

OPINION 6

‘DIVIDE AND RULE’  
DOES NOT WORK

WORLD 9

TAIWAN’S TSAI SAYS NO BACKING  
DOWN TO CHINESE AGGRESSION

MONEY 10

MARKETS HALT 7-DAY RALLY  
ON PROFIT-BOOKING

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 26, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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AUS BEAT  
SL IN T20  
WORLD CUP  
12 SPORT

CAPSULE

35 KILLED AS CYCLONIC  
STORM LASHES B'DESH

Dhaka: At least 35 people, including three children, were killed in different parts of Bangladesh as the cyclonic storm Sitrang lashed the country, officials said.

P9

DALIT COUPLE, SON SHOT  
DEAD IN MP VILLAGE

Damoh: A 32-year-old Dalit man and his parents were shot dead in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district on Tuesday after he had been accused of staring at the wife of one of the assailants, police said.

OVER 900 DENGUE CASES  
IN OCT IN DELHI, TALLY 2K

New Delhi: More than 900 cases of dengue have been reported in the national Capital in October, taking the infection tally of the vector-borne disease to 1,876 so far this year, according to a civic report issued on Tuesday.

FIVE HELD, UAPA INVOKED  
IN EXPLOSION IN TN

Coimbatore: The stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act has been invoked in the case relating to a car explosion in the city that killed one person, while five others have been arrested in the incident.

WhatsApp goes  
inaccessible  
for 2 hours

AP ■ LONDON

WhatsApp services were restored following a nearly two-hour-long global outage on Tuesday that left users from the UK to India complaining about not being able to send or receive text and video messages.

Meta, which owns the popular messaging app, said it has fixed the outage — dubbed as one of its longest — and the service was back.

It, however, did not explain what caused the glitch.

According to Downtdetector, which tracks outage reports, the messaging app was not working for many users across multiple regions.

WhatsApp Web, the app's web version, used by many on their desktops and laptops, was also hit by the outage.

“We know people had trouble sending messages on WhatsApp today. We've fixed the issue and apologise for any inconvenience,” a Meta company spokesperson said.

Meta, previously known as Facebook, bought WhatsApp in 2014. The outage led to Twitterati taking a dig at WhatsApp, with hilarious memes floating around.

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efficient municipal services to the public.

A senior official from Raj Niwas said in case a taxpayer fails to settle his tax dues by March 31, 2023, s/he shall be liable to pay all tax dues along with interest and penalty since 2004 or since whichever year it has been pending and shall not be entitled to any waiver as per the scheme. The coercive measures to collect the tax dues shall be launched against such defaulters from April 1, 2023.

The official said in order to avail the benefit of the scheme, tax payer have to apply in the prescribed form online and make payment of the dues, as per scheme, online.

While informing the features of this amnesty scheme, a senior official from Raj Niwas stated that it consists of “One Plus Five” for residential and “One Plus Six” for Non-Residential property holders.

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One-time property  
tax amnesty scheme  
Samriddhi launched

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena on Tuesday launched “SAMRIDHI 2022-23”, a scheme providing residential and commercial property holders an opportunity to clear their outstanding property tax dues by paying up only for the past six and seven years, including the current one and without any interest, instead of coughing up the entire tax dues along with interest and penalty since 2004.

This scheme, which will be valid from October 26, 2022 till March 31, 2023, could go a long way in resolving thousands of pending court cases involving citizens and the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

The amnesty proposal could also bring such property owners under the tax purview and generate revenue that could help in building better infrastructure and provide

Competition Commission of India (Commission) said it has imposed a penalty of ₹936.44 crore on Google for abusing its dominant position with respect to its Play Store policies.

Google's Play Store constitutes the main distribution channel for app developers in the Android mobile ecosystem, which allows its owners to capitalise on the apps brought to market.

The regulator noted that making access to the Play Store for app developers dependent on mandatory usage of GPBS (Google Play's Billing System) for paid apps and in-app purchases constitutes an imposition of an unfair condition on app developers.

Apart from the penalty, CCI said Google should not restrict app developers from using any third-party billing/payment processing services for purchasing apps.

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CCI fines Google  
₹936 cr for Play  
Store monopoly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In its second ruling against Google in less than a week, the Competition Commission on Tuesday slapped a penalty of ₹936.44 crore on the internet major for abusing its dominant position with respect to its Play Store policies.

The regulator has also directed the company to cease and desist from unfair business practices as well as carry out various measures to address the anti-competitive issues within a defined timeline.

This is the second major CCI ruling against Google in less than a week. On October 20, the watchdog imposed a penalty of ₹1,337.76 crore on the company for abusing its dominant position in multiple markets in relation to Android mobile devices and ordered the internet major to cease and desist from various unfair business practices.

In a release on Tuesday, the

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In Sunak, UK gets  
first non-White PM

Rishi pledges to fix  
blunders, urges unity;  
Indian-origin Suella  
Braverman back as  
UK Home Secretary

PTI ■ LONDON

Rishi Sunak on Tuesday took charge as Britain's first non-White and Indian-origin Prime Minister with a promise to put the crisis-hit country's needs “above politics” and “fix the mistakes” made by his predecessor, a day after he was elected the leader of the Conservative Party in a historic leadership run. The 42-year-old investment banker-turned politician is the youngest British PM in 210 years. He is also Britain's first Hindu Prime Minister.

In his first address at the doorstep of 10 Downing Street in London after meeting King Charles III at Buckingham Palace, the new Prime Minister said that he takes over at a time when the UK is facing a “profound economic crisis” as it deals with the aftermath of COVID and the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Sunak asserted that he is “not daunted” by the high office he has accepted and hopes to live up to its demands.

“I admired her restlessness to create change. But some



New British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak waves after arriving at Downing Street in London on Tuesday after returning from Buckingham Palace where he was formally appointed to the post by Britain's King Charles III

‘New dawn’ for UK, ‘Death of  
Democracy’: Sunak gets both  
brickbats and bouquets P9

sought to bring stability to the UK after months of political and economic turmoil.

“I will unite our country not with words but with action. I will work day in and day out to deliver for you,” Sunak, the second PM in as many months and the third this year.

Sunak on Tuesday began putting his top team in place with key Cabinet appointments and decided to keep the new Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, in place for economic stability and brought back Indian-origin Suella Braverman as Home Secretary.

Sunak, Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy's son-in-law, warned of “difficult decisions to come” and pointed to his record as chancellor of exchequer during the pandemic to promise that he will bring that “same compassion” to the challenges ahead.

“I stand here before you ready to lead our country into the future, to put your needs above politics, to reach out and build a government that represents the very best traditions of my party. Together we can achieve incredible things. We will create a future worthy of the sacrifices so many have made and fill tomorrow and every day thereafter with hope,” he said.

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mistakes were made. Not borne of ill will or bad intentions. Quite the opposite in fact, but mistakes nonetheless,” he said about his predecessor Liz Truss.

“And I have been elected as leader of my party, and your prime minister in part, to fix them. And that work begins immediately,” Sunak said as he

Kharge to take up reins,  
Rahul to witness oath

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The longest serving president of the Congress, Sonia Gandhi, will finally hand over the charge of the grand old party to M Mallikarjun Kharge, being the first non-Gandhi to head the outfit in 24 years.

Interestingly, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, who has taken a break from Bharat Jodo Yatra currently crisscrossing Andhra Pradesh, will be present on the occasion.

Rahul reached Delhi for the first time after he started padyatra from Kanyakumari on September 6 and will rejoin it on Thursday. The participation of all political members of the Gandhis, including Priyanka, is being seen as a move to galvanise the party.

The morale of party is upbeat against the backdrop of success of the Rahul-led padyatra that has now covered one third of the 3,500 km of Kanyakumari to Kashmir route.



Congress leaders and security personnel inside the office of outgoing Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi, at AICC HQ in New Delhi on Tuesday

Hectic preparations were underway at the AICC headquarters lawns in the national Capital. Kharge defeated Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor in a direct contest for the top post in the grand old party after the Gandhis opted out of the race.

Kharge called on former

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday.

He will begin his day on Wednesday with a visit to Rajghat, Shakti Sthal — the samadhi of former PM Indira Gandhi — and Vir Bhoomi, the samadhi of former PM Rajiv Gandhi.

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Army to procure 750 drones  
to boost border surveillance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing its efforts to further strengthen surveillance and attack capabilities all along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) facing China and Line of Control (LOC) with Pakistan, the Army will procure 750 remotely piloted aerial vehicles.

A request for information (RFI) or tender in this regard was issued on Tuesday and the vehicles will be bought under the fast track procedure from Indian manufacturers. The vendors have a month to respond to the RFI, officials said here. The remotely piloted aerial vehicles can carry lethal or non-lethal payload.

Last week, the Army had

issued tenders for quad copters and mini remotely piloted aircraft (RPA).

A tender or request for proposal (RFP) was issued on Thursday last inviting bids from Indian manufacturers for 1,000 copters and 80 RPAs.

Quad copter has four rotors and provides relatively stable flight performance thereby enabling surveillance and aerial photography. The RPAs will have a range from 20 km to 60-90 km and help in identifying targets for the artillery for precision strikes in high altitude areas.

Moreover, these RPAs weighing about 15 kilos will have endurance of more than 90 minutes and fly during day and night.

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Solar spectacle eclipses all other activities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Stargazers were glued to their telescopes on Tuesday evening to watch the partial solar eclipse that saw millions of the faithful taking purifying baths in lakes and rivers at pilgrimage sites to mark the occasion. The eclipse started at 4.17 pm as the moon started covering the solar disc.

The partial solar eclipse was observed in several parts of the country with Srinagar witnessing the maximum obscuration of the solar disc at 55 per cent. In Delhi 43 per cent of the solar disc was covered by the shadow of the moon, Jammu (52 per cent), Bengaluru (9.9 per cent), and Kochi (5.1 per cent).

Students from the High School at Hanle in Ladakh had gathered at the Indian Astronomical Observatory located in the region to watch the eclipse, while the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research had thrown open their lawns for public viewing of the celestial phenomenon.



People throng Nehru Planetarium in New Delhi to watch solar eclipse

Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

A solar eclipse occurs on a new moon day when the moon comes in between the earth and the sun and when all the three objects are aligned.

A partial solar eclipse will occur when the lunar disk covers the solar disk partially.

Astronomy clubs set up public

viewing of the eclipse at several locations across the country and even distributed special eyewear to watch the eclipse.

In Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath witnessed the eclipse at the Veer Bahadur Singh planetarium with a telescope and special glasses.

Since the eclipse began in the evening, the ending of the celestial phenomenon was not visible as it took place after sunset.

The Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences, Nainital and Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune had set up live streams on YouTube from the sites of their telescopes to view the eclipse.

Thousands of devotees in various parts of the country took a holy dip in rivers and lakes. In Haridwar, devotees gathered to offer prayers at Har Ki Pauri ghat on the banks of the

Ganga.

In Haryana, people thronged the Brahma Sarovar, Sannihit Sarovar, Jyotisar Tirtha, Pehowa Tirtha and other sites of the Kurukshetra, the land of Mahabharata.

According to Hindu beliefs, a bath in the holy tanks at Kurukshetra during a solar eclipse is considered auspicious. Many important temples remained closed.

In Telangana, Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple in Yadagirigutta, Sri Raja Rajeshwara Swamy temple in Vemulawada, Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple in Dharmapuri and Sri Gnana Saraswathi Devi temple in Basar are among those remain closed.

In southern and central India, the eclipse was observed just before sunset with Nagpur experiencing the eclipse from 4.49 pm to 5.42 pm. In Bengaluru, the eclipse began at 5.12 pm and reached its maximum at 5.49 pm and ended at 5.55 pm.

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# Central fund soars, NE trails in job race

PTI ■ SHILLONG

Despite the Central Government more than doubling budgetary support in the last eight years, the northeast region has lagged behind in economic output and job creation, an NEC official said here on Tuesday.

Lakhs of youth from the region are going to other parts of the country for jobs, which implies that "something is amiss in terms of economic development", North Eastern Council Secretary K Moses Chalai said.

"In 2013-14, the total 10 per cent GBS (gross budgetary support) was around Rs 34,000 crore. This financial year, it has reached Rs 76,000 crore.

"Despite this, the production and distribution of goods and services are not happening enough and there are not enough jobs," Chalai said, while speaking at a function at the North Eastern Hill University here.

Fifty-five central ministries and departments are mandated to spend at least 10 per cent of their gross budgetary support (GBS) for the central sec-

tor and centrally sponsored schemes in the northeastern region to accelerate the pace of development.

Chalai, who has recently been appointed as chairman of the inter-ministerial committee for development of border areas in the region, said that the north-east is today surrounded by the world's fastest developing economies, including Bangladesh.

"It is the time for the north-east to look at itself and come up with strategies to match with the growth," said North Eastern Council Secretary.

## HP polls: BJP replaces Kullu Sadar candidate

PTI ■ SHIMLA

The BJP changed its Kullu Sadar candidate on the last day for the filing of nominations for the Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls after his son submitted papers as an independent against the party choice in the State's Banjar seat.

Narottam Thakur, a retired teacher, filed his papers as the BJP candidate in place of Maheshwar Singh, a party leader said. As many as 376 candidates filed their nominations

on the last day taking the total to 630.

Till 1 pm, it was not clear who will file papers as the BJP candidate for the Kullu Sadar seat. Maheshwar Singh was dropped by the party after his son Hiteshwar filed his nomination as an independent candidate from the Banjar seat against the party's official candidate, the leader said.

Maheshwar Singh had earlier filed his papers on October 21 after he was declared the BJP candidate from Kullu Sadar but did not receive the official letter confirming it.

# Property tax...

From Page 1

"The taxpayers of residential properties under 'One Plus Five' scheme are required to pay the principal amount of property tax for the current Year and previous five years, whereupon 100 per cent interest and penalty on the outstanding tax amount shall be exempted and all the previous dues prior to 2017-18, will be waived off," he said.

"Similarly, under 'One Plus Six' for Non-Residential properties Scheme, property owners have to make payment of Principal amount of property tax for the current Year and previous six years and the 100 per cent interest and penalty and all the previous dues prior to 2016-17, will be completely waived off," he said.

"According to this scheme, if any taxpayer has already paid tax dues of any of the years 2017-18 onwards or 2016-17 onwards, but which has not been captured in MCD tax data, they have to submit the proof of payment so that the tax data base can be updated. Such cases where principal, interest and penalty has already been paid before the launch of the scheme, shall not be reassessed and reopened," official informed.

"The Scheme will also cover cases of the dishonored cheque (s) including cases where bank account and property has been attached as well as those pending under litigation in any court (s) of law, subject to respective terms and conditions," he said.

"During the scrutiny, if it is found that the taxpayer has not deposited the right amount of tax by willful suppression of fact or misrepresentation of fact, the benefits extended shall be withdrawn. However, any discrepancy in this regard may be raised only within a period of one year from the receipt of the application and, thereafter no claim in this regard shall be made by the department and the case will be deemed as closed," the official stated.

The LG said this scheme was a people friendly initiative taken by MCD, which will provide a big relief to the residents of authorised and regularised colonies and encourage property owners to get rid of long pending disputes and related harassment, he said.

Saxena said waiver of tax liability means more money in the hands of taxpayers, more revenue for the corporation, thereby, enabling it to undertake much desired civic infrastructure work for better service delivery to the people of the national Capital.

Thus, the scheme brings prosperity (samridhi) to all stakeholders, officials further said.

## Delhiites made mockery of ...

From Page 1

At Ashok Vihar as well, the PM 10 concentration breached the 1,000 mark to hit 1029 µg/m3 at midnight.

PM2.5 are fine particles that are 2.5 microns or less in diameter and can travel deep into the respiratory tract, reaching the lungs and entering the bloodstream.

The neighbouring cities of Ghaziabad (285), Noida (320), Greater Noida (294), Gurugram (315) and Faridabad (310) reported 'poor' to 'very poor' air quality.

Though people burst firecrackers in several parts of Delhi despite a ban on them, the intensity appeared less as

compared to the last two years.

Farm fires raged across Punjab and Haryana on Monday but the wind speed was moderately unfavourable for the transport of smoke. Hence, the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's pollution (around 10 per cent) was also not "very significant", said Gufran Beig, chair Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Indian Institute of Science.

Emissions from firecrackers and farm fires have contributed significantly to Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Diwali over the years. Their share this year was relatively less than previous years.

## Sonia to hand...

From Page 1

Chairman of the central election authority of the Congress, Madhusudan Mistry, will formally hand over the election certificate to Kharge at the function. AICC members, party MPs, Pradesh Congress Committee presidents, CLP leaders, former CMs, former State presidents and other AICC office bearers are invited to the programme.

With the Congress now remaining in power in only two States -- Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh -- on its own

and in partnership as a junior partner in Jharkhand, Kharge's first challenge is to bring the party to power in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, which go to polls in the next few weeks.

Assembly elections in Himachal Pradesh are on November 12 but the dates for Gujarat are yet to be announced.

Kharge's election also comes at a time the party is reeling under internal rumblings and high-profile exits after a series of electoral debacles.

# In Sunak...

From Page 1

On a somewhat defiant note to address the Opposition clamour for a general election, he stressed that the mandate the Conservative Party won in the 2019 general election is not the sole property of one person — with reference to former PM Boris Johnson — but "a mandate that belongs to and unites all of us". "Congratulations to @RishiSunak on this historic day, this is the moment for every Conservative to give our new PM their full and wholehearted support," Johnson tweeted. Earlier in the day, outgoing Prime Minister Truss chaired her final Cabinet meeting at 10 Downing Street before making her way to Buckingham Palace to formally tender her resignation to the 73-year-old monarch.

Sunak then arrived at the palace for his meeting with the King, who then invited him to form a government as the UK's 57th Prime Minister and the third in just seven weeks.

"The King received in Audience The Right Honourable Rishi Sunak MP today and requested him to form a new Administration. Mr Sunak accepted His Majesty's offer and kissed hands upon his

appointment as Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury," the palace statement said.

Labour leader and the leader of the Opposition Keir Starmer congratulated Sunak, but hinted at the need for a general election. Starmer tweeted: "Congratulations, Rishi Sunak, on becoming prime minister and making history as the first British Asian PM.

In a readout of a shadow cabinet meeting, Starmer said Sunak "has only ever fought one leadership election battle his entire life and 'got thrashed' by Truss. "And no wonder he doesn't want to fight a general election," he said.

In his first remarks since announcing he would not seek a return to Number 10, former prime minister Boris Johnson congratulated Sunak, calling it a "historic day".

He tweeted: "This is the moment for every Conservative to give our new PM their full and wholehearted support."

As the former chancellor made his first prime ministerial address on the steps of 10 Downing Street, he was not joined by his wife Akshata Murty and daughters Krishna and Anoushka as was expected.

# Dalit couple, son shot in MP village

**Damoh:** A 32-year-old Dalit man and his parents were shot dead in Madhya Pradesh's Damoh district on Tuesday after he had been accused of staring at the wife of one of the assailants, police said. The 32-year-old victim's two younger brothers were injured in the

attack while the main accused has been arrested, officials said. The incident took place around 6.30 am at Devran village under Dehat police station, some 20 km from Damoh district headquarters. Superintendent of Police D R Taniwar said.

## NCRPULSE

### CYNTHIA McCaffREY NEW UNICEF REP IN INDIA

**New Delhi:** Cynthia McCaffrey met with Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), and presented her credentials as the new UNICEF Representative in India. McCaffrey has served in several leadership roles in UNICEF Headquarters and brings over 25 years of experience including Director, Office of Innovation, and Director and Chief of Staff of the Office of the Executive Director. Prior to India, she was the UNICEF Representative to China.



### DELHI RECORDS MAX TEMP 30.7 C, MIN 14 DEGREES

**New Delhi:** The maximum temperature in Delhi dropped by a notch and settled at 30.7 degree Celsius and minimum at 14 degrees Celsius — two notches below the season's average — on Tuesday.

### MAN INJURED AFTER NEPHEW OPENS FIRE AT HIM

**Gurugram:** A 46-year-old man was critically injured after his nephew along with two others allegedly shot at him after bursting a gunpowder-filled pipe in his mouth over a property dispute, police said on Sunday. The nephew was identified as Jitender and his accomplices as Ashok and Dharendra. The victim identified as Vijender is currently being treated in Delhi's Safdarjung hospital.

### 3 LABOURERS KILLED IN TRAIN ACCIDENT AT BADLI

**New Delhi:** Three labourers died after being run over by a train in near KM pole no 13/25 between Badli yard and Holambi in northwest Delhi's Badli area on Monday, police said on Tuesday. The deceased, aged between 19 and 21, were identified as Mohammad Hafiz, Mohammad and Riyazul, the police said.

# WhatsApp goes...

From Page 1

The hashtag #whatsappdown was trending on Twitter.

"#WhatsApp University students, kindly note that a holiday has been declared today. Classes will resume tomorrow. #WhatsAppDown," one user tweeted.

Twitter users had a field day as they took a dig at WhatsApp.

"People coming to Twitter to see if WhatsApp is down," a user tweeted.

WhatsApp is extremely popular outside of the US, where many people use it for everyday communication.

"How are we going to communicate since Whatsapp is down? Professor: and that's where Twitter comes in," a user tweeted.

According to Downtdetector, WhatsApp faced problems since 3:17 AM EDT (12:47 pm). Users in Asia, the United Kingdom, South Africa and Europe experienced the issue while sending and receiving texts and videos on WhatsApp.

