by well-trained medical doctors and this is what worries the investigation team.

TMC starts exercise to connect with masses ahead of festivals

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

With the BJP leadership hinting at "a major change in Bengal politics after December," the ruling Trinamool Congress has started a massive "relation building exercise," within the party.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has asked all the district leaders to organise Vijaya Dashami functions throughout the State.

The public relation initiative comes days BJP leader and Union Minister Nishit Pramanik telling the media



that "there could be major change" in Bengal politics and the Trinamool Congress.

"The party will collapse as its base has corroded from the grassroots... Something may happen December... I cannot give you a date or time as I am not an astrologer," he said.

His statement came days

after Bengal opposition leader Suwendu Adhikari saying, "though the BJP will not topple... the TMC will not be able to run the government as there will be a major turmoil..."

Both these leaders' comments came days after cine star-turned-BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty too claimed that several TMC MLAs were in touch with him.

The initiative also comes days after senior Trinamool Congress leader and MLA Tapas Roy accusing senior TMC party MP Sudip Bandopadhyay of "keeping in

touch" with the saffron leadership.

Bandopadhyay considered to be a trusted lieutenant of the Chief Minister defended himself against Roy's allegations saying he would quit politics if his involvement with the BJP could be proved.

On the recent initiative by the party to go back to the grassroots senior TMC leader and spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said, "our leader Mamata Banerjee has instructed us to go to the people during the festive season because that is a part of our culture."

Gujarat wants 'new engine Govt' not 'double engine' one, says Kejriwal

PTI ■ BHAVNAGAR

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Sunday released its fifth list of candidates for 12 seats in the Gujarat Assembly elections due this year-end. With the new list, the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP has so far announced the names of 53 candidates for the upcoming polls to 182 Assembly seats in the BJP-ruled State. The ruling BJP and the opposition Congress have so far not announced names of any of their candidates for the polls.

Taking a dig at the BJP-led Central government, Delhi Chief Minister and AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said Gujarat doesn't want a



"double-engine government" but a 'new engine' government.

Addressing a rally in Bhavnagar city in the poll-bound state, Kejriwal said if Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) comes to power, it will withdraw on priority all "false cases" registered against people from various communities, groups and government employees for agitating against the BJP government in the last 27 years.

In a veiled swipe at Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's events in Gujarat where he launched projects worth crores, Kejriwal said he cannot announce such a huge package but will ensure benefits worth Rs 30,000 to households through his "guarantees".

"They say 'double engine ki sarkaar' (a double-engine government). This time, Gujarat does not want a double-engine, it wants a 'new engine.' The double engine is very old, both engines are 40-50 years old. A new party, new faces, new ideology, new energy, and a new dawn. Try for the new party, you do not lose anything for trying," he said.

The 'double-engine' phrase is used by BJP leaders to

emphasize that development will be expedited if the same party is at the helm in states and the Centre.

"Try once and give us a chance. I am here to seek one chance. You have given 70 years to these people. You gave so many years to Congress and 27 years to BJP. Give Kejriwal a chance. If I do not perform, I will not return to seek votes," the AAP national convener said.

Kejriwal and Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday embarked on a two-day visit to Gujarat for canvassing.

Kejriwal said he was watching 'big leaders' of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) visiting Gujarat during elections and

announcing packages worth Rs 30,000 crore.

"Friends, I do not have Rs 30,000 crore. I cannot announce a package for you. But I can tell you that if we win, I will give a benefit of Rs 30,000 to your family," he said and reiterated AAP's "guarantees" of free and quality education, free treatment, free electricity, creation of jobs and unemployment allowance etc.

He also promised to reduce inflation in Gujarat like in Delhi. Kejriwal cited a "survey conducted by the Centre" to claim that inflation in Gujarat is the highest in the country and double of Delhi. "This is because of massive corruption in Gujarat", he added.

"If you vote for an honest party, we will reduce the price of everything in Gujarat like we have done in Delhi," he said.

Stating that the countdown of the election has begun, the AAP leader said his party will prioritise the withdrawal of cases registered against agitators. The Election Commission has not yet announced the poll program for Gujarat.

He said the BJP government filed false cases against agitators from different communities such as Patidars, Kshatriyas, Thakors, Dalits, Adivasis, Maldharis, as well as farmers and police, ex-service-men, etc.

"Counting (of votes) is on December 8. The (AAP) gov-

ernment will form by December 15. When we form our government on December 15, all the cases registered against various people in the last 27 years by the (BJP) government for agitating against it will be withdrawn by December 31. All those government servants who have been suspended will be reinstated," Kejriwal said. He said the second priority of the AAP government will be to eradicate corruption.

"If you want hooliganism and corruption, then go with them. 27 years have passed, and another five years will pass. If you want to get schools constructed, then vote for me. If you want hospitals, medicines, and quality treatment for your

family, then come to us. If you want to see a better road, then come to us. We know how to do that," he said.

Kejriwal reiterated that several workers and leaders of the BJP want their party to lose in polls.

"They are scared of quitting the party out of fear of harassment. I request all BJP leaders to stay with your party but work to defeat AAP," he said.

Kejriwal said as per an "IB report", Congress is set to win less than ten seats in Gujarat elections. "A big change is coming this time. Be a part of the change. Do not waste your vote on Congress. Ask everyone not to vote for Congress," he said.

Earlier an Italian woman used to insult PM Modi now an Italia is insulting his mother: Anurag

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Attacking the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party, BJP leader and Union minister Anurag Thakur Saturday alleged earlier an "Italian woman" used to "insult" Prime Minister Narendra Modi now "an Italia is insulting his mother".

Though he did not name either, the apparent targets of his tirade during election rallies in Gujarat were Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who was born in Italy, and the AAP's Gujarat unit head Gopal Italia.

He also claimed there is a "huge BJP wave" in Gujarat and "this time we are going to break all previous records".

He addressed three public meetings in Surendranagar and Wadhwa in the poll-bound state, launching fierce attacks

on the Congress and the AAP.

"Earlier an Italian woman used to insult Prime Minister Narendra Modi now an Italia is insulting his mother," said the minister of youth affairs and sports.

Gujarat did not accept this "insult" earlier it will not accept it now, he said. "Gujarat will give a befitting reply."

The AAP's Gujarat president has been under the BJP fire for the past few days over his comments.

Italia was on Thursday detained for nearly three hours by the Delhi Police after he appeared before the National Commission for Women (NCW) in connection with his alleged comments against Modi. In an old video that emerged on Thursday, Italia is purportedly heard mocking Modi's 100-year-old mother Hiraba.



The BJP is organising 'Gujarat Gaurav Yatra' from October 12 to October 20 on five routes. BJP national president JP Nadda flagged off two routes on October 12, while Union Home Minister Amit Shah flagged off three routes the next day.

'Gujarat Gaurav Yatra' was also taken out by the party in 2002 under the leadership of then chief minister Narendra Modi, and then before the assembly elections in 2017.

This time, the 5,734-km Yatra aims to cover 144 of the state's 182 assembly constituencies during which more than 145 public meetings will be held.

Describing Gujarat as the model of development for the whole of India, Thakur said, "With the blessings of the people here, Modi ji came to power in 2014 and 2019 with path-breaking majority. In 2024 also, Narendra Modi ji is going to come with 400-plus seats".

Maha: Blow to BJP as Congress sweeps Panchayat Samiti polls in Nagpur

PTI ■ NAGPUR

In a setback to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Congress dominated the results of elections to the posts of Panchayat Samiti chairpersons and deputy chairpersons in Nagpur district of Maharashtra.

As per the official information, the BJP could not win even a single post of chairperson and managed to secure only three seats of deputy chairperson in the elections, results of which were declared on Saturday - on the same day of voting.

Nagpur district is the home turf of the BJP's current chief of Maharashtra unit Chandrashekhar Bawankule, state Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union minister Nitin Gadkari. Nagpur also houses the headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak

Sangh (RSS), the ideological fountainhead of the BJP that is currently in power in the state and at the Centre.

The Congress won nine out of 13 posts of chairperson and eight out of 13 posts of deputy chairperson in the district. The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) secured three posts of chairperson, while the Shiv Sena managed to win one such post, the district officials said.

The Congress won the chairperson's post in Saoner, Kalmeshwar, Parseoni, Mouda, Kamptee, Umred, Bhivapur, Kuhi and Nagpur Rural. The NCP won the post in Katol, Narkhed and Hingna, and the Shiv Sena won the Ramtek chairperson's post, they said.

The Ramtek seat was bagged the faction led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde named



'Balasahebanchi Shiv Sena', sources said.

Talking to PTI, former minister and Congress rural unit chief Rajendra Mulak said, "The Panchayat Samiti results have demoralised the BJP cadre, as the party faced a defeat on the home ground of the RSS and senior leaders Nitin Gadkari, Devendra Fadnavis and Chandrashekar Bawankule."

"Winning and losing keeps

happening, but the way they have lost shows that the BJP cadre has no grip in the district," the Congress leader said.

Elections to the posts of sarpanch and members of gram panchayats were held on Sunday and results will be declared on Monday.

Similarly, polling and counting for the posts of president and vice-president Zilla Parishads will be held on Monday, officials said.

9 die in vehicle pile-up in Karnataka, CM announces ₹2 L solatium each to kin

PTI ■ HASSAN

Nine people, including four children, were killed and 10 injured in a pile-up involving three vehicles here, police said.

The accident involving a milk tanker, a Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) bus, and a tempo traveller took place in Arsikere taluk here around 11 PM on Saturday, they said.

All those killed were travelling in the tempo traveller, which was crushed between the bus and the milk tanker. While six died on the spot, three succumbed on the way to the hospital, police said.

The injured are undergoing treatment at a hospital

here, they said.

Expressing grief about the incident, Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai in Mandya, announced a solatium of Rs 2 lakh each to families of nine people who died in the mishap.

"It is extremely sad that 9 people have died in a terrible road accident in Araseikere of Hassan district yesterday. May the departed souls rest in peace," he had earlier tweeted.

Offering condolences to families of those deceased, Former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, who hails from the district, said the victims were all from the same family and were returning to their native village after visiting some holy places.

Traders protest against opening of Reliance retail store in Jammu

PTI ■ JAMMU

Scores of traders on Sunday staged a protest against opening of a Reliance retail store here and threatened to intensify their agitation to 'safeguard' small businesses.

The protesters led by president of Chamber of Commerce and Industries (CCI) Jammu Arun Gupta and president of Traders Federation Ware House Nehru Market Deepak Gupta assembled outside the Reliance store near Jewel chowk in the heart of the city and held a peaceful dharna, officials said.

They said policemen were deployed in strength to maintain law and order.

"We are holding this protest to express our anguish

over the opening of Reliance retail store which will ruin the small shopkeepers and force them to close down as they cannot compete with these big companies," Deepak Gupta said.

He said they have been continuously appealing to the administration to take steps to save the small traders of Jammu but "no plea is being heard".

"Now the government has given permission to Reliance Smart Bazaar store in Jammu. This store will sell everything from groceries to medicines and electronics to liquor. Who will go to the small shopkeepers running their shops in the streets?," he asked.

Gupta threatened to intensify their agitation by pouring

on the roads, holding dharnas and going for a hunger strike if the administration did not revoke its permission to the Reliance retail store.

Expressing similar views, CCI Arun Gupta president appealed to the administration not to allow business tycoons to open another store in Jammu as it will directly affect the sales of small shopkeepers, who are already struggling for their sustenance due to rising inflation and several other issues concerning their business. "Allowing Reliance to open new stores will prove fatal for the small businesses in the region which should not be the case as the government has the responsibility to look after one and all in the Union Territory," he said.



Camel owners wait for tourists for camel safari in the deserts of Pushkar on Sunday..

(PTI)

Passing comment

Biden’s nasty remark about Pakistan does little to hide the growing India-US tensions

US President Joe Biden’s calling Pakistan as “one of the most dangerous nations in the world” has ruffled features in our western neighbour. Concomitantly, it may have delighted many in New Delhi, but the reality is more complex. At least, this quote should not be seen indicating any policy shift in Washington vis-à-vis Islamabad. “This is a guy [Chinese President Xi Jinping] who understands what he wants but has an enormous, enormous array of problems. How do we handle that? How do we handle that relative to what’s going on in Russia? And what I think is maybe one of the most dangerous nations in the world: Pakistan. Nuclear weapons without any cohesion,” Biden said, as quoted in a White House press release of his remark at the Democratic Party event. Quite predictably, Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif rejected Biden’s comment, claiming that Pakistan has been “a most responsible nuclear state, wherein its nuclear programme is managed through a technically sound and foolproof command and control system.” Pakistan Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari summoned US Ambassador Donald Blome to the Foreign Office of Pakistan. This must have come as a rude shock to Blome who visited Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) just a few days ago, ostensibly to plant a sapling at the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and commemorate the victims of the 2005 earthquake—a visit that was resented by India in no uncertain terms.



Minister of External Affairs mandarins must realise that the Western attitude towards India has been, if not hardening, becoming less friendly since the Ministry of External Affairs decided to stick to its old (and failed) non-alignment policy over the war in Ukraine. There have been actions, including the infamous PoK visit by Blome, that are not to the liking of India. The West-dominated Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which placed Pakistan on its “grey list” for financing of terrorism and money laundering four years ago, is likely to be dropped from it. The global financial watchdog seems to be veering towards the view that Pakistan is complying with its (the FATF’s) action plan. This may happen soon, as the watchdog meets in Paris from October 18 to 21. Only FATF officials can explain, using some tedious arguments, what Pakistan has done in the recent past to enjoy the reprieve, for it remains as dangerous a jihad factory as it was four or 14 years ago. On October 8, the US issued an advisory to its citizens, asking them to exercise “increased caution” while travelling to India due to “crime and terrorism.” One wonders in what manner there has been a surge in crime and terrorism in our country. A few weeks ago, the US cleared a \$450-million F-16 fleet sustainment programme to Pakistan. Biden’s comment may be a way to soothe feelings in New Delhi; reading more than into it—for it was a passing comment—would be going overboard.



Navy commandoes display their skills during a rehearsal ahead of DefExpo 22, at Sabarmati river front in Ahmedabad

In the hall of shame

Of the 121 countries on the Global Hunger Index, India is now ranked below its neighbours at 107.

