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RAIPUR, TUESDAY DECEMBER 5, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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Parliament Opens up to a Warm Winter

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
NEW DELHI

Against the backdrop of a massive BJP surge in three states of the Hindi heartland, the Winter Session of Parliament started smoothly on Monday. While the much-anticipated tabling of the Ethics Panel report regarding the alleged disqualification of TMC member Mahua Moitra from the Lok Sabha over the cash for query case was deferred, AAP Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha received reprieve as his suspension was revoked by the Upper House chairman, Jagdeep Dhankar. Chadha, who was under suspension for violating procedures for recommending names of MPs to a Select Committee without their consent, thanked Dhankar, members of the House and above all the Supreme Court which had advised him to 'talk' to the chairman in this regard. Echoes of the BJP's recent victory in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan also resounded through the Session as the ruling party Members of the Lower House began the Session with shouts of "Modi sarkaar, teesri baar" (Modi Government for the third time). Members of Opposition parties showing allegiance to the INDIA Bloc, including TMC member Mahua Moitra, alleged a breach of

MPS CONGREGATE IN NEW PARLIAMENT



BJP MPs flash victory sign on the first day of the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Monday

PTI

Parliamentary rules after a media report cited Ethics Committee findings. "TMC MP alleged a very serious breach of Rule 275(2) contained in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Lok Sabha. The draft report by the Committee on Ethics regarding the Unethical Conduct by Mahua Moitra,

MP, was accessed by a media channel on November 8, a day before it was to be placed before the Committee," the TMC MP alleged. The report was listed for presentation after the Question Hour. But it was not tabled till around 1 pm when the House was adjourned for lunch. As soon as the House

reassembled at 12 noon after an adjournment, Ministers laid papers, and the three reports on Bills seeking to replace criminal laws were presented. However, Kirit Solanki, who was presiding over the proceedings, skipped mentioning the report listed as item number five in Monday's list of business. TMC leader Sudip

Bandyopadhyaya asked the Chair in the Lower House as to why the item was not taken up. Congress' K Suresh and the RSP's N K Premchandran also raised the same question but there was no reply. Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said later that for reasons best known to the committee, the report has not

been tabled. He said there would have been some reason which 'forced them' not to table the report on Monday. "I think today or tomorrow, someday it will be tabled," he said outside the Parliament House. On day one of the proceedings, the Rajya Sabha passed the Post Office Bill, 2023, while the Lok Sabha cleared the Advocates (Amendment) Bill 2023. The Post Office Bill, 2023 seeks to repeal the 125-year-old Indian Post Office Act and consolidate and amend the law relating to post offices in the country. According to the proposed legislation, "the Central Government may, by notification, empower any officer to intercept, open or detain any item in the interest of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, emergency or public safety, or upon the occurrence of any contravention of any of the provisions of any law for the time being in force". Replying to the discussion for the consideration of the Bill in the Upper House of Parliament, Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw explained the provision for interception. The Advocates (Amendment) Bill 2023, which aims at regulating the legal profession by a single Act and seeks to target "touts", after an elaborate discussion.

Election after effect Sensex on record high



PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty soared more than 2 per cent to settle at record high levels on Monday, marking the fifth straight day of gains as the BJP's victory in Assembly polls in three States boosted investor sentiment. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,383.93 points, or 2.05 per cent, to close at a lifetime high of 68,865.12. The index touched an intra-day record peak of 68,918.22. The barometer logged its biggest single-day jump since May 20, 2022. The total market capitalisation of BSE listed companies surged by ₹5.81 lakh crore to ₹343.48 lakh crore. The broader Nifty also climbed 418.90 points, or 2.07 per cent, to hit its all-time

closing high of 20,686.80. On the 50-stock benchmark Nifty, 44 closed with gains. Analysts said the BJP's clear majority in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh State polls strengthened the positive sentiment built up last week following robust macroeconomic numbers and unabated foreign fund inflows. Besides, crude oil prices hovering below USD 80 per barrel fuelled investors sentiment, they said. Among the Sensex firms, ICICI Bank and SBI led the index with the maximum gains of 4.68 per cent and 3.99 per cent, respectively. Other major gainers were Larsen & Toubro, Kotak Mahindra Bank and HDFC Bank. On the other hand, Wipro and Tata Motors defied the trend and traded in negative.

Modi asks Opposition to end negativity

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

Buoyed by the massive success in the just-concluded Assembly polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Monday, asked the Opposition not to vent its frustration over the defeat in the Assembly polls inside Parliament during the ensuing Winter Session. Instead, he urged them to move forward, leaving behind 'negativity,' and sought cooperation in meaningful debates. "The country has rejected negativity. We always have dialogue with Opposition friends at the start of Session, we always seek cooperation of everyone. This time also all such processes have been completed," said Modi, addressing media outside Parliament building ahead of beginning of the Winter Session. This 'temple of democracy' is a very important platform for people's aspirations and



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses the media on the first day of the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Monday

PTI

strengthening foundation of a developed India, Modi said and urged all members to come well prepared and hold thorough discussions on Bills so that good suggestions come to the fore. But if discussion does not take place, the country misses those things, Modi said.

"If I speak on basis of the Assembly poll results, this is a golden opportunity for friends in Opposition. Instead of making plans for venting frustration over defeat, they should learn from this defeat, leaving behind the habit of negativity of the last nine years, if they move forward with positivity this Session, the country will change its perspective towards them. A new door could open for them," he said, adding that "they are in the Opposition but still I am giving them good advice." The Prime Minister urged the Opposition to come forward with a positive mindset. "I say on the basis of my experience, I would say change your (Opposition) direction a bit, leave the habit of opposing for the sake of opposing. Support constructive things that are in country's interest, debate the shortcomings that are there and you will see that the hatred among the people over such things, that may

change into love," he said. The Prime Minister said, "In 2047, the country does not want to wait long for becoming developed. This is the feeling in every section of the society. Respecting this sentiment, all members should take forward Parliament proceedings, this is my request to them". In his remarks to the media, Modi said winters may be coming late but the political heat is increasing very fast. "Only yesterday the election results of four States have come, the results are very encouraging. These are encouraging for those who are committed to the welfare of the common person of the country, who are dedicated to the bright future of the country," Modi said. He asserted that those who move forward on the principles of empowering the four castes — women, youth, farmers and the poor — ensure concrete policies for their future and last-mile delivery, receive full support of the people.

Cyclone Michaung unleashes fury in Chennai

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW
DELHI/CHENNAI

Life was thrown out of gear in Chennai and its neighbouring districts due to heavy rainfall caused by the severe cyclone Michaung, inundating the city, causing disruptions in flights and trains. Residents were startled when a video surfaced of a crocodile crossing a submerged road. The relentless downpour, reminiscent of the 2015 deluge, paralysed daily life, prompting authorities to declare a public holiday and dispatch rescue teams to aid a city besieged by torrential rains. As many as five people have died due to rain related incidents, including falling of



trees and electrocution here. Local trains have been cancelled and operations at Chennai airport have been suspended till Tuesday morning. The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has temporarily denied permission for devotees to take holy bath at Sri

Kapilathiratham waterfalls. In view of the cyclone, the Tamil Nadu Government has declared a public holiday on Tuesday for all educational institutions, Government and private offices, financial institutions and banks in Chennai, Tiruvallur and Kancheepuram districts.

Commuters found themselves stranded as suburban train and bus services remained affected. Heavily inundated roads posed a challenge to road users who were few and far. Power and internet disruptions compounded the city's challenges. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday spoke to the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry on the situation arising due to Cyclone Michaung and assured them of all necessary Central help. Shah also said adequate deployment of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel has already been made and additional teams are ready for further assistance.

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BJP starts Modi campaign at every booth for LS polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bharatiya Janata Party has started working towards organizing Modi campaign at every booth for the Lok Sabha elections as it is our resolve that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the people have blessed BJP with an overwhelming majority in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections and work will be done to complete the task in the Lok Sabha elections said Bharatiya Janata Party State President and MP Vishnudutt Sharma on Monday.



Sabha elections. Sharma said this while discussing with journalists in the state office on Monday. The workers have taken over the beginning of the Bharatiya Janata Party campaign with this resolution campaign. After reviewing, we will work on how we will win the elections in the booths where Bharatiya Janata Party has lost the elections and how we will increase the vote share by

10 percent in the booths where we have won by less votes. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with the blessings of the efficient strategy of Amit Shah, our leadership of the entire Bharatiya Janata Party of Madhya Pradesh, together with the team speed, 29 Lok Sabha seats out of 29 are in the bag of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Sharma said that with all our hard work we will win all the booths in the Lok Sabha elections. Modi campaign will run at 64523 booths of the state and it has been started. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, poor welfare schemes were launched which changed the life of every poor. The public

has blessed us to maintain the pace of development and poor welfare done by the double engine government and to fulfill our resolve to make developed Madhya Pradesh into golden Madhya Pradesh. The Bharatiya Janata Party government has been working for development and poor welfare and will continue to do so in future too. He said that the workers have done a wonderful job by playing their role as ideal workers. From Panna Pramukh to Panna Committee, Booth Committee, Mandal workers and teams from district to province have worked together. Best wishes to all the winning candidates, but the party stands with those who, due to some reason lost the election by a very small margin.