This was WhatsApp's first major outage since the October 5, 2021, snag that took down WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook together, affecting millions of users for several hours before services were restored.

Tuesday's outage happened ahead of a partial solar eclipse that was to begin at 2.28 pm. The two events are, however, not linked.

Amid an extended period of festivities in India comprising Diwali and Bhai Dooj, users began experiencing and reporting disruption of services

on the popular messaging platform on Tuesday.

Meta did not say what led to the outage.

The outage meant that messages were no longer transmitted to the server and users could not send messages to group or one-on-one chats.

When the outage was reported, Meta said it was trying to fix the problem. "We're aware that some people are currently having trouble sending messages and we're working to restore WhatsApp for everyone as quickly as possible."

At one point during the outage on Tuesday, over 29,000 reports were flagged by users on Downtdetector. Downtdetector's heatmap was showing WhatsApp users in major cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai and Kolkata, were impacted by the snag.

#Whatsappdown began trending on Twitter soon after, and many users took to the microblogging platform to share funny memes on the issue.

WhatsApp is among the most popular messaging services in the world.

# Army to procure...

From Page 1

Earlier, the Army had issued tender for 363 logistics drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). These drones will provide the Army with the much-needed logistical backup for delivering goods to front line troops in remote and high altitude areas, sources said.

The drones will be procured through fast track procedure from Indian manufacturers. While 163 drones will be deployed for high altitude areas, the remaining 200 UAVs are meant for medium altitude, they said.

The RFP for buying 200 medium-altitude drones says the platforms should be capable of withstanding strong winds. The document says each medium-altitude logistics drone should be able to carry at least 20 kilograms of payload and the overall weight of each platform would be around 100 kilogram. The weight of the payload for high-altitude logistics drones has been kept at not less than 15 kilogram. Both medium-altitude and high-altitude drones would also have a range of 10 km for delivering payloads, officials said.

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**NOTICE**

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works & Services are available on i) Website of Coal India Limited: [www.coalindia.in](http://www.coalindia.in), ii) Website of ECL: [www.easterncoal.nic.in](http://www.easterncoal.nic.in), iii) CIL e-Procurement Portal: <https://coalindiataenders.nic.in>, iv) Central Public Procurement Portal: <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM Portal: <https://gem.gov.in>."

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**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**1<sup>st</sup> CORRIGENDUM**

Name of Work : Electrical work in connection with Setting up of quick watering arrangement at HNZM station.  
The amendments in above said tender are as under:

Tender No.:- 30-Elect-39-T-2022-23-E3	Earlier published	Amended
<b>Name of work</b>	Electrical work in connection with Setting up of quick watering arrangement at HNZM station.	Electrical work in connection with Setting up of quick watering arrangement at HNZM station.
<b>Approx. cost of the works in</b>	Rs. 125.92 lacs	Rs. 125.92 lacs
<b>Address of the office</b>	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
<b>Bid Security</b>	Rs. 213000.00	Rs. 213000.00
<b>Date &amp; time of submission of tender</b>	26.10.2022, 12:00 Hrs.	07.11.2022, 12:00 Hrs.
<b>Opening of tender</b>	26.10.2022, 12:00 Hrs.	07.11.2022, 12:00 Hrs.
<b>Website &amp; notice board</b>	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

The tender document of above mentioned tender has been modified kindly go through the amended documents available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and submit your offer accordingly. **Tender No. 30-Elect-39-T-2022-23-E3** **2845/2022**

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is to inform to the public at large that **Mrs. Manita Bansal** who is owner of the Portion/Unit bearing no. Private No. A-2, On Upper Ground Floor (Rear Side), area admeasuring 720 Sq. Ft. (Approx.), Part of built up Property bearing no. 1963, built on area admeasuring 205 Sq. Yds., out of Khazra no.115/13 Min. Ward No. 6, Situated in Lai Dora Village- Mehrauli, Tehsil- Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030; having purchased the same from 1) Mr. Manoj Kumar Bansal, 2) Mr. Parveen Sirohi, 3) Mr. Rajesh Kumar Bansal, 4) Mr. Anil Kumar Gupta vide Sale Deed dated 12.07.2018, vide Document No. 4628, registered with the office of Sub-Registrar, Wazirabad, registered on 13.07.2018; and same to be finance & mortgage by **Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Limited**. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any Person having any type of claim / right / title / interest / creating mortgage over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 7 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien etc.

**Lucem Legal LLP**  
269, Rama House, Ground Floor, Masjid Moha, Opp. Uday Park, South Ext. II, New Delhi-49  
Contact# 011-40946316

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is to inform to the public at large that **Mrs. Babita W/o Mr. Lal Bahadur** is purchasing the **HALF SHARE (1/2 SHARE) OF PROPERTY NO. A-12 LAND AREA MEASURING 76.5 SQ. YARDS OUT OF KHASRA NO. 57/15 & 57/16/1, SITUATED AT WAKA MAUJA SARAN (JAWAHAR COLONY FARIDABAD) TEHSIL & DISTT. FARIDABAD** from Mr. Ved Prakash Bhati S/o Mr. Chokhe Singh, who had purchased the subject property through **Sale Deed Dated 19.09.2011**, Vide Doc. No.10114, and same to be financed & mortgaged by **Roha Housing Finance Pvt. Ltd.** However, Original Sale Deed Dated 09.02.1983 (Doc. No.11857), Original Sale Deed dated 15.05.1978 (Doc. No.769), and Original GPA, ATS and Will dated 22.05.1971 have been lost and not available and an FIR has lodged on dated 19.10.2022 with LR No. 905467/2022 for loss of document. If any Person having any type of claim/right/interest over the said property may inform in writing at the address mentioned below, about his objections within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, Charge, disputes etc.

**Lucem Legal LLP**  
B-338, on Second Floor, Opp. SBI, Sector-2, Noida, UP - 201301 Contact# 0120-4269379

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

It is to inform to the public at large **Mrs. Chandani Kumari W/o Mr. Sanjay Kumar Rai** who is purchasing the **RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY AREA MEASURING 50 SQ. YDS. OUT OF KHASRA NO. 421 SITUATED IN CHOTPUR VILLAGE, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR, U.P.** from Mr. Charan Singh S/o Mr. Harsharan, who had owner through Khalauni Record, and same to be financed & mortgaged by **Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd.** If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/ interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.

**Lucem Legal LLP**  
B-338, on Second Floor, Opp. SBI, Sector-2, Noida, UP - 201301 Contact# 0120-4269379

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**OFFICE OF SR. DEE/G DRM OFFICE, NEW DELHI**

**1<sup>st</sup> CORRIGENDUM**

Tender No. 30-Elect-42-T-2022-23-E3  
Name of work : Electrical work in connection with development of infrastructure facilities at Farukhnagar for examination of BCACBM rakes.  
The amendments in above said tender are as under:

Tender No. 30-Elect-42-T-2022-23-E3	Earlier published	Amended
<b>Name of work</b>	Electrical work in connection with development of infrastructure facilities at Farukhnagar for examination of BCACBM rakes.	Electrical work in connection with development of infrastructure facilities at Farukhnagar for examination of BCACBM rakes.
<b>Approx Cost of the works</b>	Rs. 9.83 lacs	Rs. 9.83 lacs
<b>Address of the office</b>	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
<b>Bid Security</b>	Rs. 19700.00	Rs. 19700.00
<b>Date &amp; time of submission of tender</b>	27.10.2022, 12:00 Hrs.	07.11.2022, 12:00 Hrs.
<b>Opening of tender</b>	27.10.2022, 12:00 Hrs.	07.11.2022, 12:00 Hrs.
<b>Website &amp; notice board</b>	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.	<a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Sr. Divl Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

The tender document of above mentioned tender has been modified kindly go through the amended documents available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and submit your offer accordingly. **2848/22**

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**



# Pollution level in Delhi day after Diwali lowest in 5 years: Rai

## 30% less pollution post-Diwali, says Environment Minister; flags off 150 mobile anti-smog guns

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

There was 30 per cent less pollution on Diwali in Delhi as compared to last year and the city recorded its best air quality for the day after the festival in five years, Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Tuesday, on the sidelines of an event where he flagged off 150 mobile anti-smog guns.

Earlier Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the results of efforts made by Delhi residents to curb pollution in the city were encouraging but there was still a long way to go.

His remarks came a day after Diwali when the air quality in the national Capital was recorded in the 'very poor' category. "Delhiites are working hard in the field of pollution."

There have been very encouraging results but there is still a long way to go. We will make Delhi the best city in the world," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) stood at 323 on Tuesday (the day after Diwali) as compared to 462 last year, which means the "air pollution declined by over 30 per cent", he said.

The Minister said the AQI on the day after Diwali stood at 390 in 2018, 368 in 2019 and 435 in 2020. The share of farm

fires in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution was 25 per cent on Diwali in 2021, 32 per cent in 2020 and 19 per cent in 2019. "People of Delhi were very thoughtful on Diwali this year and I want to thank them. Today, the pollution level is the lowest in five years," Rai told reporters after flagging off the anti-smog guns.

He said the anti-smog guns will sprinkle water in areas where air pollution is high. Ten such anti-smog guns were launched last year.

The Delhi Government had in September imposed a complete ban on the production, sale and use of all types of firecrackers till January 1, including on Diwali, a practice it has been following for the last two years.

Rai had last week said that bursting of firecrackers on Diwali in Delhi will attract a jail term of up to six months and a fine of Rs 200.

"The AQI of 323 is still worrying and tells us that air pollution will increase amid low temperatures in the coming days," he said.

He further claimed the Punjab Government controlled stubble burning in the State without support from the Centre. Punjab reported 1,019 incidents of stubble burning on Diwali day (Monday) as compared to 3,032 on Diwali last year.



National Capital enveloped in pollution after Delhiites flouted the Government's anti-cracker order for Diwali, in New Delhi on Tuesday



Mobile anti-smog guns spray water into the air after their flag-off by Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai, in New Delhi on Tuesday

## BJP: Govt should accept that it has failed to curb pollution

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP leaders shared on social media several videos of people defying the firecracker ban on Diwali to take a dig at the AAP Government, while the party said the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation should accept that it has "failed" to curb pollution.

Using the hashtag 'DhuhuaKejriwal', BJP leader Tejinder Pal Singh Bagga, among several videos, shared on Twitter clips of a boy and some other people bursting firecrackers.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri challenged Chief Minister Kejriwal's claim that pollution has reduced in Delhi.

Bidhuri claimed that Delhi is the most polluted capital of the world. "Delhi was the world's most polluted Capital city even on Diwali and



remained in the top 10 on Tuesday as well," he asserted. Bidhuri said Kejriwal should prove his claim right or else resign for lying. "If my claim is false, I will quit," he said.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana claimed that the Air Quality Index (AQI) was in the "hazardous" category on the day of the festival and on Tuesday. According to forecasting agencies, the air quality in Delhi on the morning after Diwali was recorded in the



"very poor" category but the situation was relatively better than previous years due to favourable meteorological conditions which diluted the effect of firecrackers and stubble burning.

In the run up to Diwali, BJP leaders had targeted the Delhi Government over the complete ban on firecrackers, dubbing the Arvind Kejriwal-led dispensation "anti-Hindu".

Questioning Kejriwal on the results of the firecracker

ban, Khurana claimed that even last year the AQI was in the "severe" category just like this time.

The Delhi Government had in September announced a complete ban on the production, sale and use of all types of firecrackers till January 1, 2023, including on Diwali, a practice it has been following for the last two years in a bid to curb pollution in the national Capital.

"What did you get out of cracker ban on Diwali? Last year, the AQI was 444 on the next day after Diwali and today it is 425. It was in hazardous category then and is today as well. You should accept that you have failed to stop pollution in Delhi," Khurana said in a tweet in Hindi.

According to the agencies, the city is set to record its best air quality for the day after Diwali since 2015 on Tuesday.

## Video war on social media around bursting of crackers

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEWDELHI

Social media was abuzz with videos of people bursting firecrackers with impunity on Diwali in the national Capital, defying a ban in place to curb pollution. However, the veracity of these videos could not be independently verified.

Some of the videos even turned out to be clips from different parts of the world, sparking a mini war of words on their veracity on Twitter.

The Arvind Kejriwal Government had in September announced a complete ban on the production, sale and use of all types of firecrackers till January 1, 2023, including on Diwali, a practice it has been following for the last two years due to the rising pollution levels in the national Capital.

Sharing a clip, Punnet Bansal tweeted, "No Judges, Politicians, Dogs or Insects were harmed during the making of this video... Celebrated

Diwali as it should be!! #DhuhuaKejriwal #Diwali".

Another Twitter user Woke Pandemic, whose Twitter bio says "president of WhatsApp University", had shared a video of fireworks dotting the sky on Diwali on Monday. "Happy Diwali Milords," read a post on the handle. The hashtag 'DhuhuaKejriwal' was used by many on Twitter to share videos of defying of the firecracker ban.

Rishi Rajput, whose Twitter bio reads "nationalist, BJP workers", shared a video of bursting of fireworks and said, "Thank You Delhi for showing your courage to son of Aurangzeb." Rosy, whose Twitter bio says that she is a lawyer, shared the video of a dog watching fireworks.

"Sanghi dog who loves crackers and enjoys watching them bl?st #DhuhuaKejriwal," she said in a tweet.

# Fewer cases of respiratory illness

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Hospitals in Delhi saw fewer people coming in with respiratory illnesses this year as the national Capital reported less air pollution post-Diwali compared to last year. Also, fewer instances of burn injuries were reported in hospitals than in 2021.

Doctors, however, warned that it is too early to reach a definitive conclusion about the prevalence of respiratory illness post-Diwali since people tend to come to hospitals only when their condition worsens.

"The air quality this time is better than the last few years. Although there has been an increase in the number of res-

piratory cases in the last couple of days, the numbers were about 20 per cent less than last year," said Dr Manoj Goel the director of Pulmonology at Fortis Memorial Research Institute.

The Delhi Government-run Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital and Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) Hospital reported fewer instances of such cases. Dr Suresh Kumar, the medical director of LNJP Hospital said four to five patients came with respiratory complaints on Diwali. GTB Hospital's Medical Director Dr Subhash Giri said there were fewer complaints of such respiratory illnesses since the air quality is slightly better

this year probably due to windy conditions and a ban on firecrackers. About burn injuries, Dr Giri said the hospital received 23 such cases. "Four were serious while the rest were minor burn injuries."

LNJP Hospital also received six cases of burn injuries with all of them being minor ones, said its medical director. Dr Sumit Ray, the head of the department of critical care medicine at the Holy Family Hospital, said that even though there were fewer cases of respiratory illnesses such as COPD and asthma, the situation needs to be monitored for the next couple of days. "People tend to go to hospitals when their condition worsens. So

we might see a surge in patients over the next couple of days," he said. His views were endorsed by Dr Manoj Goel who advised people to get vaccinated against flu and pneumonia. "It is too early to make a definitive conclusion.

We still need to be careful and take all the measures to prevent pollution. Continue preventive therapy if suffering from chronic lung and heart diseases following doctor's advice," he said.

Dr Ray said they received six cases of burn injuries, with one being serious. "We referred that patient to Safdarjung Hospital." Some hospitals, however, saw a significant spike in cases of respiratory illness.

## Sisodia asks Secy to explain bid to scuttle Dilli Ki Yogshala

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has sought an explanation from the Secretary, Directorate of Training and Technical Education for an alleged bid to "discontinue" the AAP dispensation's flagship yoga programme 'Dilli Ki Yogshala'. There was no immediate reaction available from the officer, Alice Vaz, on the matter.

In a note on Tuesday, Sisodia said he was informed that in a meeting of the Board of Governors of Delhi Pharmaceutical Sciences and Research University (DPSRU) on September 30, it was decided to discontinue the pro-



gramme on the "insistence" of the officer. The Deputy Chief Minister also said in the note

that he was informed that many members of the Board wanted to continue the current programme but the training and technical education (TTE) Secretary took a "strong stand" against continuing it.

The 'Dilli Ki Yogshala' programme was announced by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on December 13 last year for providing free-of-cost yoga instructors to the people of Delhi. Currently, 590 yoga classes are being run daily with more than 17,000 participants.

Sisodia said the Delhi Assembly had passed a budget for DPSRU to start the Centre for Meditation and Yoga Sciences (CMYS) mandated to conduct certification and diploma programmes to train yoga

instructors.

Even the prime minister promotes adoption of yoga by way of organising promotional events on International Day of Yoga, he said. "Despite knowing this, the Secretary TTE is wrongly and forcibly trying to discontinue the 'Dilli ki Yogshala' programme and sabotage the efforts of the Delhi Government to provide yoga classes for the benefit of thousands of Delhiites," read the note by Sisodia.

He directed the officer to submit her explanation within 24 hours as to why the yoga programme has to be discontinued when Section 6(4) of the DPSRU Act empowers the university to undertake extra-mural studies and extension services.

## BJP forms 12 committees for MCD elections in city

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Gearing up for the forthcoming Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) election, the Delhi BJP on Tuesday formed 12 poll-related committees. The panels will be associated with election management, manifesto, campaigning, media and procurement of advertisement material, among others. Senior leaders and office-bearers will be among members of these poll panels.

Ashish Sood, the co-in-charge of Jammu and Kashmir, has been made the convener of the election management committee for the Delhi Municipal Corporation elections. The panels will be associated with election management, manifesto, campaigning, media and procurement of advertisement material, among others. Senior leaders and office-bearers will be among members of these poll panels.

Former Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay will be the convener of the manifesto committee. Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Badhuri, former Delhi BJP president Vijender Gupta,

MLA Abhay Verma, Raghav Awasthi and Rekha Gupta will be its members. The social media and campaign committee's convener will be BJP national spokesperson Shahzad Poonawala.

Punit Agarwal, Rohit Upadhyay, Khemchandra Sharma, Puja Tiwari, Nikhat Abbas, Apurva Singh and Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga will be members of the committee. Committees have also been formed for the election call centre and the election office, legal and election commission related matters, campaign material and advertisement procurement. Convener of Samaj Sammelan is General Secretary Kuljeet Singh Chahal, while president of AJ Morcha, Bhupender Gothwal and president, OBC Morcha, Santosh Pal are the other members.

In 2017, the BJP had swept the civic body poll bagging 181 wards in the erstwhile south, north and east Delhi municipal corporations. The Centre unified the three municipal corporations this year into the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, reducing the number of wards from 272 to 250.

## Amit Yadav appointed NDMC head

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Tuesday appointed Amit Yadav, a 1991-batch AGMUT cadre IAS officer as the chairman of the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). He replaced Bhupinder Singh Bhalla, a 1990-batch officer.

As per the notification issued by the Joint Secretary, Ashutosh Agnishotri, dated October 25, "in exercise of the powers conferred under the



New Delhi Municipal Council Act, 1994, the Central

Government appoints Amit Yadav, IAS (AGMUT:1991) to be the Chairperson of New Delhi Municipal Council, vice Bhupinder Singh Bhalla, IAS (AGMUT:1990) with effect."

Prior to this appointment, Yadav, a 1991-batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the AGMUT cadre, was posted as the Additional Secretary, Department of Commerce in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Yadav has held several important

assignments in both Central and Delhi Governments in various capacities. He has worked as Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. He has also worked as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Telecommunication.

Yadav has served as Counsellor in Permanent Mission of India (WTO), Geneva and Civil Affairs Officer at Kosovo.

# DU allows two days to upgrade UG admission preference

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi University (DU) will open a two-day window from Wednesday allowing those who gained admission in undergraduate (UG) courses to upgrade to their higher 'programme + college combination' preference.

Around 59,100 candidates have paid fees and secured admission in various UG programmes in DU's first round of seat allocation. Tuesday was the last day for the payment of fees by those who accepted the college and course allotted to them. "Of the 72,800 students who accepted the college and



course, around 59,100 have sealed their admission by paying fees," DU Registrar Vikas Gupta said on Tuesday. Gupta said the vacant seats will be displayed on Wednesday. Thereafter, DU will open a two-day window, allowing those

who gained admission in UG courses to upgrade to their higher 'programme+college combination' preference.

The upgrade option will not be available for those who have been allocated their first preference of course and college, the official said.

The last date for payment of fees for admission following the first round of seat allocation was October 25. DU will display vacant seats following the conclusion of the first round of the Central Seat Allocation System on Wednesday. Thereafter, the candidates can opt to upgrade their allotted seats. "The vacant seat will be

displayed on Wednesday and subsequently, the candidates who have taken the admission in CSAS Round 1 can opt for upgrade and re-ordering their higher preferences from Wednesday to Thursday," the official said.

"Choosing the 'upgrade' option will mean that the candidate consents to consideration of an offer of admission to a programme + college combination of their higher preference in the subsequent round. The candidate's current admitted seat will be auto-cancelled if the new preference is allocated," the official added. A candidate who opts for

'Upgrade' can also reorder the programme+college combinations that were higher in preference than the allocated one.

"The programme + college combination in which a candidate had taken admission earlier will never be offered to the candidate in any subsequent round.

A candidate who gets upgraded will have to accept the upgraded seat and complete the admission procedures.

"If a candidate does not do any activity on the upgraded seat/s, it will, by default, be considered cancelled and the candidate will be out of CSAS-2022," the official said.