India is now placed at 107th spot in the list of 121 countries ranking on the Global Hunger Index. This is enough to set the alarm bells ringing for the Indian government which is high on its achievements and does not tire of numerating its achievement. However, the facts are different from the projected image. Despite tall claims, the reality for people living on the fringe is getting from bad to worse. What is worse is that even less developed countries like Nepal and Pakistan and Bangladesh are placed higher than India. This is an indication that the lopsided development taking place in India has no meaning for the downtrodden. In the Global Hunger Index (GHI) in 2022, jointly published by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe, India has gone down to the 107th spot from 101. The GHI measures and tracks hunger at the global levels. Of the 121 countries on the GHI, India is ranked below its neighbours; Nepal (81), Pakistan (99), Sri Lanka (64), and Bangladesh (84). There is no merit in the argument that corona led to malnutrition as the effect of coronavirus can be simply ignored as its footprint was similar in the Indian subcontinent.



The GHI has pegged India as a country with a serious hunger problem. The GHI has given India a score of 29.1, which falls in the ‘serious’ category of hunger level. The list, ranks Yemen in the lowest position at 121. The GHI score is calculated on four indicators - undernourishment; child wasting which is the share of children under age five who have low weight for their height and are put in the category of acute under-nutrition; child stunting, children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic under-nutrition; and child mortality under the age of five. India has been increasing scores over the years. The country has continuously slipped on GHI during the present BJP regime. It started going up in 2014 for undernourishment and the prevalence of wasting in children. The proportion of undernourishment in the population went from 14.8 in 2014 to 16.3 in 2022, and the prevalence of wasting in children under five years increased from 15.1 in 2014 to 19.3 in 2022. India’s child-wasting rate is the highest in the world. The saving grace is that stunting in children under five has reduced from 38.7 in 2014 to 35.5 in 2022, and under-five mortality reduced from 4.6 in 2014 to 3.3 in 2022.

Fight Taliban for women rights

The state of women has become pathetic in Taliban’s regime. The world community must stand for Afghan women.



SHREYA GARG



It is said that a community becomes prosperous and happy if women in it feel pride in getting married to men of that community. However, the opposite is equally true, that is when women no longer feel pride in being a bride of a particular community. In the latter case, the community is deemed vulnerable and weak. If the Taliban think they can survive as a community in the long run by treating women as inferior beings with no desire and autonomy, then they couldn’t be more wrong. For it is women who play a huge part in grooming and nurturing future generations. And if they are denied the basic right to education, then society as a whole can never make any advancement. Ignorance of women’s rights in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan is horrific. It is said that ignorance breeds more ignorance and that “ignorance isn’t always bliss”. The war in Afghanistan has ended, but the country continues to bleed. No! It’s not blood on the streets this time, but deep, potent, and invisible wounds that are being inflicted upon humanity day in, and day out.

Slowly but surely there will be no women doctors, gynecologists, or even pediatricians in Afghanistan. The infant mortality rate will go up, the ratio of men to women will take a toll, and the community will suffer a major setback.

To understand this, it is important to note that Afghanistan is the only country in the world where girls are forbidden to go to school. They are married off at a young age, subjected to domestic violence, and find themselves caught in the quicksand of slavery and extreme haplessness. As per reports, the Taliban have carried out inspections in girls’ schools and expelled hundreds of pubescent girl students. Their rationale is that once a girl hits puberty, she is more prone to the “vilified” male gaze. Hence, an estimated three million girls in Afghanistan have been deprived of basic education which is deemed a fundamental right by the UN. The way Afghan

women live their lives, that is, behind a veil, confined to the walls of their homes, with no freedom to even step outside of their homes in their own country without being chaperoned by a male is a blot on humanity. The lives of Afghan women are governed by dictates of those who have a reputation for being anti-women. They view women as a threat and want their existence to be merely for procreation.

Education is known to be a great lever for mankind. No matter what caste, religion, or social strata one belongs to, an educated person can be the force of change for good. Depriving someone of education is oppressive, regressive, inhuman, and a deliberate attempt to sabotage their progress. The fact that the Taliban have been able to keep girl children away from schools - both in the past (1996-2001) and today - must be condemned in all seriousness by all nations.

Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai said, “When girls go to school, countries can recover from conflict more quickly once peace is established. Educating girls helps create stability and binds communities.” The converse of it is also true, and that is, when

“SLOWLY BUT SURELY THERE WILL BE NO WOMEN DOCTORS, GYNECOLOGISTS, OR EVEN PEDIATRICIANS IN AFGHANISTAN. THE INFANT MORTALITY RATE WILL GO UP, THE RATIO OF MEN TO WOMEN WILL TAKE A TOLL AND THE COMMUNITY WILL SUFFER A MAJOR SETBACK

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIO-UK TRADE TIES AT THE LOWEST EBB

Sir — The India-U.K. free trade agreement (FTA) is reportedly on the “verge of collapse” after the Indian government was angered by comments made by the UK Home Secretary S. Braverman questioning action over visa overstayers from the country. This is sweet music to Indian ears. We should be guarded and careful with the UK and its deal offers for sure after three centuries of deceit and loot. Having depleted their centuries of loot from its jewel in the crown from India for three centuries and after their stupid “BREXIT” they have no option but to flee.

India should refrain from signing the deal because not only is it a trade deal, but Britain as a whole is on the verge of collapse economically due to very high inflation and fast dwindling foreign reserves. Lakhs of British citizens are leaving the country and settling in Australia and New Zealand. Moreover, the research published by Columbia University Press shows that during the period from 1765 to 1938, Britain looted 45 trillion dollars from Kohinoor Crown India. This research has been flashed in many International media.

CR Krishnan | Mumbai

SPLIT VERDICT ADDS TO THE CONFUSION

Sir — Apropos, ‘Split Verdict’ (Oct 14). The SC delivered a split verdict in the challenge of the Karnataka Government Order. The back-door entry of religious instruction in education is one example of India’s many about-turns since it gained freedom. Students enforcing religious beliefs in educational institutions is wide off the mark. As anything worn by students over her shirt can be said to be objectionable.

A three-judge Bench of then Chief Justice held that hijab is not a part of essential religious practices of Islam. Whereas people are comparing it with turbans which are very essential practices for the Sikh community. The aim should be to encourage secular environmental schools. Students should wear uniforms as prescribed by schools. All

Amitabh Bacchan stands tall



There is only one Big B in Bollywood - Amitabh Bacchan who has achieved so much in life. He shared screen space with 3 generations (9 members) of Raj Kapoor’s family. He acted along with 3 brothers Raj, Shami, and Shashi Kapoor and also with innumerable same family-members pairs (father, son... 2 brothers... Husband, wife... Mother, daughter... Mother, son...

Brother, sister...). He acted with almost the entire acting family members of Raj Kapoor, Rajesh Khanna, Dharmendra, Sridevi and many others. His movie Amar Akbar Anthony (1977) had all the 4-star singers (Rafiq, Kishore, Mukesh, Lata) singing “hum ko tum se ho gaya hai pyar kya kare...”. His movie Naseeb (1981) had all 3-star sisters (Lata, Asha, Usha Mangeshkar) singing “rang jamake jayenge ...” He was the. Only person to play son and grandfather to his real-life son in different movies Paa (2009) and Delhi-6 (2009). Amitabh even acted in a triple-role movie (Mahaan: 1983) which is rare in Bollywood. He also starred in 14 double-role movies. In Hyderabad, he has the most golden Jubilee and silver jubilee hits record. His movie Abhimaan ran for about 500 days in a theater in Colombo. That’s the magic of Big B.

Nivriti Madhu PV | Secunderabad

religious identities should be left behind when they are attending classes. It’s important to draw a line as school is the place to develop your talents and gain knowledge.

Tashi Baheti | Ujjain

UNNECESSARY CONTROVERSY OVER AD

Sir — This is in response to the hue and cry being raised by religious zealots revolving around an advertisement featuring a Bollywood star where the newly-wed groom is being seen stepping into the bride’s home following the marriage rituals. Doesn’t the Khasi groom of Meghalaya shift into the bride’s home after marriage? Or is Meghalaya not part of India? Do Khasis not qualify as Indians? Yet how can it be claimed that “groom reaching the bride’s home post-marriage” amounts to an assault on “Indian traditions and customs”?

Does multicultural India start and end with upper castes Hindi-speaking Hindus? When would the zealots acting as self-appointed guardians of “nationalism”

learn to appreciate the unique diversities of heterogeneous India and respect the cultural/religious/linguistic independence of all possible groups?

When will these parochial chauvinists get rid of the imperialist mindset of “Hindi-Hindu-Hindustan”? Moreover, even any non-Khasi couple can also exercise this arrangement in their matrimonial life. By which moral/legal/democratic right can the “proud nationalists” hold any objection to such matters lying in the absolute personal domain of the couple? Similarly, how can they poke into the rights of the advertisers even if they “invent” such an arrangement? Would all Indians have to necessarily think and act according to the “mainstream” or “majority” and refrain from exercising their minds by swimming opposite it!

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

It’s important for us to break the shackles of colonialism by removing regressing colonial laws, then only India can progress in true sense. In last 8 years, we removed 32,000 compliances to improve ease of living



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

Direct clash of (NATO) troops with the Russian army is a very dangerous which could lead to catastrophe. They are smart enough not to take such a step.

Russian President —Vladimir Putin

But, the sweetest thing was that, of course, Vicky was also fasting. Yes, he also fasted. That, he wouldn’t... I’m sure he wouldn’t have [let me do it alone], and he didn’t even... it’s not like I asked him to do it all. I didn’t say anything. He did it himself



Actor —Katrina Kaif

I am not Deepti, but I won’t do it. Doesn’t mean you (Jos Buttler) can leave early.

Cricketer —Mitchell Starc

Every institution at some point of time becomes old and needs renewal and I’m trying to reform and renew the Congress party.



Congress leader —Shahi Tharoor

FIRST COLUMN

IMF OUTLOOK SHOWS TOUGH TIME AHEAD

Large economies are heading into recession due to Ukraine war and covid



VINAY K SRIVASTAVA

The International Monetary Fund has come out with the economic outlook for October 2022. The report says that the world economy is passing through severe economic challenges. The estimated recession is more severe than expected slowdown. The main drivers of the problem are the lingering Covid-19 global pandemic, Russian invasion of Ukraine, resulting in disruption in the global supply chain in the last two years, higher inflation pressure and the slowdown in China.

The outlook keeps the global forecast unchanged for the current year. However, the report expects a recession in the next year. The IMF estimates global growth to slow from six per cent in 2021 to 3.2 per cent in 2022, and the projection for 2023 has been cut to 2.7 per cent. It is 0.2 per cent lower than its July 2022 forecast.

The three advanced economies – the US, China and the Euro area will continue to decline. Moreover, the tightening monetary policy and financial condition in the United States will slow global growth to one per cent next year.

It is estimated that the slowdown of 2023 will affect the economy, accounting for 33 per cent of the global economy in 2022 and 2023. This is the weakest growth profile since 2001 except the global financial crisis of 2008 and acute phase of the global the Covid pandemic. According to the IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier, the worst time is yet to come and the year 2023 will be like a recession.

Apart from this, inflation has become a global problem and it is at higher than seen in several decades. It is expected that global inflation will rise from 4.7 per cent in 2021 to 8.8 per cent in 2022, and then gradually decline to 6.5 per cent in 2023 and 4.1 per cent by 2024. The toughest task is how to address these problems. Pierre-Olivier in a blog said that there is a risk that over-tightening policy can take the global economy into an unnecessary severe recession and under-tightening policy could further entrench inflation.

The good thing for India is that we are in a better position as compared to other advanced and developing economies. Pierre-Olivier said in the press briefing that India has been doing fairly well in 2022 and is expected to continue growing fairly robustly in 2023. The outlook for India is for growth of 6.8 per cent in 2022 – a 0.6 per cent downgrade since the July forecast. The growth forecast in 2023 remains unchanged at 6.1 per cent.

Rising inflation is a difficult problem for India. CPI inflation averaged 6.3 per cent in January-March quarter, 7.3 per cent in April-June quarter and 7.0 per cent in July-September quarter in 2022. It rose to 7.41 per cent in September from 7.0 per cent in August 2022. Pierre-Olivier had suggested that the fiscal and monetary policy should be on 'probably be on a tightening side'. The IMF has projected CPI at 6.9 per cent in 2022 and 5.1 per cent next year. The good thing is that the IMF expects inflation will return to the inflation tolerance band by the financial year 2023-24.

To counter the global challenges, the report suggests that to restore price stability monetary policy must continue and fiscal policy should aim at reducing the cost-of-living pressure. The report also suggests that structural reform can be supported to overcome the problems of inflation by improving productivity and easing supply constraints.

(The author is Associate Professor, Institute of Technology & Science, Ghaziabad)

Child helpline merger may hurt the response

The move to transfer CHILDLINE to emergency number 112 is without rationale and requires a rethink

With the government publishing draft guidelines for CHILDLINE under the Mission Vatsalya Yojana for child protection services, the ongoing tussle between the government and the civil society stakeholders of CHILDLINE has not reached any resolution yet. After the merger, the helpline will be “integrated” with the Home Ministry’s universal emergency helpline number 112.

Moksha, who works as a child helpline staffer in Vadodara, Gujarat, says: “A lot of times kids do not want to tell their problems to even their parents as they may be scared of their reaction.” According to her, the staff’s continuous on ground efforts as well as their empathetic behaviour to pursue the children in relation to their problems, or in crisis situations, makes the children trust the staff eventually.

“We try to create a safe environment for the children so that they are not scared. We go on the ground and make them understand that they will receive help if they call on 1098 and that no one will judge or blame them,” she said.

Worried that the police attending the child helpline calls, after it comes under MHA, may not be able to handle the cases with the “sensitivity” that the Non-Profit Organisations (NGOs), social activists and counsellors currently do. Will the police invest this much time, she asks.

The first 24-hour telephonic child helpline service, accessible to anyone calling on 1098, was started in June 1996 by Jeroo Billimoria, a former professor of TISS Mumbai and founder of several international NGOs. It was started as a field action project under the Department of Family and Child, TISS.