Process for formation of 16th assembly starts

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The process of formation of the sixteenth assembly is commences, election results have already declared. The Assembly Secretariat is fully prepared to welcome the elected members of the Assembly. This was said by AP Singh, Principal Secretary, Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly, after the review meeting of officers and employees in the Legislative Assembly today. The PS said that the Assembly Secretariat has a special place whose dignity we all have to maintain through our working behaviour. Besides, cooperation will be provided to the newly elected members coming to the Assembly by treating them with respect and decency.



BJP leader Rameshwar Sharma being greeted by his supporters after his victory in the state assembly elections in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

Businessman attacked in Budhwara area by 3 miscreants

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A catering service owner was attacked by three masked miscreants who opened fire and attacked with sharp edged weapons in broad daylight in the state capital on Sunday; victim sustained grave injuries and is undergoing treatment. Police said that the miscreants fired five rounds at them and attacked the victim with swords. Three bullets hit the businessman in his back, below his waist and in his hand. He has been admitted to a private hospital in critical condition. CCTV video of the incident has surfaced. Before the attack, the accused had sent an audio message demanding extortion money of Rs 1 crore and was also told that if

money would not be provided they would attack on December 3 and threatened to kill him. The person sending the message has described himself as aide of a Dubai company. On December 3, the date mentioned in the audio, for not paying the extortion money, the businessman was shot inside his shop. The victim Nawaz Riaz was shot in the back, below the waist and in the hand. Three masked miscreants entered the Taj Tent House shop located in Budhwara area and opened fire at the victim. Victim's elder brother Faraz said that there is an old dispute going on with Aamir alias Barf and his brother Zohan regarding our shop. Aamir is a habitual criminal, many serious crimes like

attempt to murder and smuggling of MDM drugs are registered against him and is a watch list criminal of Talaiya police. He was recently released after serving three years in jail. According to Faraz, we had bought the shop three years ago. Aamir claims that he had paid the earnest money for the shop, whereas the person who sold the shop to us did not provide any such information. He wants us to vacate the shop, otherwise give him Rs 1 crore. Recently, he had beaten his cousin over these matters. We had also lodged an FIR against Aamir. Since then, threats were being received continuously. There was fear that we would be attacked. Asked for help from the police, but the complaint was not taken seriously. An audio message came on

WhatsApp on Nawaz's mobile. The bully revealed his name as Naseem Banne Khan. Called himself a goon of station Bajaria. He said, 'You are people with money. You have a lot of money. We are gangsters. Our job is to make people aware of death and also to kill them if necessary. The head of the gang we are associated with has ordered us to attack you on December 3'. Talaiya police station in-charge CB Rathore said that the victim has expressed suspicion of orchestrating the attack on Aamir alias Barf. The miscreants are also being traced through CCTV footage. The threatening audio has also been examined. On the basis of another complaint application given earlier, another case of harassment has been registered against Aamir.

Congress to discuss its defeat in polls

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The Congress has convened a meeting of all 230 candidates on Tuesday to discuss the defeat in the Madhya Pradesh assembly elections and the reasons behind the poor performance, party leaders said. The meeting will also discuss how to strengthen the party and the way forward, a leader said. MP Congress president Kamal Nath is scheduled to address the meeting. Senior leaders Digvijaya Singh, Suresh Pachouri and others will discuss the causes of the party's debacle with the participants, sources said on Monday. The Congress has called a meeting on Tuesday of all the 230 candidates who contested the November 17 assembly polls," MP media cell chief KK Mishra confirmed.

Dense fog witnessed in many districts

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The weather conditions remained cold in Madhya Pradesh on Monday, dense fog was witnessed in many districts in the morning. Light rain occurred in many areas. In Shivpuri, more than an inch of rainfall was recorded while it continued to drizzle in Gwalior. Gwalior was the coldest city in the state on Monday. Here the day temperature dropped by 5.1 degrees. The minimum temperature was recorded at 20.1 degrees. The minimum was 24.9 degrees in Bhopal with a drop of 4.9 degrees, 26.2 degrees in Indore, 29.4 degrees in Jabalpur and 23.8 degrees in Ujjain. Cyclonic storm 'Michong'

The minimum was 24.9 degrees in Bhopal with a drop of 4.9 degrees, 26.2 degrees in Indore, 29.4 degrees in Jabalpur and 23.8 degrees in Ujjain

in the Bay of Bengal is likely to affect Shahdol, Jabalpur division and surrounding areas of Madhya Pradesh. It may rain in most of the districts of the state including the capital. 'Michong' will hit Andhra coast on December 5. The days will be sunny and nights will be cold for the next 5 to 6 days. The rains will start again from December 5 to 11. The coldest night in

Madhya Pradesh on Sunday was 13.8 degrees in Pachmarhi. The minimum temperature in Khargone was 14.2 degrees. The highest minimum temperature was 20.4 degrees in Narmadapuram. In Bhopal the maximum temperature increased by 7 degrees in a single day. The temperature on Saturday was 22.8 degrees Celsius. It came down to 29.8 degrees on Sunday. It was 2.1 degrees more than normal. In Indore, the mercury was recorded at 28.2 degrees after an increase of 3.9 degrees, in Gwalior it was 25.2 degrees, in Ujjain after an increase of 5.1 degrees the temperature was recorded at 29.5 degrees and in Jabalpur it was 28.1 degrees.



BJP workers celebrate the party's victory in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan state assembly elections, in Bhopal on Monday.

Pioneer photo

Dr Bhavya gets first prize for research excellence at NAPTICON 2023

IRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

Dr Bhavya, a Junior Resident from the Department of Pharmacology has been awarded First prize in the Oral presentation on "Evaluation of effect of mood stabilizers and antipsychotics on cognition in patients with bipolar disorder 1- A prospective observational Study" at Annual National Conference of National Association of Pharmacology & Therapeutics (NAPTICON 2023). The awarded study was based on thesis topic, "Evaluation of effect of pharmacological treatment on cognition in patients with bipolar disorder 1- A prospective observational Study conducted under the guidance of Dr Ajay Shukla, Associate professor, Department of Pharmacology, Dr Shubham Atal, Associate Professor, Department of Pharmacology & Dr Abhijit Rozatkar, Additional Professor, Department of Psychiatry. The study was conducted with the collabo-

The awarded study was based on thesis topic, "Evaluation of effect of pharmacological treatment on cognition in patients with bipolar disorder

ration of Department of Pharmacology & Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS Bhopal. Dr Bhavya also received third prize in NAPTICON 2023, organized by the Department of Pharmacology & Therapeutics, King George's Medical University, Lucknow in association with National Association of Pharmacology & Therapeutics on 1st& 2nd December 2023. Executive Director, AIIMS Bhopal, Prof. Dr Ajai Singh congratulated him on this achievement.

Folk Instrument of Uttarakhand on display

IRISH SHARMA ■ BHOPAL

Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Vithi Sankul, today inaugurated its monthly exhibit for December 2023. The exhibit, titled "Hudka, a Folk Instrument of Uttarakhand," showcases the hourglass-shaped musical instrument, which is a traditional folk instrument of the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand. Abhay Patil, PCCF and Managing Director, Forest Federation of Madhya Pradesh, was the chief guest at the inauguration. Amitabh Pandey, Director of the museum, and other officials and staff were present at the occasion. The December exhibit was curated by Museum Keeper, Rajendra Jhariya. He explained that the hudka is a large, hollow, hourglass-shaped drum that is played with the hands. It is used in a variety of festivals, celebrations, and folk songs and dances in the Kumaon region. The hudka is also an important part of the Jagar ritual, a traditional Kumaoni spiritual practice. During the Jagar, a hudka player accompanies a singer who tells stories about the lives of deities or ancestors.