## Dean: All DU seats filled in St Stephen's College

New Delhi: Almost all unserved seats across undergraduate courses in St Stephen's College were filled in the first round of seat allocation, said DU Dean of Admission Haneet Gandhi.

The admission to minority seats reserved for Christian candidates is underway. There are 450 seats across 11 UG courses in the college. The admission process became a bone of contention between DU and Stephen's for months.



# Cong divided in its dig at BJP over Sunak rise

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday spoke with a forked tongue on the issue of Indian-origin Rishi Sunak becoming the PM. Taking a dig at the BJP, senior Congress leaders P Chidambaram and Shashi Tharoor said that India should draw lessons from the UK for making non-majority citizens the PM only to see it contradicted by their party's communications head Jairam Ramesh who asserted the country has seen many minorities hold top offices.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and TMC's Mohua Moitra too joined in from the Opposition ranks speaking in line with Chidambaram and Tharoor.

"First Kamala Harris, now Rishi Sunak. The people of the US and the UK have embraced the non-majority citizens of their countries and elected them to high office in government. I think there is a lesson to be learned by India and the parties that practice majoritarianism," Chidambaram said on Twitter.

For his part, Tharoor said: "A party like BJP which doesn't have a single Muslim MP in Parliament today, which is a shocking situation that's never been there in past. Can supporters of BJP imagine a PM of another background or a BJP CM from either Islamic or Christian faiths? I doubt it."

"If this does happen, I think all of us will have to acknowledge that the Brits have done something very rare in the world, to place a member of a visible minority in the most powerful office. As we Indians celebrate the ascent of @RishiSunak, let's honestly ask: can it happen here," said Tharoor.

Seeking to put the records straight from the Congress amid the statements from Chidambaram and Tharoor,



AICC general secretary communications Jairam Ramesh said respecting diversity has been India's hallmark for many years and cited the examples of Zakir Hussain, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed and A P J Abdul Kalam who held the top constitutional position in the country for many years.

"In our country, Dr Zakir Hussain first became the President in 1967, then Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed became the President and Dr Abdul Kalam and if I keep giving you examples, Barkatullah Khan became chief minister and A R Antulay also became the chief minister," he told reporters.

Mehbooba said it was a proud moment that Indian-origin Sunak was elected as the UK's prime minister but it should also serve as a reminder that

Britain has accepted an ethnic minority member as its premier but "we are still shackled by divisive and discriminatory laws like NRC and CAA." Moitra welcomed the move and hoped India too becomes more tolerant.

Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi, however, congratulated and wished the best to Sunak to bring political and economic stability in the country.

"Worth reading Chinmay Tumbhe's India Moving, a history of Indians on the move. For the Sunaks- moving from undivided India to Africa and then the UK, they have proved that Indian diaspora whichever country they make their home, will make their contribution count. Glad to see this," Chaturvedi said on twitter.

## BJP hits back, cites examples of Kalam, Manmohan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the rise of Rishi Sunak, born of Hindu parents, as the Prime Minister of Great Britain, on Tuesday, led to charges of "majoritarianism" from the Opposition directed at the BJP, the saffron party responded by citing the place of prominence occupied by APJ Abdul Kalam and Manmohan Singh— both from minority communities — in Indian politics to respond.

With People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader Mehbooba Mufti going rapturous over Sunak being the first Indian-origin minority PM of the UK, the BJP asked whether she "will accept a minority (Hindu) as Jammu and Kashmir's chief minister."

The BJP cited APJ Abdul Kalam and Manmohan Singh's rise as the country's President and Prime Minister respectively to hit out at them. BJP leader and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad hit back at the PDP chief in a series of tweets and reminded Mehbooba of the "extraordinary presidency" of APJ Abdul Kalam and Manmohan Singh as India's prime minister for 10 years.

"Mehbooba Mufti Ji! Will you accept a minority in Jammu and Kashmir as Chief Minister of the state? Please be frank enough to reply," the senior BJP leader tweeted.

"Some leaders have become hyper active against majoritarianism after election of Rishi Sunak as PM of the

UK. Gently reminding them about the extraordinary Presidency of APJ Abdul Kalam, Manmohan Singh as PM for 10 years. A distinguished tribal leader Droupadi Murmu is now our President, (sic)" he tweeted.

Prasad further wrote, "A competent leader of Indian origin Sunak is becoming the Prime Minister of UK. We all need to compliment him on this extraordinary success. It is tragic that some Indian politicians are unfortunately trying to make a political brownie point on this occasion."

The ruling party also rejected any parallel between its leaders' opposition to prime ministership for Sonia Gandhi, who is of Italian origin, after the Congress won the Lok Sabha poll in 2004 and Sunak's ascendancy to the top. "Can't differentiate between Italian-born Sonia (who refused to take Indian citizenship for several decades after marriage with Rajiv) and UK-born Rishi with Indian ancestry," BJP's foreign affairs department head Vijay Chauthaiwale said responding to a Twitter user.

BJP's IT department head Amit Malviya noted that India has had three Muslims and one Sikh president besides a Sikh prime minister for 10 years and minorities in top judicial positions and the armed forces.

"It need not learn about diversity and inclusivity from any other country. But Mehbooba must walk the talk and back a Hindu for J&K's CM," he said.

## Jaishankar, Cleverly discuss terror, ties as Sunak takes charge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hours after Rishi Sunak assumed charge as the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (UK), External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar spoke to his UK counterpart James Cleverly on the phone. Jaishankar later said they "discussed counter-terrorism, bilateral relations and the Ukraine conflict".

Both the ministers held parleys in the backdrop of India and the UK set to complete negotiations regarding the Free Trade Agreement later this month. Earlier, it was to be completed by October 24 coinciding with Diwali. The proposed pact is part of the Roadmap 2030 envisaged by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in May last year.

In January, both countries formally launched talks for a free trade agreement to boost bilateral trade and investments. In such pacts, two countries either eliminate or significantly reduce customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them, besides easing norms for promoting investments and services trade.

The UK is a major investor in India. India's main exports to the UK include ready-made garments and textiles, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, petroleum and petrochemical products, transport equipment and parts, spices, metal products, machinery and instruments, pharma and marine items.

Major imports include precious and semi-precious stones, ores and metal scraps, engineering goods, professional instruments, non-ferrous metals, chemicals and machinery.

In the services sector, the UK is one of the largest markets in Europe for Indian IT services.

The bilateral trade has increased to \$17.5 billion in 2021-22 compared to \$13.2 billion in 2020-21. India's exports stood at \$10.5 billion in 2021-22, while imports were \$7 billion.



## War last option, but peace impossible without power: PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has always considered war as the last option but peace is impossible without power, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said.

He also said induction of women in the armed forces will improve their capabilities.

Giving this message while interacting with troops on the occasion of India Day on Monday in Kargil, he praised them and said, "I bow towards the spirit of the Armed Forces of India. Your sacrifices have always made our country proud. It is because the armed forces are protecting our borders that every citizen in India sleeps peacefully."

Celebrating Diwali every year since 2014 with the frontline soldiers, Modi said, "We have always considered war as the last option. Whether it took place in Lanka or Kurukshetra, till the end, every effort was made to prevent it. We are in the favour of world peace."

Referring to the 1999 war, the

## CDS, IAF & Army chiefs celebrate Diwali with troops on forward areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan, IAF chief V R Chaudhari and Army Chief General Manoj Pande visited different forward locations on Monday to celebrate Diwali with the troops.

The CDS, accompanied by White Knight Corps Commander Lt General Manjinder Singh, visited forward posts in Rajouri sector of Jammu and Kashmir. General Chauhan also laid a wreath at Naman Sthal, the war memorial of Nausheera

Prime Minister said India defeated terror during the Kargil conflict adding Drass, Batalik and the Tiger Hill are the witnesses of their lofty courage. "The

Sector and paid his respects to the bravehearts who had laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

General Chauhan was briefed by field commanders on the current operational situation and security scenario along the LoC. He also reviewed the development of defence infrastructure and operational preparedness undertaken despite challenging terrain and weather conditions in the region. Addressing the troops, he exhorted them to inculcate professionalism and carry forward the rich tradition of courage and valour of the Indian Army.

meaning of Diwali is end of Atank (terror) and Kargil made it possible," he said while addressing the soldiers there.

He said India is now respected glob-

ally. "While you protect our borders, we are taking a tough stand against our enemies.

If we are challenged, then our armed forces know how to give a befitting reply to the enemy in their own language," the Prime Minister said.

Targeting the previous governments over corruption, he said mis governance has restricted the country's potential for development.

He said the country is fighting a decisive war against corruption.

As prime minister, Modi first celebrated Diwali in Siachen in 2014. In 2015, he visited Punjab to mark 50 years of Indian Army's achievements in the 1965 war with Pakistan.

While in 2016, he went near the China border to spend the festival with the security personnel, he was in the Gurez Sector in North Kashmir in 2017.

In 2018, he was in Uttarakhand's Harsil and the next year in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri. Last year, he was in Nowshera in Jammu and Kashmir.

## 'Very disturbing': India on abduction, reported killing of citizens in Kenya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of its two missing Indian citizens in Kenya for more than 80 days, India has described the circumstance surrounding their abduction "very disturbing." New Delhi is in touch with the authorities there and the Indian envoy met Kenyan President William Ruto and requested him to expedite the probe into the issue.

Authorities in Kenya promised a speedy inquiry into the whereabouts of Indian nationals Zulfikar Khan and Mohammed Zaid Sami, who went missing in that country on July 21.

In a statement, Kenya's public prosecutions director Noordin M Haji said an inquiry



report will be submitted as soon as possible. It maintained Khan and Sami remained missing.

As per media reports, Zulfikar Ahmed Khan and Mohammed Zaid Sami Kidwai, who were part of Kenyan President William Ruto's digital campaign team, were killed by a disbanded police group. The report cited a close aide of the Kenyan President who claimed that the Indians were indeed killed. However, it is

learnt that the Kenyan government has not said anything officially on the report.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in a statement on Monday said, "We have been in regular touch with the Kenyan government to locate the whereabouts of the two missing Indian nationals, Mohammad Zaid Sami Kidwai and Zulfikar Ahmed Khan."

"Our High Commissioner in Nairobi, Mangya Khampa, today called on President William Samoei Ruto to convey our deep concern and request the expediting of investigations into the matter. The specific circumstances surrounding the abduction and subsequent lack of information is very disturbing.

## Chargesheet against 12 filed in SSC job scam in Bengal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Tuesday said it has filed a chargesheet against 12 accused persons, including the chairman, secretary and advisor of West Bengal Central School Service Commission (WBCSSC) for alleged corruption relating to illegal appointment of Assistant Teachers in class IX and X in secondary and higher secondary schools across West Bengal.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has chargesheeted then Advisor of WBCSSC Dr Santi Prasad Sinha, then Chairman Dr Subires Bhattacharyya, then President of Adhoc Committee

Dr Kalyanmoy Gangully, then Assistant Secretary Ashok Kumar Saha, two Programme Officers Parna Bose and Samarjit Acharya and six private persons before the Special Judge, Alipore (West Bengal).

The six private persons chargesheeted are Prasanna Kumar Roy alias Rakesh, Pradip Singh alias Chotu, Inui Das, Md Azad Ali Mirza, Imam Momin and Rohit Kumar Jha.

The CBI had registered the case in compliance with the orders dated April 7 of Calcutta High Court in connection with a petition relating to illegal appointment of Assistant Teachers in class IX and X in secondary and higher secondary schools in the State.

## SC to hear on Oct 31 plea seeking direction to publish draft legislations on Govt websites

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on October 31 a plea seeking directions to the Centre and the States to publish draft legislations prominently on Government websites and in the public domain at least 60 days before they are introduced in Parliament and State assemblies.

According to the cause list of October 31 uploaded on the apex court website, the petition is slated to come up for hearing before a bench comprising Chief Justice U U Lalit and Justices S R Bhat and Bela M Trivedi.

The plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has



also sought a direction to the Centre to ensure that all the draft and final legislations are put in the public domain in all regional languages.

It said any draft legislation, except those related to national security, must be published on government websites at least 60 days before they are introduced in Parliament or

state legislature.

"In today's democratic process, with the advent of advanced media and technology, it is no longer appropriate for governments, both Central and State, to suddenly pass laws overnight with scarcely any legislative debate and no wider consultation at all," said the plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey.

The plea said at least as far as central laws are concerned, the proposed legislations should be translated into regional languages and published on website at least 60 days prior to their introduction in Parliament so that citizens have a full understanding of them.

## Bharat Jodo achieves purpose, has led to people raising voice over issues: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday said the Bharat Jodo Yatra, which has completed one-third of the 3,570-km route, has achieved its desired purpose with people raising their voice against the issues of price rise, unemployment and divisiveness.

AICC general secretary Jairam Ramesh said the yatra has so far covered four States and a total of 18 districts and will cover another eight in Telangana in the next 11 days, after which it will move towards central India. It will resume after the Diwali break on Thursday from Mehboobnagar in Telangana.

He also said the Congress will launch state-specific marches -- a 2,400-km yatra in Odisha starting October 31 from Bhubaneswar, a 850-km yatra in Assam, and one in West Bengal starting December 28.

Ramesh said after Telangana, the yatra will enter Nanded in Maharashtra. The yatra will be in



Maharashtra for about 16 days and thereafter cover Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. "After 48 days' journey, 4 states, 18 districts, 4 public rallies, 35 street meetings and 4 press conferences, I can say that the desired purpose and objectives with which Bharat Jodo Yatra was started is being achieved," Ramesh told reporters.

He said 50 different organisations of the youth, women, trade unions, social workers, civil society organisations have met Rahul Gandhi during the yatra and discussed different issues. The issues related to farmers have been raised everywhere and their plight is being highlighted, besides

discussion on unemployment, he said, adding the third issue raised is of inflation, especially GST on essential commodities.

Ramesh also claimed that around 50 organisations have walked with Rahul Gandhi during the yatra and have spent time with him. Rahul Gandhi has addressed four press conferences in these 48 days - one each in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. He has so far addressed four huge rallies - in Kanyakumari, Thrissur, Bellary and Raichur, besides 35 street meetings, public meetings, small public meetings, in evenings.

"So one-third of the Bharat Jodo Yatra has been completed and the speed with which we are going, I hope that by February 20 we will reach Kashmir. It may be possible to reach even before that, but the speed with which we are going, we can say that the Bharat Jodo Yatra will be complete anytime between February 20 and 25," he said.

## Govt earns ₹254 cr from scrap disposal during Special Swachhata campaign

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday dished out figures to showcase the achievements of the ongoing Special Swachhata Campaign,

The Government has earned more than Rs 254 crore from scrap disposal and reviewed more than 40 lakh files even as 37.19 lakh sq feet of space has been cleared of junk and scrap.

Addressing media persons, Union Minister for DoPT Jitendra Singh said that the Government will achieve more when the Swachhata campaign ends on October 31. He also said that Government has initiated a clean mission on October 2 and started clearing of online files too this time.

"Tremendous enthusiasm in Ministries and Departments for

institutionalizing Swachhata and minimizing pendency witnessed this time. While clearing old files across the country 3,05,268 public grievances were redressed and 588 Rules were eased for disposal of files kept inside offices for decades," he said. Singh was addressing press conference along with V Srinivas, Secretary, Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Apurva Chandra, I&B Secretary, Vineet Pandey, Secretary, Posts and Satyendra Prakash, Principal DG, PIB.

Singh urged officials to draw inspiration from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words in his tweet that "such efforts are not only innovative and commendable but most importantly remind us of our basic civic duty of keeping our surroundings and public places clean."

### Defence production dept holds drive at 294 sites

**New Delhi:** The Department of Defence Production has organised cleanliness drives in 294 sites across the country. The department has also disposed of nine pending issues from MPs, one public grievance referred by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and 231 general public grievances during the period. Around 850 physical files have been reviewed, weeding out 322 of these files. A sum of Rs. 10,72,00,960 has been realised in revenue so far from the sale of scrap and 75,145 square feet space has been freed up, officials said here on Tuesday. **PNS**

"The special campaign 2.0 in its 3 weeks, was holistic in size and scale, witnessed widespread participation from thousands of officials and citizens who came together create a movement for Swachhata in Government Offices. Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State and Secretaries to Government of India participated in the special campaign 2.0 providing leadership and guidance in implementation.

"In 3 weeks, the Department of Posts has conducted the cleanliness campaign in 17767 Post Offices, the Ministry of Railways has conducted in 7028 Railway Stations, Department of Pharmaceuticals in 5974 campaign sites, Department of Defence in 4578 campaign sites and Ministry of Home Affairs in 4896 campaign sites," said Singh.





I remind the Governor that this is Kerala and it would be better for him if he behaves properly: Pinarayi Vijayan

# Uproar over Guv notice to 2 more V-Cs

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan on Tuesday issued show cause notices to two more Vice-Chancellors of State-owned universities in Kerala asking them to explain by November 4 why action should not be taken against them in the backdrop of the October 21 Supreme Court verdict declaring “void ab initio” the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of the Kerala Technical University.

Governor Arif Mohammed Khan had issued such show cause notices to Vice-Chancellors of nine universities on Monday asking them to furnish their replies by November 4.

The Governor’s Sunday directive to the nine Vice-Chancellors to quit by Monday 11 AM had created a political crisis in the State on Diwali day with Chief Minister Pinarayi



Vijayan issuing a stern warning to the former that his antics would not work in Kerala.

“I remind the Governor that this is Kerala and it would be better for him if he behaves properly,” declared the Chief Minister while addressing a mammoth public meeting.

The none-vice chancellors who had approached the Chief Justice with a their grievance

that the Governor’s directive to them to submit their resignation by Monday 11 am was violation of natural justice which has been enshrined in the Constitution. But by Monday morning, the Governor toned down his directive to show cause notices which were returnable by November 4.

The Kerala High Court in a special sitting on Diwali Day

because of the uncommon situation arising out of the Governor’s action ruled that the vice chancellors could continue till November 4. But by that time the stand off between the Governor and the CPI(M) worsened to a point of no return.

The SFI, the student wing of the party declared that it would not allow the vice chancellors appointed by the Governor to set their foot in the campuses. They also declared that they would not allow the Governor to come out of the Raj Bhavan.

Chief Minister Vijayan said in a specially convened press meet at Palakkad on Monday that if the appointment of vice chancellors was not in order and had violated the UGC norms, the Governor who appointed them should own up moral responsibility and quit.

But Arif Mohammed Khan said Vijayan’s words do not

befit the stature of the chair he occupies and hence he was rejecting it.

“The CPI(M) is following an outdated and irrelevant ideology imported to India from Europe and they are nit to be blamed for their ignorance,” said the Governor.

The CPI(M) led LDF would hit the streets in Kerala by Wednesday to express their resentment and anger over the Governor’s action.

R Bindu, higher education minister and spouse of CPI(M) leader Vijayaraghavan said that the Governor was trying to create anarchy and chaos in the education sector in the State that has become a role model for the world.

The Congress leaders K Sudhakaran (KPCC president) and V D Satheesan (leader of the opposition) too charged that the Governor was behaving as if he was the handmaiden of the Sangh Parivar.

## Tejashwi Yadav rubbishes speculation about another volte face by Nitish Kumar

PTI ■ PATNA

Speculations about Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar’s return to the BJP-led NDA have received a thumbs down from his deputy Tejashwi Yadav, who asserted that the ‘Mahagathbandhan’ is going strong.

Yadav, who is the heir apparent of the RJD, the largest constituent of the ruling coalition, also said that his party enjoyed the full support of alliance partners and looked forward to winning by-elections to two Assembly seats – Mokama and Gopalganj — scheduled to be held next week.

“It was decided by all coalition partners that we contest both seats. Mokama is our sitting seat while Gopalganj is my native district. We are confident of a Mahagathbandhan victory at both places,” Yadav told reporters on Monday at Jehanabad, where he had gone to attend the death anniversary of a deceased party colleague.

The by-poll at Mokama has been necessitated by disqualification of Anant Kumar Singh, who has been convicted in cases relating to arms and explosives recovered from his residences. His wife Neelam Devi has got the party ticket.

In Gopalganj, BJP candidate Kusum Devi’s bid to retain the seat of her late husband Subhash Singh has been challenged by the RJD’s Mohan Gupta.

Yadav was also asked about the fresh rounds of con-



jecture about Kumar, which have been triggered by the CM’s former close aide Prashant Kishor, who has alleged that the JD(U) leader had not asked MP Harivansh to resign as Rajya Sabha deputy chairman as he wanted to keep options open.

Former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, whose Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) is an ally of the ‘Mahagathbandhan’, recently ended up lending weight to the speculations by saying that he will support Kumar for any such decision if it was taken in the state’s interests. Manjhi was sitting beside Yadav while the deputy CM replied to queries from journalists.

“Manjhi is our senior; he is like a guardian (‘abhibhavak’). Our coalition is rock solid and he feels the same,” remarked Yadav while the HAM leader nodded in approval.

“We drove the BJP out of power and have been running a strong and stable government. There is no room for any misgivings though those with vested interests may keep spreading rumors,” added the deputy CM.



A silhouette of a bird against the backdrop of moon covering the sun during the partial solar eclipse in Patna on Tuesday PTI

## SSB personnel join kin of bravehearts to pay homage to paramilitary’s martyrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) on Tuesday organised a special event to commemorate the paramilitary bravehearts who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

In continuation of the Police Commemoration Day celebrated on October 21 and the ongoing Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, a special event was organised by SSB at the National Police Memorial in the national Capital in which officers and families of SSB personnel joined the families of the valiant bravehearts and paid homage to the martyrs.