By the year 2000, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment had agreed to fund the project at the national level and committed that by 2002, it would be available in every Indian city.

CHILDLINE was, hence established, under which the workers identified and provided support service at various locations. It served like a link between the Ministry and the NGOs working in the related fields of child rights.

According to Childline India Foundation, as of 2021, CHILDLINE services are available across 602 cities and districts, covering almost 81 per cent of the Indian landscape. The network has 1080 partner organisations and 153 Child Help Desk. CHILDLINE operates from centralised call centres at six places -- Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai.

“As soon as a call is received on the network, the case is forwarded to the field partner who is operating in the nearest area,” said Moksha. “The team partner then rushes to the child and makes sure that the child is safe,” she added.

Draft guidelines for Mission Vatsalya published in April this year states, “The

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THERE COULD BE CASES OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND THE CHILD WOULD NOT WANT TO TALK TO AUTHORITIES. EVEN IF THEY TALK, SUGGESTIONS LIKE ‘COULD YOUR FATHER REALLY DO THIS’ OR ‘DO YOU REALLY WANT TO MAKE THIS COMPLAINT’ COULD BE MADE

”

(The Author is a winner of the WNCB Awards for Untold Stories on child labour: Charkha Features)



Mission Vatsalya in partnership with States and Districts will implement a 24x7 helpline service for children as defined under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 and amended in 2021. The child helpline will operate with improved coordination of State and District functionaries and will be integrated with 112 helpline of MHA.

The government argued that the child helpline was being merged with the Emergency helpline so that the police personnel were the first interface of the calls made on 1098, instead of social workers.

Senior officials of the Ministry of Women and Child Development asserted that this was being done to make sure that states have interfaces for children complaints as well as “data sensitivity”. However, many civil society members and child rights activists have been repeatedly questioning the rationale behind the move even when the current child helpline number 1098 is working successfully.

Brinda Adige, a Bengaluru-based activist and Director of Global Concerns India, said: “This merger is unacceptable, because the people who will be handling the helpline will neither be equipped nor trained to handle these calls.”

Moksha and Brinda both claim that the calls received on the child helpline number are of various nature. “They can range from a child or their parents calling just to seek information, or someone who is calling to file a complaint,” says Adige.

According to Moksha, the extent of calls can be from “social to economic in nature, where the parents had even asked to take care of their children as they could not afford to do so during the pandemic.”

A statement published by ‘The Concerned for Working Children (CWC)’ said: “Many calls are from children who are in mental distress and require immediate or long-term support and counselling.” According to them there are also requests for food, books, shelter, etc.

“These calls require experts who understand children and their psychology and are trained to protect and guide the children.”

Children make silent calls when they are deeply distressed and the Childline personnel wait until the child opens up. According to the statement, the children ask, “Will Police be ready to do it?” “The police are therefore not at all an appropriate first point of contact for receiving these calls,” concluded the statement.

Adige argues: “The Karnataka government has appointed people who are handling the 121-helpline number at police stations in Bangalore (Makkala Sahayavani Helpline).

They are not able to provide any type of immediate counselling.” For example, she adds, “If a woman, locked outside her house along with her children by her husband, has dialled the helpline number, I would first ask her of her exact location, then inquire if she has money to reach a safe place. Arrangements would then be made accordingly.”

In addition to these factors, statement by the CWC pointed out that when the children complained against sexual abusers or drug peddlers to the police, they “have exhibited bias and discriminated in favour of the abuser or even taken bribes.” Thus, the presence of police increases “ostracism” against the children, claimed the statement.

“There could be cases of child sexual abuse and the child would not want to talk to authorities. Even if they talk, suggestions like ‘could your father really do this’ or ‘do you really want to make this complaint’ could be made,” said Brinda Adige.

According to her, she would ask the child to meet with the mother or if the child is comfortable with the father because the abuser is his/her mother’s brother, then that will be done. Meanwhile, I would also call a non-governmental organisation (NGO) with a trauma crisis centre, and ask to provide the child with a counsellor.”

Moreover, talking about the rationale of data sensitivity given by the government, the statement added “we are sure that MWCD follows similar protocols for preserving the data sensitivity as the Government and hence instead of shifting this work to MHA, the required measures for strengthening should be done while retaining it within MWCD itself.”

Talking about the same rationale, Adige adds: “There is no guarantee that the calls being received as well as recorded will follow a confidentiality clause. Children and their family’s identities can be exposed to threats, their numbers can be traced.”

POINT COUNTERPOINT


PAKISTAN IS ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS NATIONS IN THE WORLD...THE COUNTRY HAS NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITHOUT ANY COHESION. —THE US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN



UNLIKE THE US, WHEN HAS PAKISTAN SHOWN AGGRESSION, ESPECIALLY POST-NUCLEARISATION? —FORMER PAKISTAN PM IMRAN KHAN

PM-KISAN is much more than a welfare measure

It is not only an income-support programme but also an essential welfare measure achieving progress on other fronts



NAVEEN P SINGH

(The author is Member [Official], Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices. Views are personal)

additional income support, overall impact of the income-support intervention is much beyond the benefits to farmer lives and rural prosperity. Also, PM-KISAN goes beyond monetary and fiscal measure to stimulate the economy which is often hit by sluggish rural demand. Therefore, PM-KISAN is not only an income-support programme but also an essential welfare measure achieving significant progress on other fronts as well.

It is pertinent to be aware about the ripple effect of the programme in general and farmer’s welfare in particular.

The significance of PM-KISAN is much broader than anyone could expect. First, the PM-KISAN implementation and the issues associated with it shall incorporate factors

that essentially signal the success and the failure. The inherent multiplier effect also adds to the whole governance process, people’s participation, and development as a result of introducing a scheme affecting large section of society.

In addition to encouraging farmers to invest in productive capital asset and human resource development as a result, it shall have an impact on farming and technology adoption by the farmers.

Second, the Reserve Bank of India spends significant sum on the financial inclusion and enhance banking habits of people, yet only 40.1 per cent of small and marginal farmers are financially inclusive. In rural areas, after the PM-KISAN launch, banking habits of people have significantly

improved and their curiosity to learn about financial products have also seen considerable jump. Thus financial inclusion of the large sections of the agrarian society is going without much noise.

Third, it was observed over the years that the key government programmes often subject to elite capture and selection biases. PM-KISAN, with the robust DBT network, has necessarily shunned away the bias associated with the programme implementation. Negligible amount of bias is associated in other interventions with respect to of social, economic, and agricultural characteristics. Indeed PM-KISAN is a resolve for the quote made by the former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi ‘only 15 paise of every rupee’

meant for welfare of downtrodden reaches the beneficiary.

Fourth, research findings suggest that more than half of the amount credited to the farmer beneficiary of the PM-KISAN is spent on agriculture, either meeting current expense or investment (if transferred during sowing season). When the private investment in agriculture, especially corporate investment, is low, assured income support to farmers can influence to bring in corporate investment in agriculture.

Enhanced spending ability for the agriculture sector by farmers with support from PM-KISAN is changing the way the marketing of agriculture inputs is being done and has reduced the dependence on moneylenders.

Fifth, the amount paid to the farmers is often stated to be inadequate, but the amount paid under the scheme is significant sum from the point of view of small and marginal farmers and also from point of rainfed farming across agro ecological zones while easing them with liquidity constraints affected by variable cost of inputs. One has to look income support through PM-KISAN beyond the prosperous farmers and states of the country.

For small and marginal farmer of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and North-Eastern states, the amount paid under PM-KISAN saves the cost of cultivation anywhere between the 20-50 per cent and also the saving happens as a result; it can be sourced to invest in adoption of modern technology. Initial study of IFPRI in

Uttar Pradesh states that PM-KISAN has increased the adoption of improved paddy cultivars from 4-15 per cent. This shows that the additional effects that PM-KISAN is impacting the whole agriculture system is huge and needs coveted research.

Of course, inclusion of tenants (without jeopardising the land owner’s rights) and leasee and landless farmers remains an issue. It would also call for assessment of the PM-KISAN programme with other major government programmes, viz., MGNREGS, PMKSY, food grain procurement on the improvements in the agriculture sector where-in inclusion of small farmers from marginalised environments and rainfed ecologies are mainstreamed.

Military range shooting kills 11 Russians



AP ■ MOSCOW

Two men fired at soldiers on a Russian military firing range near Ukraine, killing 11 and wounding 15 before being slain themselves, the Russian Defence Ministry said.

The ministry said in a statement that the shooting took place on Saturday in the Belgorod region in southwestern Russia that borders Ukraine. It said two men from an unnamed former Soviet republic fired on volunteer soldiers during target practice and were killed by return fire.

The ministry called the incident a terrorist attack. The shooting comes amid a hasty mobilisation ordered by President Vladimir Putin to beef up Russian forces in Ukraine — a move that triggered protests and caused hundreds of thousands to flee Russia.

Putin said Friday that over 2,20,000 reservists already had been called up as part of an effort to recruit 3,00,000. He promised the mobilisation would be wrapped up in two weeks.

The mobilisation was troubled from the start, with authorities issuing confusing signals about who should be called up for service in a country where almost all men under age 65 are listed as reservists.

Even though the Russian leader declared that only people who had recently served in the military would be subject to the call-up, activists and rights groups reported military conscription offices rounding up people without any army experience — some of whom were also unfit for service for medical reasons.

Some of the freshly called-up reservists posted videos of themselves being forced to sleep on the floor or even outside and given rusty weapons before being sent to the front lines.

Russian media reports said some of those who were mobilised were sent to combat without receiving proper training and were quickly killed. Authorities have acknowledged the mobilisation was often poorly organised and promised to improve the situation.

Rockets strike Mayor's office in separatist Donetsk, says Ukraine

AP ■ KYIV

The mayor's office in a key eastern Ukrainian city controlled by pro-Kremlin separatists was struck by rockets on Sunday morning, Russian state agencies reported. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

According to RIA Novosti, the municipal building in Donetsk was seriously damaged by the attack, which local separatist authorities blamed on Ukraine.

Photos circulating on social media showed plumes of smoke swirling around the building, rows of blown-out windows and a partially collapsed ceiling, RIA Novosti and local media also reported that three cars parked

nearby had burnt out as a result of the strike. Kyiv didn't immediately claim responsibility or comment on the attack.

Kremlin-backed separatist authorities have previously accused Ukraine of numerous strikes on infrastructure and residential targets in the occupied territories, often employing the US-supplied long-range HIMARS rockets, without providing corroborating information.

The strikes came a day after two men from a former Soviet republic fired at volunteer soldiers during target practice at a Russian military firing range near Ukraine, killing 11 and wounding 15 before being slain themselves. The Russian Defense



Ministry, which reported the killings, called the incident a terrorist attack.

The incidents come amid a hasty mobilisation ordered by

President Vladimir Putin to beef up Russian forces in Ukraine amid a series of battlefield setbacks following his February invasion. The callup triggered

protests and caused hundreds of thousands to flee Russia.

Also Saturday, a Washington-based think tank late accused Moscow of conducting "massive, forced deportations of Ukrainians" which it said likely amount to ethnic cleansing.

In its regular online update, the Institute for the Study of War referenced statements made this week by Russian authorities, which claimed that "several thousand" children from a southern region occupied by Moscow had been placed in rest homes and children's camps in Russia amid an ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive.

The original remarks by

Russia's deputy prime minister, Marat Khusnullin, were reported by the state RIA Novosti agency on Friday.

The Institute also said that Russian authorities "may additionally be engaged in a wider campaign of ethnic cleansing by depopulating Ukrainian territory through deportations and repopulating Ukrainian cities with imported Russian citizens," in violation of international humanitarian law. Russian authorities have previously openly admitted to placing children from Russian-held areas of Ukraine, who they said were orphans, for adoption with Russian families, in a potential breach of a key international treaty on genocide prevention.

France ramps up war support for Ukraine, rebuilds armories

AP ■ PARIS



soldiers must also be trained, to last the distance."

France had previously trained Ukrainian artillery troops to use Caesar self-propelled howitzers it has supplied.

The expanded training that France is now offering is "a very important step," the minister said. "We are changing the scale."

The minister said Crotale air defense missile batteries that France is preparing to send to Ukraine "will be par-

ticularly useful in the fight against drones and against aerial bombardments."

France has 12 of the batteries, the minister said. He didn't specify how many of them will go to Ukraine but said "it will be significant to enable them to defend their skies"

The aim is for Ukraine to be able to deploy them within two months, which includes the training time for Ukrainians to use them, the minister said.

France has supplied 18 Caesar artillery pieces and is in discussions to furnish six more. Lecornu said France is also studying a Ukrainian request for rocket-launched ground-strike weaponry.

France also has set up a fund of 100 million euros (\$97 million) "which the Ukrainians can use to buy what they want, on condition that the supplier is French," the minister said.

Among recipients of the first Ukrainian orders using the fund is a French firm that will supply pontoon bridges, he said.

France's dipping into its stocks of weaponry to supply Ukraine has also turned a spotlight on the country's own defense needs.

Lecornu said the Crotale batteries destined for Ukraine are being replaced by the more modern Mamba air defense system, which is expected to form part of the security shield around the 2024 Paris Olympics.

France has also placed orders to replenish its stock of Caesar cannons, to replace those sent to Ukraine, the minister said.

The French defense budget for 2023 will climb to its highest levels since World War II, at 44 billion euros (USD 42.8 billion), he said. That compares with 32.

Biden turning to Trump-era rule to expel Venezuelan migrants

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Two years ago, candidate Joe Biden loudly denounced President Donald Trump for immigration policies that inflicted "cruelty and exclusion at every turn," including toward those fleeing the "brutal" government of socialist Nicolas Maduro in Venezuela.

Now, with increasing numbers of Venezuelans arriving at the US-Mexico border as the Nov 8 election nears, Biden has turned to an unlikely source for a solution: his predecessor's playbook.

Biden last week invoked a Trump-era rule known as Title 42 -- which Biden's own Justice Department is fighting in court -- to deny Venezuelans fleeing their crisis-torn country the chance to request asylum at the border.