President confers National Award to Commissioner Sandeep Rajak

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

President Droupadi Murmu honoured Madhya Pradesh Commissioner for Disabled Shri Sandeep Rajak with the National Awards for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, the Best State Disability Commissioner Award at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. On this occasion, Union Minister of Social Justice Dr. Virendra Kumar, Union Minister of State Pratima Bhowmik, Ramdas Athawale, K Narayan Swamy, Secretary Rajesh Agrawal, Joint Secretary Kishore Surwade were present on the dais. In the state, the outstanding work has been done in the country in effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, education, rehabilitation, employment, self-employment, sports, barrier-free environment for the Divyangans as well as making UDID cards. Rajak has continuously played an active role in resolving the problems of the Divyangans and implementing government schemes through mobile courts and advocacy meetings

Rajak has continuously played an active role in resolving the problems of the Divyangans and implementing government schemes through mobile courts

at the district level. Camps and public awareness programmes were organised in every district with the help of government and non-government organisations working in the state to provide benefits of schemes to the Divyangans. It is a matter of pride for the state that Rajak received the National Award from the President in Delhi on the International Day of Persons with Disabilities by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. Besides, MP state was also honoured for the implementation of Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan being greeted by Congress State President Kamal Nath and Congress MP and his son Nakul Nath after BJP's victory in the state assembly elections, at former residence in Bhopal on Monday. Pioneer photo

Dipin Jain conferred with Atal Shastra Award

PNS ■ INDORE

Dipin Jain, the Vice Chairman of the Prestige Education Foundation and Joint President of the Prestige Group of Industries, was awarded the prestigious MARKENOMY National Award, the 'Atal Shastra Award—Doyen of the Decade,' in recognition of his outstand-

ing contributions to industry, engineering, and management education. The award was presented to him by the NBCC Chairman at the 8th National Markenomy Award ceremony in New Delhi. Dr. S. Raman Iyer, director of the Prestige Institute of Management and Research, received the award on behalf of Jain. Dipin Jain expressed his gratitude to the jury of the

Markenomy National Award for this prestigious honor and dedicated this award to all his well-wishers, colleagues, and associates. Dr. Davish Jain, Chairman of the Prestige Education Foundation and Chancellor of Prestige University, as well as Himanshu Jain and Ketan Jain, Directors of the Prestige Education Foundation, congratulated Jain on this prestigious award.

Women’s reservation bill, a historic achievement, says Vice President

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday that passing the women’s reservation bill was a historic achievement.

“Giving reservation to women ... will lead to revolutionary developments,” he said.

He added that the true meaning of democracy was equal opportunities.

“There is no dearth of opportunities in the country today and the government is ready to provide every possible assistance.”

He said this at a programme at the Hidayatullah National Law University (HNLU) in Raipur.

Chhattisgarh Chief Justice and Vice Chancellor of HNLU,



Ramesh Sinha, was present.

He urged the youth to take maximum benefit of the

efforts being made by the government. He also extended an invitation to the students to

visit the new Parliament

house. This was Dhankhar’s first

“There is no dearth of opportunities in the country today and the government is ready to provide every possible assistance”

People trusted BJP for future building: Om Mathur



STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Chhattisgarh BJP in-charge Om Mathur on Monday said people have trusted the saffron party to build the future of the state. Mathur told the newly

elected MLAs that it was their foremost responsibility to work for the development of constituencies and for the prosperity of the state.

He was addressing the MLAs at the BJP headquarters here.

Union Health Minister and state election co-incharge

Mansukh Mandaviya said: “Everyone has to live up to the trust the public has expressed in you.”

The event was attended by former Chief Minister Raman Singh, MLAs Brijmohan Agrawal, Arun Sao, Bhawna Bohra, OP Choudhary and several others.

18 women elected in Chhattisgarh elections

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

As many as 18 women from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress have been elected to the 90-member Chhattisgarh Assembly.

The BJP winners are Bhawana Bohra from Pandariya, Renuka Singh from Baharatpur-Sonhat, Laxmi Rajwade from Bhatgaon, Shakuntala Singh Porte from Pratappur, Uddeshwari Paikra from Samri, Raimuni Bhagat from Jashpur, Gomati Sai from Pathalgaon and Lata Usendi from Kondagaon.

Similarly, Vidyawati Sidar from Lailunga, Uttari Jangade from Sarangarh, Chaturi Nand from Saraipali, Kavita Pran Lahare from Bilaigarh,



Ambika Markam from Sihawa, Sangeeta Sinha from Sanjari-Balod, Anila Bhediya from Daundi Lohara, Yashoda Nilamber Verma from Khairagarh, Harshita Swami Baghel from Dongargarh and

Savitri Manoj Mandavi from Bhanupratappur have become Congress MLAs.

In 2018, 13 women were elected to the House. In 2023, a total of 155 women were in the electoral fray.

Four recent entrants to BJP elected MLAs

STAFF REPORTER ■
RAIPUR

A common man, a former trooper, a former bureaucrat and an actor-turned-politician who recently joined the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have been elected as MLAs in Chhattisgarh.

The BJP had named actor Anuj Sharma from Dharsiwa, Ishwar Sahu from Saja, former IAS officer Neelkanth Tekam from Keshkal and former CRPF trooper Ramkumar Toppo from Sitapur. All four defeated their Congress opponents.

Sharma beat former Rajya Sabha MP Chhaya Verma by 44,343 votes while Ishwar Sahu defeated seven-time MLA and former cabinet minister Ravindra Choubey by 5,196



votes. Tekam won against sitting

MLA Santram Netam by 5,560

votes and Toppo defeated former cabinet minister Amarjeet Bhagat by 17,160

votes. Sharma is an actor in Chhattisgarhi films and joined the BJP in June this year.

Sahu, a labourer by profession, is the father of Bhuwaneswar Sahu, who was killed in a communal clash in Biranpur in Bemetara district in April 2022.

Tekam joined the saffron party in August after resigning from the IAS.

Toppo, a former trooper in the CRPF, took voluntary retirement and joined the BJP in September. He was awarded the President’s Medal for Gallantry in 2021.

Overall, the BJP won 54 seats while the Congress 35 seats. The Gondwana Gantantra Party (GGP) won one seat in the 2023 elections to the 90-member Assembly.



BJP leader Brijmohan Agrawal was on Monday weighed with sweets in celebration of his eighth victory in the Chhattisgarh Assembly elections.

Hyenas kill youth in Keshkal



STAFF REPORTER ■
KESHKAL

A young man was killed after being mauled by two hyenas on Sunday evening in Keshkal region in Chhattisgarh’s Kondagaon district. The bleeding

youth was rushed to a hospital where he died during treatment, police said.

He was walking alone when the hyenas attacked him. The victim has not been identified due to lack of any identity on him.

School bus overturns in Ghaghi valley, many injured



STAFF REPORTER ■
SURGUJA

A bus full of school children overturned in the Ghaghi Valley in Chhattisgarh’s Surguja district after falling into a ditch, injuring many of them, four of them seriously.

The children have been admitted to the Medical College Hospital.

The cause of the accident is said be faulty brakes. The bus was returning to Dhamtari after a picnic at Mainpat.

Study identifies peptide that drives heavy alcohol drinking

IANIS ■

US researchers have identified a peptide that is involved in heavy alcohol drinking, which can also be targeted for developing therapies to tackle binge drinking.

Alcohol is the most common addictive substance in the world. Alcohol use disorder, a highly prevalent, chronic, relapsing disorder, affects more than 14 million people in the US alone, in addition to being severely under-treated, with only three modestly effective pharmacological therapies available.

Chronic exposure to alcohol has been shown to produce profound neuroadaptations in specific brain regions, including the recruitment of key stress

neurotransmitters, ultimately causing changes in the body that sustain excessive drinking.

The area of the brain known as the “bed nucleus of the stria terminalis” (BNST) is critically involved in the behavioural response to stress as well as in chronic, pathological alcohol use.

Researchers from Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine identified that the peptide called pituitary adenylate cyclase activating polypeptide (PACAP) is involved in heavy alcohol drinking.

In addition, they have discovered that this peptide acts in the BNST area.

Using an established experimental model for heavy, intermittent alcohol drinking, the researchers



observed that during withdrawal this model showed increased levels of the stress neuropeptide PACAP selectively in the BNST, compared to the control model.

Interestingly, a similar increase was also observed in the levels of another stress neuropeptide closely related to PACAP, the calcitonin gene-related peptide, or CGRP.

Both peptides have been implicated in stress as well as pain sensitivity, but their role in alcohol addiction is less established.

In the paper, appearing online in the journal eNeuro, the researchers then used a virus in a transgenic model to block the neural pathways containing PACAP that specifically arrive at BNST.

“We found that

inhibiting PACAP to the BNST dramatically reduced heavy ethanol drinking,” said Valentina Sabino, co-director of the School’s Laboratory of Addictive Disorders as well as Professor of pharmacology, physiology & biophysics.

According to the researchers, these results provide evidence that this protein mediates the addictive properties of alcohol.

“We found a key player, PACAP, driving heavy alcohol drinking, which can be targeted for the development of novel pharmacological therapies,” added Pietro Cottone, Associate Professor of pharmacology, physiology & biophysics and co-director of the Laboratory of Addictive Disorders.

2 IAF pilots killed in trainer aircraft crash

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Two IAF pilots died on Monday in a Pilatus PC-7 Mk II trainer aircraft crash during a routine training sortie from Air Force Academy, Hyderabad. The mandatory court of inquiry was instituted to ascertain the cause of accident. It was the first accident involving the Swiss-origin aircraft in IAF service.

The aircraft met with an accident on Monday morning during a routine training sortie from AFA, Hyderabad, the IAF said in a statement.

"It is with deep regret that the IAF confirms both pilots onboard the aircraft sustained fatal injuries. No damage to any civil life or property has been reported. A Court of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the cause of the accident," it added.

India bought 75 trainers from Pilatus Aircraft for ₹2,900 crore under a 2012 contract. It is a turboprop, tandem seating, basic trainer aircraft of IAF. Initial training of all pilots is carried out on Pilatus PC-7 Mk II planes and Kiran Mk-1/IA trainers. Those training to



become fighter pilots further train on the British-origin Hawk advanced jet trainers before they can fly supersonic fighter jets.