Following this, the next of

kin of the bravehearts were felicitated at the event. “The families of Martyrs then visited the Wall of Valour where the names of all the SSB and Police Bravehearts who made supreme sacrifice for the nation are engraved on stone,” the SSB said in a statement.

It further said, “The senior officers of the Force also interacted with the families of Martyrs and inquired about their well-being and grievances.

The Families were then given a tour of the Police Museum and were shown the videos that were prepared by the Force as a tribute to supreme sacrifice of its Martyrs

and on the diverse role of SSB on national security. As many as 50 Bravehearts of SSB have made supreme sacrifice in the service of the nation.”

Director General of SSB Anish Dayal Singh and Additional Director General, B Radhika besides senior officers laid wreaths at the memorial before the retreat ceremony.

The event was marked with pipe and brass band display by the Force followed by open air display of movies on freedom struggle, valour and sacrifice of paramilitary personnel, and the invaluable contributions of SSB and police bravehearts in the service of the nation, it added.

## Poll violence: Bengal sitting on powder keg, says Ghosh

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress and BJP engaged in war of words over lack of law and order and electoral violence in Bengal with BJP national vice-president saying no free and fair poll was possible in the State and that without violence the TMC Government might not last a single day.

The Bengal ruling outfit hit back saying the BJP should first wipe off the shames of recurrent defeats it faced at the hands of the TMC.

“There is no law and order in Bengal which is sitting on gunpowder,” Ghosh on Tuesday said adding “no election in the State possible without central forces ... had there been no violence the Trinamool Government would not last for a single day.”

Ghosh’s statement comes barely a few months before the State goes to the next year’s panchayat elections. The BJP has been asking for central forces in the rural polls for about 78,000 seats while the State Election Commission has said that the polls can be

managed with the State police force. Ghosh’s statement found an immediate rebuttal with the TMC leadership which ridiculed the saffron outfit for repeatedly generating a false hope of victory but getting comprehensive defeats at the hands of the Trinamool.

“Dilip Ghosh is a big leader and a good orator but he has no understanding of the people’s views ... in Bengal no party other than the Trinamool Congress is preferred by the people ... This has been proved repeatedly in the elections,” said TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh.

“In the last year’s Assembly elections they brought in their entire national leadership and gave a call for winning more than 200 seats but ended up winning some 77 seats ... in the subsequent months they have lost all the by-elections and civic polls ...

“In Asansol parliamentary by-elections, which was earlier won by them on two successive occasions — the last one by a margin of more than 1.5 lakh votes — they lost by more than 3 lakh votes ... so it is clear that their TRP is

falling ... they should first prepare their party organisation to talk big.”

Meanwhile, there was much ado on Tuesday when a footage going viral showed Darjeeling BJP MP Raju Bishta, Siliguri saffron MLA Shankar Ghosh meeting senior CPI(M) leader and a former State minister Ashok Bhattacharya at his residence.

The Diwali-day meeting came a day after senior BJP leaders in Bengal gave a call for a united fight against the TMC and even called upon the Marxists to join hands with them to take on the ruling outfit.

Soon after the vide went viral TMC MP Shantanu said that the meeting itself proved that the BJP and the Left had been working hand-in-hand to topple the Trinamool government.

Bhattacharya and the BJP MP however gave clarifications that the meeting was a personal affair as he and Ghosh had been invited by the CPI(M) leader like the TMC leaders also to attend a function at the death anniversary of the Left leader’s wife.

## TN car explosion: Five arrested, UAPA invoked

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

The stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act has been invoked in the case relating to a car explosion in the city that killed one person, while five others have been arrested over the incident and police have intensified the probe covering all aspects, including the terror angle.

The arrested were identified by the police as Muhammad Talka, Muhammad Azharuddin, Muhammed Riyaz, Firoze Ismail and Muhammed Nawaz Ismail, all in their 20s. With some of them being enquired by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2019, the police were also probing their activities after that, City Police Commissioner V Balakrishnan said.

Hours after the Tamil Nadu BJP questioned why the police had not specified the reasons for the arrest of the five and the sections under which they have been detained, Balakrishnan said that besides the UAPA, other IPC sections like conspiracy have also been included in the case.

Police are also probing if the man killed in the gas cylinder explosion in the car on Sunday, Jemisha Mubeen had any links with Mohammed Azharuddin, an accused in the Easter Sunday bomb blasts in



a Sri Lankan Church in 2019, which killed over 250 people. The Kerala visits of the some of the arrested are also being investigated.

Further, 75 kg of potassium nitrate, charcoal and aluminium powder have been recovered from Mubeen’s house, Balakrishnan added. These chemicals are used in making country bombs, police had said earlier.

“UAPA has been invoked since there has been an explosion,” Balakrishnan told reporters here.

Three of the arrested were seen in a CCTV footage, along with Mubeen earlier, carrying two LPG cylinders and two small drums, the content of which has been sent for forensic examination, the Commissioner said. While the three had helped Mubeen carry the items “with knowledge,” another person was apprehended for coordination. One man was arrested for providing the car, Balakrishnan added.

Asked if the police was probing a possible terror angle, Balakrishnan reiterated that

## Civic Chandran surrenders in sexual harassment case

**Kozhikode:** Writer and social activist ‘Civic’ Chandran, who is an accused in a sexual harassment case filed by a Dalit woman, on Tuesday surrendered before the investigating officer.

The accused reached the Vadakara DySP office on Tuesday along with his lawyers after Kerala High Court had recently set aside a sessions court order granting him anticipatory bail. “He reached the office and surrendered. We will produce him before the court,” Vadakara DySP, R Hari Prasad, told PTI. The sessions court had

granted him the relief on the ground that the accused was a reformist and against the caste system and it was highly unbelievable that he would touch the body of the victim fully knowing that she belongs to the Scheduled Caste (SC).

Disagreeing with the findings of lower court, Kerala High Court had on October 20, said fact that accused and complainant woman were very familiar to each other was discernible from prosecution records and therefore, his knowledge about her being a Dalit can be discerned from the

materials available on record. The high court had also rejected the accused’s plea for relief on medical grounds, saying that in cases involving serious offences under the SC/ST Act where anticipatory bail is specifically barred by the statute, mere illness of the accused is not a ground for granting the relief.

It had directed Chandran to surrender before investigating officer within seven days “for subjecting himself for interrogation and medical examination, if any, for the purpose of investigation.” PTI

## 700 shops gutted as fire ravages Arunachal’s oldest market

**Itanagar:** Around 700 shops were reduced to ashes in a massive fire that broke out at Naharlagun Daily Market near Itanagar on Tuesday morning, police said.

There was no casualty in the fire that was first spotted around 4 am, they said. The market, the oldest in the state, is situated near the fire station and Naharlagun police station, around 14 km from Arunachal Pradesh’s capital Itanagar.

The fire is suspected to be caused by firecrackers or lamps lit for Diwali celebrations, police said. Firefighters swung into action immediately but as the shops were made of bam-

boo and timber with dry items stored in abundance in the market, the blaze spread fast, they claimed. Panicked shopkeepers struggled to save anything they could as exploding LPG cylinders further added fuel to the fire.

Three fire tenders, one of which was brought in from Itanagar, fought for hours to bring the blaze under control, police said. The exact damage caused by the fire is being assessed, but it is estimated to be in crores of rupees, they said. Superintendent of Police (Capital) Jimmy Chiram said exact cause of fire would be known after completion of the investigation by fire depart-

ment. Shopkeepers alleged that after spotting the blaze they rushed to the adjacent fire station but no personnel could be found. Further, when the fire services personnel arrived, the fire engines did not have water.

To refill engines, the personnel had to travel a long distance, and they could come back with water only around 5 am, by which most of market was already gutted, the shopkeepers alleged.

“The police also did not act. All of them should be terminated from service for failure to perform their duties,” Naharlagun Bazar Welfare Committee president Kipa Nai said. After speaking to the



shopkeepers, Arunachal Chamber of Commerce and Industries (ACC&I) president Tarh Nachung demanded that all fire personnel on duty be suspended for negligence. It was the failure of the govern-

ment that it did not set up the minimum infrastructure required for fire fighting -- such as water filling points, which should immediately be made available at different locations in the Capital Complex, he said.

## ‘India most important nation for Meta’

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India is the most significant country for Meta in terms of all the new things that feature across its platforms Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, a top company official said. Meta has also provided a great opportunity for numerous brands and millions of creators to express their creativity and build audiences in India through short-form videos, said Manish Chopra, Director and Head of Partnerships for Facebook India (Meta). “India is a very critical market for our platforms from multiple



dimensions. A lot of new product learning and incubation is done here, and ‘Reels’ is an example of that... this is the market where we have done the most amount of testing of new prod-

uct features. “India is the most significant market where the focus is for all the new things that we are doing across Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp,” he told PTI.

Chopra was speaking on the sidelines of Meta’s annual ‘Creator Day’, which was recently held for the first time in Kolkata. The event celebrates creators and gives them a chance to create, collaborate and learn from each other, he said. Chopra said ‘Reels’ (short-form videos), which was launched two years back, has gained massive popularity in India, including tier-2 and tier-

3 cities. “India is the lighthouse country for ‘Reels’ for Meta globally. As per a new research report, around 200 million people are spending about 45 mins per day on short-form videos, and this figure is estimated to go up to 600 million people.”

“Reels is helping creators express their creativity, passion, and build audiences and followers that relate with them through the content,” he said.

Short-form videos have also become a potent medium for brands to promote their products on Facebook and Instagram, the official said.

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Amid buzz that Karnataka Congress leaders are planning a State-wide bus tour ahead of Assembly polls next year, party president D K Shivakumar on Tuesday gave an indication in this regard by stating that the next plan of action is for taking forward the momentum of the ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ at the State-level.

He said he would get a report on party leaders and office-bearers who did not actively participate in the Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Yatra.

There are reports that the

KPCC chief is miffed at a section of party leaders for not actively participating in the yatra and is likely to submit a report to the high command in this regard.

“We can’t leave it (the momentum of Bharat Jodo Yatra) here. Also at the KPCC level, how to take it forward until the yatra ends (in Kashmir) is being thought about, the senior leaders will soon be discussing this,” Shivakumar told reporters here.

There has been a round of discussion with Rahul Gandhi at Raichur, he said.

“The next plan of action for

Karnataka is by intertwining the Bharat Jodo Yatra with Karnataka politics for the development of the State,” he said.

According to party sources, the bus yatra would be similar to ‘Panchajanya Yatra’ undertaken in 1999 by the KPCC under the leadership of its then president SM Krishna, which led the Congress to victory in the Assembly election. They said the bus yatra was likely to be in two separate teams headed by Shivakumar and Legislature Party leader Siddaramaiah.

Both leaders share Chief

Ministerial ambitions and were into a game of political onepmanship.

Speaking about the Bharat Jodo Yatra last week, Shivakumar said a committee would be constituted under the chairmanship of KPCC working president Dhruvanarayan to study the effect or impact of the yatra along the places it passed through in the State and other places.

He said the party plans to include the opinions expressed by citizens who joined the yatra and those highlighted by Congress scion Rahul Gandhi during the yatra.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

# New British PM

Rishi Sunak happens to be Hindu by faith, but this fact is unlikely to make him pro-India

With Rishi Sunak becoming the third Prime Minister in two months, there are great expectations from him, especially because he has experience, as a former finance minister, to tackle the economic crisis that Britain faces. Just like his immediate predecessor, Liz Truss, he is a Thatcherite. “My values are Thatcherite. I believe in hard work, family and integrity. I am a Thatcherite, I am running as a Thatcherite and I will govern as a Thatcherite,” he wrote in a newspaper. But there is also a difference between him and his predecessor in this regard: while Truss’ adoption of Thatcherite principles was doctrinaire, Sunak believes in a pragmatic approach. Truss seemed impatient; she wanted to undertake Thatcherite reforms like tax cuts in a hasty fashion, without taking the fiscal situation into account. Since public finance is related to inflation and interest rates, her earlier announcements hit bond markets hard. But the blowback shook her; he had to remove her finance minister and dump the reforms. This, she believed, would “reassure the markets of our fiscal discipline,” but that didn’t happen. Her policy U-turn also made her political position untenable, leading to her exit. Right from the beginning, he has been critical of the imprudent decisions made by Truss. When the two leaders were fighting for the prime ministerial office a few months ago, Sunak had expressed his skepticism over Truss’ bold and audacious (which now look disastrous) plans. While Truss’ Thatcherism was filled with ideological enthusiasm, Sunak’s looks more grounded. Which is not surprising given his background as a banker and entrepreneur.



Sunak, who is the son-in-law of Infosys founder NR Narayana Murthy, also happens to be the first British Asian and Hindu Prime Minister of the UK. The 42-year-old went to Winchester College and studied Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford University, according to a British Government website. He was also a Fulbright Scholar at Stanford University (USA) where he studied for his MBA. Many Indians are feeling vicarious pleasure in Sunak’s ascension, though he never lived in India. The saffron brigade is jubilant that a Hindu now heads the top office in Britain that ruled India for over a couple of centuries. More excited *deshbhakts* are using the term ‘reverse colonialism,’ as if we have sort of righted a historical wrong. Serious Indians should trash such notions with the disdain that these deserve, for Sunak doesn’t appear any less British than his predecessors. He is a devout Hindu, and his Diwali photographs have gone viral, but his faith is unlikely to influence the course of Indo-British ties. There is nothing on record to suggest that he would do anything that would benefit India. And last, but not the least, Sunak’s rise gives the lie to the theories Left-liberals keep spreading about racism in Western societies. Which non-Western nation would accept a white person as their head of government?



A ‘Nihang’ holds an eagle during ‘Fateh Divas’, a day after Diwali in Amritsar

# Autocracy at its best

Kerala Gov seeking VCs’ resignation smacks of high-handedness and blatant abuse of power

Diwali 2022 will remain etched in the political chronicle of Kerala as a dark day of democracy. The Festival of Lights turned out to be a carnival of pyrotechnic as Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan flexed muscles through the media about an issue that should have been sorted out amicably. The law and order in the State have taken a beating as the CPI(M) declared a “war” on the Governor whom they charge as an agent of the Sangh Parivar. The root cause of the present flare-up was the recent Supreme Court verdict which dethroned M S Rajasree, vice chancellor of the Kerala Technical University from office. The Supreme Court while disposing of a petition (filed by a person who too was in the race for the top job in the University) had said that all norms specified by the UGC in the selection of VCs have been violated by the Government of Kerala. The Court also declared Rajasree’s appointment void ab initio (null and void from the beginning itself). The search committee to handpick the VC should have three to five experts who are expected to make a list of ten or eleven names to be considered for the top job. In the case of Rajasree, there was no search committee or list of candidates. The CPI(M) decided that Rajasree should be coronated as Vice-Chancellor and the Governor signed on the dotted line. All other vice-chancellors in universities owned by the State have been appointed like this. But the CPI(M) alone is not responsible for this scenario. When the State comes under the spell of the Congress-led UDF rule, they appoint their nominees as vice-chancellors. The Governor by a directive through social media on Sunday evening asked all VCs to quit by Monday 11 am in the backdrop of the Supreme Court verdict. The VCs approached the Kerala High Court late Sunday night seeking some breathing space. By Monday morning the Governor toned down his warning to a show cause notice and asked the VCs to reply why action should not be taken against them based on the verdict of the Rajasree case. The High Court asked the VCs to wait till the Governor takes a final call on the issue. The Governor was given the wrong advice by his legal team which should have guided him to sail through safe waters. The question being asked is whether Kerala is going the West Bengal way where the chief minister and the Governor had a running battle till the latter was kicked upstairs.



# ‘Divide and rule’ does not work

Contrary to popular belief, dividing society has not always been the norm of State policy; even the British united India in more ways than one

“Divide and rule” would be a ready excuse for many an Indian to use where he/she cannot explain the cause of say, a Hindu-Muslim riot, or any other such dispute or conflict. Tactically, an official or a local politician using this excuse is understandable, but for a person who knows modern Indian history, routinely dishing out this excuse is unpardonable. The East India Company began its political career in present-day Madras (now Chennai), a settlement that they founded for the purpose. Its core officers and soldiers lived in their fort. The first Governor was Andrew Cogan. The Company’s business activities then spread to Bombay, which had been given by the King of Portugal to his son-in-law, England’s King Charles II, who gave the islands to the Company a gifted lease of £10 per annum. The first effective first Governor of the city was Gerald Aungier, who developed the fishing village into a township and established its headquarters at Fort George (not St. George, which was East India Company’s name for its Madras settlement). All this happened in the late 1660s. The East India Company’s first commercial establishment was opened in 1644, although it was developed into a full-fledged settlement with the building of Fort William and the acquisition of Govindpur, Kolikata, and Sutanoti from the Nawab of Bengal. However, the founding of Calcutta city is dated to 1690, by the legendary Job Charnock. But the city had to wait until 1700 for its first Governor when Sir Charles Eyre was installed. The three establishments were known as Presidencies, quite independent from one another, and directly reported to the Company’s London headquarters. There was no postal service in India in those days although ships came and went to and from these three ports. There was no particular complaint about this arrangement. Nevertheless, the Westminster parliament—not the East India Company’s Court of Directors—chose to pass the



Regulating Act of 1773, whereby the Governors of Bombay and Madras were asked to begin reporting to Fort William at Calcutta. The Governor at Calcutta then was designated the Governor-General in India. This was evidence enough that the English government did not have “divide and rule” in its mind. Had it been otherwise, London would have allowed the three Presidencies to grow independent of one another and flower as three separate countries, and not bunch them together as one administrative entity. One must assume that it was difficult for people in London in the 17th and 18th centuries to appreciate the significance of communal rivalry prevalent in India. But then how would several other measures, encouraging rather than discouraging steps that would ultimately lead to an integrating India, be explained? The Indian Civil Services (ICS), which later birthed the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) that runs independent India’s administration and other senior services need not have been all-India institutions; they could have been different in the different Presidencies. For instance, the civil administrative services in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and

THE ENGLISH GOVERNMENT DID NOT HAVE ‘DIVIDE AND RULE’ ON ITS MIND. HAD IT BEEN OTHERWISE, LONDON WOULD HAVE ALLOWED THE THREE PRESIDENCIES TO GROW INDEPENDENT OF ONE ANOTHER AND FLOWER AS THREE SEPARATE COUNTRIES

Burma were distinct and did not have similarities with India. If Macaulay’s formula of introducing English education in the country had not been proposed and then implemented, an Oriya might have found it difficult to communicate with his Bihari neighbour. What if the English rulers had chosen to structure the armed forces Presidency-wise, rather than under a single umbrella? A common currency is a boon but having to change one’s currency notes when crossing over from one Presidency to another, certainly isn’t. Had such a measure not been implemented by the British, would the free flow of trade and commerce in the entire country have even been conceivable? Just imagine what the level of India’s contact is with Pakistan on one hand and Bangladesh, on another. Myanmar, then called Burma, was a province of British India until 1937. What is our level of understanding and interaction with that country today, even though it is our next-door neighbour? Mohammed Ali Jinnah, who founded Pakistan, was candid enough to say that Pakistan was born the day the first Hindu was converted. That happened early in the 8th

century AD. Since then, India was invaded continually until 1760 AD. Only during the fifty-year reign of Emperor Akbar and his successors Emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan was there cordiality between communities. Otherwise, most of the time, there was at least an undercurrent of discord, especially due to the imposition of jaziya on the one hand and temple desecration on the other; both measures were the hallmark of the rule of Aurangzeb. By the end of his reign, the Rajputs, Sikhs, Jats, and finally the Marathas were in open revolt. Aurangzeb admitted his failure in his letters to his sons saying “I come and go as a stranger. I know not who I am. I lacked leadership and my duty in protecting the people”. Aurangzeb also expressed the fear that his officials and troops would be ill-treated (by his enemies) after his death. All this made sure that the two communities could not see eye to eye again. Even the Partition could not fully heal the wounds. Why, therefore, the insistence on laying blame only upon the British for “divide and rule”? (The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SPACE IS A GOLD MINE!

Sir — Apropos ISRO’s success, After India’s Mars mission, a section of society debated whether the money spent on space mission could be used to uplift the life of the poor. But investment in space science is like a gold mine where mining has just begun. It needs patience and foresight to see the long-term benefits. At NASA entrance we find Indian Tamil poet Auvaayar’s lines- “What we have learned Is like a handful of earth; What we have yet to learn Is like the whole world” Space tourism is a business yet to be explored.

TS Karthik | Chennai

### THE SPIRIT OF DIWALI

Sir — Diwali - the ‘festival of lights’ represents the symbolic victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance. India is the land of different cultures, traditions, faiths, and festivals. The festival of Diwali is the biggest festival of Hindus and is celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the country. However, various cultures and religions have various historical stories as backgrounds to celebrate Diwali. While primarily known as a Hindu festival for followers of ancient Vedic culture and tradition, the festival is also celebrated across the world by other faiths like Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. This great festival comes in the month of Karthika as per the lunar cycles, on the 13th day, which is called Trayodashi. Traditionally, on this auspicious day, everybody is supposed to worship Dhanavantari - the deity dedicated to health and well-being. For celebrating Diwali, the Hindus clean and paint their houses as they believe that on this day Goddess Laxmi visits their house and gives blessings to the inmates. Let us resolve to celebrate the festival of Diwali in an eco-friendly manner so that the importance of the festival is not affected in any manner.