The rule, first invoked by

Trump in 2020, uses emergency public health authority to allow the United States to keep migrants from seeking asylum at the border, based on the need to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Under the new Biden administration policy, Venezuelans who walk or swim across America's southern border will be expelled and any Venezuelan who illegally enters Mexico or Panama will be ineligible to come to the United States. But as many as 24,000 Venezuelans will be accepted at U.S. Airports, similar to how Ukrainians have been admitted since Russia's invasion in February.

Mexico has insisted that the U.S. Admit one Venezuelan on humanitarian parole for each Venezuelan it expels to Mexico, according to a Mexican official who was not authorized to dis-

cuss the matter publicly and spoke condition of anonymity. So if the Biden administration paroled 24,000 Venezuelans to the U.S., Mexico would take no more than 24,000 Venezuelans expelled from the U.S.

The Biden policy marks an abrupt turn for the White House, which just weeks ago was lambasting Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, both Republicans, for putting Venezuelan migrants "fleeing political persecution" on buses and planes to Democratic strongholds.

"These were children, they were moms, they were fleeing communism," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said at the time.

Biden's new policy has drawn swift criticism from immigrant advocates, many of them quick to point out the Trump parallels.



"Rather than restore the right to asylum decimated by the Trump administration ... The Biden administration has dangerously embraced the failures of the past and expanded upon them by explicitly enabling expulsions of Venezuelan migrants," said Jennifer Nagda, policy director of the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights.

The administration says the policy is aimed at ensuring a "lawful and orderly" way for Venezuelans to enter the U.S.

Why the turnaround?

For more than a year after taking office in January 2021, Biden deferred to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which used its authority to keep in place the Trump-era declaration that a public health risk

existed that warranted expedited expulsion of asylum-seekers.

Members of Biden's own party and activist groups had expressed skepticism about the public health underpinnings for allowing Title 42 to remain in effect, especially when COVID-19 was spreading more widely within the U.S. Than elsewhere.

After months of internal deliberations and preparations, the CDC on April 1 said it would end the public health order and return to normal border processing of migrants, giving them a chance to request asylum in the U.S.

Homeland Security officials braced for a resulting increase in border crossings.

But officials inside and outside the White House were conflicted over ending the authority, believing it effectively kept down the number of people crossing the border illegally,

according to senior administration officials.

A court order in May that kept Title 42 in place due to a challenge from Republican state officials was greeted with quiet relief by some in the administration, according to officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss internal discussions.

The recent increase in migration from Venezuela, sparked by political, social and economic instability in the country, dashed officials' hopes that they were finally seeing a lull in the chaos that had defined the border region for the past year.

By August, Venezuelans were the second-largest nationality arriving at the U.S. Border after Mexicans. Given that U.S. Tensions with Venezuela meant migrants from the country could not be sent back easily, the situation became increasingly difficult

to manage.

So an administration that had rejected many Trump-era policies aimed at keeping out migrants, that had worked to make the asylum process easier and that had increased the number of refugees allowed into the U.S. Now turned to Title 42.

It brokered a deal to send the Venezuelans to Mexico, which already had agreed to accept migrants expelled under Title 42 if they are from Guatemala, Honduras or El Salvador.

All the while, Justice Department lawyers continue to appeal a court decision that has kept Title 42 in place. They are opposing Republican attorneys general from more than 20 states who have argued that Title 42 is "the only safety valve preventing this Administration's already disastrous border control policies from descending into an unmitigated catastrophe."

GOP hopefuls turn to Pence to broaden appeal before election

AP ■ NEW YORK

In Donald Trump's assessment, Mike Pence "committed political suicide" on Jan 6, 2021.

By refusing to go along with the then-president's unconstitutional push to overturn the results of the 2020 election, Pence became a leading target of Trump's wrath and a pariah in many Republican circles.

But the final weeks of this year's intensely competitive midterm elections suggest that the former vice president's fortunes have shifted as he lays the groundwork for his own potential 2024 White House campaign. The man who was booed last year at a conservative conference is now an in-demand draw for Republican candidates, including some who spent their primaries obsessively courting Trump's endorsement, in part by parroting his election lies.

Pence has travelled the country, holding events and



raising millions for candidates and Republican groups, including signing fundraising solicitations for party committees.

For some campaigns in tight races, Pence is seen as something of a neutralizing agent who can help broaden their appeal beyond Trump's core base of support. That's the case in Arizona, with a critical Senate race this year and where the 2024 presidential campaign will be hotly contested. Last week, Pence endorsed Senate nominee Blake Masters, who has struggled to pivot from the primary and win over moderates in a state where one-third

of voters are registered independents.

"He takes a little bit of the edge off Masters with a lot of voters," veteran GOP strategist Scott Reed said. "You know Masters is new to this, first-time candidate, said some silly things he probably regrets during the campaign. But now it's all about undecided voters in Maricopa County. There's not a lot more science behind this."

The endorsements can seem jarring given that Pence has spent much of the past year pushing back on Trump's election lies, which spurred the violent mob that descended on the

Capitol on Jan. 6 while Pence was trying to preside over the formal congressional certification of Joe Biden's election victory. Pence and members of his family had to be rushed to safety and were held for hours in an underground loading dock as the marauders roamed the building's hallways. Some rioters chanted "Hang Mike Pence!" and erected a makeshift gallows outside.

Pence agreed to endorse Masters even though Masters, during the primary, baselessly denied the 2020 election results. Masters recorded a video in which he said he thought Trump had won and claimed on his website that "if we had had a free and fair election, President Trump would be sitting in the Oval Office today."

Trump endorsed Masters in June, saying in a statement: "Blake knows that the 'Crime of the Century' took place, he will expose it and also, never let it happen again."

Pence made no mention of that in Phoenix on Tuesday.

12 killed in mass shooting in bar in Mexico



IANS ■ MEXICO CITY

At least 12 people were killed and three others injured after unidentified gunmen opened fire in a bar in Mexico's Irapuato city in Guanajuato state, local media reported.

Around six men and as many women were killed in the incident that occurred on Saturday evening, CNN reported, quoting city's Secretary of Citizen Safety statement.

Search is on for the unidentified gunmen.

This is the second mass shooting in less than a month in the state of Guanajuato.

In the earlier incident, 18 people, including a city mayor, were killed and three others wounded when gunmen opened firing at a town hall in San Miguel Totolapan city in Mexico.

Family mourns miner's death in Turkey, seeks punishment

AP ■ AMASRA (TURKEY)

My one and only, where are you," a mother cried at a cemetery beside a freshly-laid mound of earth. She couldn't process the death of her 33-year-old son who was killed in a coal mine explosion in northern Turkey.

Selcuk Ayvaz was among the first to be buried, following a funeral Saturday where his coffin was wrapped in the red and white Turkish flag. Relatives told his stunned 3-year-old daughter to say farewell to his coffin. His wife, who is expecting their third child — a boy — any day now, was distraught, slowly eating a chocolate bar from the hand of a social worker.

Friday's explosion at the state-owned Turkish Hard Coal Enterprise's (TTK) mine in the Black Sea town of Amasra killed 41 miners and injured 11. Five of the injured are in critical condition in an Istanbul hospital, suffering from burns that cover 65% to 85% of their bodies,

according to the health minister.

There were 110 miners when the blast occurred. Fifty-eight of them made it out on their own or were rescued.

Ayvaz's father kissed a photo of him twice, saying "my baby." Recep Ayvaz, 62, said he rushed to Amasra from his village when he heard of the mine explosion.

"I waited and waited and there was no news," he explained. He then received word that his son was at the children's hospital. When he got there, he saw cars in front of the morgue and his eldest son identified his brother's body.

"I asked them to show me and they showed me my child," the father said, describing his son's head injuries. "His hair, his mustache were all burned, his sides blackened, it's still in front of my eyes, I can't forget it."

The Turkish flag was hanging on their house of mourning.

"Our pain is huge. What can I say? My daughter-in-law is at home, she's about to give birth in two or three days. My wife is doing very bad. She fainted two

or three times and the same for my daughter-in-law," Recep Ayvaz said.

Energy Minister Fatih Durmaz said preliminary assessments indicated the tragedy was caused by a firedamp explosion — when methane mixes with air and fire — creating a dangerous underground situation.

The minister announced Sunday coal production at the Amasra mine would be stopped until investigations are completed, the state-run Anadolu Agency said. Five prosecutors were investigating, according to the justice minister.

But Ayvaz's mother Habibe wasn't appeased. The 63-year-old said she heard there was a gas leak in the mine and questioned why her son was sent into it at all. "It's a massacre outright, a massacre," she said, inconsolable. "I am calling on our president, I am calling on Mr. Suleyman (Soylu, interior minister), punish them and may God damn them," she said referring to the mine's contractors.

China will not renounce use of force to unify Taiwan, warns Xi

PTI ■ BEIJING

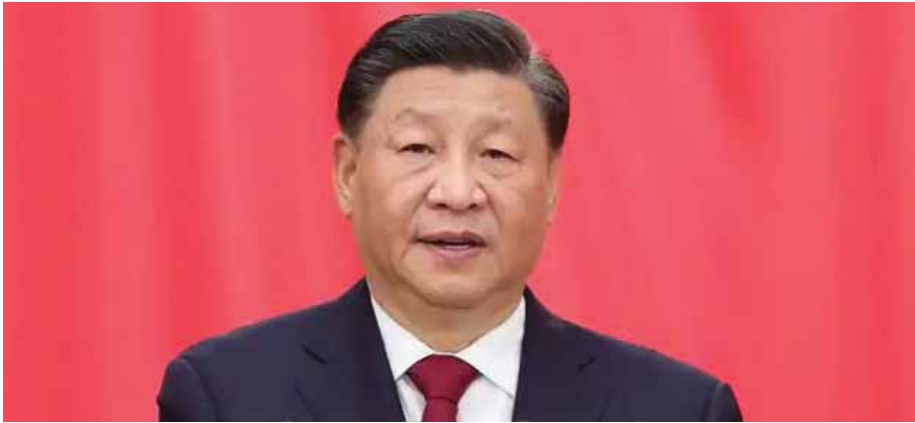
As he is all set to be in power for a record 3rd five-year term and perhaps for life, President Xi Jinping on Sunday warned that China will "not renounce the use of force" to unify Taiwan with the mainland.

He also vowed to advance the modernisation of the country's military to "world-class standards" to protect national sovereignty, security and developmental interests.

Taiwan considers itself a sovereign state – but China views the self-ruled island as a breakaway province that must be reunified. Beijing has not ruled out the possible use of force to achieve national unification.

"We will not renounce the use of force and will take all necessary measures to stop all separatist movements" in Taiwan, Xi said on the opening day of the five-year Congress of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), which is widely expected to confer an unprecedented 3rd five-year term on him.

Except for Xi, all the top leaders of the party, including the number two leader Premier Li Keqiang, would be replaced or reshuffled during the Congress as the administration headed by 69-year-old Xi



is completing a 10-year tenure.

However, the Congress is expected to endorse Xi's continuation as he has already been declared a "core leader" of the party on par with its founder Mao Zedong. Xi's continuation in power will formally end the over three decade practice of its top leaders retiring after completing two-five-year tenures.

In a show of unity, almost all retired former leaders of the party -- including Xi's predecessor Hu Jintao and Song Ping, a 105-year-old party veteran who groomed Xi's early career, took part in the opening ceremony held at the ornate Great Hall of the People here. However, conspicuously missing was 96-year-old former president Jiang Zemin, who

was party leader until 2002.

All the leaders were seated along with Xi and Premier Li in the front row in the ornate Great Hall of People and seen cheering key aspects of his speech spanning one hour 45 minutes.

Xi's pledge to complete the reunification of China, which means the merger of Taiwan with the Chinese mainland, received a prolonged round of applause from over 2,300 elected delegates attending the Congress. Xi, also the General Secretary of the CPC, said the party must stand firm on its strategy to resolve the Taiwan issue and be determined to reunify the nation.

"Resolving the Taiwan question is a matter for the Chinese, a matter that must be resolved by the Chinese," he said.

China has conducted intense military drills and fired missiles over the self-governing island following the high-profile visit of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in August, the highest American official visit to Taiwan, sparking concerns that Beijing may be preparing the ground for invasion.

"We will continue to strive for peaceful reunification with the greatest sincerity and the utmost effort, but we will never promise to renounce the use of force, and we reserve the option of taking all measures necessary. This is directed solely at interference by outside forces and the few separatists seeking 'Taiwan independence' and their separatist activities; it is by no means targeted at our Taiwan compatriots," Xi said.

The president said the wheels of history are rolling on toward China's reunification and the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

"Complete reunification of our country must be realised, and it can, without doubt, be realised! We have always shown respect and care for our Taiwan compatriots and worked to deliver benefits to them. We will continue to promote economic and cultural exchanges and cooperation across the Strait. "We will encourage people on both sides of the Strait to work together to promote Chinese culture and forge closer bonds," he said.

He said that during the past 10 years China has resolutely safeguarded sovereignty.

"We have not yielded any ground on matters of principle and we have resolutely safeguarded China's sovereignty, security and development interests. National security has been strengthened on all fronts," he said. But at the same time he said China strives for friendly ties and partnership with neighbouring countries. "China strives to enhance friendly ties, mutual trust and converging interests with neighbouring countries," Xi said.

Xi also stressed on further modernising national defence and military.

Tehran prison blaze killed 4 inmates: Iran

AP ■ CAIRO

A towering blaze at a notorious prison housing political prisoners and anti-government activists in Iran's capital killed four inmates, the country's judiciary said Sunday.

Flames and smoke rising from Tehran's Evin Prison had been widely visible Saturday evening, as nationwide anti-government protests triggered by the death of a young woman in police custody entered a fifth week. In online videos, gunshots and explosions could be heard in the area of the prison.

The blaze was extinguished after several hours and no detainees escaped, state media said. They said the fire broke out after a fight between prisoners, in an apparent attempt to distance the events there from the ongoing protests. Hundreds are being held at Evin, where human rights groups have reported repeated abuses of prisoners.

State media originally reported nine people were injured but the judiciary website Mizan.News on Sunday said four inmates died of smoke inhalation and 61 others were injured. It said all four who died were in prison on robbery convictions.