India is now building its own basic trainer aircraft. In March, the defence ministry awarded a ₹6,838-crore contract to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for 70 HTT-40 basic trainers. HAL will start rolling out the aircraft in 2025-26.

In July 2019, the defence ministry suspended business dealings with Pilatus Aircraft Ltd for one year for violation of a pre-contract integrity pact in the 2012 contract, while also factoring in Indian investiga-

tions against the plane maker for alleged corruption and irregularities. The contract with Pilatus Aircraft Ltd included a clause for the follow-on purchase of 38 more planes.

Monday's crash comes six months after an ageing Kiran trainer aircraft, flown by one of India's finest test pilots and with a woman flight test engineer onboard, crashed on the outskirts of Karnataka's Chamaraajanagar on June 1, putting the spotlight on the decades-old plane and the pressing need to replace it with a modern aircraft.

Both survived the crash. The air force plans to retire the Kiran trainers by 2025.

Jaishankar, US deputy NSA Finer hold talks



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Monday here met Principal Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) of the United States Jon Finer and discussed various bilateral and global issues.

The meeting came the backdrop of a case filed in a US court by American prosecutors against an Indian national for his alleged involvement in a plot to kill a Khalistani leader on American soil.

It is understood that the issue figured in the meeting between Jaishankar and Finer, though there is no official confirmation on it.

"Good to meet Principal Deputy NSA of the US Jon Finer this afternoon. Useful exchange of views on the glob-

al situation. Discussed taking our bilateral cooperation forward," Jaishankar said on X. India on Thursday last week described as a "matter of concern" the US linking an Indian official to a man charged with conspiring to kill Gurbhant Singh Pannun, a Sikh extremist, and asserted that follow up action will be taken based on findings of an inquiry panel investigating the allegations. India has already constituted a probe team to investigate allegations relating to the foiled plot. On Wednesday last, US federal prosecutors charged Nikhil Gupta, 52, of working with an Indian government employee in the foiled plot to kill Pannun. The US prosecutors informed a Manhattan court that authorities in the Czech Republic arrested and detained Gupta.

Number of women MLAs remains low in newly elected Assemblies in 4 States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The number of women MLAs in Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Madhya Pradesh Assemblies remains much below the one-third mark, as provided under the women's reservation bill passed by Parliament recently, data compiled by think tank PRS Legislative Research said.

Their number in Chhattisgarh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh assemblies has gone up marginally, while it has gone down in Rajasthan, the data said.

Chhattisgarh scores the highest among all four states with 21 per cent of its newly elected lawmakers women. In 2018, Chhattisgarh had 13 women MLAs, 14 per cent of the total, which has gone up to 19 women now.

In Telangana, the number of women MLAs went up to 10, or 8 per cent of the total. In 2018, the state sent six women to its assembly.

In Rajasthan, the number of women MLAs was 24 in 2018, which came down to 20 this time. Their number in Rajasthan assembly has never exceeded 15 per cent, the report said.

In Madhya Pradesh, 30 women were elected to the assembly in



2013, while in 2018, only 21 women could find a place in the House. This time, the state has elected 27 women.

The number of older MLAs also remains high in all assemblies, with Chhattisgarh, MP, and Telangana seeing their assemblies grow older.

In Chhattisgarh, the proportion of MLAs above the age of 55 years is 41 per cent in the new assembly.

In 2008, the state had 16 per cent of MLAs above this mark, with the number going up to 29 per cent in 2013, and to 40 per cent in 2018.

In MP, 50 per cent of MLAs are above the age of 55 this time. This proportion was 38 per cent in 2018, 30 per cent in 2013, and 21 per cent in 2008. In Rajasthan, in 2018, 48 per cent of the elected members (95 out of 200), were above 55. The proportion has marginally decreased in the new Assembly,

settling at 46 per cent. In Telangana, the average age of the newly elected MLAs is 56. The proportion of MLAs above 55 there has increased from 39 per cent in 2018 to 60 per cent in 2023.

When it comes to education, in Chhattisgarh, the proportion of MLAs with at least a graduate degree has reduced from 69 per cent in 2018 to 59 per cent in 2023.

In MP, the proportion of MLAs with graduation degree was 44 per cent in 2018. It has come down to 36 per cent in the latest assembly, while the number of post-graduates has gone up from 27 per cent to 35 per cent. A majority of the MLAs in Rajasthan have a graduate degree. In 2018 more than half of the elected women and about a quarter of the elected men were post-graduates. The proportion remains similar in 2023.

Winter Session: Silkariya mishap, acid attacks on women among issues discussed on day 1

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Silkyara tunnel mishap, acid attack on women and small children engaging in excessive screentime thereby impacting their overall growth figured on the first day of Winter Session of the Rajya Sabha. CPI (M) P V Sivadasan raised the issue of collapse of Silkyara tunnel and demanded an inquiry into the incident

alleging that safety measures were not implemented by the company concerned.

A part of the Uttarkashi tunnel -- around 200 metres from the entrance -- had collapsed on November 12 trapping 41 workers.

A rescue team pulled out all trapped workers on November 28 in a multi-agency operation that hovered between hope and despair for almost 17 days.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour in the House, Sivadasan termed the incident very painful and accused the tunnelling company of violating all security measures, rules and norms.

"...Transparent and fair inquiry is very necessary," said the MP. Silkyara was the not the sole incident and such events have happened before in the area, he said.

Ajay Pratap Singh(BJP)said



Sivadasan may have his own views on the incident, but the government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the wellbeing of the poor.

He expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Dhami, Union Minister V K Singh, and all those involved in the rescue operation, including rat miners, for successfully evacuating

the workers. Expressing concern over the incident of acid attacks, Sangeeta Yadav(BJP)called for effective steps to stop these crimes. She also favoured adequate compensation to the victims, impacting them skill development and an overall change in the attitude of society towards them. She also said nearly 1,500 incidents took place in the last five years. Raising the issue of excessive

screentime on mobile amongst children, Fauzia Khan(NCP)said it could impact their mental and physical development. She also cautioned against online predators.

Sant Balbir Singh(AAP)raised the issue of air pollution. He said about 21 lakh deaths take place every year due to air pollution. The air was clean for only one day in Delhi, five days in Mumbai, and 15 days

in Chennai in a year, Singh said. He further said whenever there are talks about air pollution, it is attributed to stubble burning by farmers of Punjab. He said no farmer of Punjab wants to burn stubble and urged the Centre to grant financial assistance to farmers so that they don't have to burn their crop to clean the field before fresh sowing.

Visiting Saudi Arabian Minister to hold talks to firm up comprehensive Hajj plans

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to streamline hosting of Indian pilgrims for Haj and Umrah performers, Saudi Arabia's Minister for Hajj and Umrah Tawfig bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah has embarked on a visit to India to firm up comprehensive plans.

A readout released by the Saudi embassy in Delhi said Al-Rabiah will engage in high-level discussions with Indian leaders and prominent figures in the Hajj and Umrah services sector, with a focus on strengthening coordination and collaboration.

It said the collective aim is to bring about a qualitative and unique transformation in the experience of the pilgrims, further underscoring Saudi Arabia's enduring dedication to serving them and visitors with "unparalleled" hospitality. Al-Rabiah's visit to India is an important part of a series of



international tours aimed at showcasing Saudi Arabia's unwavering commitment to serving Umrah performers and visitors, it said.

"This visit aims to achieve significant advancements in streamlining procedures, enhancing services, and outlining comprehensive plans for hosting pilgrims and Umrah performers, aligning closely with the outlined objectives of 'Saudi Vision 2030,' it said.

It said Al-Rabiah will engage in high-level discussions with Indian leaders and prominent figures in the Hajj and Umrah services sector, primarily to strengthen coordination and

collaboration. "Specifically, the discussions will focus on facilitating the smooth travel of Indian guests to the revered two Holy Mosques, underscoring the commitment to providing convenient and efficient services," it said.

"To further streamline processes for Indian Umrah seekers, an inaugural exhibition for the Nusuk platform and the Tasheer e-visa-issuing centre will be organised during the visit," it said.

The Saudi government said this initiative highlights the "dedication" to providing seamless and user-friendly services for Umrah performers from India.

The minister is accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior officials and representatives from the private sector and associated entities. "The visit aims to introduce an array of facilities available to the guests of Allah from India,

emphasising the distinctive benefits of the electronic Umrah visa and the Nusuk platform, reinforcing the commitment to providing exceptional services," it said. It further said these international visits reflect the Ministry's continuous efforts in the Hajj ecosystem to establish robust communication channels and foster cooperation with countries worldwide.

"The primary objective of these trips is to showcase the exceptional services provided by the government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Umrah seekers and visitors coming to the Kingdom," the readout said.

"Moreover, the initiatives seek to facilitate and enhance the procedures for those travelling to Makkah and Madinah, aligning with the government's steadfast commitment to creating the best possible experience for the guests of Allah," it said.