Vivek Koul | Jammu

## Winning is a habit



Cricket is a mind game and we Indians live another day with sheer experience. Kohli made a match of it, Hardik Pandya’s hard-hitting innings and Ashwin’s wishful thinking all helped in the key game. Moreover, Ashwin’s 3 economical overs gave the Indian team an edge. Our pace lived up to their reputation and the left arm medium pace Arshdeep Singh.

made a mark. The absence of both Bumrah and Jadeja was not felt. In short, it was a total team performance. Watching India vs Pakistan WC T20 game, we all felt that the quality of Cricket played was special. Virat Kohli, and Hardik Pandya, showed that by playing conventional cricket you can score at a fair clip, and there is no need for reverse sweeps, switch hits, or slogs! The basics, properly executed, are so much nicer to view. And the game has set the tone for the matches to follow. Sheer entertainment that we are keenly following the World Cup. T20. The Holy Grail of the shorter version of the game. When the situation is tough, Ashwin is an experienced and clever cricketer. If cricket was science, Ashwin would be Einstein. When every one on the ground proved to be a novice, Ashwin showed the way how a crisis can be handled in the best way possible.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

### PRIORITISE NATIONAL SECURITY

Sir — National security is the first and most important priority of every Indian citizens. It is must to lead a peaceful and happy life in the Country. But it is disturbed by terrorism and communalism, thanks to our immediate neighbours who are generally wholesale distributors of disturbances in India and all over the world. Pakistan and China have constantly and repeatedly engaged in creating mischief on every occasion across our common borders. They are also trying to influence and operate through our other neighbors Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh to disturb our country in all possible ways. It is the primary duty of the government to ensure that these disrupting terrorist activities are stopped at the border at all costs. These border areas must be under the strict vigil of security forces and every entry through these borders should be scrutinized by the security forces. The security of our border areas must be

entrusted to a special task force consisting of Defence, BSF, Coast Guard, and ITBP etc to arrest the sneakers across the borders. Support is given to these miscreants from inside our country too and so proper measures must be employed to monitor and to take preventive actions. Support from Ex-service personnel, retired govt servants, committed Youth organizations, etc can come handy to augment the security forces at land, sea, and air borders. The smuggling activities of various items across borders are increasing at alarming levels destroying the stability of our country. Hence this calamity of smuggling activities across our borders must be arrested at all cost and every Indian Citizen has to support the government in eliminating the threat of our enemies across our borders, Pakistan, China, and their supporters.

Vijaya Kumar | Thiruvananthapuram

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

In Kargil, our forces crushed terror. I was fortunate enough to be a witness. I was shown my old photos here, and I am grateful for that.



Prime Minister —Narendra Modi

Boris Johnson delivered Brexit and the great vaccine rollout. He led our country through some of the toughest challenges we have ever faced, and then took on Putin and his barbaric war in Ukraine. We will always be grateful to him for that.

UK Prime Minister —Rishi Sunak

To anybody I hurt this year, you deserve it...Now that the year is ending, I want to confess something similar to my Bollywood friends.



Actor —Kangana Ranaut

It was undoubtedly the best innings of your (Kohli’s) life. It was a treat to watch you play, the six off the back foot in the 19th over against Rauf over long on was spectacular!

Former cricketer —Sachin Tendulkar

Has any governor in the country taken such measures? This can be seen as an attempt to interfere in government activities.



Kerala Education Minister —R Bindu



FIRST COLUMN

MUST KNOW OBJECTIVE OF AN ORGANISATION

Checks and balances form the core of any robust dynamics



Probability cannot just be a matter of detection mechanisms for irregularities. If designed sensitively and operated with care, many aberrations can be eliminated to enable joyful operation of organisation.

The issue is of designing systems scientifically and operating them equally diligently. There is a well-known quote on the pitfalls of the concentration of power in the hands of a few — ‘Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely’. Systemic checks and balances are inherent and essential in the interest of fair play and equity. It is not sufficiently realised that checks and balances are a secondary level of prudence. The first level is the design itself. The design, irrespective of the statutory requirements, must be logically coherent, adequate and pro-active. Pointing this out is not being obscurantist, but is a demand of common sense and fair play. Indeed, it is a pre-requisite and an essential requirement of any roll out processes. As an entity, a public system is often the object of some common fault finding, related to its emphasis on processes. It causes delay on some occasions by its attempt to keep the design of the organizational decision making coherent and consistently whole. The trouble, however, is not with the process but with the overdoing of the process.



In organisations where there are no ‘statutory’ governance requirements, the system remains flexible, which by itself can be a virtue. However, this can be open to much abuse and diversion of funds for use as they were not intended. The risk of this becoming pernicious is large.

Each player tends to see the problem not just systemically but as a leeway he can derive to enhance his own convenience. This is something that is not only undesirable but can be dangerous. It is being called dangerous, because proprietary and financial assets can become surrogates for objectives which are not part of the organizational objectives processes. Much of these can be managed effectively, if a system of governance audit is voluntarily implemented in

Institutions, which apparently do not have a statutory obligation to observe formal norms of governance audit. To do this is both simple and complex. It is simple because truth, in its essence, is essentially a simple phenomenon, and to observe the truth requires no special skills other than recording the process with integrity. Later on, the narrative of the facts gets structured in a formal frame, often in a legal system and phraseology.

The complications arise because of a propensity to seek advantage in a public system. The ambience of an organisation should be so designed as to reduce this possibility and, if possible, eliminate it.

Absolute answers are always difficult to prescribe, and the contextual bias of a situation has its own role in the evaluation of an organization’s effectiveness. The above elaboration is meant to explain how fundamental simplicity is at the core of organisational effectiveness. Anything else can be an aberration. Shrouding it in a ‘public sector’ versus a ‘private sector’ debate only transforms an operational distinction to a judgmental platform. Private-run organisations have an objective and raison d’etre, as public-sector organisations.

The way forward in organisation management would be to understand the objective for which the organisation was set up and then to choose the suitable systems and processes. It need not always be approached in an either/or mode. A hybrid mode may be worth a thought.

*(The author is Chairman, DK International Foundation, ‘Sharan’)*

Tech-based solutions can check poll abuses

When it is possible to use a credit or debit card from anywhere, anytime, why not ‘anytime, anywhere voting’?

Election expenditure and malpractices, normally and predominantly in by-elections, as is observed by print and electronic media in the Munugod Assembly elections in Telangana, have become extremely alarming. One contesting candidate announcing that he would get Rs 1,000 crore from the Center for development works, while also securing Rs 18,000 crore of contract is ridiculous.

India holds the world’s largest national elections, well known to be also globally the second most expensive polls. According to a study -- ‘Poll Expenditure: The 2019 Elections -- by the Centre for Media Studies (CMS), a pioneer in development research, a staggering Rs 55,000-60,000 crore was spent in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. According to SY Quraishi, the former Chief Election Commissioner of India, the huge expenditures signal threats to representative form of the government and reveal the linkages between election expenditure and the exorbitant levels of corruption that citizens have to bear while availing basic public services.

The CMS termed it as the ‘most expensive election ever, anywhere’ with an estimated Rs 100 crore spent in each Lok Sabha constituency. This is multiple times more than the expenditure limit (Rs 70 lakh) mandated by the Election Commission of India. Interestingly, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spent about 45 per cent of the total amount. The CMS feels that despite ECI having an elaborate system of surveillance and tracking at all levels, except symbolic confiscations, no stern initiative was taken. It seldom demonstrated its powers, and remained a silent spectator when parties and candidates did not observe its directives.

Despite these startling revelations three years ago by the CMS which has 30 years of active and hectic pursuits as an independent institute, nothing seems to have been initiated to check such expenditure in elections by the ECI.

‘Unfolding Indian Elections - Journey of the living democracy’, a book published by Election Commission of India in January 2017, documented several interesting facts about Indian elections. Independence to India heralded universal adult suffrage and the first general elections were held for the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies simultaneously during 1951-52. Every citizen above 21 years (now it is 18 years since 2014 elections) of age was eligible to vote. It was an enormous task to enroll every adult citizen. The whole process was fairly a grand success. Spending money or buying votes in the elections was an anathema. The whole process of election took place from September 10, 1951 to June 4, 1952. The global community witnessed the elections with great interest. The first CEO of India Sukumar Sen oversaw the elections. The indelible ink for application on voter’s fingers was developed by Indian Council of Scientific and Industrial



THE ECI SHOULD DESIGN A ‘PERMANENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER CARD’ IN SUCH A WAY THAT EXCEPT THE VOTER, NO ONE CAN USE IT. AND THE VOTER TOO CAN USE IT ONLY ONCE IN A PARTICULAR ELECTION

*(The author is a political analyst)*



Research. Metal boxes numbering 24, 73, 850 and 1, 11, 095 wooden boxes were used to receive ballots. Each candidate was assigned one box then.

Some voters regarded ballot boxes as objects of worship and dropped flowers and some dropped papers, hurling abuses to a particular candidate. Later, a common ballot paper system was introduced and used successfully until EVMs were introduced. The Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) are the new ballots. The usage has trimmed the bulk and the cost of election material, lessened manpower requirements, eliminated invalid voting and accelerated the counting process. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) was first used in Noksen Assembly segment in Nagaland in September 2013, enabling voters to verify that their vote has gone to the intended candidate only, and has come into use all over subsequently.

Election abuses have become a characteristic feature steadily. Unless an IT-enabled technology solution in the form of ‘Anytime, Anywhere Voting’ is introduced by the Election Commission of India (ECI), survival of democracy will be at stake. With the ever-changing scenario, it is convinced that ECI is practically powerless, helpless and incapable of regulating the poll expenditure of candidates and parties running into crores, particularly in by-elections. The major reason for huge expenditure is the lengthy prolonged election and electioneering process that we exercise now. Hence, it is high time that a thought is given moving from the

EVM form of voting to ‘Anytime, Anywhere Voting’, reducing steeply the entire election process and cutting short the campaign time considerably.

As of now the election process commences with announcing schedule followed by Model Code of Conduct, which again is a stumbling block for carrying developmental and welfare programs sometimes months together, which is absurd. Political parties announcing their candidates followed by nominations and submitting B-forms to Returning Officers, scrutiny, withdrawals, campaign, voting, counting, declaring winning candidate etc. form part of long-lasting electoral process. This propels exorbitant expenditure on political parties and candidates, often multiple times over and above mandated by the polling body, absolutely unchecked by ECI.

This whole process needs an urgent immediate change through electoral reforms by introducing the ‘Anytime, Anywhere Voting’ system. Voters instead of going to a polling booth and waiting in queues for longer hours till their turns come to vote needs to be changed. He or she should have the choice to vote anytime, anywhere and not in a specified polling booth. Voters should be enabled to vote during the prescribed couple of days and on inserting the card, the ballot connected to the voter’s constituency should appear. Cards also should be programmed in such a way that, other than the voter, and that too only after inserting the card, none will be able to enter the booth.

Campaign time should be cut



short and be made almost nil since these days of proliferation of electronic media they can make use of them to reach the voter. Direct contact with voters during elections to be totally curtailed or may be zeroed down. Political leaders or elected representatives, by this arrangement, will more frequently meet the voters, instead of the present tradition of luring them only during election time.

As of now, poll irregularities commence the moment elections are announced and for by-elections from the day the seat falls vacant. Better to hold elections maximum within a week from the date of nominations, including filing nominations along with B-form, scrutiny, withdrawal, brief campaign, voting, counting and announcement of results. When the campaign time is reduced, the possibility of spending huge amounts to buy votes will be minimized at least.

Voting may take place for more than a day. The ECI should design a ‘Permanent Social Security Number Card’ in such a way that except the voter no one can use it. And the voter too can use it only once in a particular election. Electoral Machines are to be arranged at as many places as possible with proper security arrangements. When we could move from using separate boxes for each candidate to a common ballot box and from there to EVMs, the voter can easily adapt to this. When it is possible to use a credit or debit card from anywhere, anytime and withdraw or deposit money, including abroad, why isn’t ‘anytime, anywhere voting’ possible?

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

GERMANY HAS A ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY WITH REGARD TO KASHMIR. WE SUPPORT THE UNITED NATIONS TO FIND PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS —FOREIGN MINISTER, GERMANY FALSCHGESAGT ANNA BAERBOCK



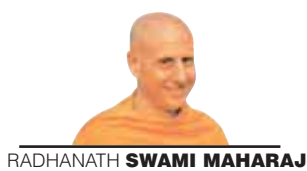
ALL SERIOUS MEMBERS OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY HAVE A ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY TO CALL OUT INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. —EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON ARINDAM BAGCHI

Ramrajya is founded with awakening of godliness

When our heart is fully illuminated, we experience Lord Ramachandra within ourselves and our love for Him awakens

The Hindu festival of Dassehra celebrates the victory of the noble Rama over the evil Ravana, and it leads to Diwali, which celebrates Rama’s victorious return to his home in Ayodhya. Diwali is a “festival of hope, even in apparently hopeless conditions - it is a time of transformation from darkness to light - a transformation of heart, from greed to generosity, from envy to appreciation and ultimately, from suffering to joy”.

The history of Dipavali is based on Rama, the 7th avatar of Lord Vishnu, who descended to earth to show us an example on how we can live and grow through the most difficult challenges of life. Lord Ram faced many hardships in exile, but yet he



*(The author is a spiritual guru at the International Society for Krishna Consciousness)*

always maintained integrity and morality. This world is designed in such a way that trials, tribulations and pain we experience give birth to opportunities to grow. Religions have no meaning without good characters. Good characters mean to live with integrity. Integrity means that we embrace sacred universal ideals - compassion, morality and a will to serve, to transform selfishness into selflessness and to maintain our ideals even when confronted with great obstacles.

This has to be ensured even in the face of temptation, that if I give up this ideal I could gain so much or the fear that if I don’t give up my sacred ideas of compassion and morality then I may lose so much. But what is it that

we are really looking for in this world? Everyone seeks fulfillment. Things - power, position, prestige, property, wealth — can give a certain amount of fulfillment to the physical body and to the mind but they cannot give fulfillment to the heart.

We should build our life on the foundation of what is really meaningful, and that is within us - the power to love and the power to recognize love. We believe that the origin of that inner tendency is the eternal soul’s loving relationship with God. And that love, between the soul and God, when we connect with it, manifests as compassion for every living being. It’s important that we take some time in our life to step back from all the distractions and



duties and just meditate and pray.

When we speak about Diwali and darkness, we can remember that the real beauty of life is in seeing the potential of light in any situation. Our mission in life as human beings is to kill the demons within our hearts. Ravana represents arrogance

and lust – “I am the controller and I am the enjoyer”. Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, Viradha, and the asuras represent arrogance, who we must slay in our hearts.

Sometimes very difficult and serious problems coming into our life are necessary to help us to fulfill our higher purpose. One, who is fixed to the truth, will see every situation as an opportunity to progress, even when faced with such extremes as being banished to the forest for 14 years and losing everything. Rama understood that this is the opportunity to fulfill his mission. So, yes when reversals come in our lives, they will help us to fulfill our mission, provided we keep our goal set and fixed.

Krishna tells in

Bhagavad-Gita that by hearing glories of the Lord and by serving and remembering Him we are laid on the path of devotion. When our heart is fully illuminated then we can experience Ramachandra within ourselves and our love for Him awakens. That love comes with unconditional compassion for every living being. Ramarajya is thus established within us. In this age of Kali, the chanting of His holy names, “Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare” is truly the way to lead people on the path to devotion.

Karmas play an important role. As you sow, so shall you reap. Accordingly, when we act, there will be

another reaction. The laws of karma are like the laws of gravity, what goes up must come down. Lord Ram and Lord Krishna are like the sun and maya is akin to darkness. Where there is sun, there cannot be darkness. That is what Diwali really represents ‘to light up our hearts not just by some physical fire but with the lights of God’s grace’. When our heart is fully illuminated, we experience Lord Ramachandra within ourselves and our love for Him awakens. In that love comes through unconditional compassion to every living being. The most powerful and important mantra is “Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare/Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare”.



# World leaders welcome Sunak

## ‘Ground-breaking milestone’ and ‘significant moment’: World leaders on Rishi becoming UK PM

PTI ■ LONDON/ WASHINGTON

Several world leaders, including US President Joe Biden and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, have lauded Rishi Sunak becoming the UK's new Prime Minister as a "ground-breaking milestone" and hoped for better bilateral relations amidst a turbulent world. Sunak, 42, on Monday, won the race to lead the Conservative Party and became Britain's first prime minister of Indian-origin on Tuesday.

Sunak will be the third UK prime minister this year and will replace Liz Truss, who served as Britain's shortest-serving prime minister for just 45 days.

"We've got the news that Rishi Sunak is now the prime minister," Biden said in remarks made during a Diwali celebration at the White House on Monday. "It's pretty astounding, a groundbreaking milestone and it matters," the US President said. Biden is yet to formally congratulate Sunak until he has met King Charles and been asked to form a government, as protocol dictates.

The Kremlin on Tuesday said that Russia sees no reason to expect relations with the UK to improve under Sunak.

Russia does not see any "preconditions, grounds, or hope" for building more constructive relations with Great Britain in the foreseeable future, Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, commenting on the appointment of Sunak as the UK's new prime minister.

"No, at present, we do not see any preconditions, grounds or hopes for some positive shifts in the foreseeable future," the Russian presidential spokesman was quoted as saying by the offi-



cial TASS news agency.

Peskov said this while commenting on the prospects of warmer relations between the two countries with the appointment of the UK's new prime minister. Russia-UK relations have soured even further since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February. The UK responded with several rounds of sanctions, and it is one of the main backers of President Volodymyr Zelensky. The UK has also provided substantial military support to Ukraine, the report added.

Ukraine's President Zelenskyy tweeted his congratulations to Sunak. "I wish you to successfully overcome all the challenges facing British society and the whole world today. I'm ready to continue strengthening the Ukraine-UK strategic partnership together!" he said.

China's leadership has said that it wants to "advance ties with the UK" under Sunak, Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin was quoted as saying by the BBC.

"We hope that we can work

with the UK side on the basis of mutual respect and win-win co-operation and advance China-UK relations along the right track," he said.

Sunak has favoured closer ties with China than his predecessor and was criticised by Truss for pursuing a trading relationship when chancellor, the report added.

Australia's treasurer, Jim Chalmers, called Sunak a great friend of Australia and lauded the significance of Britain having its first prime minister of Asian descent, The Canberra Times newspaper reported.

"I don't think it's insignificant that a country like the United Kingdom has its first prime minister of colour," he said on Tuesday.

European leaders couched their well-wishes with statements on the need for a stable and predictable neighbour.

The European Council president, Charles Michel, tweeted his congratulations on Monday night, emphasising that Brussels and London faced shared challenges.

## ‘New dawn’ for UK, ‘Death of Democracy’: Britain’s new PM witnesses both brickbats and bouquets

PTI ■ LONDON

Indian-origin Rishi Sunak on Tuesday witnessed both brickbats and bouquets from the UK media as he scripted history by becoming the first person of colour to become the Prime Minister of Britain, which in the past had colonised most of the world, with some news outlets acknowledging his leadership as the "new dawn" for the country, while others questioning the validity of his victory. Sunak was leading the front page of every major newspaper in the UK.

"Unite or die – Sunak's warning to Tory MPs," read The Guardian banner headline under a picture of the 42-year-old Conservative Party leader



receiving a hero's welcome at the party's head office in London.

Noting that Sunak "will become the third Conservative prime minister in under two months and the fifth in six years", the report said, "He will also make history as the first Hindu to lead the country."

Echoing similar sentiment, The Mail headline read, "A

new dawn for Britain" with the sub-head: "Rishi Sunak becomes our youngest modern PM - and first with an Asian heritage".

Striking a similar ebullient note, The Sun said, "The force is with you, Rishi" with the main image showing him holding a lightsaber.

However, not all media outlets were happy with Sunak being the UK's new Prime Minister.

In a scathing attack on Sunak, The Mirror in its banner headline asked "Our new (unelected) PM" that "Who voted for you?"

Describing him as "twice as rich as the King", its main story said he will now "preside over brutal public spending cuts".

## Who is Rishi?

Rishi Sunak, an Oxford University and Stanford Graduate, is the youngest British Prime Minister in 210 years. Here are some facts about him and his India connection:

- 42-year-old Sunak was born in the UK's Southampton area to an Indian family. His grandparents hail from Punjab.

- The son of a pharmacist mother and doctor father, he was educated at one of England's most renowned schools, Winchester, and then Oxford. He spent three years at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. And later gained an MBA from Stanford in California, where he met his wife Akshata Murthy, Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy.

- Sunak worked at billionaire activist hedge fund manager Chris Hohn's TCI Fund Management for about three years, before moving to join his TCI colleague Patrick Degorce's hedge fund Theleme Partners.

- He married Akshata in 2009 and the couple have two daughters — Krishna and Anoushka.

- Sunak became a Member of Parliament (MP) in 2015 after he got elected from Richmond, Yorkshire.

- He took oath as MP on the Bhagavad Gita in the Parliament.

- In February 2020 he was designated as the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the most important UK Cabinet post.