Ten inmates were hospitalised, with four of them in serious condition, Mizan reported. It said some prisoners had tried to escape but failed.

State TV on Sunday aired video of the fire's aftermath, showing scorched walls and ceilings in a room it said was the upper floor of a sewing workshop at the prison.

"This fire was caused by a fight between some prisoners in a sewing workshop," said Tehran Gov. Mohsen Mansouri. "The workshop was set up to create jobs" for prisoners, he said.

Iran's state-run IRNA news agency reported Saturday that there were clashes between prisoners in one ward and prison personnel, citing a senior security official.



The official said prisoners set fire to a warehouse full of prison uniforms, which caused the blaze. He said the "rioters" were separated from the other prisoners to de-escalate the conflict.

The official said the "situation is completely under control" and that firefighters were extinguishing the flames. Later, Tehran prosecutor Ali Salehi said that calm had returned to the prison and that the unrest was not related to the protests which have swept the country for four weeks.

IRNA later reported nine people had been injured, without elaborating. It published video showing burnt debris scattered around a building, with firefighters spraying down the blaze's embers. Families of inmates gathered Sunday near the prison hoping for news of their loved ones inside.

Masoumeh, 49, who only gave her first name, said his 19-year-old son was taken to the prison two weeks ago after taking part in the street protests. "I cannot trust news about his health, I need to see him closely," she said.

Iran's celebrities face reprisals for supporting stir

AP ■ BAGHDAD

Singers, actors, sports stars — the list goes on. Iranian celebrities have been startlingly public in their support for the massive anti-government protests shaking their country.

And the ruling establishment is lashing back.

Celebrities have found themselves targeted for arrest, have had passports confiscated and faced other harassment.

Among the most notable cases is that of singer Shervin Hajipour, whose song "For ..." has become an anthem for the protest movement, which erupted Sept. 17 over the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in police custody after she was arrested for not abiding by the Islamic Republic's strict dress code.

Bookie odds favour Sunak comeback

Amid turbulence for UK PM Truss

PTI ■ LONDON

British Prime Minister Liz Truss, just over a month into the job, is already seen as increasingly unlikely to ride out the turbulence within her own Conservative Party and the financial markets, with her former leadership rival Rishi Sunak the odds-on favourite to make a comeback for 10 Downing Street.

At the end of a tumultuous week in British politics which saw Truss sack her close friend and trusted aide Kwasi Kwarteng who was enforcing her own economic policies as Chancellor, the mutinous voices within the governing Conservatives continue to flag how Sunak had warned against much of the financial meltdown that would follow his rival's unfunded tax-cutting policies.

The former British Indian Chancellor adopted a silent approach as he hosted two pre-scheduled parties at a central London hotel this week to thank his Ready for Rishi leadership campaign team and officials at the UK



Treasury.

"His approach is one part 'I told you so' but rather more a sense of sadness. He just says: 'It didn't have to be like this,'" a friend was quoted by 'The Sunday Times' as saying.

As the Oddschecker bookies' odds aggregator showed 42-year-old Sunak racing ahead as the favourite to replace 47-year-old Truss, his team is said to be eyeing what would be one of the most remarkable political comebacks in British politics.

According to insiders, the UK-born Indian-origin politician, who lost to Truss in the Tory membership vote after being the clear frontrunner among his parliamentary colleagues, is steering well clear of any accusations of plotting against Truss as he spends time in his constituency of Richmond in Yorkshire.

Among the possibilities being considered by Tory rebels is to avoid another full-blown leadership election by getting members of Parliament to unite behind one particular candidate.

Sunak is not seen as an all-out favourite for that because the fierce loyalists from former Prime Minister Boris Johnson's camp, who still blame his resignation as Chancellor for their leader's exit in the wake of the party-gate scandal, are unlikely to rally behind him.

The proposal of a joint unity ticket involving Sunak and Penny Mordaunt, who came third in the shortlisting phase of the leadership contest and now serves as Leader of the House of Commons in the Truss Cabinet, has also been considered.

However, close aides on both sides indicate that neither would be willing to serve as the other's junior. UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace is con-

sidered a strong contender as the new unity candidate if Truss is convinced to step down. Meanwhile, the prospect of Johnson attempting his own possible comeback of sorts has not been ruled out.

On Sunday, the new Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, urged his party to unite behind Truss as "the last thing that people really want" is yet another change of leader.

"She's listened, she's changed, she's been willing to do that most difficult thing in politics which is to change tack," said Hunt, as he insisted Liz Truss is still the one in charge amid reports of him now the de facto leader overturning most of her tax-cutting plans.

"Taxes are not going to go down as quickly as people thought and some taxes are going to go up. So it's going to be very, very difficult and I think we have to be honest with people about that," he said.

Hunt, himself a former Tory leadership hopeful and a Sunak supporter, has ruled out vying for the top job again and said he was focussed on the "very big fiscal statement" for the end of this month when much of his predecessor's controversial mini-budget is set to be reversed.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it known to all that my client Shri RAKESH KUMAR GUPTA son of Shri Satya Narain Gupta r/o A-2/95, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi - 110063 has disowned his elder son namely NIKHIL GUPTA from all his movable and immovable properties. My client has also broken all relations with his above said son from today onwards. Anybody dealing/making any business/any Monetary Transaction/ Family Terms or Relation with my client's son, as named above, will be at their own risk and consequences and my client will not be held responsible for the same.

SANDEEP GUPTA (Advocate)
Ch. No. 174, Civil Wing, Tis Hazari, Delhi

Singapore mulls insects for human consumption



PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singaporeans may soon be able to consume insects, with the Singapore Food Agency seeking feedback from the food and animal feed industry to allow insects for human consumption and as livestock feed.

The changes in regulation could potentially allow people to consume species such as crickets, beetles, moths and bees, The Straits Times newspaper reported on Sunday. These can be consumed directly or made into items such as fried insect snacks or protein bars, the report said.

The regulation of these insects, whether imported or locally farmed, and insect products would be subject to food safety requirements and conditions.

The Singapore Food Agency (SFA) had taken reference from the European Union and countries such as Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Thailand, which have allowed the consumption of certain insect species, the report said, adding that for instance, silk-worm pupae are traditionally eaten in South Korea and crick-

ets in Thailand.

The agency conducted a thorough scientific review and assessed that specific species of insects with a history of human consumption can be allowed for use as food, said its spokesman.

In recent years, commercial farming of insects for human consumption and as animal feed has been promoted by the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and has received commercial interest, the SFA said.

To feed the world's growing population sustainably, the FAO said edible insects have high nutrient content, require less feed and emit fewer greenhouse gases compared with farmed livestock.

"SFA keeps abreast of such developments in food production and innovations, and has received industry queries on the import of insects as food or animal feed," said the agency's spokesman.

It said that there is currently interest from more than 10 companies in insect food product imports or insect food farming.

S Korea on 24-hr standby against N Korea N-test

IANAS ■ SEOUL

The office of South Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol has been on 24-hour standby as North Korea is expected to conduct its seventh nuclear test at any time, officials said Sunday North Korea's recent series of missile launches and other provocations are believed to be part of the regime's preparations for a seventh nuclear test, Yonhap news agency reported quoting officials.

"As North Korea's provocations have become more frequent, we're putting all of

our effort into maintaining a readiness posture with a sense of alertness," one senior presidential official told reporters. "It's a 24-hour readiness regime."

Another official told Yonhap News Agency that the presidential office has been coming up with detailed plans to respond to a North Korean nuclear test.

"Everyone is in standby mode," the official said by phone.

North Korea has ratcheted up tensions in recent weeks by conducting a series of ballistic missile launches,

including one over Japan, flying warplanes and firing artillery shells into maritime buffer zones off its east and west coasts.

Yoon had no public schedule this weekend but is known to have received briefings in real time on North Korea's movements.

On Saturday, the president visited a hotel restaurant in the US military's Yongsan Garrison and took photos with troops in a demonstration of his commitment to strengthening the South Korea-US alliance, the senior official said.

Stage set for dramatic showdown as Jan 6 panel summons Trump

IANAS ■ WASHINGTON

The stage for a dramatic showdown has been set between ex-President Donald Trump and the Jan 6 Congressional panel probing the capital hills insurrection of 2021 which led to nine deaths and arrests of over hundreds of Trump supporters.

The last meeting of the January 6 committee did not conclude its ninth and possibly final public hearing by referring Donald Trump to the US justice department for criminal conduct - a move many, including some members of the panel, had urged, The BBC reported.

Instead, all nine members of the bi-partisan panel, including democrats and republicans, voted to issue a subpoena to Trump to appear before the panel and testify to the events of the attack by his supporters on Capitol.

The decision of whether to indict the president for crimes relating to the 6 January 2021 attack on the US Capitol rests with the justice department, not Congress. And the committee's formal subpoena of the former president, while historic, is almost certain to be ignored by Mr



Trump, The BBC said.

Reacting angrily to the subpoena, Trump, in a 15-page letter to the Chairman of the Jan 6 panel Bennie Thompson, Democrat from Mississippi, said the "committee was a total BUST" and filled with "political hack and thugs". But apparently in a rethink following an advice by fellow republicans close to him, he decided to reconsider his decision to appear before the committee, The Independent of London reported quoting authoritative sources close to Trump.

Office of the Superintending Engineer
3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh
GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND Email: sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 6887/208 C-03/2022 **Notice Inviting Bid** Dated : 15/10/2022

RFP for the following works on EPC mode:-
The Public Work Department through S.E., 3rd Circle Public Works Department, Pithoragarh Government of Uttarakhand, is engaged in the construction of following work in Champawat district of Uttarakhand state."Through An Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract.

State	Name of Work	Estimated cost	Completion Period	Maintenance period
Uttarakhand	"DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION WORK OF 125 M SPAN MOTOR BRIDGE ON HANUMANGARHI KHETKHEDA THAVALANKHEDA MOTOR ROAD FROM VILLAGE NAYAKGOTH IN DISTRICT CHAMPAWAT UNDER HON'BLE CHIEF MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT NUMBER 881/2021.	12.10 Cr.	12 (Twelve month)	60 Month (Sixty Month)

The complete BID document can be viewed / downloaded from official portal of the Uttarakhand website <https://uktenders.gov.in> from 20.10.2022 to 13-11-2022 (upto 11.00 Hrs. IST). Bidder must submit its Financial Bid and Technical Bid at <https://uktenders.gov.in> on or before 13-11-2022 (upto 11.00 Hrs. IST). Bids received online shall be opened on 14-11-2022 (at 13.00 Hrs. IST).

Bid through any other mode shall not be entertained. However, Bid Security, document fee, Power of Attorney and Joint Bidding Agreement etc. shall be submitted physically by the Bidder on before 13-11-2022 (at 11.00 Hrs. IST) in the office of Superintending Engineer, Third Circle PWD Pithoragarh. Please note that the Superintending Engineer Third Circle Public Work Department Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand reserves the right to accept or reject any of the BIDs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Delton Cables Limited
Regd. Office : Delton House 4801 Bharat Ram Road 24 Darya Ganj New Delhi -110002
Website : www.deltoncables.com, E-mail: cs@deltoncables.com, CIN: L31300DL1964PLC004255

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED SEPTEMBER 30, 2022 (Rs. in lakhs)

SL No	Particulars	Quarter ended 30.09.2022	Half Year ended 30.09.2022	Quarter ended 30.09.2021
		Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited
1	Total income from operations (net)	5,951.58	12,395.69	3,980.31
2	Net Profit for the period (before Tax, Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	151.01	366.57	131.95
3	Net Profit for the period before Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	151.01	374.49	131.95
4	Net Profit for the period after Tax (after Exceptional and / or Extraordinary items)	93.70	333.27	141.69
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	95.36	340.35	139.47
6	Equity share capital (Face Value of Rs.10/- each)	864.00	864.00	864.00
7	Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items) (Face Value of ₹ 10/- each)			
(a) Basic (Rs.)		1.08	3.86	1.64
(b) Diluted (Rs.)		1.08	3.86	1.64

Notes:-

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of unaudited Quarterly/Half Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / half yearly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchanges website (www.bseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.deltoncables.com).
- The above result have been prepared in accordance with principle and procedures of Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) as notified under the companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015 as specified under section 133 of Companies Act, 2013.
- The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their respective meetings held on Oct 15, 2022.

For and on behalf of the Board
Vivek Gupta
(Managing Director)
DIN 00035916

Place : Delhi
Date : 15, Oct, 2022

Govt considering proposals for extending ₹35K cr PLI scheme to more sectors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is considering proposals to extend Rs 35,000 crore PLI scheme to different sectors such as leather, bicycle, some vaccine materials, and certain telecom products with an aim to boost domestic manufacturing and create jobs, an official said.

PLI (production linked incentive) benefits are also being considered for toys, some chemicals and shipping containers.

"The proposals are at discussion stage. Inter-ministerial talks are going on to extend PLI benefits to all these different sectors as there has been demand from industry and certain departments," the official said.

The government has already rolled out the scheme with an outlay of about Rs 2 lakh crore for as many as 14 sectors, including automobiles and auto components, white



goods, pharma, textiles, food products, high efficiency solar PV modules, advance chemistry cell and speciality steel.

The official said there are some savings from this Rs 2 lakh crore which could be considered for other sectors, and is under discussions.

The objective of the scheme is to make domestic manufacturing globally competitive and create global champions in manufacturing.

Last month, Commerce and

Industry Minister Piyush Goyal stated that the government is working to extend incentives under the PLI scheme to more sectors.

The PLI scheme is also aimed at making Indian manufacturers globally competitive, attracting investment in the areas of core competency and cutting-edge technology; ensuring efficiencies; creating economies of scale; enhancing exports and make India an integral part of the global supply chain.

India has potential to attract \$475 bn through FDI in 5 yrs: CII-EY report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has optimistic growth prospects for foreign investments with a potential to attract FDI flows of USD 475 billion in the next 5 years, according to a CII-EY report.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India has seen a consistent rise in the last decade, with FY2021-22 receiving FDI inflows of USD 84.8 billion, despite the impact of the pandemic and geopolitical developments, it highlighted.

The report revealed that 71 per cent of Multi-National Companies (MNCs) working in India consider the country as an important destination for their global expansion.