4,45,256 cases of crime against women registered in India in 2022: NCRB



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 4,45,256 cases of crime against women were registered across India in 2022, almost 51 FIRs every hour, up from 4,28,278 in 2021 and 3,71,503 in 2020, according to the latest NCRB data. The rate of crime against women per lakh population stood at 66.4 while the charge sheeting in such cases was logged at 75.8, showed the data in the annual crime report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which functions under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

In a note of caution about the annual report, the NCRB said the primary presumption that the upward swing in police data indicates an increase in crime and thus a reflection of the ineffectiveness of the police is fallacious. "Rise in crime" and "increase in registration of crime by police" are clearly two different things, a fact which requires better understanding. Thus an oft-repeated expectation from certain quarters that an effective police administration will be able to keep the crime figures low is misplaced," it stated.

The majority of crimes against women under the Indian Penal Code were of cruelty by husband or his relatives (31.4 per cent) followed by kidnapping and abduction of women (19.2 per cent), assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (18.7 per cent), and rape (7.1 per cent), the NCRB stated. With 14,247 cases in 2022,

Delhi registered the highest rate of crime against women in the country at 144.4 -- way above the country's average rate of 66.4. Such cases in Delhi stood at 14,277 in 2021 and 10,093 in 2020, the official data showed.

In absolute numbers, Uttar Pradesh (65,743) registered the maximum FIRs in cases of crime against women in 2022 followed by Maharashtra (45,331), Rajasthan (45,058), West Bengal (34,738) and Madhya Pradesh (32,765), it showed. These five states together contributed to 2,23,635 (or 50.2 per cent) of the total cases lodged in India last year, according to the NCRB, which is tasked with the collection and analysis of crime data.

In 2021 and 2020, Uttar Pradesh registered 56,083 and 49,385 cases in this category followed by Rajasthan (40,738 and 34,535), Maharashtra (39,526 and 31,954), West Bengal (35,884 and 36,439) and Madhya Pradesh (30,673 and 25,640), it showed. A total of 12 states and Union Territories recorded crime rates higher than the national average of 66.4. Delhi topped the list at 144.4 followed by Haryana (118.7), Telangana (117), Rajasthan (115.1), Odisha (103), Andhra Pradesh (96.2), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (93.7), Kerala (82), Assam (81), Madhya Pradesh (78.8), Uttarakhand (77), Maharashtra (75.1) and West Bengal (71.8). The rate of crime in Uttar Pradesh -- which alone contributed nearly 15 per cent of the cases in India -- stood at 58.6, according to the NCRB.

342 proposals approved till November 16 to complete stalled real estate projects



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has approved 342 proposals till November 16 this year to complete stalled real estate projects, benefit more than 2 lakh homebuyers and unlock projects worth Rs 94,367 crore, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Monday.

As of November 16, 2023, under SWAMIH, 342 proposals aggregating to Rs 37,554 crore have been approved and this will benefit around 2,18,699 homebuyers and unlock projects worth Rs 94,367 crore," the minister said.

To give relief to those who have booked houses in stalled projects, the government has established a SWAMIH investment fund, he said. It will fund the stalled projects that are net-worth positive and registered under RERA, including those projects that have been declared as non-performing assets or are pending proceedings before the National Company Law Tribunal under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, he said.

According to the minister, the Central government had constituted a committee

under the chairmanship of former NITI Aayog chief Amitabh Kant to examine the issues related to legacy stalled real estate projects.

The committee has recommended various measures to complete these stalled projects and handover the same to the homebuyers, he said, adding that the panel has observed that the primary reason for stress in real estate projects is the lack of financial viability of these projects. "Accordingly, the committee has recommended a slew of measures aimed towards improving the financial viability of these real estate projects, to enable their completion," Kishore said in the written reply.

In its report in August, the 14-member committee said to encourage financial institutions to fund stalled projects, a scheme offering subsidised interest rates, similar to MSME, is recommended. "Additionally, the central government may consider a guarantee fund similar to MSME for such finances. The MoHUA (Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs) will prepare a detailed scheme and send it to the ministry of finance, in this regard," the report stated. The committee observed that the steps to improve the internal rate of return of these projects would attract more funding and judicial interventions such as insolvency and bankruptcy code should be used only as a last resort. Project resolution should be a win-win situation for all stakeholders, it said.

Bill aimed at regulating legal profession, curbing touts passed by Parliament

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday passed Advocates (Amendment) Bill, 2023, a Bill which aims at regulating the legal profession by a single Act and seeks to target "touts". Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal said that there should be no role of touts in the country's courts. The Rajya Sabha had passed the Bill, during the Monsoon session.

The Bill provides that every High Court and District Judge can frame and publish lists of touts (those who procure clients for legal practitioners in return for any payment). According to the provisions, people named in the list of touts will be excluded from entering the court premises. Any violation of this provision will entail punishment with imprisonment of up to three months and a fine. "The legal profession is a noble profession. The law commission was given a mandate to bring judicial reforms as per new circumstances. There should be no role of touts in the court premises in the country. Hence, it was felt that in the amendment there should be provisions related to touts," Meghwal said.

Initiating the debate, Karti Chidambaram of the Congress said, injustice anywhere is a threat to justice and touts thrive because of the com-



plexity in dealing with our legal system. "Because of the asymmetry in our society in terms of education, access to people in authority and wealth, sometimes people do not know how to navigate the legal system. This is what is being exploited and some people step in as

touts. Touts thrive because of the complexity in dealing with our legal system," the Sivaganga MP said. "We largely welcome the amendment...However, I urge the government to focus on the big fish rather than targeting the touts in the small courts," he added.

BJP breaches BSP, Congress bastions, gets Dalit votes

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The BJP inflicted a blow to the Congress and the BSP in Rajasthan by breaking into their traditional Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes community vote bank as it swept the Assembly elections in the state, winning 115 of the 199 where polling took place. Of the 34 SC reserved seats that went to the polls, the BJP won 22 and the Congress 11. An Independent candidate won the other seat. Among the 25 seats reserved for ST candidates, the BJP won 12, the Congress 10 and the Bhartiya Adivasi Party three. The BJP emerged victorious in Nadbai, Nagar, Karauli and Tijara which were won by the BSP in 2018. The Congress won Udaipurwati and Kishangarh Bas. All these seats were won by the Mayawati-led party in 2018 but the MLAs later joined the Congress. During the election campaign, the BJP had made “atrocities against Dalits” one of the rally-

ing points against the Ashok Gehlot government. A little over two percentage points separated the vote share of the BJP and the Congress. In 2018, less than one percentage point separated the winner from the loser. The BJP received 41.69 per cent of the total votes polled this time, an improvement of 2.41 percentage points over 2018, while the Congress and the BSP’s vote share declined by 0.29 percentage points and 2.26 percentage points respectively. The BSP’s vote share which was 4.08 per cent in 2018, reduced to 1.82 per cent this time. The Congress got 39.53 per cent of the total votes polled in 2023. The vote share of the Rashtriya Loktantrik Party and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) remained almost intact. The RLP’s vote share was recorded at 2.39 per cent though it won only one constituency with Hanuman Beniwal managing to secure his seat. The party had won three seats in 2018 with a 2.4 per



cent vote share. Like in 2018, the AAP could not win any seat in Rajasthan this time too as it received just 0.38 per cent of the total votes polled. Dalit support had come as a breather for the Congress in the 2018 Assembly elections, as it had won 19 out of the 34 SC reserved seats. The BJP had won 12 of these seats, the RLP got two, while one was won by a Congress rebel as an Independent. The BJP had won nine ST category seats in 2018 while 12 such seats were won by the Congress. In the 2013 Assembly elections, the SC community had largely voted for the BJP, making it victorious in 32 of the 34 SC-reserved seats. At that time, the BJP had won 163 seats while the Congress’ tally had plunged to just 21. Rajasthan Assembly has 200 seats of which 199 of them went to poll on November 25. Election to the Karanpur seat of Sriganganagar was postponed following the death of the Congress candidate.