- As Chancellor of the Exchequer under Boris Johnson's leadership, he lit Diwali diyas at his residence on Downing Street.

- A teetotaler, Sunak is a Star Wars fan who wanted to grow up to become a Jedi knight.

- He often speaks of his heritage and how his family reminded him often about values and culture.

- When Johnson ordered the first nationwide lockdown owing to Covid pandemic, he crafted a massive financial rescue package to safeguard millions of jobs.

- British tabloids called him 'Dishy Rishi' when his stars were on the rise and he was considered to be

## Liz wishes Sunak ‘every success’ as she exits as PM

PTI ■ LONDON

Outgoing British Prime Minister Liz Truss on Tuesday wished her successor Rishi Sunak "every success" in her final speech on the doorstep of 10 Downing Street in London, before she made her way to Buckingham Palace to formally tender her resignation to King Charles III.

Accompanied by her husband Hugh O'Leary and two daughters, Britain's shortest-serving Prime Minister ended her tenure by trying to strike an optimistic tone as she said that brighter days lie ahead. Her audience with the monarch will be followed immediately by Sunak's meeting, which will be the moment he becomes the new British Prime Minister.



"I wish Rishi Sunak every success for the good of our country," said Truss.

"Our country continues to battle through a storm. But I believe in Britain. I believe in the British people and I know that brighter days lie ahead," she said.

The 47-year-old Conservative Party member of Parliament, who said she now plans to continue to serve her constituents of South West Norfolk in central England from the backbenches of Parliament, seemed to defend her tax-cutting policies that ultimately led to her early departure as Prime Minister.



## Ukraine N-agency thickens plot over alleged dirty bomb

AP ■ KYIV

Ukraine's nuclear energy operator said on Tuesday that Russian forces were performing secret work at Europe's largest nuclear power plant, activity that could shed light on Russia's claims that Kyiv's forces are preparing a "provocation" involving a radioactive device.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu made an unsubstantiated allegation that Ukraine was preparing to launch a so-called dirty bomb.

Shoigu made the charge in calls to his British, French, Turkish and US counterparts over the weekend. Britain, France, and the United States rejected it out of hand as "transparently false".

Ukraine also dismissed Moscow's claim as an attempt to distract attention from the Kremlin's own alleged plans to detonate a dirty bomb, which uses explosives to scatter radioactive waste in an effort to sow terror.

Energoatom, the Ukrainian state enterprise that operates the country's four nuclear power plants, said Russian forces have carried out secret construction work over the last week at the occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Ukraine.

Russian officers controlling the area won't give access to Ukrainian staff running the plant or monitors from the UN's atomic energy watchdog that would allow them to see what they are doing, Energoatom said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

Energoatom said it "assumes ... (the Russians) are preparing a terrorist act using nuclear

materials and radioactive waste stored at (the plant)".

It said there were 174 containers at the plant's dry spent fuel storage facility, each of them containing 24 assemblies of spent nuclear fuel.

"Destruction of these containers as a result of explosion will lead to a radiation accident and radiation contamination of several hundred square kilometres (miles) of the adjacent territory," the company said.

It called on the International Atomic Energy Agency to assess what was going on.

The Kremlin has insisted that its warning of a purported Ukrainian plan to use a dirty bomb radioactive device should be taken seriously and criticized the Western nations for shrugging it off.

The dismissal of Moscow's warning is "unacceptable in view of the seriousness of the danger that we have talked about", Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

Speaking during a conference call with reporters, Peskov added: "We again emphasise the grave danger posed by the plans hatched by the Ukrainians."

The White House on Monday again underscored that the Russian allegations were false. "It's just not true. We know it's not true," John Kirby, a spokesman for the National Security Council, said.

"In the past, the Russians have, on occasion, blamed others for things that they were planning to do."

Dirty bombs don't have the devastating destruction of a nuclear explosion but could expose broad areas to radioactive contamination.

# Germany, EU launch work on ‘new Marshall Plan’ for Ukraine

AP ■ BERLIN

German and European Union leaders gathered experts on Tuesday to start work on what Germany's chancellor described as a "new Marshall Plan" for the rebuilding of Ukraine.

The Marshall Plan was a US-sponsored initiative that helped revive western European economies after World War II. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, whose country currently chairs the Group of Seven industrial powers, first announced plans for the one-day conference in the summer.

Kyiv's backers need to discuss already "how to ensure and how to sustain the financing of the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of Ukraine for years and decades to come", said Scholz, who co-hosted the meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

He said he's looking at "nothing less than creating a new

Marshall Plan for the 21st century, a generational task that must begin now."

Von der Leyen said the World Bank puts the cost of damage to Ukraine so far at 350 billion euros (USD 345 billion).

The EU decided in June to make Ukraine a candidate to join the bloc, and needs "to firmly embed Ukraine's reconstruction efforts as part of its path toward the European Union", she said.

In addition to longer-term help and short-term assistance with its regular budget, "Ukraine needs fast rehabilitation right now as we speak," as Russia targets Ukrainian electricity and other infrastructure ahead of the onset of the winter, von der Leyen said. She called those attacks "pure acts of terror."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasised that point in a video address from Kyiv. He told the Berlin conference participants that Ukraine has a USD 17 bil-



lion "fast recovery" plan to repair damage to hospitals, schools, transportation and energy infrastructure, and other structures.

"As of now, we haven't received a single cent for the implementation of the fast recovery plan," he said, speaking through an interpreter.

Scholz underlined Germany's commitment to keep supplying Ukraine with weapons, including air-defence systems, as long as they are needed.

"The best reconstruction is the reconstruction that does not have to happen at all because Ukrainian cities and power sta-

tions are protected from Russian bombs, drones and missiles," he said.

"We do not yet know when this war will end, but end it will!" the German leader said. "From our own historical experience, we also know that reconstruction is always possible and that it is never too soon to tackle this task."

Zelenskyy called for reimbursement for damages using seized Russian assets, a point that Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki underlined.

"There is a huge pot of gold to be taken and dedicated for Ukraine's reconstruction, which is Russian assets — assets of the Russian Federation and Russian oligarchs," Morawiecki said. "Freezing means really not too much. ... They have to be confiscated"

Von der Leyen said that is the aim, but sounded a note of caution. "The will is there, but legally it is not trivial; there's a

lot of work still in it," she said. "We insist on the rule of law. ... This process has to be legally sound."

Scholz and von der Leyen invited the leaders of the International Monetary Fund, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the European Investment Bank, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the UN Development Programme and others on Tuesday.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said he hopes a "financial coordination platform" for efforts to help his country will be set up by the end of this year.

"We have no time to waste. The scale of destruction is staggering," von der Leyen said. "We need all hands on deck — the G-7, the European Union, Europe; strong partners like the United States, Canada, Japan, the UK, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand and many, many more."

## German president visits Kyiv as West mulls rebuilding plan

AP ■ KYIV

Germany's president arrived in Kyiv on Tuesday for his first visit to Ukraine since the start of Russia's invasion, as Western countries mull a massive plan for Ukrainian rebuilding when the war eventually ends.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said after arriving that "it was important to me in this phase of air attacks with drones, cruise missiles and rockets to send a signal of solidarity to Ukrainians".

Eight months of pummelling by the Kremlin's forces has ruined homes, public buildings and the power grid. The World Bank estimates the damage to Ukraine so far at 350 billion euros (USD 345 billion).

The German president, whose position is largely cere-



monial, made it to Ukraine on his third try.

In April, he was planning to visit the country with his Polish and Baltic counterparts, but said his presence "apparently ... wasn't wanted in Kyiv".

Steinmeier has been criticised in Ukraine for allegedly cozying up to Russia during his time as Germany's foreign minister.

Last week, a planned trip was put off because of security concerns.

Steinmeier's visit came as Ukrainians are bracing for less electric power this winter following a sustained Russian barrage on their infrastructure in recent weeks.

Citizens in the southern city of Mykolaiv lined up for water and essential supplies on Tuesday as Ukrainian forces advanced on the nearby Russian-occupied city of Kherson.

In Berlin, meanwhile, European Union leaders brought together experts to start work on a "new Marshall Plan" for the future rebuilding of Ukraine — a reference to the US-sponsored plan that helped revive Western European economies after World War II.

German Chancellor Olaf

## Russian court hears appeal by Griner against 9-year sentence

AP ■ MOSCOW

A Russian court on Tuesday started hearing American basketball star Brittney Griner's appeal against her nine-year prison sentence for drug possession.

Griner, an eight-time all-star center with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury and a two-time Olympic gold medalist, was convicted Aug. 4 after police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport.

Griner is taking part in the session held at the Moscow Regional Court via video call from a penal colony outside Moscow where she is being held.

Griner's February arrest came at a time of heightened tensions between Moscow and Washington, just days before Russia sent troops into Ukraine.

At the time, Griner was returning to Russia, where she played during the U.S. League's off-season.

Griner admitted that she had the canisters in her luggage, but testified that she had inadvertently packed them in haste and that she had no criminal intent. Her defense team presented written statements that she had been prescribed cannabis to treat pain.

The nine-year sentence was close to the maximum of 10 years, and Griner's lawyers argued after the conviction that the punishment was excessive. They said in similar cases defendants have received an average sentence of about five years, with about a third of them granted parole.

Before her conviction, the U.S. State Department declared Griner to be "wrongfully detained" — a charge that Russia has sharply rejected.



# Taiwan's Tsai says no backing down to Chinese aggression

AP ■ TAIPEI (TAIWAN)

Taiwan won't back down in the face of "aggressive threats" from China, the president of the self-governing island democracy Tsai Ing-wen said Tuesday, comparing growing pressure from Beijing to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Tsai's comments follow the conclusion of the twice-a-decade congress of China's Communist Party at which it upped its long-standing threat to annex the island it considers its own territory by force if necessary.

The party added a line into its constitution on "resolutely opposing and deterring" Taiwan's independence "resolutely implementing the policy of one country, two systems," the formula by which it plans to govern the island in future.

The blueprint has already been put in place in the former British colony of Hong Kong, which has seen its democratic system, civil liberties and judicial independence decimated.

Speaking to an international gathering of pro-democracy activists in Taipei, Tsai said democracies and liberal societies were facing the greatest host of challenges since the Cold War.

"Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine is a prime example. It shows an authoritarian regime will do whatever it takes to achieve expansion-



ism," Tsai said.

"The people of Taiwan are all too familiar with such aggression. In recent years, Taiwan has been confronted by increasingly aggressive threats from China," she said, listing military intimidation, cyber attacks and economic coercion among them.

The rising Chinese threat

has spurred calls on Taiwan for additional defense investments and a lengthening of the term of national service required of all Taiwanese men.

"However, even under constant threats, the people of Taiwan have never shied away from the challenges" and have fought to work against authoritarian forces looking to under-

mine their democratic way of life, Tsai said.

Tsai was speaking at the opening ceremony of the World Movement for Democracy's Steering Committee, which is chaired by 2021 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Maria Ressa.

Taiwan and China split amid civil war in 1949 and Taipei enjoys strong U.S. Military and political support, despite the lack of formal military ties.

Despite having just 14 official diplomatic allies, Taiwan has drawn increasing backing from major nations, including Japan, Australia, the U.S., Canada and across Europe.

A recent visit by U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi enraged Beijing, which responded with military exercises seen as a rehearsal of a blockade of the island.

On Monday, Tsai met with a German parliamentary delegation focusing on human rights, who expressed concern about how Taiwan would handle threats from China.

"Taiwan is really facing military threats," delegation head Peter Heidt said. "From Germany's point of view, changes to the cross-strait status quo, if any, must be based on peaceful means. Also, these changes must be made after both sides have reached a consensus."

Also on Tuesday, Taiwanese

Premier You Si-kun was meeting with Ukrainian lawmaker Kira Rudik and Lithuanian politician Zygimantas Pavilionis. Taiwan has strongly condemned the Russian invasion and at least one Taiwanese citizen is reportedly fighting with Ukrainian forces.

The Ukrainian conflict has focused new attention on if and when China might launch military action against Taiwan, given that a solid majority of Taiwanese reject Beijing's calls for "peaceful reunification."

A full-scale invasion across the 160-kilometer (100-mile) - wide Taiwan Strait remains a daunting prospect for China despite its recent massive military expansion, especially in its naval and missile forces.

However, Chinese leader Xi Jinping's securing of another five-year term in office has some observers speculating he may be looking to move up the schedule for bringing Taiwan under China's control.

Among personnel changes at China's congress that concluded Saturday, Gen. He Weidong was elevated to second vice chairman of the Central Military Commission. He was formerly head of the Eastern Theater Command, which would be primarily responsible for operations against Taiwan should hostilities break out.

# More questioning sought of Trump aide in Mar-a-Lago probe

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Justice Department is seeking to again question an associate of Donald Trump who was seen on security camera footage moving boxes of classified records at the former president's Florida estate, according to a person familiar with the matter.

Walt Nauta has already been interviewed by investigators examining the potential mishandling of classified government records at Mar-a-Lago and prosecutors want to speak with him again as they try to understand how boxes came to be relocated from a storage room at the property, said the person, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing probe.

A Justice Department spokesman did not immediately return a message seeking comment.

The Justice Department is investigating potential violations of multiple criminal statutes, including unlawful retention of national defense information and obstruction. It is not clear whether anyone will be charged.

The obstruction aspect of the probe burst into public view in August when prosecutors in a court filing described how classified documents were "likely concealed and removed" from a Mar-a-Lago storage room in a potential effort to



obstruct the investigation and impede Justice Department efforts to recover the records.

The Justice Department in May issued a subpoena seeking the return of classified records taken from the White House to Mar-a-Lago after Trump's term had ended.

Law enforcement officials visited on June 3 to collect the records, and were given an envelope containing 38 documents with classification markings. They also instructed the Trump legal team to preserve the boxes of classified records in the storage room until further notice.

But FBI agents came to believe that more documents remained at the home, and that there had been efforts to obstruct their probe. They returned on Aug. 8 with a court-authorized search war-

rant and collected more than 100 documents marked as classified, including at the top-secret level.

The person who spoke to the AP declined to characterize Nauta's precise account to the authorities.

The Washington Post reported earlier this month that a Trump associate, since identified as Nauta, told the FBI that he had moved boxes at Trump's explicit direction.

The New York Times, which reported earlier on Monday that prosecutors were seeking another interview with Nauta, also cited one person briefed on the matter as saying that Nauta said he had acted at Trump's direction.

But the newspaper cited another person who described Nauta as less specific about what he had been told.

# Biden's mid-term 'closing argument': Look at alternative

AP ■ WASHINGTON

With Republicans increasingly confident about victory in this year's midterm elections, President Joe Biden dismissed the polls in a speech at Democratic Party headquarters Monday, saying there's still time for "one more shift" that will help his party.

"If we get people out to vote, we win," Biden said to scores of Democratic organizers who cheered and chanted as he entered the room for what he called his "closing argument."

Campaign workers around the country tuned in via livestream for the pep talk, delivered 15 days from Election Day.

The speech was Biden's latest attempt to turn the midterms



into a choice between Democrats and Republicans, rather than a referendum on his unpopular administration at a time of entrenched economic dissatisfaction.

Biden has largely steered clear of traditional campaign events around the country, in favor of speeches where he tries to frame the stakes for voters.

"The polls have been all over the place," Biden said, adding that surveys have become increasingly unreliable for measuring public opinion. "Republicans ahead, Democrats ahead, Republicans ahead. But it's going to close, I think, with seeing one more shift — Democrats ahead."

He said Republicans would roll back progress on expanding health care coverage, limiting the cost of prescription drugs and increasing taxes on corporations.

"At least they're being honest this time," he said. "They're telling you exactly what they want to do if they win."

He added, "They're so confident they're going to win, they're saying this without an ounce of shame."

# Fresh China Congress footage deepens mystery over former leader Hu's exit

IAN S ■ BEIJING

Fresh footage has emerged showing more of what happened before China's former leader Hu Jintao was dramatically led out of a session during last week's Communist Party Congress in Beijing, the media reported. It shows in greater detail how outgoing Politburo member Li Zhanshu, to Hu's left, takes a file away and speaks to him, BBC reported.

Then China's current leader Xi Jinping gives lengthy instructions to another man who subsequently attempts to persuade Hu to leave.

The unexpected moment led to intense speculation, with some arguing that it was a deliberate power play by Xi to show that the more consensus-driven Hu era was definitively over

while others suggested it could have been because of Hu's poor health, BBC reported.

The moment unfolded the day before Xi announced his third term and his top team of loyalists — both the timing and the fact that Chinese politics are so opaque sparked a global guessing game as to what had happened.

Many wondered if it was a deliberate piece of political theatre. Unlike Hu, whose presidency between 2003 and 2013 was seen as a time of opening up to the outside world, Xi has presided over a country that has become increasingly isolated.

The new footage, filmed by Singapore based Channel News Asia, does not debunk the official line that Hu was ill. But it also suggests that Hu's handling of the document in front of him

played a role in the incident, BBC reported.

Meanwhile Hu said something to an impassive Xi as he was escorted out, while the other men seated in the row did not turn around as he was led out.

Deng Yuwen, a former editor of Communist Party newspaper the Study Times, says there is no reason that the party would put a document that Hu was not allowed to read right in front of him at such a high-profile meeting with cameras rolling.

But Deng says the spectacle of other senior officials — including Hu's former second in command Wen Jiabao — looking straight ahead as Hu was led out behind them does say something about Xi's China, BBC reported.



# Pro-democracy publisher Lai found guilty on fraud charges

AP ■ HONG KONG

Pro-democracy Hong Kong publisher Jimmy Lai was found guilty Tuesday on a pair of fraud charges related to lease violations — the latest of a series of prosecutions apparently aimed at punishing him for his past activism.

Lai had been arrested during a crackdown on the pro-democracy movement following widespread protests in 2019 under the city's sweeping Beijing-imposed National Security Law. He is already serving a 20-month sentence for his role in unauthorized assemblies.

His media company Next Digital had published the now-shuttered Apple Daily, Hong Kong's last surviving pro-democracy newspaper.

Lai also faces collusion charges under the National Security Law and a separate sedition charge. His ex-colleague Wong Wai-keung was also convicted Tuesday on a single charge of fraud.

Lai and two former executives at his company were charged with fraud for subletting part of the office space to a sec-

retarial firm, which was also controlled by Lai, between 2016 and 2020. Their move was said to have violated the lease agreements with the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation. The second fraud count was for letting the same firm use the media outlet's office space in breach of lease agreements between 1998 and 2015.

Judge Stanley Chan Kwong-chi at the District Court said the nature of the firm did not conform with what was stipulated in the lease agreements, and ruled that Lai had hidden the fact the company was occupying space in the building. He said he did not believe Lai had forgotten the business was using the office.

One of the executives, Royston Chow, made a deal earlier this year to help with Lai's and Wong's prosecution in exchange for exemption from criminal liability.

Lawyers for Hong Kong media mogul and pro-democracy activist Jimmy Lai are asking the United Nations to investigate his imprisonment and multiple criminal charges as "legal harassment" to punish him for speaking out.



# 'Cyclone kills 35 in Bangladesh'

PTI ■ DHAKA

At least 35 people were killed and several homes destroyed as cyclone Sitrang ravaged Bangladesh's southern coastlines and central parts after it made a landfall overnight, according to officials and media reports.

Sitrang completed its landfall and weakened to a tropical depression over Bangladesh in the early hours of Tuesday, Prothom Alo, a Bengali daily newspaper, reported.

Newspaper tallies and unofficial counts stated that the cyclone claimed 35 lives along-side leveling homes and other infrastructures, uprooting trees and disrupting road communication and power supplies.

Around 10 million people were without power in districts along the coasts on Tuesday.

"Until 6 pm this evening, reports of 35 deaths were reported from 16 (of the 64 administrative) districts," the mass circulation Prothom Alo said, but officials preferred several of the deaths as "missing cases," confirming so far 16 deaths.

Another prominent news website bdnews24.Com stated that the death toll from cyclone Sitrang till Tuesday evening was 22.

The cyclone made its landfall in southwestern Bangladesh coast but media reports have stated that highest deaths were reported from southwestern Chattogram coastlines where a sand-laden dredger sank in the Bay of Bengal drowning eight workers as strong wind flipped the vessel.

Over a million people were evacuated to cyclone shelters in coastlines but deaths were

reported from areas in central Bangladesh as well, since strong winds collapsed houses and uprooted trees causing casualties.

A family of three — the parents and their minor child — perished as a tree fell on them in central Cumilla while the storm took a prison van off the road killing two policemen and a prisoner in Tangail, another central district.

One death each was reported from Narail and Barguna sub-districts. The body of a child was recovered from Chittagong district. A mother and her two-year-old son died after a boat sank during the storm in Jamuna River in Sirajganj district.

One man died after the railing of a multi-story building collapsed and fell on him in Dhaka, while two women died after a tree fell on them in Gopalganj district.

# UK court to hear Uyghur demands to ban Xinjiang cotton



AP ■ LONDON

A human rights group are taking the UK government to court to challenge Britain's failure to block the import of cotton products associated with forced labour and other abuses in China's far western Xinjiang region.

Tuesday's hearing at the High Court in London is believed the first time a foreign court hears legal arguments from the Uyghurs over the issue of forced labor in Xinjiang.