The optimism is driven by both short-term and long-term prospects.

A majority of MNCs feel that the Indian economy will perform significantly better in 3-5 years, with 96 per cent of respondents being positive about the country's overall potential, according to the



report titled 'Vision - Developed India: Opportunities and Expectations of MNCs'.

"Against the backdrop of growth challenges being faced by major economies of the world and new geopolitical issues, it is heartening to note that MNCs consider India an attractive investment destination and are planning expansion."

"We are confident that the continuing reform momentum by the Government will attract

increasing volume of investment from MNCs and facilitate their larger integration in domestic supply chain," said Chandrajit Banerjee, Director General, CII.

According to the report, the direction of India's growth is being determined by the strong momentum in domestic consumption, services, digital economy, and infrastructure. The estimated real growth in consumption is the third highest behind only the US and China, while the fast-expanding

digital economy is expected to reach USD 1 trillion by 2025.

Besides the fact that India is among the fastest-growing large economies in the world, the confidence in its potential stems from strong consumption trends, digitisation and a growing services sector, along with the government's strong focus on infrastructure and manufacturing, the report shared.

Significantly, over 60 per cent of MNCs stated improvement in the business environment in the last three years. MNCs appreciate the impact of GST, the government's digital push in various spheres, and transparency in taxation, amongst other reforms, it added.

As continuing improvement in business environment, MNCs would like to see enhanced effectiveness of the national single window for approval / clearances; greater tax certainty, and stronger contract enforcement mechanism, among other measures, said the report.

Coal is going to be back again as gas becoming unaffordable: FM



PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Given the global energy crisis, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that coal is going to be back again as gas has become unaffordable.

Sitharaman, who attended the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, said the western world has seen countries moving to coal.

"The Western world has seen countries moving to coal. Austria has already said, and today...they are going back to coal," Sitharaman told a group of reporters from India during an interaction on Saturday.

Russia has sharply curtailed natural gas shipments to Europe in retaliation for sanctions that the West put in place after its invasion of Ukraine.

In late April, Russia cut off gas supplies to Bulgaria and Poland after they refused Moscow's demand to pay for the deliveries in rubles, Russia's currency.

Also, apart from that many countries in the West are moving away from coal to generate electricity as it contributes to climate change and air pollution.

Responding to a question on her remarks earlier, the finance minister referred to another news item about an old thermal power plant in the United Kingdom being refurbished to generate electricity.

"The matter of fact, it is now reviving itself as a thermal unit. So, it's not just India, many countries have gone back. And coal is now going to be back again, because I think gas cannot be afforded. Or it is not available as much as you want," Sitharaman said.

Policy needed to ensure airlines maintain 4-6 months of cash reserves: CAPA CEO

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Indian airlines industry will continue to be sick unless there are policies in place to ensure that the operators have at least 4-6 months of cash kept in reserves for continuity of operations, according to global consultancy and aviation firm CAPA.

CAPA said it estimates the domestic airline industry could post losses to the tune of USD 1.4-1.7 billion or more losses this fiscal.

The two listed airlines, IndiGo and SpiceJet, have already reported losses of Rs 1,064.30 crore and Rs 789 crore, respectively, in the April-June quarter of the current fiscal.

"Financial fitness is a fundamental criterion of operating (globally)...India is the only country where technically insolvent companies can expand, can continue to operate," Kapil Kaul, CEO for South Asia at CAPA, said at an industry event in Mumbai recently.

He said going by the global practice, the airlines have to ensure that they have at least 4-6 months of cash reserves when no revenue is coming in while their air operator permits are also renewed every year, while in India, the AOP comes for renewal only after 5-odd years.

"We don't have a financial assessment. We do have it only when the airlines are in almost the last stage of operations. So through a structure



of policy-making you need to ensure that 4-6 months of cash, depending upon the size of the business, must be fundamental in terms of operating. If you don't have that (the framework) we will continue to have a sick industry," Kaul stated.

He emphasised that if such a best practice is not adopted at this stage when some of the airlines are infusing capital through various funding instruments, everything in the circle will go out of hand.

He noted that the airlines industry was unviable even before the emergence of the pandemic as barring one, no other airline had the cash on hand for more than 15 days of operations.

Covid had an unprecedented impact on the sector, which nobody was prepared for, resulting in USD 7-8 billion of losses, he added.

"This fiscal we will be looking at USD 1.4-1.7 billion losses or possibly more," Kaul said.

For a capital-starved industry which is mostly negative net worth where getting funds is very tough, these numbers call for radical measures and a different strategy, he noted.

"The more we celebrate profit-less growth, the more we will be away from the kind of reforms the sector requires. We continue to play around at the edges, not looking deep enough to change the sector," Kaul said.

Fuel sales soar on festive season demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's fuel sales soared in the first half of October with an across-the-board surge in transportation fuel demand on the back of the economic activity picking up as festival season kicked in, preliminary industry data showed.

Petrol and diesel sales jumped 22-26 per cent year-on-year while also rising month-on-month in the first half of October. Petrol sales soared 22.7 per cent to 1.28 million tonne during October 1-15 when compared to 1.05 million tonne of consumption in the same period last year. Sales were 31 per cent higher than COVID-marred first half of October 2020 and 33.4 per cent more than pre-pandemic October 1-15, 2019. Demand was 1.3 per cent higher than the first half of Sept 2022.

Diesel, the most used fuel in the country, posted a near 27 per cent rise in sales in the first fortnight of October to 3.08 million tonne when compared to the same period last year.

Consumption was up 16 per cent over October 1-15, 2020 and 26.6 per cent higher than pre-COVID 2019. The fuel, which had seen a near 5

per cent drop in sales in August before a rebound in the following month, saw demand rise 6.9 per cent month-on-month.

Industry sources said the ending of monsoon rains in most parts of the country and a pick-up in agriculture season led to a rise in diesel demand.

Rains usually restrict mobility and demand from the farm sector, which uses diesel in irrigation pumps and trucking. Also, the festival season kicking in led to a pick-up in economic activity and a rise in demand. Auto fuel sales had dipped in July and August owing to the monsoon and reduced demand. This dip had come after a surge in June that was supported by increased summer travel to colder areas of the country to escape from the heat and vacations during annual breaks at educational institutions.

As the aviation sector opened up, India's overall passenger traffic at airports inched closer to pre-COVID-19 levels. Accordingly, jet fuel (ATF) demand jumped 22.1 per cent to 264,00 tonne during the first half of October when compared to the same period last year.

Indian Govt keeping watch on increasing trade deficit: Sitharaman

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The Indian Govt is keeping a watch on the growing trade deficit to check if there is a disproportionate increase in the gap against any one country, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said.

"Trade deficit is actually growing," she said. "It is growing across the board, meaning we are importing a lot more than exporting. And the net is definitely going against us. But, we're also keeping a watch as to if there's a disproportionate increase against any one country," Sitharaman said, responding to a question on the increase in trade deficit against China to nearly USD 87 billion.

India's trade deficit with China widened in 2021-22 and continues to do so in 2022-23, the Ministry of Commerce data showed. In the financial year 2021-22 (FY22), the trade deficit was recorded at USD 72.9 billion, up nearly USD 29 billion from FY21's figure of USD 44 billion. In 2020-21, the trade deficit was recorded at USD 48.6 billion.

"Equally, if you look into the items that are imported, they are less of final consumption goods and more of intermediaries. And when I say more of raw materials and intermediate goods, it's also got a potential for value addition and exports," she said. "So, I wouldn't want to immediately get anxious about this net deficit, meaning imports being far higher than exports, because I think carefully if you look at it, the kind of imports that are happening are very essential, also for our industrial activity and for our value addition for exports," she said.

IT cos headed for lower attrition in coming quarters: Analysts

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Fears of global recession and spate of layoffs in the start-up space are expected to have a sobering effect on high attrition levels in Indian IT industry over the next 2-3 quarters, say market watchers as majority of large tech companies talked of easing of supply side pressures in September quarter.

Infosys, whose high levels of attrition had alarmed analysts at one point, reported lower attrition

of 27.1 per cent in just-concluded quarter, compared to 28.4 per cent in June quarter.

For Wipro, the attrition came down to 23 per cent in Q2FY23, from 23.3 per cent in the previous sequential quarter. The attrition rates for HCL Tech had been rising since quarter ended September 2021 (15.7 per cent in Q2FY22), but it plateaued at 23.8 per cent in Q2 FY23, holding on to the same levels as June quarter (Q1FY23). "It has already stabilised, and it is early indication

of where we are in terms of what we look forward to, from here on. So we are in a good place there," Ram Sundararajan, Chief People Officer of the Noida-headquartered HCL Tech said during Q2 earnings briefing.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) said its LTM or Last Twelve Months attrition in IT services inched up further to 21.5 per cent but the company was quick to add that it will start seeing the churn "settle" in the coming months.

The technology job market

which had overheated in the last few quarters has begun to cool off, and compensation expectations of new hires are also becoming more realistic, the company said during the earnings call.

Overall, the Q2 scorecards of Tier 1 Indian tech companies have clear markers that supply side pressures are set to ease.

Milind Lakkad, Chief HR Officer of TCS said, "With supply catching up across the industry, the pressure to poach experienced talent is easing. So, we should start

seeing the churn settle in the coming months.

Based on the monthly trends, we believe our quarterly annualized attrition figure has peaked in Q2 and should start moderating in the second half."

India's largest IT services company saw net additions of 9,840 employees during the quarter, with closing headcount of 6.16 lakh professionals.

TCS said its FY 23 fresher onboarding is proceeding as per plan.

Rupee is not sliding, dollar is strengthening, says FM

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that the rupee has not weakened but it is the dollar that has strengthened, as she defended the 8% slide in the value of Indian currency against the greenback this year.

Speaking to reporters after attending the annual meetings of the IMF and the World Bank, she asserted that the fundamentals of the Indian economy were strong and that inflation was low compared to other parts of the world.

"First of all I would look at it as not rupee sliding. I would look at it as dollar strengthening, dollar strengthening incessantly," she said in reply to a question on weakening rupee. All other cur-

rencies around the world are performing against a strengthening dollar, she said.

"And I'm not talking technicalities, but it is a matter of fact that India's rupee probably has withstood this dollar rate going up, the exchange rate in favour of dollar strengthening is there and I think Indian rupee has performed much better than many other emerging market currencies."

The rupee settled at 82.35 against the US dollar on Friday, having touched another record low of 82.68 on Monday after which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is likely to have intervened. Some analysts say the central bank may have spent nearly USD 100 billion in the past year to defend the rupee.

WBSEDCL invites bids to install 205 EV charging, battery swapping stations in PPP

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Ltd (WBSEDCL) has invited expressions of interest for setting up electric vehicle charging infrastructure in public-private partnership (PPP) to boost e-mobility in the state, an official said on Sunday.

The state-run utility has sought bids from interested operators to build 205 charging or battery-swapping stations for different types of vehicles, he said.

WBSEDCL, the state nodal agency for establishing charging infrastructure for electric vehicles, said the stations would be installed on its land but main-



tained by operators who will offer a share of the revenue.

"In this tranche of the deal, we will provide land for the installation of 205 EV charging/swapping stations in our sub-stations. The investment, operation and maintenance will be done by private concessionaires. The floor value of revenue share for the auction is Re 1 per unit of electricity," the official told PTI.

A bidder who will offer the

highest revenue share will be awarded the contract for a specific site. Of the 205 stations, 40 will be set up along national highways and the remaining 165 will be built elsewhere, he said, adding that the initial contract period will be of 10 years, with extension clauses, he said.

The state power sector regulator - West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission (WBERC) - has set a tariff of Rs 6.98 per unit for EV charging stations throughout the year.

According to the state EV policy, West Bengal intends to be one of the best states in terms of electric mobility penetration by 2030 with a target of one million e-vehicles.

Industry calls for district-level strategy for hospitality, tourism

PTI ■ LUCKNOW

Emphasising on the need to chart out a district-level strategy for MSME associated with the hospitality, tourism and travel sector, industry body CHATT believes that the government has made impressive plans for the sector but there is a lacking in the implementation.

"The Confederation of Hospitality Technology and Tourism Industry' (CHATT) also says that online platforms have

played a crucial role in giving wide recognition to budget hotels, homestays and BNB (Bed and breakfast) in the travel, tourism and hospitality sector.

This can help the government reach out to these businessmen and overcome their difficulties.

CHATT's general secretary Anwar Shirpurwala told PTI on Sunday that the government has made comprehensive plans for the hospitality, tourism and travel sectors.

Festive sales bring cheers to industry, hike in DA & productivity-linked bonus act as catalyst



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing festive season sales has brought cheers to the consumer goods industry with early trends from all channels indicating robust sales and traders' body CAIT expecting up to Rs 2.5 lakh crore infusion into the market through sales and service.

Sales of products such as TV, home appliances, FMCG food and non-food, apparel etc from offline and e-commerce channels have recorded almost 8-10 per cent volume growth over the last year's festive season and consumers are willing to spend despite inflationary concerns.

Festive season sales start from Onam, covers Durga Puja, Dusshera and ends with Diwali.

Encouraged by early signs, traders' body CAIT expects an 'infusion of about Rs 2.5 lakh crore in the markets by way of shopping and sale of goods and usage of service' during Diwali festive season.

Moreover, a recent hike of 4 per cent in dearness allowance (DA) benefiting 4.18 million central government employees and 6.97 million pensioners would act as a catalyst. In addition to this, Productivity-Linked Bonus (PLB) equivalent to 78 days of wages to non-gazetted railway employees is also going to help the consumers in their spending, said the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT). "It will certainly trigger the market and the economy. These two decisions of the government will pump thousands of crores of rupees into the economy," said CAIT Secretary General Praveen Khandelwal, adding a good agriculture crop is also expected to bring money in rural India.

According to Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA), sales have picked up after Navratri and will reach their peak near Diwali. The industry is witnessing good traction in sales of LED TVs, washing machines and refrigerators.

Salary in certain sectors to reach pre-pandemic level by fiscal-end: TeamLease HRTech CEO

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Salary level in certain sectors are expected to be restored to the pre-pandemic mark by the end of this financial year aided by the recovery in economic activities, according to TeamLease HRTech CEO Sumit Sabharwal said.