Lalduhoma, man who guarded Indira, set to be Mizoram CM

PTI ■ AIZAWL

From earning the dubious distinction of the first MP to be disqualified under the anti-defection law to being all set to becoming the chief minister of Mizoram, 73-year-old Lalduhoma’s political journey has been all about battling against odds. Lalduhoma, an ex-IPS officer who served as the in-charge of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s security, is the Chief Ministerial face of the Zoram People’s Movement (ZPM). The ZPM which was registered as a political party only in 2019 secured a majority in the Mizoram assembly on Monday, winning 27 of the 40 seats and losing in one other, as votes were being counted, according to the Election Commission (EC). Lalduhoma himself bagged the Serchhip seat by defeating his nearest MNF rival J Malsamwzuala Vanchhawng by 2,982 votes. For over three decades, chief ministership in the northeastern state has been a see-saw



affair between two senior politicians - Lal Thanhawla of the Congress and MNF’s Zoramthanga. Lalduhoma first contested the Mizoram assembly polls on a Congress ticket in 1984, but lost to People’s Conference party nominee Lalhmingthanga by a margin of 846 votes. The same year, he contested the Lok Sabha polls as a Congress candidate and was elected unopposed. The ZPM leader resigned as

state Congress president and withdrew his primary membership from the party in 1986, after he was accused of conspiring against then chief minister Lal Thanhawla and some cabinet ministers. Lalduhoma became the first MP to be disqualified under the anti-defection law after he quit the Congress in 1988. He was also disqualified by Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalrinliana Sailo in 2020, after 12 Mizo National Front (MNF)

legislators filed complaints, alleging he defected to the ZPM by actively participating in party activities, though being elected as an independent in the 2018 polls. Lalduhoma was the first legislator to have been disqualified under the anti-defection law in Mizoram, but he managed to win the by-election to the Serchhip seat in 2021. Besides the Congress, he was once part of the MNF. He had floated his own party, the Zoram Nationalist Party, and was also instrumental in the formation of the ZPM. In the 2018 assembly polls, Lalduhoma won two seats - Serchhip and Aizawl West-I. He had defeated incumbent legislator and five-time chief minister Lal Thanhawla from Serchhip by a margin of 410 votes. Lalduhoma subsequently vacated the Aizawl West-I seat to retain Serchhip. Prior to the 2018 elections, Lalduhoma had successfully contested polls as a ZNP candidate from the Ratu seat in 2003 and Aizawl West-I seat in 2008.

Narrow 2 per cent swing helps Congress win Telangana

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

A slim two per cent shift in votes toward the Congress led to K Chandrasekhar Rao-led BRS losing power to the grand old party in the assembly polls. According to the Election Commission’s data, the Congress secured victory by claiming 64 seats in the 119-member assembly, attaining a 39.40% vote share, surpassing BRS, which won 39 segments with a 37.35% vote share. The BRS witnessed a drop in its vote share by over 10%, declining from 47% in the 2018 assembly elections, while the Congress gained slightly more than what the BRS lost, amounting to an 11% increase. In 2018, the BRS secured a significant 88 seats, whereas the Congress managed to win only 19 segments, garnering 28.4% of the votes. The BJP, initially emerging as a primary challenger to the BRS after winning a few by-polls and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections, ultimately doubled its vote share and improved its tally to eight seats. In the 2018 polls, the saffron party secured just



one seat with a seven per cent vote share. Krishna Sagar Rao, BJP’s chief spokesperson, stated that the party believes it gained votes and seats due to its promises of appointing a BC leader as Chief Minister and Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s commitment to forming a committee on SC categorisation. The BJP leader expressed the opinion that Congress could have gained more if there had

not been an aggressive campaign by the BJP on these two issues. Political analyst and senior journalist Telakapalli Ravi noted that the BJP successfully diverted the vote share of BRS in its favor. According to some observers, the Congress gained ground by attracting votes from Telugu Desam Party sympathisers after the TDP opted out of the race due to its own reasons. The TDP secured 3.5% of the votes

and two seats in the 2018 assembly elections. The AIMIM party led by Asaduddin Owaisi retained its seat tally while almost maintaining its vote share. The Hyderabad-centric party secured seven seats, obtaining 2.22% of the votes compared to 2.7% in 2018. The elections for the Telangana assembly were conducted on November 30, and the vote counting was done on December 3.

Over confidence cost us Rajasthan, MP, Chhattisgarh: Assam Congress chief

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Factors such as anti-incumbency, voter fatigue, and dissatisfaction among the youth contributed mainly to the poor showing of BRS in the Telangana Legislative Assembly election on Sunday. Despite the towering image of BRS supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, along with the party’s extensive grassroots network and welfare programmes, the perceived inaccessibility of its leaders contributed to the growing anti-incumbency sentiments. Additionally, the opposition projection of what they called the BRS family rule in the state further exacerbated this sentiment. The party’s decision to renominate most of the 119 MLAs did not yield the desired results either. The BRS has dominated Telangana politics since the



state’s formation in 2014 and had a significant presence even in undivided Andhra Pradesh since 2001. While the BRS government introduced various welfare schemes, its alleged failure to fulfill key election promises, including providing housing for the poor, ensuring significant job creation, doling out

unemployment relief, as well as the delayed implementation of farmers’ loan waivers and the leak of recruitment test question papers worked against them. The BJP was initially considered the main opposition to BRS, but the scenario changed after the Congress gained momentum following the Karnataka elections in May.

Allegations of an implicit understanding between BRS and BJP, particularly regarding the Delhi excise policy case involving Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao’s daughter Kavitha, weakened the BJP, leading anti-establishment votes to consolidate in favour of the Congress. Unlike previous elections where sentiments for sep-

arate statehood played a crucial role, emotional issues did not significantly sway this election. In 2018, the Congress and TDP formed an alliance, with BRS accusing TDP Chief N Chandrababu Naidu of being anti-Telangana. However, TDP chose not to contest the recent Telangana assembly election due to ongoing legal issues and Naidu’s imprisonment in Andhra Pradesh. Similarly, YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) led by Y S Sharmila, daughter of former undivided Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy, withdrew from the contest, declaring support for the Congress. Congress ran an assertive campaign centered on the theme of change, encapsulated in the slogan ‘marpu kavali - Congress raval’ (there should be change - Congress should come), which effectively resonated with the electorate.

GRSE delivers India’s largest-ever survey vessel to navy: Official

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Ltd on Monday delivered the “largest-ever” survey vessel to be built in the country - INS Sandhayak - to the Indian Navy, an official said. INS Sandhayak, the first in a series of four survey vessels being made by GRSE for the navy, was launched on December 5, 2021, and was undergoing fitting out and trials thereafter. The 110-metre-long ship was delivered on December 4, which is observed as Navy Day, the GRSE official said. The protocol of delivery and acceptance was signed between GRSE Chairman and MD, Commodore (ret’d) P R Hari, and commanding officer of the vessel, Commodore R M Thomas. INS Sandhayak is the reincarnation of another ship by the same name, which was also a



survey vessel. That ship had been commissioned into the navy in 1981 and decommissioned in 2021, the official said. Fully designed by the GRSE, the survey ships are capable of full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of port and harbour approaches, as well as determination of navigation channels and routes, he said. The Sandhayak-class vessels can also undertake surveys of mar-

itime limits and collection of oceanographic and geographical data for defence applications, which add muscle to India’s maritime capabilities, he said. These ships can also carry a helicopter each, participate in low-intensity combat and function as hospital ships, apart from the capacity to be used for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, the official added.

MES-Shiv Sena (UBT) protest at K’taka-Maha border demanding merger of Marathi-speaking areas

PTI ■ BELAGAVI

Members of the Maharashtra Eklikiran Samiti in association with Shiv Sena (UBT) held a protest at Shinoli in Kolhapur district of Maharashtra on the opening day of the Karnataka Assembly’s winter session being held in this border district headquarters town on Monday, according to an MES leader. MES has been demanding merger of several Marathi speaking areas and villages of the state with Maharashtra, “We could not hold a demonstration at Belagavi because the police denied us permission but we did stage a

protest at Shinoli in Maharashtra,” MES convener Suraj Kanbarkar said. The protesters raised pro-Maharashtra slogans at the protest site and demanded that the ongoing Assembly session at the ‘Suvarna Vidhana Soudha’ in Belagavi, where the government holds winter sessions, bordering Maharashtra be stopped immediately. They also appealed to the Centre to intervene and take steps for merger of Belagavi district and certain regions in its neighbouring districts in Karnataka with substantial Marathi population with Maharashtra. Meanwhile, various organisa-

tions are staging protests here including Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha led by Kodihalli Chandrashekhar, Safai Karmachari, Mundargi Horata Samithi and a teachers’ association to highlight their demands. In view of the session in progress, section 144 of the CrPC has been clamped at least one kilometre around the ‘Suvarna Vidhana Soudha’. At least 5,000 policemen have been deployed in and around ‘Suvarna Vidhana Soudha’. The border issue dates back to 1957 when States were reorganised on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim to Belagavi, which was part of the

erstwhile Bombay Presidency, as it has a significant Marathi-speaking population. It also laid claim to over 800 Marathi-speaking border villages which are currently a part of Karnataka. Karnataka maintains that the demarcation done on linguistic lines as per the States Reorganisation Act and the 1967 Mahajan Commission Report is final. In an assertion about Belagavi being an integral part of the State, Karnataka built the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha here, modelled on the Vidhana Soudha, the seat of the State Legislature and Secretariat, in Bengaluru.