The region is a major global supplier of cotton, but rights groups have long alleged that the cotton is picked and processed by China's Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslim minorities in a widespread, state-sanctioned system of forced labour.

The case, brought by the Munich-based World Uyghur Congress and the Global Legal Action Network, a nonprofit, is one of several similar legal challenges aimed at putting pressure on the U.K. And European Union governments to follow the lead of the United States, where a law took effect this year to ban all cotton products suspected of being made in Xinjiang.

Researchers say Xinjiang produces 85% of cotton grown in China, constituting one-fifth of the world's cotton.

# Japan steps up push to get public buy-in to digital IDs

AP ■ TOKYO

Japan has stepped up its push to catch up on digitisation by telling a reluctant public they have to sign up for digital IDs or possibly lose access to their public health insurance.

As the naming implies, the initiative is about assigning numbers to people, similar to Social Security numbers in the U.S. Many Japanese worry the information might be misused or that their personal information might be stolen. Some view the My Number effort as a violation of their right to privacy.

So the system that kicked



off in 2016 has never fully caught on. Fax machines are still commonplace, and many Japanese conduct much of their business in person, with cash. Some bureaucratic procedures can be done online, but many Japanese offices still require "inkan," or seals for stamping, for identification, and insist on people bringing paper forms to offices.

# Israeli troops raid gunmen's hideout; 5 Palestinians killed

AP ■ NABLUS (WEST BANK)

Israeli forces raided a stronghold of an armed group in the occupied West Bank's second-largest city, blowing up a bomb lab and engaging in a firefight, the military said on Tuesday.

Five Palestinians were killed and 20 were wounded, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry.

The overnight raid in the old city, or kasbah, of Nablus, was one of the deadliest in the West Bank in 2022 and comes at a time of escalating tensions. Television footage showed flames and smoke rising in the night sky over Nablus. The army said it used shoulder-launched missiles. Local residents reported a large explosion that rocked the old city and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The target of the raid was a



group of Palestinian gunmen calling themselves the Lions' Den. The group was responsible for the recent fatal shooting of an Israeli soldier and several attempted attacks, the army said.

The five men killed in the raid were in their 20s and 30s, the Health Ministry said. Several of the wounded were in serious condition, the ministry said. Israel's caretaker prime min-

ister, Yair Lapid, confirmed that Wadie Houh, a leader of the Lion's Den group, was killed in a shootout with Israeli troops overnight. In remarks at a conference, he said the operation was "an accurate and deadly strike at the heart of terror infrastructure trying to carry out attacks".

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip staged a general strike in protest of Tuesday's killings. Stores remained shuttered throughout the day in Nablus, Ramallah, Gaza City and other Palestinian cities.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, the army said troops fired at a suspect who threw an explosive at them during an arrest raid near the village of Nebi Saleh. The Palestinian Health Ministry reported the death of 19-year-old Qusai al-Tamimi.

Ongoing Israeli arrest raids in the West Bank pose a serious challenge to the Palestinian self-rule government, which administrators just over one-third of the territory.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas relies on security cooperation with Israel, particularly against his Islamic militant rivals, to remain in power. At the same time, this cooperation is deeply unpopular among Palestinians who chafe against Israel's open-ended occupation, now in its 56th year.

Younger Palestinians are particularly disillusioned. Small bands of gunmen have formed in some areas, first in the Jenin refugee camp, a stronghold of militants, and now in Nablus. These groups challenge the Palestinian Authority and carry out attacks against Israeli targets.



# Markets halt 7-day rally on profit-booking

RIL, FMCG stocks weigh

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks nursed losses on Tuesday as investors booked profits after a seven-session rally amid weak Asian market cues and foreign fund outflows.

The 30-share BSE Sensex halted to hold on the early gains and declined 287.70 points or 0.48 per cent to finish at 59,543.96. During the day, it hit a low of 59,489.02 and a high of 60,081.24.

On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty fell 74.40 points or 0.42 per cent to end at 17,656.35.

Nestle India was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slipping 2.83 per cent, followed by Hindustan Unilever, Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank, HDFC, Reliance Industries, Bajaj Finance and Asian Paints.

Market heavyweight Reliance Industries was the biggest drag on the benchmark following lacklustre Q2 results.

In contrast, Tech Mahindra, Maruti, Larsen & Toubro, Dr Reddy's, SBI, NTPC and M&M were among the winners, climbing as much as 3.29 per cent.

"The domestic market pared its early gains with FMCG and private banks pressuring the benchmark. Market attention has shifted to central bank policy announcements since the European Central Bank is expected to hike interest rates at its upcoming policy meeting.

"The impending US GDP



data will give additional clarity to the expectation that the Fed will temper its aggression in regard to rate hikes," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge dipped 0.35 per cent, while the midcap index climbed 0.45 per cent.

Among BSE sectoral indices, FMCG fell 1.10 per cent, telecommunication dipped 0.91 per cent, financial services went lower by 0.62 per cent, realty declined 0.61 per cent and utilities lost 0.60 per cent.

Among the gainers were capital goods, auto, industrials and oil & gas.

"While the global markets are still not portraying any clear trend, the recent buying in heavyweights especially from

the banking pack has lifted the sentiment. We may see some consolidation in the index ahead but the tone is likely to remain positive.

"The focus should remain on identifying stocks from the sectors which are participating in the move, without losing focus on risk management..." said Ajit Mishra, VP - Research, Religare Broking Ltd.

Elsewhere in Asia, markets in Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower, while Tokyo finished higher.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading on a mixed note in mid-session deals. Wall Street had ended higher on Monday.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.27 per cent lower at USD 92.08 per barrel.

The rupee appreciated 7 paise to close at 82.81 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, as easing crude oil prices buoyed investor sentiments.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded shares worth Rs 247.01 crore on Tuesday, as per exchange data.

In a special one-hour Muhurat trading session on Monday to mark the beginning of Hindu Samvat year 2079, the BSE benchmark jumped 524.51 points or 0.88 per cent to end at 59,831.66. The Nifty advanced 154.45 points, or 0.88 per cent, to finish at 17,730.75.

The BSE and NSE will be closed on Wednesday (October 26) on the occasion of 'Diwali Balipratipada'.

# Premium, mid-end products lift festive sale spirit amid inflation woes

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Premium and mid-end products have lifted sales of consumer durables and FMCG items this festive season amid inflation woes, according to industry players.

Industry body Consumer Electronics and Appliances Manufacturers Association (CEAMA) said the sector is estimated to clock volume growth of 20 per cent and value growth of over 30 per cent.

"Overall mid and premium product sales have done well this festive season. The mid and premium segment has witnessed around 30 per cent volume growth at least and value growth between 40 to 50 per cent this festive season. The last three days were great for mid and premium products," CEAMA President Eric Braganza told PTI.

However, he said, "Sales of entry-level products are down by 10-15 per cent this festive season."

The decline in sales of entry-level products is primarily due to upgrading by consumers and also stress witnessed in the rural market.

Panasonic Marketing India Managing Director Fumiya Fujimori said consumers are looking for a premium range of appliances and the company expects double-digit growth this festive season, led by smart ACs, large-screen TVs and the home appliances category.

"In terms of value growth inverter ACs recorded 38 per cent growth, overall LEDs grew by 10 per cent whereas 4K TVs grew by 34 per cent. Our top-load washing machines regis-



tered 13 per cent growth this festive season," he said.

The company is seeing a rise in demand for appliances that are easy to use (allowing users to multi-task), energy-efficient, connected (smart), and healthy and hygienic. Consumers have become conscious of their choices and value-proposition premium appliances are taking precedence in their purchase decisions.

"This growth trend is here to stay," he said, adding, "Keeping that in mind, we are seeing a rise in growth (both value and volume) for inverter ACs, 4K smart LED TVs and top-load washing machines."

In the FMCG sector, HUL Managing Director and CEO Sanjiv Mehta said sales post-Diwali would also need to be taken into account to determine if there has been better offtake in the festive season compared to last year, although sales in the September quarter were higher than the preceding three-month period.

Nevertheless, he said, the premium brands are having greater traction overall in the

market than mass brands.

"The premium brands are growing at a faster rate than the popular brands and popular brands are growing faster than the mass brands," he had said during the company's second quarter earnings call.

He explained that growth in the premium category "indicates that people with more disposable income are much more resilient and much more resistant to inflation."

On the other hand, Mehta said, "When times are tough the poor gets hit much harder and people who have more disposable income, they clearly look at if they can get a better value and they'll go on for value packs."

Another FMCG major ITC in its quarterly earnings statement had said input prices remained elevated even as some commodities witnessed softening in the course of the quarter.

"Inflationary headwinds continued to weigh on consumption expenditure which was partly offset by the early onset of the festive season this year in some parts of the country," it said.

## Airlines' passenger load factor slips substantially on Diwali day

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Most airlines recorded lower occupancy on Diwali day on October 24, with their passenger load factor slipping considerably in to the range of 65 to 70 per cent as against 80-85 per cent during recent days.

Leading Indian carrier Indigo on Monday witnessed PLF of 64.5 per cent while Vistara and Air India recorded the PLF of 63 per cent and 67.3 per cent, respectively, on Monday, on the day of Diwali celebration.

As per industry sources, higher air fare during the festival on most of the routes was one of the main reasons behind lower occupancy of airlines. Airfares on many busy routes including Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Bengaluru, and other routes were nearly up by more than 50 per cent keeping in mind the festive rush. This might have acted as a deterrent for some and can be the reason for lower occupancy, said an industry source.

The analyst said that the air fares have generally become more competitive on many routes, particularly after the entry of Akasa Air and during general days, tickets were available at lower prices.

As per latest data of the aviation regulator, the passenger load factor or occupancy of the airlines remained on the higher side in the range of 75 to 85 per cent during September. The data said that domestic aviation traffic in the country continues to record growth as passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-September 2022 were 8.74 crore as against 5.31 crore during the corresponding period of previous year, thereby registering annual growth of 64.61 per cent.

# COAI roots for 'same service, same rules' for parity with OTT communication services

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom operators' association COAI has made a strong pitch for 'same service, same rules' with regard to OTT communication services, arguing that a level playing field needs to be maintained for all technologies.

OTT, or over-the-top, communication apps such as WhatsApp and others offer voice and video calling.

The regulatory conditions and treatment "must be made uniformly applicable for similarly placed players", the Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) said in a statement. "...There is a need to ensure a level playing field among all technologies, that is Same Service Same Rules with respect to OTT Communication Services, so

that fair and healthy competition prevails in the industry," COAI said.

The industry body said it welcomes inclusion of OTT communication services in the recently released draft Indian Telecommunication Bill 2022. "However, in order to bring comprehensiveness and avoid any possible ambiguity, COAI is of the considered view that the OTT Communication services need to be defined in the draft Telecom Bill," it added.

COAI claimed that certain quarters "based on misinformed views" have opined that the principle of 'Same Service, Same Rules' may not be applicable for OTT communication services.

"It has been erroneously suggested that Telecom Services and OTT

Applications do not operate on the same layer, when in fact; services such as calls (voice/video) whether provided by the TSPs (telecom service providers) or the OTT Apps, operate on the same layer, essentially riding on the network layer," COAI contended. The industry body was also dismissive of the opinion that a framework for regulating OTTs and bringing them on par with telcos is not needed as operators have spectrum, numbering resources, interconnect and Right of Way (RoW) for setting Infrastructure.

COAI pointed out that operators, in fact, undergo a government-mandated process for allocation of spectrum and numbering resources by undertaking critical commitments and deliv-



erables, while investing heavily in networks.

"OTTs, on the other hand,

are free from any of these obligations, but enjoy all the privileges of delivering the

same services, without having to bear any of the regulatory obligations, security obliga-

tions, investment or network requirements," said COAI, whose members include Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea.

Telcom service providers are subject to regulatory obligations such as security, service quality, subscriber verification, anti-spam, strict compliances, and various audits.

OTT communication service providers, on the other hand, are not subjected to any form of regulation.

"This seriously dents the level playing field in the market," COAI said.

The association went on to say that telcos pay exorbitant levies and taxes in terms of license fee and other charges, while OTT communication service providers, who ride on telcos' networks, are not subjected to such levies, "thus

causing loss to the Government exchequer".

Moreover, OTT players consume massive bandwidth, exerting tremendous pressure on the network infrastructure established by the operators. The OTT players gain massive direct and indirect benefits without incurring any additional costs. "With advent of new technologies and advancement of the telecom ecosystem to entail such services/products, it is only logical that the new Telecom Bill brings OTT Communication services under a proper regulatory framework, as required for any legitimate sector," according to COAI.

If not, then the license conditions and regulatory obligations for the telcos too should be equally relaxed, it added.

## DLF to launch new properties worth ₹3,500 cr in 2nd half of FY23

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty major DLF plans to launch new projects worth Rs 3,500 crore during the second half of this fiscal, mainly in Gurugram and Panchkula as it seeks to tap a rising demand.

In an investors presentation, DLF informed that the company plans to launch residential projects across Gurugram and Panchkula by March 2023 after getting requisite approvals from authorities.

The company plans to launch around 3 million square feet area across residential projects. That apart, DLF has completed inventories worth Rs

3,222 crore and properties worth Rs 5,622 crore in the under-construction projects that have been launched.

"Product potential (near term) ~Rs 12,350 crore," DLF said in the presentation, after taking into account the inventories available for sales currently and projects to be launched in the second half of this fiscal year.

On operational performance, DLF said its sales bookings rose 62 per cent year-on-year during the April-September period to Rs 4,092 crore from Rs 2,526 crore in the year-ago period. DLF Ltd has given guidance of sales bookings at Rs 8,000 crore for the current 2022-23



financial year, a 10 per cent increase from the previous fiscal.

Its sales bookings rose to Rs 7,273 crore in 2021-22 fiscal. The same stood at Rs 3,084 crore in the previous year.

"We remain optimistic on the inherent growth potential in

the housing sector on the backdrop of rising aspirations of the communities for well-designed, high-quality products across established ecosystems," DLF said, adding that it has received good response to new products like low-rise independent floors across multiple markets.

It aims to continue this growth trajectory by continuously offering differentiated products across multiple segments.

The realty firm further said it would continue to focus on stronger cash generation through sustained momentum in sales of completed inventory along with new offerings.

Last week, DLF reported a 26 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at Rs 477.20 crore for the quarter ended September. Its profit stood at Rs 378.12 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The company's total income fell to Rs 1,360.50 crore in the second quarter of this fiscal. It was at Rs 1,556.53 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.

In a statement after results, DLF had said it experienced further consolidation across the industry in the backdrop of changing consumer preference towards quality offerings from large and credible players.

## Reliance Retail to expand biz in affordable toy segment through Rowan brand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



brand Rowan on its shelves but also from other brands, said an industry source.

Reliance Retail also has the iconic British toy retail brand Hamleys in its fold.

Hamleys is the world's oldest toy retailer and was acquired by Reliance in 2019, marking the first acquisition of a global retail brand by the company.

Hamleys would continue to operate in the premium space, while brand Rowan would help Reliance Retail to tap the mid-

premium and mass segment with its affordable offerings, the source said.

The unit value of toys will be much lower at Rowan stores, and the discounts offered will be higher. Hence, products will be more affordable, he added. Moreover, unlike Hamleys, the store size of Rowan stores will be much smaller, ideally measuring between 500-1,000 sq ft, he noted. "We also launched Rowan, which is a new format from Reliance as a toy store, which is a small format, typically around 500-1,000 sq ft in size, selling more affordable toys..." Reliance Retail Head of strategy and business development Gaurav Jain said.

## Govt extends deadline for ethanol production scheme

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The government has extended the deadline for the scheme which provides financial aid to molasses-based distilleries for enhancing ethanol production, by six months till April 21, 2023.

The decision has been taken to improve production and supply of ethanol under the Centre's Ethanol Blended with Petrol (EBP) programme.

The Department of Food and Public Distribution had earlier asked all distilleries to enhance ethanol production to make the programme successful.



Through the EBP, government aims to reduce pollution and increase value addition in the domestic sugar industry.

It has scaled up blending targets from 5 per cent to 10 per cent under it.

## Sebi fines 6 entities in Deutsche Mutual Fund front-running case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi has imposed penalties totalling Rs 15 lakh on six entities in a case pertaining to front-running the trades of Deutsche Mutual Fund, which is now known as DHFL Pramerica Mutual Fund. Those penalised by Sebi are — Kanchan Jena, Hemlata Dei Jena, Malati Lata Jena, Jayant Chhaparia, Abhishek Chhaparia and Progressive Share Brokers.

They have been directed to pay the fine within 45 days, according to two separate orders passed by Securities and Board of India (Sebi) on Friday.

Sebi found that the Fund Manager (FM) of Deutsche Mutual Fund (DMF) and his parents had employed a scheme to 'front run' the orders of the DMF and also were involved in every step that led to the fruition of the scheme, from the beginning till the withdrawal of the wrongful gain of the front running trades.

However, three sisters -- Kanchan Jena, Hemlata Dei Jena, Malati Lata Jena -- Jayant Chhaparia, Abhishek Chhaparia facilitated them in executing front-running trades during the investigation period from September 2014 and May 2015.

Front-running, which involves dealing in stocks based on insider knowledge of a future transaction, is considered one of the most serious offences by the



Sebi.

Notwithstanding the finding that the FM and parents of FM were effectively controlling the trading and bank accounts of noticees 1-4 (Jena sisters and Jayant Chhaparia) the same will not absolve absolutely the noticees. Sebi noted that the noticees cannot be absolved absolutely for their 'omission' and utter negligence to act in a prudent manner which enabled FM and parents of FM to use their trading and bank accounts as mule account sets, to execute those front running trades in a fraudulent manner during the investigation periods.

Further, Abhishek Chhaparia by giving misleading statements regarding trades done and by providing his mobile number for facilitating the opening of the trading account of his father Jayant Chhaparia for participation in the scheme to front run the trades of DMF shows that he

was also an agreeable participant to the front running scheme, the regulator said.

Also, the watchdog noted that Progressive Share Brokers had not acted with due skill, care and diligence while opening of trading account of Malati Lata Jena, which enabled the manipulators to carry out the nefarious activities by masking their identity. It was noted that the subject account was used to front run the trades of Deutsche Mutual Fund.

Accordingly, the regulator levied a fine of Rs 5 lakh on Jena sisters as well as Rs 5 lakh on Chhaparias for violating PFUTP (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) norm and another Rs 5 lakh on Progressive Share Brokers for flouting stock brokers' rule.

In December 2021, the fund manager of Deutsche Mutual Fund and his parents settled the case with Sebi after paying nearly Rs 5 crore.



# ‘BARCA MUST SHOW THEY CAN COMPETE’

AP ■ BARCELONA

Barcelona coach Xavi Hernandez said on Tuesday his team had to try and beat Bayern Munich this week even if their Champions League fate is already sealed by kick-off.

The Catalans could be eliminated if Inter Milan beat Czech minnows Viktoria Plzen at home before they face Bayern on Wednesday.

"We'll watch (that game) on television all together in the dressing room," said Xavi. "Regardless of what happens in Milan, we have to show that we can compete."

"We are extremely motivated to show we can compete with them, we will go out with the same intensity we showed against Villarreal and Athletic Bilbao. We have to match them."

Barcelona have only won one of their first four Champions League matches and were beaten 2-0 in Munich in September despite putting in a good performance and creating several chances.

The German champions have beaten Barcelona each of the last five times they have faced each other, including 8-2 in Lisbon and two 3-0 wins last season in the group phase.

After heavy summer expenditure, including signing striker Robert Lewandowski from Bayern, Barcelona had hoped to be able to demonstrate they could challenge for the Champions League.

Xavi said he would not change the starting line-up to rest key players if Inter won and Barcelona were knocked



out.

"I have already decided the team," he said. "It will only change if there is an injury or problem, it's not related to what happens in Milan."

Barcelona were knocked out in the

group phase last season and dropped into the Europa League, where they were beaten by eventual winners Eintracht Frankfurt in the quarter-finals.

"If in the end we wind up in the

Europa League we will go out to compete like lions and try to win it," added Xavi.

"I am always positive, but when it's no longer in your hands, you aren't so positive, it's logical, it's human."

## Lukaku set for Inter return in Plzen decider

AP ■ MILAN

Romelu Lukaku should be available for Inter's Milan's Champions League clash with Viktoria Plzen which could seal the Italians' place in the last 16, coach Simone Inzaghi said on Tuesday.

Lukaku has been out with a thigh injury for two months but Inzaghi said the Belgium forward should be on the bench at the San Siro, where a win will guarantee Inter's passage to the knockout stages.

"If Lukaku confirms what we have seen in training yesterday and recent days he will be in the squad, he has been working with a lot of enthusiasm and desire," Inzaghi told reporters.

"We still have today's training to go, but he is clearly on his way back. he's an hugely important player for us who has been out for two month. He's been a big loss."

Lukaku's return is also good news for Belgium coach Roberto Martinez with the Red Devils' opening World Cup fixture against Canada just under a month away.

Inter can qualify for Group C on Wednesday evening thanks in large part to the four points they took from their two previous matches against Barcelona.

Inzaghi's team sit second in the group and lead the Catalans by three points with two games remaining after beating them at the San Siro



and then drawing a thrilling encounter 3-3 at the Camp Nou a fortnight ago.

Having the better of the head-to-head record between the two teams would decide final placings in Inter's favour should the pair finish level on points.