Hit by the pandemic, organisations across sectors resorted to pay cuts and layoffs to reduce their labour costs, Sabharwal told PTI.

"After analysis of data from our

client base, we found that the workers in the formal sector witnessed a 3.6 per cent wage cut while informal workers experienced a much sharper fall at 22.6 per cent. The pandemic has shown us the importance of the format sector in the economy," he noted.

He said, as normalcy returned and the economy gradually recovered companies began giving increments that helped in narrowing the salary gap to the 2019 level.

However, there is still a little



gap of around 7-14 per cent from the 2019 wage level in certain sectors. "We expect the recovery to reach the 2019 level by the end of

this financial year," he added. Further, Sabharwal noted that large and traditional businesses in sectors such as banking, ecommerce, education, information technology and telecommunication witnessed an average annual increment in the range of 5-12 per cent. "Talent retention amid high attrition, recovery in businesses, and easing concerns about Covid-19 disruptions are some of the factors making companies handsomely reward their employees," he said.

REAL WIN EL CLASICO

AP ■ MADRID

R eigning champions Real Madrid beat Barcelona 3-1 in the Clasico to overtake their fierce rivals at the top of La Liga on Sunday.

Karim Benzema opened the scoring in the 12th minute by converting a rebound after Marc-Andre ter Stegen saved from Vinicius Junior, with Fede Valverde drilling home the second from the edge of the box before the break.

Ferran Torres pulled one back for Barcelona in the final stages after good work by Ansu Fati, but Rodrygo won and converted a late penalty to ensure Carlo Ancelotti's side inflicted Barcelona's first domestic defeat of the season.

Madrid ended the Catalans' seven-game winning streak in the league and added to the still-raw pain of their struggles in Europe, where they are on the verge of Champions League elimination.

Barcelona, who spent heavily in the summer to try and catch up with their rivals, now trail them by three points. The Catalans had conceded just one league goal in eight games before the Clasico but shipped double that tally in the first half, leaving Madrid as the division's only unbeaten side.

After a damaging draw with Inter Milan midweek that left Barcelona's European hopes hanging by a thread, Xavi made changes.

Jules Kounde returned after injury to strengthen the defence, with veteran defender Gerard Pique, who made a costly error against the Italians,



dropping out. Frenkie de Jong and Alejandro Balde also came into the side.

Xavi's counterpart Ancelotti had fewer decisions to make, with Valverde getting the nod over Rodrygo on the right of the attack, while Andriy Lunin started in goal with Thibaut Courtois not ready to return after suffering sciatca.

Last season Barcelona's best moment came at the Bernabeu, as Xavi's side earned a surprising 4-0 win,

but this visit found them at their lowest ebb since the Spanish World Cup winner took charge.

Vinicius probed in the opening stages down the left flank against the unconvincing Sergi Roberto and that was where Madrid's opening goal came from after 12 minutes.

The masterful Toni Kroos held off Sergio Busquets and threaded a neat pass down the wing, with Vinicius leaving Roberto for dead. Ter Stegen denied the Brazilian winger, but

Benzema was on hand to slam home the rebound.

The French forward had gone five games without a goal, but ended his drought on the big stage, showing typically perfect timing as he is expected to win the Ballon d'Or in Paris on Monday.

The visitors should have levelled when Raphinha fired a cross along the six-yard box which De Jong missed and then Lewandowski, at full stretch, sent high over the crossbar.

Griezmann, Reinildo double-act help Atletico usurp Athletic



AP ■ MADRID

Antoine Griezmann's strike earned Atletico Madrid a 1-0 win at Athletic Bilbao to help Diego Simeone's side leapfrog their Basque opponents and move third in La Liga on Saturday.

Atletico's goal lived a charmed life in the final stages, thanks to brilliant defending from Reinildo Mandava and some impressive saves from Ivo Grbic, who had to come on for the injured Jan Oblak.

Ernesto Valverde's Athletic were awarded a late penalty for handball against Reinildo, but it was cancelled after the officials spotted the ball had struck the defender on the face.

Earlier Nemanja Gudelj scored one of the goals of the season to earn Sevilla a 1-0 win at Mallorca, their first in seven games across all competitions.



Benzema expected to win Ballon d'Or

AP ■ PARIS

Karim Benzema is the overwhelming favourite to win the men's Ballon d'Or at a ceremony in Paris on Monday and thereby become the first Frenchman to claim the most prestigious individual prize in football since Zinedine Zidane almost quarter of a century ago.

There are 30 nominees, but the Real Madrid striker is the outstanding candidate after his remarkable performances last season helped his club win the Champions League and La Liga.

Benzema scored an astonishing 44 goals in 46 games for his club including 15 in the Champions League.

His exploits included a hat-trick in 17 second-half minutes against Paris Saint-Germain in the last 16, and another away to Chelsea in the quarter-final first leg. He also scored three more goals over both legs of the semi-final against Manchester City.

Benzema was named the UEFA player of the year in August, and he is living a marvellous twilight to his career with the World Cup to come.

Benzema is playing the best football of his career with his 35th birthday approaching the day after the World Cup final.

"What is most important to me is to win collective trophies. If you do things well on the field, individual awards will follow," Benzema pointed out recently.

His victory at the Chatelet Theatre in the French capital seems an inevitability.

Normal service was restored last year when Lionel Messi won the Ballon d'Or for the seventh time, but he is not even nominated this time after a disappointing season at Paris Saint-Germain.

Cristiano Ronaldo is nominated but there is no Neymar on the list.

Benzema aside, there are four other members of Real's Champions League-winning side: Vinicius, the evergreen Luka Modric, goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois and midfielder Casemiro, now of Manchester United.

Kylian Mbappe, Erling Haaland, Lewandowski and Kevin De Bruyne feature too, but Benzema stands out by a distance.

If Benzema wins, he will be the fifth Frenchman to do so, following in the footsteps of Raymond Kopa in 1958, Michel Platini (1983, 1984, 1985), Jean-Pierre Papin (1991) and Zidane (1998).

The award was previously based on a player's performances over the course of the calendar year.

But the format has changed, with the prize now based on a player's record over the last season.

There is far less certainty about the identity of what will be the fourth women's Ballon d'Or.

There are three members of England's European Championship-winning squad short-listed among the 20 contenders.

Lucy Bronze and Millie Bright were both named but Arsenal striker Beth Mead is the most likely candidate after scoring six goals at the Euro.

Neymar faces fraud trial for Barca transfer from Santos

AP ■ BARCELONA

Five years since Neymar put a tumultuous end to his career at Barcelona, the Brazil forward will be tried in Spain to

determine whether he and others committed fraud when he joined the Catalan club from Santos back in 2013.

In a trial starting Monday in Barcelona, Neymar, his father,

and the former leaderships of both Barcelona and Brazilian club Santos face charges of fraud and unfair competition. They are accused of hiding the real cost of his transfer with the goal

of not paying money that DIS, a private Brazilian company, says it is owed as the rightful owners of 40% of Neymar's player rights. DIS is asking for Neymar, his father, also called

Neymar and who acts as his agent, and former Barcelona executives Sandro Rosell and Josep Bartomeu to be jailed for five years.

The trial is expected to last

until the end of October, with the World Cup opening on November 21 in Qatar. Neymar will be obliged to attend unless the judge grants him permission to miss a session.

Mount nets brace in Chelsea's 2-0 win

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM

Mason Mount scored twice as Chelsea beat Aston Villa on Sunday to strengthen their grip on a Premier League top-four place.

Manchester United played out a 0-0 stalemate at home to Newcastle on a busy day of action while Southampton and West Ham shared the points in a 1-1 draw.

Arsenal secured a fourth straight league win in a match delayed after referee Chris Kavanagh lost contact with the video assistant referee and goalline technology.

Chelsea's fourth consecutive league win came courtesy of Mount's double plus an inspired performance from goalkeeper Kepa Arrizabalaga, who produced a string of saves in the first half.

Mount's first came after Villa defender Tyrone Mings - in the sixth minute -- miscued a simple header straight to the England midfielder, who finished coolly beyond Emi Martinez.

Despite their early gift, Chelsea struggled to find attacking fluency and were indebted to Arrizabalaga, whose best save came from a point-blank header from Danny Ings.

Chelsea manager Graham Potter made a double change at half-time, bringing on defenders Kalidou Koulibaly and Cesar Azpilicueta for Kai Havertz and Marc Cucurella.

Mount doubled their lead in the 65th minute, curling home a free-kick from 25 yards after he was brought down by Mings.

Cristiano Ronaldo was



handed just his second start of the Premier League season against Newcastle but could not add to his tally of 700 club goals -- a milestone he reached last week against Everton.

Eddie Howe's visitors could have been ahead at the break after an impressive first half in which Joellinton hit the crossbar before turning the rebound onto the post.

Southampton took a 1-0 lead in the 20th minute when Romain Perraud's shot was

deflected in by defender Ben Johnson but Declan Rice equalised in the second half with a fine strike from outside the area.

GUNNERS WIN

Arsenal shaded an entertaining first game at Elland Road and led 1-0 at the break following Bukayo Saka's fourth league goal of the season.

The goal came in the 35th-minute lead following Rodrigo's wayward pass. Martin

Odegaard slipped Saka in on the right edge of the area and the England winger slammed the ball into the roof of the net.

Play was earlier halted by referee Kavanagh over the communication issues less than four minutes after kick-off. Leeds officials confirmed that a power cut at the stadium had caused the problem.

Leeds missed the chance to equalise in the 64th minute when Patrick Bamford dragged his penalty wide.

Reece James to miss WC with knee injury

AP ■ LONDON

Chelsea and England defender Reece James will miss the World Cup in Qatar after the Premier League club confirmed on Saturday he will be out for eight weeks due to a knee injury.

James, who had established himself as Gareth Southgate's first-choice right wing-back at international level, limped off during Chelsea's 2-0 Champions League win at AC Milan on Tuesday.

"Following the knee injury sustained in our away match against AC Milan, Reece has received treatment from the Chelsea medical department



and visited a specialist this weekend," Chelsea said in a statement.

"After consultation between all parties, Reece will now undergo a rehabilitation programme and is expected to be out for eight weeks."

Inter beat Salernitana to continue revival

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan's revival continued on Sunday with a 2-0 Serie A win over Salernitana after closing in on qualification for the Champions League knockout stages in midweek.

On a high from Wednesday night's thrilling 3-3 draw at Barcelona, Simone Inzaghi's side saw off Salernitana at the San Siro thanks to goals either side of half-time from Lautaro Martinez and Nicolo Barella.

Three wins from their last four matches, including four points taken from Barca in the Champions League which have put them one point away from the last 16, have boosted Inter and sparked Martinez back



into life.

Martinez had been in a worrying drought until he crashed in his superb strike at the Camp Nou, and he followed up on that strong performance by opening the scoring in the 15th minute.

The Argentina forward lashed home his first league goal since August -- his fifth of the season in all competitions -- after being fed by Nicolo Barella following Denzel Dumfries' raid down the right flank.

Martinez nearly doubled Inter's lead six minutes after the break when he headed Hakan Calhanoglu's free-kick just over the bar.

But Barella made sure Inter would collect the points six minutes later and Calhanoglu was again involved with a wonderful pass.

The Turkey midfielder clipped a perfect left-footed pass over the top, and after cutting inside Barella drilled home with his left to net his third goal of the campaign.

Barella's strike ended Salernitana's resistance and left the away side in 12th, five points above Verona who sit just inside the relegation zone ahead of visit of AC Milan on Sunday night.

Regasa, Cheptai win at Delhi Half Marathon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chala Regasa of Ethiopia and Kenya's Irine Cheptai produced impressive performances to claim the men's and women's titles respectively in elite races at the Vedanta Delhi Half Marathon here on Sunday.

Regasa won the race with a time of 1 hour 30 seconds, while Cheptai came up with a personal best of 1:06:42 to top the women's event.

In the Indian elite men's category, it was an incredible photo finish as defending champion Avinash Sable and Kartik Kumar took the first two positions respectively, receiving tremendous applause from the spectators.



The duo clocked an identical 64 minutes, but it was the top-billed Sable who was declared the winner by the technical officials of the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) after going through the

footage.

There were no surprises in the Indian women's elite race with Sanjivani Jadhav bagging the crown after two previous podium finishes, with a timing of 1:17:53.

India play mighty Brazil in U-17 WWC

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

It doesn't happen that often. But an Indian football team will get a rare opportunity to rub shoulders with the mighty Brazil, in the FIFA Women's U-17 World Cup here on Monday.

Hosts India are already out of reckoning for a place in the knockouts but there is no doubting the fact that their last match of the tournament will be a huge learning experience as the South American powerhouse is on a different level in world football.

Hosts India conceded three goals in the second half to suffer a humiliating 0-3 defeat to Morocco in their second Group A match and crash out of the tournament on Friday.

After the back-to-back defeats against Morocco and the USA, who smashed them 8-0 in their opener, India head coach Thomas Dennerby concluded



that the team is not up to the mark technically.

He wants his girls to be more confident with the ball while building their attacks when they play Brazil in their final match.

"When we have the ball, we

need to feel relaxed and start playing. We need to be confident and play a little bit more. Now, we have nothing to lose. I hope the girls start playing freely," said Dennerby on the eve of the match.

In the latest FIFA rankings

released early this week, Brazil's senior girls are placed ninth.

Dennerby is very much aware of Brazil's reputation, but at the same time, he thinks his wards are capable of proving themselves on the pitch.

"We have to focus very hard on defending, but we also know football is not only about defending. It would be nice for us to score in the tournament," he said.

"Brazil are a good team. And we also know that Brazil are fighting to ensure their place in the knockout stage. So, I think they are going to come out with all guns blazing," the coach added.

The Indian girls, Dennerby said, are ready to play for their honour against Brazil.

"We will fight and try to score a goal. It would be nice to come out of this tournament with a goal," he said.

Erigaisi shocks Magnus Carlsen

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi on Sunday hogged the spotlight, beating world champion Magnus Carlsen in round seven of the preliminaries of the Aimag Chess Rapid online chess tournament.