School students, teachers stranded in Kerala forest during trekking, rescued

PTI ■ KOLLAM

A team of 35 people including 32 school students were rescued from Achankovil forest area in Kollam district early on Monday after they got lost in the dense jungle during an impromptu trekking expedition undertaken without the knowledge of forest officials. A group of students from a school near Karunagappally in the coastal part of the district was camping near the Kumbhavurutti Waterfalls as part of a three-day scout and guides tour. Forest officials said the group ventured into the forest area without their permission on



Sunday at around 11 am but got lost for several hours. “A massive operation was launched yesterday by the Forest Department. We had the assistance of the Punalur police and Fire Force Department. We located them and brought them back safely at around 3:30 am

today,” a senior forest official told PTI. The officials said permission was given to the group which comprised 15 male students, 17 female students and three teachers for camping and scouting the locality of the ecotourism centre near there. However, without taking our permission, they went almost around 4.5 km inside the forest and got stranded, the official added. The official added that they lost their way while coming back due to heavy fog and rain. “They also said they felt the presence of elephants and decided to stay together on a nearby rock for hours until help arrived,” the

official said. Forest officials from nearby Ranni, Konni, Punalur, Pathanapuram, Kollam, Achankovil, and other regions participated in the search and rescue operations. Even though many had their mobile phones with them, they were unable to contact the outside world due to lack of service, the official added. The students were unharmed and all have reached their respective homes, the official added. Sources said a report in this regard will be filed to the higher officials of the forest department and a decision on registering a case will be taken only after that.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Battle lines drawn

Stormy debates set the tone for the winter session of Parliament as key Bills await passage

The BJP, buoyed by recent triumphs in Assembly elections, is up against a resolute Congress in the hallowed Houses of Parliament with the commencement of the winter session. The session's importance, especially for the Congress, is that it finds its dominance even within the Opposition's INDIA bloc challenged following the electoral setback and needs to restore its image. And since it is the penultimate Parliament session before the general elections, the Government wants to push as many Bills through as possible. The last session would be the budget session, with focus mainly on the Lok Sabha elections and the budget. This session has set the stage for crucial discussions and debates that will shape the nation's legislative landscape ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. Concluding on December 22, the session is poised to be eventful, with a comprehensive agenda comprising 21 Bills and a charged political atmosphere. Adding to the expected drama, the Lok Sabha Ethics

Committee has recommended the expulsion of TMC MP Mahua Moitra over a 'cash-for-query' complaint and the report is scheduled to be tabled in this session. But the report was surprisingly not tabled at least till lunch time Monday though it was item number five on the day's agenda, leading to speculation from the Opposition benches. This led the Congress to raise concerns about the functioning of parliamentary committees, urging a review of rules and processes. It would be interesting to observe what happens next.

One of the focal points of the session is the introduction of three Bills seeking to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Indian Evidence Act. This move signifies a overhaul of the legal framework and is likely to spark intense debates in both Houses. Another contentious move includes the Bill regarding the appointment of the CEC and Election Commissioners. The Opposition parties are expected to staunchly oppose this Bill. The list comprises 19 legislative business and two financial business Bills. The latter segment will involve the presentation, discussion and voting on the first batch of supplementary demands for grants for 2023-24. Simultaneously, attention will be given to demands for excess grants for 2020-21, accompanied by the introduction, consideration and passing of the related appropriation Bill. With a host of Bills on the agenda and political dynamics at play, the session is likely to be a litmus test for the NDA Government's legislative agenda and the Opposition's resilience. The nation will keenly observe the proceedings as the lawmakers navigate through a range of issues that will shape the nation's legal and political landscape. But the biggest question is, will Parliament function smoothly or be marred by walkouts and pandemonium? If its functioning is disrupted, it would be a big loss to the nation in general and our democracy in particular.



PICTALK



Tourists visit the Marina Beach as high tidal waves lash the shore owing to Cyclone Michaung, in Chennai

PTI

No rationale for giving subsidies to Tesla

Concession given to import of Tesla cars would could hamper the efforts being made by other car companies operating in India

Once again the issue of reducing import duty for importing their cars is in discussion for American electric car company Tesla. Till now, a 60 per cent import duty has been imposed on any car whose price is less than \$ 40,000 and a 100 per cent import duty is imposed on cars costing more than \$ 40,000. This is done to protect the Indian automobile industry from unfair foreign competition.

India's automobile industry has made remarkable progress in the last few decades. The share of the automobile sector in the total manufacturing output of the country is about 49 per cent and it constitutes 7.1 per cent of the total GDP. Most of the vehicles plying in the country are manufactured in India and very few vehicles are imported. Not only this, India's automobile exports were worth \$21.2 billion. Tesla company has put up the condition of duty cut on the import of its cars to 18 per cent, for setting up a plant of car manufacturing in the country. The company says it is ready to invest \$2 billion in the country, provided the



import duty on its cars is reduced. Its request is under consideration. Today almost all the automobile companies in India have started producing electric and hybrid cars. In such a situation, customers already have options to buy electric cars. In India, nearly one lakh electric cars are sold monthly and the number is expected to rise rapidly. Keeping in mind the growing market of Electric Vehicles (EVs) in the country, Tesla company has come up with a proposal to set up its plant in India, about which there is no opposition per se. To encourage the production of electric cars in the country, the import duty on components has already been reduced significantly. Today, spare parts for electric cars are being imported at only 10 to 15 per cent import duty. These are much lower than the import duty on conventional automobile parts. Due to low import

duty on electric car components, established automobile companies and startups in the country have started adding value to a large extent in the country. Given the incentives being given to electric cars by the Government of India, it seems that soon India will start meeting its requirement of electric vehicles. Till now, the key to the development of the automobile industry in the country has been the protection given to this industry by the government. Concession given to import Tesla cars would not be right, as it could hamper the efforts being made by the companies already operating in the country. But more importantly, Tesla company manufactures luxury cars. In 2019-20, only 40637 luxury cars were sold in the country, which was reduced to only 19700 in 2020-21 during the Covid-19 period. The reason for this is that only a very small section of the country can buy luxury cars more expensive than 16 to 17 lakh rupees i.e. \$20000 US and even a smaller section can buy a car worth \$40000 i.e. 32-33 lakh rupees. In such a situation, if Tesla company is given an

exemption in import duty, then rich people who can buy expensive cars will naturally buy imported Tesla cars. This will affect the manufacturing of luxury electric cars in the country. Not only this, many other companies, including Volkswagen, who are also in the queue, will also demand lower import duty. We also have to understand that domestic companies are already putting a lot of effort into research and development in manufacturing electric cars. An Indian company 'Ola', with the help of investors, has made significant progress in manufacturing electric scooters in the country. Similar efforts can be made in cars, but the concession in import duty will hamper these efforts. We have to understand that Tesla's business model is such that it does not encourage domestic manufacturers of components, and only uses internal manufacturing technology. The expectation that the downstream value chain will develop with the arrival of Tesla company is not correct.

(The writer is a Professor, at PGDAV College, DU, views are personal)



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Searching for the right CM candidate

After the state assembly poll results, speculation about who the new chief ministers will be, is rife

The exit polls had predicted a neck-to-neck battle in these states, with a tied result of 2-2 for both Congress and the BJP. However, despite a close fight in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh, the Party could only win Telangana. Despite the stringent anti-defection laws, MLAs are tempted with large sums of money to change sides, often resulting in the winning Party's government's collapse has strengthened itself in the North, but it has yet to find a foothold in the South. The BJP's successful poll strategy united its supporters and minimised internal conflicts. Fielding Parliament members as candidates helped the Party reduce internal sabotage.

Congress gained an advantage in Telangana due to its strong local leadership. The Party also benefited greatly from the defections of many leaders who began to see it as a viable contender, especially after its success in Karnataka. Voters shifted towards the Congress once it became evident that it posed a severe challenge to the ruling BRS, BJP and Congress did not announce chief ministerial candidates before the polls. Both parties must decide whether to continue with established leaders or search for new leadership. Congress must decide whether to appoint Revanth Reddy or a new face.

The Party has many potential candidates, so the main question is how to implement the new rules. The BJP favours phasing out old guards like Vasundhara Raje, Shivraj Singh Chouhan, and Raman Singh, who have had their innings. Another crucial factor when selecting new candidates is their caste. A diverse mix of castes is essential, not limiting it to Rajputs or forward castes. Additionally, their performance will also be taken into consideration. Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants a suitable candidate to deliver the States in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. This is his top priority for performing a hat trick.

Let's take a look at Madhya Pradesh as an example. Shivraj Singh Chouhan, one of the



longest-serving Chief Ministers, is ready to continue. During an event in Madhya Pradesh, Chouhan even asked the public for their opinion on whether he should run for Chief Minister again if elected.

There are many potential candidates for the top post in Madhya Pradesh. They include three Union Ministers, Narendra Singh Tomar, Fagga Singh Kulaste, and Prahlad Patel, who provide a range of options. Kailash Vijayvargiya, the Party's General Secretary and Jyotiraditya Scindia, the Union Minister who helped bring down the Kamal Nath government, are also on the list of potential candidates. The prominent candidate in the State of Rajasthan would be the former chief minister Vasundhara Raje. Union ministers Bhupender Yadav and Ashwini Vaishnav, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Minister Arjun Meghwal, and Mahant Balaknath are also in the race. Rajyavardhan Rathode is a Rajput and a multiple-time cabinet minister. Satish Poonia served as the Rajasthan BJP president when the Party was out of power. In early 2023, C P Joshi, a Brahmin and two-

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DESPITE THE STRINGENT ANTI-DEFECTION LAWS, MLAS ARE TEMPTED WITH LARGE SUMS OF MONEY TO CHANGE SIDES, OFTEN RESULTING IN THE WINNING PARTY'S GOVERNMENT'S COLLAPSE

time MP, replaced Poonia as the state BJP president. Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, the Union Minister for Jal Shakti, a new-generation BJP leader, is also a potential candidate for the CM of Rajasthan.