Inter take to the field in

one of two early kick offs on Wednesday and will eliminate Barca, who host group leaders Bayern Munich, if they claim the three points as expected.

However even if they fail to win they will still go into the last 16 draw on November 7 if Barca don't better Inter's result.

## Emery admits 'cold, calculating' decision to leave Villarreal for Villa

AP ■ BIRMINGHAM

New Aston Villa coach Unai Emery said on Tuesday he had to be "cold and calculating" when deciding to leave Villarreal for the Premier League side.

The Spanish coach agreed to take over at Villa Park after Steven Gerrard was sacked, ending a successful two-and-a-half year spell at Villarreal.

Emery guided the team to the Europa League trophy in 2021 and took the team to the Champions League semi-final last season, but Villa activated his release clause on Monday to take him to England.

"When you take these decisions you have to be cold and calculating, and stick to the contracts that we sign," Emery told reporters at Villarreal's training ground, asked if he was leaving them in the lurch.

"I have the maturity and experienced to take decisions firmly and with respect."

The coach said he was grateful to Villarreal, from the board to the supporters, for his time at the club.

"I have been myself here. They gave me the conditions to be myself, at my best version. You must keep having challenges, I had a home at Villarreal," Emery said.

"I called Fernando (Roig, the president), on Friday to tell him the situation and that I wanted to be in charge for Sunday's game and on Monday we would meet. Yesterday it all



happened."

Roig thanked Emery for his work but admitted that his decision took the club by surprise.

"It caught us on the back foot," Roig said.

"We have a great relationship. It's been a bit tough for us. But against adversity and change we have always shown strength. Today is about Unai Emery, his work and thanking him."

"We've been left in a bad position but we thank you and wish you the best."

Villarreal are close to appointing former Barcelona and Real Betis coach Quique Setien as a replacement, according to reports in Spain.

They face Hapoel Be'er Sheva in the UEFA Conference League on Thursday, with director of football Miguel Angel Tena set to take the reins as interim coach.

## SINDHU BACK IN TOP 5, PRANNOY MOVES TO 12TH IN LATEST BWF RANKINGS

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu and Thomas Cup winner HS Prannoy gained a spot each to reach the 5th and 12th positions in women's and men's singles world rankings released on Tuesday.

Sindhu, who has not played any tournament since winning gold in the Commonwealth Games in August due to an ankle injury, possesses 87218 points from 26 tournaments.

This is after three years that Sindhu, a former world no. 2, has regained her place in the top 5. The former world champion



from Hyderabad resumed her training on Monday after recovering from the injury.

In the men's singles, Prannoy continued his ascendency after a pre-quarterfinal finish at the Denmark Open Super 750. The 30-year-old, who is ranked number one in the Race to Guangzhou ranking, has 64,330 points from 26 tournaments.

CWG champion Lakshya Sen and CWG bronze medallist Kidambi Srikanth are static at number 8 and 11. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who also claimed a maiden gold in Birmingham, too held on

to their number 8 rankings in the men's doubles.

The pairing of MR Arjun and Dhruv Kapila jumped two places to grab the 19th spot.

Women's doubles pair of Treasa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand and mixed doubles pair of Ishaan Bhatnagar and Tanisha Crasto achieved a new career-high ranking of 27 and 29 respectively.

However, women's doubles combination of Ashwini Ponappa and N Sikki Reddy dropped to 24th, while two-time CWG gold medallist Saina Nehwal slipped a place to 33rd in the women's singles rankings.

## Harmanpreet named captain for India's FIH Pro league

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Harmanpreet Singh was on Tuesday appointed captain of a 22-member Indian men's hockey team for the season opening FIH Pro League matches against Spain and New Zealand in Bhubaneswar. Manpreet Singh has been named as his deputy.

India are scheduled to open their campaign against New Zealand on October 28 and will take on Spain on October 30. The hosts will play their second tie against New Zealand on November 4 and face Spain on November 6.

While Harmanpreet will lead the team, he will be ably assisted by the experienced midfielder Manpreet.

"We are continuing to expand the leadership skills of the group with

Harmanpreet Singh being selected as captain for these first four games," chief coach Graham Reid said in a release.

The team will also see some fresh faces in Mohd Raheel Mouseen, who was part of India's victorious outing in the FIH Hockey 5's earlier this year and S Karthi, who played his maiden tournament for India at the Asia Cup Jakarta.

"We have chosen an experienced squad to play the first two rounds of Pro League starting this weekend in Bhubaneswar. Given that, we also have two new players playing in the Pro League."

"Mohammed Raheel will make his debut in the 11-a-side format after strong performances including Leading Goal Scorer and Player of the Tournament at the FIH 5's tournament



in Lausanne in June and at the recent National Games in Rajkot."

The team includes goalkeepers Krishan Bahadur Pathak and PR Sreejesh.

Among defenders Jarmanpreet Singh, Surender Kumar, Harmanpreet Singh, Amit Rohidas, Jugraj Singh, Mandeep Mor and Nilam Sanjeep Xess have been selected.

Midfielders Sumit, Manpreet Singh, Hardik Singh, Moirangthem Rabi-chandra Singh, Shamsheer Singh, Rajkumar Pal and Mohd Raheel Mouseen have been picked to represent India.

In the forwardline, S Karthi has been rewarded for his performance in the Asia Cup held in Jakarta earlier this year. He will play alongside experienced forwards Mandeep Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Abhishek and Sukhjeet Singh.

All matches will be held at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium, which will also host the men's World Cup in January next year.

## Aussies scrape in, but feel at home at World Cup in Qatar

AP ■ MELBOURNE

There was a big song and dance about how Australia scraped into the World Cup.

A so-called Wiggles dance made replacement goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne a public enemy in Peru, with his flailing arms and legs as he prepared to make saves in the penalty shootout becoming a meme as the Socceroos secured one of the last spots in Qatar.

With so much focus on Redmayne's routine in the last-ditch intercontinental playoff, two important elements of that victory following a game that finished 0-0 were overshadowed: Australia earned a place in soccer's marquee event for the fifth consecutive time, and did it by playing 80% of their qualifying games away from home.

Tough border laws meant the Socceroos didn't host any international games for more than two years. And so 16 of



their 20 qualifiers were on the road in an extra-long campaign that started in September 2019 and culminated in Qatar in June with a 2-1 win over United Arab Emirates in an Asian playoff game that gave them the shot at Peru.

The Aussies are already comfortable with the condi-

tions in Qatar, where they were unbeaten in four qualifiers for 2022 and where they've won 10, drawn three and lost two games since 2008.

The Socceroos will open Group D against defending World Cup champion France in a familiar situation: Australia lost to France 2-1 in its open-

ing group game four years ago in Russia. The Australians then play Tunisia before taking on Denmark - another group rival in 2018.

### ROAD WARRIORS

Players in the Australian squad are scattered around leagues on four continents, so long-distance travel for national team duties is a regular part of the deal.

Having 13 qualifying games in the Middle East this time around, mainly in Kuwait, cut down on travel time for the bulk of players based in Europe and Asia and allowed for more quality time when in camp.

The Australians had 13 wins, including 11 in a row, and four draws in the 20 qualifying matches. Home-and-away losses to Japan in the last round and a 1-0 loss against Saudi Arabia in Jeddah cost Australia an automatic spot in Qatar, forcing them down the playoff route.

## Lionel Messi to lead Argentina at World Cup

AP ■ BUENOS AIRES

Anging but still one of the best players on the planet, Lionel Messi will lead Argentina in his fifth - and possibly - last World Cup.

And with him, Argentina certainly has a chance to win its third title.

"I don't know whether we are big favorites or not, but I believe Argentina is always a favorite for its history, what it means and even more now for how we got here," the 35-year-old Messi said in a recent interview.

Messi helped the South American country end its 28-year title drought when Argentina won the Copa America in 2021. It was Messi's first major title for the national team.

The team has also set a national record by going unbeaten in 35 straight matches.

Argentina will play its opening match in Qatar in Group C against Saudi Arabia on Nov. 22. The team will face Mexico four days later and then take on Poland on Nov. 30.

### THE ARCHITECT

Few believed Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni would succeed after he took over four years ago with little experience on the job. He had coached youth teams in Mallorca, where he lives, and was an assistant to Jorge Sampaoli at Sevilla, and later



at Argentina.

But under Scaloni, Argentina finally won a title again and, in June, broke its unbeaten streak record with a 3-0 win over European champion Italy at Wembley Stadium.

Scaloni brought in new talent, including goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez, defender Cristian Romero and midfielders Leandro Paredes and Rodrigo De Paul. He also rallied Messi and veterans Nicolás Otamendi and Ángel Di María around

him.

The 44-year-old coach broke away from the days of "Messi-dependence." The team is solid on both ends of the field and hasn't trailed in a match since the beginning of 2020.

"Today there's no team dominating 70-80% of a match ... There's moments in which you have to fall back, work, feel that you are at a hard time," Scaloni said. "The good thing about this team is that it knows how to suffer."



# OZ WIN TO STAY ALIVE

PTI ■ PERTH

Marcus Stoinis destroyed the Sri Lankan attack en route to scoring the fastest fifty by an Australian as the hosts got their T20 World Cup campaign back on track with a seven-wicket victory here on Tuesday.

Charith Asalanka's 38 not out off 25 balls helped Sri Lanka put up a fighting 157 for six after Australia put them in.

Sri Lanka fought hard before they were blown away by the brute force of Stoinis who remained on 59 off 18 balls as Australia romped home in 16.3 overs.

The all-rounder raced to a record half-century in 17 balls. His memorable knock included half a dozen sixes and four boundaries.

Despite losing fast bowler Binura Fernando to injury in the first over, Sri Lanka kept themselves in the game for a major part of Australia's chase.

The dangerous David Warner perished cheaply and skipper Aaron Finch was unable to break the shackles, increasing the pressure on the hosts.

Finch struggled to 24 off his first 35 balls and ended up with 31 off 42 balls.

Mitchell Marsh scored a run-a-ball 17 before Glenn Maxwell came up with a couple of sixes and fours in his 12-ball 23 to release some pressure. During his short stay,



Maxwell suffered a nasty blow on the right side of helmet grill while trying to pull a rising delivery from Lahiru Kumara.

The all-rounder fell attempting another big hit but substitute Ashen Bandara took a brilliant catch very close to the deep midwicket boundary to leave Sri Lanka at 89 for three in the 13th over.

While Finch struggled at the other end, Stoinis came in and produced a barrage of sixes and fours to effectively shut the door on Sri Lanka.

Stoinis, and the rest of the batters, targeted star Sri Lanka spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, who had a day to forget, leaking 53 runs in three overs.

Earlier, defending champions Australia produced a disciplined bowling effort for the majority of the innings before Asalanka propped up the total on a quick pitch.

The last four overs yielded 46 runs for Sri Lanka including a 20-run final over from Pat Cummins.

The left-handed Asalanka launched into Cummins in the

## My innings was unusual, poor: Finch

PTI ■ PERTH

Australia skipper Aaron Finch termed his knock "unusual" and "poor" after struggling to 31 off 42 balls in his side's seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the T20 World Cup here on Tuesday.

Even as Finch was unable to break the shackles, Marcus Stoinis recorded the fastest fifty by an Australian to help his side overhaul a target of 158 in 16.3 overs. Stoinis raced to an unbeaten 18-ball 59, having reached his half century in 17 deliveries.

But Finch, who usually looks to attack, seemed to be batting on a different pitch.

"Very happy (with the result). My innings was unusual, poor. I couldn't hit the ball," Finch said at the presentation ceremony.

Defending champions Australia entered the game after their humbling defeat to New Zealand in their opener.

"The way we approached with the bat was fine. It was seaming a long way there, if we could get through that, it was important to set-up the back end of the innings.

"It would've been nice if I could've kicked on earlier and made the chase a bit easier but all in all, pretty clinical, I think with the ball as well."

Charith Asalanka's 38 not out off 25 balls helped Sri Lanka put up a fighting 157 for six after Australia put them in.

Sri Lanka fought hard before they were blown away by the brute force of Stoinis.

Asked about the powerplay,

Finch said, "They bowled the hard length, it was tough. Such a big ground, hard to stand and deliver. Nice to get the two points."

Speaking about Stoinis' knock, the Australian captain said, "It was a pretty special innings. To come out with that intent is the main thing. When you walk out to bat and have that presence of the crease, that's half the battle in T20 cricket."

"When you got the skill that he has got, it's a good combo."

Playing in front of his home crowd, Stoinis said he was nervous to start with.

"To be honest I was really nervous today being at home in Perth with lots of family and friends here but really happy we put on a bit of a clinic today."

## Paine accuses South Africa of ball tampering

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Former Australia captain Tim Paine has claimed in his book that South Africans were involved in ball tampering in the Johannesburg Test which was played a few days after the infamous sandpaper-gate scandal in Cape Town that rocked Australian and world cricket in 2018.

The fallout of the Cape Town Test, the third of the four-match series, was huge as it led to one-year bans on then Australian captain Steve Smith and his deputy David Warner.

Cameron Bancroft was suspended for nine months by Cricket Australia for his role in the scandal. It also prompted a cultural review into Australian cricket.

However, Paine claimed in his new book that the Proteas had also indulged in ball tampering in the fourth Test at New Wanderers Stadium, Johannesburg.

"I saw it happen in the fourth Test of that series," Paine wrote in his new autobiography 'The Paid Price', according to

Australian media.

"Think about that. After everything that had happened in Cape Town, after all the headlines and bans and carry on.

"I was standing at the bowlers' end in the next Test when a shot came up on the screen of a South African player at mid-off having a huge crack at the ball," he added.

Paine was part of the Australian playing XI in Cape Town (March 22-26) and then captained the side in Johannesburg (March 30-April 03).

Paine, who stepped down from Test captaincy last year, also alleged that the incident was covered up by the broadcasters.

"The television director, who had played an active role in catching out Cam (Cameron Bancroft), immediately pulled the shot off the screen.

"We went to the umpires about it, which might seem a bit poor, but we'd been slaughtered and were convinced they'd been up to it since the first Test.

"But the footage got lost. As



it would," Paine said.

The wicketkeeper admitted he couldn't quite believe what he was seeing on TV, denying

the speculation that the dressing room was aware of the plan (of sandpaper-gate scandal).

"Cricketers keep a lot to

themselves, even in the happiest teams. Coaches and support staff do the same," Paine wrote.

"Everyone out there was shocked when they looked up on the big screen and saw Cameron Bancroft with a piece of sandpaper in his hand. I was stunned. We all were."

The 37-year-old said that ball tampering was commonplace in cricket adding that he had seen players "taping small pieces of sandpaper onto their fingers" in the past.

Paine felt the team should have taken more responsibility and supported the trio of Smith, Bancroft and Warner in the aftermath of the scandal.

"Steve and Cam (Cameron) were alone. Things were tense and horrible. I think Davey felt abandoned and that nobody was looking out for him.

"Everyone was a part of it to some degree - would it have worked out better for those three players if we had owned it as a team? I think it would have," Paine wrote.

"On reflection, all three of them should have had more support.

## To hell with spirit of game: Hardik on 'Mankading'

PTI ■ DUBAI

To hell with the spirit of the game, we need to stop making a fuss about this," Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya is very clear in his head how the run out of the batter, backing up far at the non-striker's end should be perceived.

Once considered unfair play, although legal, in the gentleman's game, the ICC has now termed these kind of dismissals as 'run out'. Since October 1, it no longer sits in the 'unfair play' section of its rule book.

However, the debate continues if such dismissals are against the 'spirit of game'.

"Personally, I have no problem with it (running out for backing up far at the non-striker's end), said Pandya, who played a key role in India's dramatic four-wicket win over arch-rivals Pakistan in their T20 World Cup open-



ing match.

"If I am walking out (of the crease) and someone runs me out, that is my mistake. He (bowler who runs him out) is using the rule to his advantage, that is fine, that's not a big deal," he said in an ICC Review Podcast, recorded before the T20 World Cup.

The issue became a hot topic of discussion when Deepti Sharma ran out Charlie

Dean at the non-striker's end for leaving her crease too early and handed India a historic 3-0 clean sweep in women's ODI series in England, last month.

Such run-outs are known as Mankading, harking back to the first such dismissal crafted by Vinoo Mankad when he ran out Bill Brown at the non-striker's end in this fashion twice in the 1947-48 Test series against Australia.

"We need to stop making a fuss about this (running out at non-striker's end). It is a rule as simple as that. To hell with the spirit of the game," Pandya said

He also said match-ups between particular opposing players do not work in the shortest format.

"Match-ups, honestly, they are over-rated. I don't mind saying that. In Test and ODI cricket, it might work but I don't believe it in T20 cricket. I am never worried about match-ups."

## Zimbabwe coach slams play in 'ridiculous' WC conditions

Zimbabwe coach Dave has slammed the umpires' decision to carry on with their Super 12 match even in "ridiculous" amounts of rain.



AFP ■ AUSTRALIA

In a weather-hit stop-start match in Hobart, South Africa were on the brink of victory in their revised chase of 64 in seven overs when a final spell of showers forced a washout.

Quinton de Kock with an unbeaten 47 off 18 balls had steered the total to 51 for no loss in three overs but South Africa and Zimbabwe shared a point each in Group 2 on Monday.

"I don't think we should have even bowled a ball, to be fair," said Houghton.

"But the umpires are the guys making those decisions out in the middle and they seemed to think it was fit to play. I disagree with them, but there's not much I can do off the field."

Zimbabwe won the toss and elected to bat but their innings only began after a rain

delay of more than two hours and 30 minutes and the match was reduced to nine overs a side.

Zimbabwe managed 79-5, before De Kock replied with a flurry of fours and a six before rain arrived again, forcing the umpires to cut overs further.

"The rain had got so heavy at one stage, it was ridiculous," said Houghton.

"For most of the evening it was misty with mizzle, but it got to the stage where we could hear it thumping on the roof in the dugout.

"To me that's no longer mizzle and drizzle -- that's time to get off the field.

"And the field was wet when we started, it was wet when South Africa fielded, so they were difficult conditions for both sides.

"But it just got more and more wet as we bowled. I don't think the conditions were right

to carry on playing."

Zimbabwe fast bowler Richard Ngarava slipped and had to be taken off injured.

Houghton said: "He's lying in the changing room with a bunch of ice strapped to his ankle. Obviously we're not too happy about the fact he's not in a great space for bowling at the moment."

South Africa coach Mark Boucher said Zimbabwe would have wanted to carry on if they had got into a similar position as the Proteas.

"We bowled with a ball that was quite wet as well," he said. "We were in a very good position. You walk away from this game thinking we were hard done by."

The washout has left South Africa in a tricky spot in a group which includes heavyweights India and Pakistan. Only two teams from the group make the semi-finals.

## No complacency against Ireland: Buttler

Captain Jos Buttler warned his strongly fancied England side on Tuesday they risk getting "hurt" if they underestimate Ireland at the Twenty20 World Cup

AFP ■ MELBOURNE

England launched their title charge by beating Afghanistan by five wickets in Perth on Saturday, with their bowling and fielding outstanding.

Sam Curran was the star with an incredible 5-10 -- the first England bowler to take five wickets in a T20I.

In contrast Ireland, who came through the preliminary round, were thrashed by nine wickets by Sri Lanka in Hobart.

Despite the apparent gulf in class -- England are ranked world number two and Ireland 12 -- there will be no complacency with only the top two from the six-team group progressing to the semi-finals.

"We give them great respect, we expect a really tough game," Buttler said ahead of Wednesday's clash at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

"We'll prepare well, we'll try and turn up on the day and assess conditions, see what's in front of us, try and use our talent as best we can on the day to put pressure on them, and try and win the game."

With Group 1 games to come against defending cham-



pions Australia, last year's beaten finalists New Zealand and 2014 winners Sri Lanka, there could be a temptation to rest players or rotate bowlers.

But Buttler was adamant it was important to field the best team possible and avoid any mishaps.

"In such a short tournament, in must-win games pretty much every time, we try and get our best team on... the best team on the day due to conditions, opposition," he said.

"Any time you take things for granted or you don't respect the opposition is when you can get hurt."

"I think in T20 cricket especially, there's the one format where it's as level a playing field as any."

Rain could play a part on Wednesday with an 80 percent chance of showers forecast.

Buttler said he was confi-

## England recall Roy for Australia ODI series

AFP ■ LONDON

Opening batsman Roy was dropped from the England squad currently competing in the T20 World Cup in Australia and removed from the list of centrally contracted players following a run of low scores at both international and domestic level.

He endured an especially miserable time in The Hundred, averaging 8.5 over six innings for Oval Invincibles and making three ducks.

able to react quickly to those kinds of things. You have a little idea of things you might do if those kinds of things happen," he said of the weather.

"But again, don't want to



The 32-year-old had previously been an integral part of England's white-ball sides and featured in the XI that won the 2019 50-over World Cup final against New

Zealand at Lord's.

Roy said last week he was "gutted" and "motivated to say the least" about his axing as he signalled his determination to regain his place.

With England white-ball captain Jos Buttler batting down the order in ODIs and Jonny Bairstow injured, Roy could now open alongside Phil Salt in the three-match series against Australia that starts in Adelaide on November 17, just four days after the scheduled T20 World Cup final.

get too preoccupied with what-ifs. When a situation arises, let's try and adapt as fast as we can, try and make quick decisions that we feel is in the best interest.