The 19-year-old Erigaisi, who had gone down to compatriot Vidit Santosh Gujrathi to make a losing start in the event, is currently in fifth place after eight rounds.

The win over Norwegian superstar Carlsen in the seventh round early on Sunday was the Indian's first over the world champion.

Erigaisi won three straight games, beating Nils Grandelius (Sweden), Daniel Naroditsky (USA) and Carlsen before settling for a draw against Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Poland).

AP ■ GEELONG

Jan Frylinck smashed 44 runs and took two wickets as Namibia hammered Asia Cup champions Sri Lanka by 55 runs to cause a major upset in the opening match of the T20 World Cup on Sunday.

The left-handed Frylinck and JJ Smit, who made an unbeaten 31, lifted Namibia to 163-7 with their 69-run seventh-wicket stand after being invited to bat first in Geelong.

Sri Lanka were then bowled out for 108 in 19 overs with David Wiese, Frylinck, Bernard Scholtz and Ben Shikongo taking two wickets each in the team's first of three opening-round matches.

The African minnows are on course for a second straight Super 12 place after achieving the feat on their T20 World Cup debut last year in the United Arab Emirates.

"Incredible journey, last year was a special experience for us. We've started a great win, but a lot of work to do throughout this tournament still," skipper Gerhard Erasmus said after the stunning win.

"It's been a historic day for us. The opening day has been quite special but we want to kick on from here and qualify for the Super 12 stage. We understand the bigger picture as well."

Cricket icon and India's batting great Sachin Tendulkar tweeted: "Namibia has told the cricketing world today... 'Nam' yaad rakha! (remember the name!)"

Namibia lost their openers inside three overs with returning fast bowler Dushmantha Chameera getting a wicket third ball when Michael van Lingen was caught at deep third-man.

Jan Nicol Loftie-Eaton fell to a brilliant diving catch by wicketkeeper Kusal Mendis



HISTORIC DAY

World No.14 team Namibia stun Asia Cup champions Sri Lanka in 2022 T20 World Cup opening match

after a 12-ball 20.

Stephan Baard and skipper Erasmus attempted to rebuild with a stand of 41 but Sri Lanka's bowlers kept chipping away with wickets.

Namibia slipped to 93-6 when spinner Maheesh Theekshana got big-hitter

Wiese caught behind for nought but Frylinck, who hit

four fours in his 28-ball innings, and Smit had other ideas.

FANS SILENCED

The pair took the attack to the opposition with five fours and two sixes in the final five overs.

Sri Lanka, who won the Asia Cup last month, lost

Mendis for six when his top-edge off Wiese ballooned up to land in the gloves of Zane Green.

Shikongo silenced the Sri Lankan fans when he sent back Pathum Nissanka for nine and Danushka Gunathilaka for nought from consecutive balls.

Bhanuka Rajapaksa played out the hat-trick ball, surviving

a big lbw shout.

"Once we lose three wickets in the powerplay, we are usually out of the game," said skipper Dasun Shanaka.

"The plans should be simple, we need not do anything special. We've got a good team, it's about the process."

Former Sri Lanka captain Sanath Jayasuriya backed the

Binura Fernando replaces injured Madushanka in SL squad

PTI ■ GEELONG

Binura Fernando on Sunday replaced injured pacer Dilshan Madushanka in the Sri Lankan squad for the T20 World Cup.

"The Event Technical Committee of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 has approved Binura Fernando as a replacement for left arm fast bowler Dilshan Madushanka in the Sri Lanka squad," said the ICC in a statement.

Fernando, who has played nine T20Is, was named as a replacement after Madushanka was ruled out due to a torn quad muscle.

team to bounce back and make the Super 12 stage.

"Disappointing result. However, this team has come back from defeat before. Let's regroup and win from here first target is to qualify. Come on boys let's do this!" Jayasuriya wrote on Twitter.

Frylinck, a left-arm seamer who was named man of the match, removed Dhananjaya de Silva as Sri Lanka slipped to 40-4.

The left-handed Rajapaksa and Shanaka, who made 29, attempted to put the chase back on track with a partnership of 34 but Scholtz broke the stand with his left-arm spin.

Scholtz got Rajapaksa out for 20 when he skied a shot and also sent back Wanindu Hasaranga.



Netherlands pip UAE by 3 wickets in low-scoring thriller

PTI ■ GEELONG

Netherlands' lower-middle order held their nerves to eke out a three-wicket victory over United Arab Emirates with a ball to spare in a Round 1 group A match of the ICC T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

While UAE struggled to reach 111 for 8 in 20 overs, the total started looking menacing once the Netherlands were reduced to 76 for 6 by the 14th over before they gathered their bearings.

It was Scott Edwards (16 not out) and Logan Van Beek (4 not out) who kept their cool in the final over bowled by medium pacer Zawar Farid as Netherlands scampered home for a single off the penultimate delivery of the match to start off on a winning note.

It was Pakistan-born Junaid Siddique (3/24 in 4 overs), who dismissed Tom

Cooper (8) and former South African-born IPL player Roelof van der Merwe in three balls to bring UAE back in the game.

But, Tim Pringle (15), son of former New Zealand seamer Chris, and Edwards added 27 runs in five overs to take the Netherlands team closer to victory.

Earlier, when UAE batted, they could never really force the pace as Muhammad Waseem crawled to 41 off 47 balls. Deliveries worth more than 10 overs went in the account of dots as all the Netherlands bowlers were on the money.

Pacer Bas de Leede, whose father Tim had played the 1996 World Cup for the 'Orange Brigade, was the pick of the bowlers with 3/19 in 3 overs while opening bowler Fred Klaassen (2/13) and Van der Merwe (1/19), with his slow left arm orthodox, kept the total under check.

T20 WCup: 11-year-old bowls to Rohit at nets

PTI ■ PERTH

Drushil Chauhan, an 11-year-old cricket enthusiast, had a moment to remember when he got an opportunity to bowl at skipper Rohit Sharma during India's practice session here ahead of the T20 World Cup.

Drushil was one of the many kids present at the WACA ground for the morning session. He impressed everyone with his smooth bowling action after the Indian team arrived for its afternoon practice session.

India skipper Rohit invited Drushil to bowl at him in the nets.

"We were at the WACA for a noon practice session and kids were finishing their morning event. We could see 100-odd kids playing cricket from our dressing room. One caught everyone's attention, especially Rohit," Hari Prasad Mohan, Team India's analyst, said in a video posted by the BCCI.

"Everyone was amazed by his smooth run-up, his natural talent. He was constantly beating the bat. Rohit went out to ask him to bowl few balls in the nets. It was an amazing sight."

Drushil was invited to the team's dressing room as well and he shared some moments with the coaches and some of



the members.

"I was very surprised, my dad told me that I might be able to bowl to him. So I got really excited," said the left-arm swing bowler.

He said his favourite deliveries are inswing yorkers and outswing balls.

After the net session, Rohit asked Drushil: "You stay in Perth; how are you going to play for India?"

"I am going to go to India when I'll be good enough," replied Drushil as the Indian captain signed some merchandise for him.

India will take on Australia and New Zealand on October 17 and 19 in the two official warm-ups ahead of tournament proper.

The inaugural champions will face Pakistan in their campaign opener on October 23.

No.1 Swiatek rallies past Pegula to reach San Diego final

AP ■ SAN DIEGO

World number one Iga Swiatek of Poland rallied after a rain delay to defeat sixth-ranked American Jessica Pegula on Saturday and reach the WTA San Diego Open final.

Swiatek, seeking her eighth title of the year, advanced to her ninth WTA final of the season by defeating Pegula 4-6, 6-2, 6-2 after two hours and six minutes.

Three-time Grand Slam champion Swiatek will play for the crown on Sunday against the winner of a later semi-final between 19th-ranked American Danielle Collins, this year's Australian Open runner-up, and Croatia's 77th-ranked Donna Vekic.

In a rematch of this year's French and US Open quarter-finals, Swiatek dropped the first set just before a lengthy rain delay that allowed the 21-year-old Polish star to regroup.

Swiatek raced ahead 3-0 and broke again on a forehand winner in the eighth game to force a third set, which she also dominated, taking the victory with a break when Pegula netted a forehand.

Winner of a WTA-best 63 matches this year, Swiatek



improved to 4-1 all-time against Pegula, having lost their first meeting in 2019 at Washington but wining this year at Miami and in the US and French Open quarter-finals.

Swiatek, a runner-up last week at Ostrava, seeks her 11th career WTA title. Her titles this year include Qatar, Indian Wells, Miami, Rome, Stuttgart and the US and French Opens.

Collins won her only WTA titles last year at Palermo and Silicon Valley.

Vekic won her third career WTA title last October at Courmayeur in her most recent tour final.

Patil, Arjun, Kiran get India 5th gold in ISSF World C'ship



PTI ■ CAIRO

The Indian men's 10m air rifle troika of Rudranksh Balasaheb Patil, Kiran Ankush Jadhav and Arjun Babuta won the country's fifth gold medal in the ISSF World Championship here on Sunday, routing China 16-10 in the title round.

It was also Patil's second senior world championship gold in his very first outing, having won the individual 10m air rifle event earlier.

India also picked up a silver and two bronze medals on the day to take their tally to five gold, one silver and five bronze, to maintain their second place behind China in the standings.

With the women's 10m air pistol team also making the

gold medal match, that tally is certain to go up further by the end of the tournament.

The Indian team raced ahead 14-2 in the final against a Chinese side which had Yang Haoran (double Olympic gold medalist and two-time world champion), Lihao Sheng (Tokyo Olympics silver medalist) and Song Buhan (world championship silver medalist).

China mounted a strong comeback to win the next four series and narrow the gap to 14-10, but the Indians held their own in the final series to clinch the crown.

Both the teams were at each other from Saturday itself when the Chinese prevailed over the Indians, both in round one of qualification of 28 teams and then in the top eight second

round as well.

The air rifle women, who had a heartbreak in the individual event, redeemed themselves with a bronze in the team event, prevailing 17-11 in a nail-biter against Germany.

Meghana Sajjanar shot two consecutive 10.9s in the crucial stages to clinch the deal along with partners Elavenil Valarivan and Mehuli Ghosh. They had earlier finished third in qualification stage two to miss out on the gold match by 0.6 points.

Manvi Jain and Sameer won India's first silver of the championships, going down to China's Feng Sixuan and Liu Yangpan 17-03 in the gold medal match of the 25m standard pistol mixed team junior competition.

Yash Dhull powers Delhi to 7-wicket victory over Puducherry



PTI ■ JAIPUR

Young Yash Dhull showed his T20 credentials with a smashing 71 not out off 46 balls as Delhi easily chased down a tricky target set by Puducherry with seven wickets to spare in a group B match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy on Sunday.

Puducherry scored 168 for eight in 20 overs with Parameswaran Sivaraman's 43 off 30 balls being the highest contribution. Veteran Ishant Sharma (1/26 in 4 overs) and the seasoned Navdeep Saini (3/37 in 4 overs) bowled at a brisk pace.

Delhi, who had lost their last game against UP after a batting debacle, chased down the target with four balls to spare.

Young Dhull, who has already scored a half-century in the tournament, was at his flawless best as he hit 10 boundaries during the chase.

Delhi needed 56 off 33 balls when skipper Nitish Rana was dismissed for 36 off 26 balls, but Ayush Badoni (32 not out off 15 balls) came in and started

smashing the Puducherry bowlers. Badoni hit three fours and a six while adding exactly 56 runs in 4.5 overs with Dhull to seal the issue.

Earlier, skipper Rana used seven bowlers including himself, but still Puducherry still managed close to 170, largely due to Marimuthu Vikneshwaran's 21-ball 39, which was studded with four fours and three sixes.

SAURASHTRA BEAT GUJ

Indore: Saurashtra's combined effort trumped Chirag Gandhi's individual brilliance as they got the better of Gujarat by three wickets in their Group D match.

Batting first, Gujarat made 162 for seven in their allotted 20 overs. In reply, Saurashtra completed the task with exactly an over to spare.

Gandhi top-scored for Gujarat with a blazing 63 off a mere 23 balls, striking six boundaries and four sixes in his whirlwind knock.

In reply, Tarang Gohel blazed away to 19 in 11 balls before being dismissed by

DUBE'S ALL-ROUND SHOW TAKES MUMBAI CLOSER TO KO

PTI ■ RAJKOT

Prithvi Shaw had a rare off day but Shivam Dube joined the party as his all-round show ensured a 15-run victory for Mumbai over Vidarbha in a group A match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament here on Sunday.

Batting first, Mumbai scored 155 for eight in 20 overs with Dube's 41 off 40 balls and Sarfaraz Khan's 26



Vishal Jayswal. But India's number three batter in Tests, Cheteshwar Pujara carried on to make 38 off 27 balls while forging useful partnerships with Samarth Vyas (33) and captain Jackson (15).

Parth Chauhan struck 25 in 16 balls before Jay Gohil (19 off

14 balls) helped Saurashtra cross the line.

KARNATAKA WIN

Mullanpur: Pacer Vidhwath Kaverappa bagged a career-best 5/11 as fancied Karnataka recorded a convincing 34-run win over Jammu & Kashmir in

their Group C match.

Batting first, Karnataka were restricted to 147 for seven in the stipulated 20 overs, but the total proved to be more than enough as Jammu & Kashmir were bowled out for 113 in 18.2 overs.

For J & K, India's pace sen-

sation Umran Malik returned figures of 1/37 from his full quota of four overs, while Abid Mushtaq and Rithik Singh picked up two wickets each.

The J & K team kept losing wickets at regular intervals, failing to pose a threat to their much stronger opponents despite Vivrant Sharma's 46-ball 63.

BENGAL BEAT TN

Lucknow: Shahbaz Ahmed produced a brilliant all-round performance to power Bengal to a dominating 43-run win over Tamil Nadu in their Elite Group E match.

The 27-year-old from Haryana led Bengal's aggressive batting display with an unbeaten 27-ball 42 laced with three fours and two maximums to take the team to 164 for six after opting to bat.

He then returned to scalp three crucial wickets with his left-arm spin to completely derail Tamil Nadu's run chase as they ended with 121 for 9 in their stipulated 20 overs.