In Chattisgarh, too, former chief minister Raman Singh is a front-runner. Raman Singh, the BAMS doctor who ruled Chhattisgarh for 15 years till 2018, is the most recognisable face of the Party in the State. He was a union minister before he became the chief minister of Chhattisgarh in 2003. However, he has been sidelined in the past five years. Vishnu Dev Sao is also a contender for CM. He has a clean image, comes from an RSS family and has risen. Union Minister Renuka Singh, a prominent tribal leader, from the Bharatpur-Sonhat constituency is yet another option.

Congress, on its part, must choose a leader to keep the Party united in Telangana. The leader of BRS., K Chandrashekhara Rao is known for his talent in luring away members from other parties. Historically, Congress has lost its ability to protect its flock. This was visible in

Goa, Karnataka, and other states.

Revanth Reddy is the most likely candidate in Telangana. He belongs to the robust Redd and had the full support of Congress leadership despite criticisms from within the Party for his style of functioning. Starting with ABVP as a student, he has ended up at the top.

Reddy faces various challenges, including winning more seats in the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. However, it's more crucial for him to keep his Party united. Of late, the instability kicks off with horse trading, commencing immediately after the government's formation.

Despite the stringent anti-defection laws, MLAs are tempted with large sums of money to change sides, often resulting in the winning Party's government's collapse. Political parties use tricks to buy the required M.L.As to snatch the government. The BJP is upbeat about its success and is already strategising for the 2024 polls. The opposition group INDIA's future is still being determined after the huge BJP win.

(The writer is a popular columnist; views are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Saffron surge



The BJP's surge in the northern states with a 3-1 victory against the 'INDIA' block, again proved Modi is the heartland's hero. The saffron party stormed and accomplished the much-needed victory just a few months before the national elections. The BJP's star campaigner PM Modi led the party's campaign single-handedly in the elections proved himself as a popular vote-catcher and remained a towering figure in the national political arena. The Telangana's victory of Congress in the bit-

crime branch in October directing them to appear in person in connection with the PE launched on the complaint by an investor Yogeshbhai Mafatlal Bhansali. The other pleas have been filed by Parkin and Cornish, who were summoned by the Gujarat Police for a preliminary enquiry on a complaint filed by an investor in the Adani group companies.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

PROTECTION FOR JOURNALIST

Sir—The Supreme Court on Friday extended the interim protection from arrest it had granted to four journalists against whom the Gujarat Police had issued summonses in connection with an article published on the Adani Group. The top court was hearing the pleas filed by Ravi Nair, Anand Mangnale, Benjamin Nicholas Brooke Parkin and Chloe Nina Cornish against the summonses. Nair and Mangnale have challenged the summonses issued by the Ahmedabad crime branch asking them to appear for questioning with respect to the preliminary enquiry (PE) into their article published on the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) website. Nair and Mangnale received notices from the

terly fought contest is the only solace to the oldest party which miserably failed to retain Rajasthan and Chattisgarh while facing a humiliating debacle in MP, which it hoped for a comfortable win. While the Telangana Congress could demolish the KCR's BR's fort, which was seen as a corrupt and familial outfit, the credit for the party's handsome victory in the state mainly goes to its firebrand and flamboyant state Congress Chief A Revanth Reddy. The Telangana's victory also implies that A Revanth Reddy is emerging as Telangana's YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, the AP CM. But, these results are a rude shock and fodder for thought for the Opposition's 'INDIA' block, yearning to trounce the BJP. Should this be a pointer to the next Parliament elections, the faultless among INDIA Constituents such as DMK's antagonist comments on Sanatana Dharma and Rahul Gandhi's distasteful remarks on Modi are proving costly and merit corrective steps.

N Sadhasiva Reddy | Bengaluru

activists who have raised their voices against government policies are being raided by the CBI, ED or Income Tax Department every day. The question here arises is whether only opposition leaders are thieves and indulge in illegal affairs. Are the ruling parties saints? There is no corruption happening during today's rule? They never answer this. Now the people of the Enforcement Directorate appointed by them are themselves infiltrating and getting arrested red-handed. A few days ago, it was reported that the Rajasthan Anti-Corruption Bureau had arrested two Enforcement Directorate officers, Naval Kishore Meena and his associate Babul Meena, for allegedly taking a bribe of ₹ 15 lakh to settle a case related to the chit fund case. The central government officers are turning out to be a robber!

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

BECOME AN OBSERVER



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

After having done what we could, we must leave it to God, and become an observer

How is this word defined in English? An observer is a person who watches or notices something. But in Sanskrit, it has wider meaning. To understand it, let us refer to the verse # 2.47 of the Bhagavad-Geeta. What does this very famous verse teach us? “You have a right only in action, not ever in predetermining its fruits (results). You should not try to speculate about the fruit of action.” What do we normally do? We are habituated to speculate, predetermine, get attached to results, etc. Unfortunately, we have not been given this right. So, what happens? We suffer.This article is to dissuade us from acting in this fashion, because of ‘gahana karmano faith’ (the intricacy of action is very difficult to understand). The following example will clarify. We apply for a job, as do so many. We have certain qualifications. Do they match with what the job requirements are in the eyes of those deciding? They ask certain questions, for which we are not well prepared, but someone else is. How do they formulate these questions? As we go deeper into it, complications compound. Because what will ultimately happen is what was destined. This is the eternal truth. We all get what is destined, no more or no less.



Another example will shed more light on the subject. A golf player reaches the top of the world standing, but then his form dives. What happened? Good karmaphalas took him to the top, but when bad karmaphalas manifested, his fortune suffered greatly. This we do not accept and keep on struggling.What should we do? Do we have an option to overturn our luck? We do and we don’t. First, we cannot do anything about it, even if God doesn’t intervene. Why? Because the creation functions based on the ‘Karmaphala Principle’, which is: “What we sow we reap.” Every act by body, mind and words results in a fruit good or bad. These must come to fruition. Then, are we stuck? No, we are not. God is very kind; we are never condemned. We have to approach God for help. Why? Because God can help us come out of our bad karmaphalas. It is not easy, though we have to start doing what yogis do, which is, “karmayogis, giving up attachment, perform acts by body, mind, intelligence and by senses also for self-purification only.” God is very generous; He begins to help us as we get started.Let us go into further details about what happens and can happen, if we approach God. There is just not one type of help available. In verse #7.16, Lord Krishna has commended four kinds of people, out of which two are distressed and seekers of wealth. In the last verse of the Geeta, Sanjay has spoken about being blessed with opulence, victory, wealth and morality, if one makes a connection with God. (18.78) These are the other types of our desires. But what we will ultimately get will be decided by God only. Therefore, after having done what we could we must leave it to God, i.e. become an observer. If we wish to further secure ourselves, then, we must become devotees of God. In the second part of this verse, Lord Krishna mentions that His devotees become special. What happens? God takes charge of their lives. What does it mean? (11.33) Some famous examples besides of Arjuna are Adi Shankaracharya, who established four ‘mathas’ in Badrinath, Dwarka, Puri and Sringeri. God used Swami Vivekananda to spread Sanatana dharma across the world. These are very famous examples, but, those placed in the lower levels of devotion, are used for doing good to people around them. We, souls, expected to do two roles? One is to do our duties, and the other is to constantly evaluate what we are doing. This is what being an observer is. In the case of non-devotees, God is an observer, and in the case of devotees, they become observers. Because God takes the role of ‘Karta’ (doer) in their lives. They have reached the third level while doing karma (duties) and having taken ‘sharan’ (shelter). They can well and truly become observers fully assured about their future. How else?

(The writer is a spiritual guide; views are personal)

Balochistan: An undeclared war zone- II

Human rights violations are rampant in Balochistan. The Pakistan is waging an undeclared war on Baloch people, writes **Mir Khan Baloch**



Anwarul Haq Kakar was a senator in the Balochistan assembly before resuming office as Prime Minister of Pakistan. ISI has given him special instructions to pursue the narrative of Islamabad to counter the ongoing Balochistan freedom movement. His NGO, ‘Voice of Balochistan’ publishes content on social media and YouTube. He is head of well-known state-sponsored death squads whose prime objectives are to facilitate Pakistan ISI, MI (Military Intelligence) and the army to locate the Baloch activists and freedom-loving patriots and later kill them in fake encounters. He often can be seen with Sarfaraz Bugti who is another cabinet member of the current government but he runs dozens of death squads in Sui, Dera Bugti, Pirkoh, Loti, Sibi and adjoining areas of Dera Bugti. His most active death squad militia is the Bugti Aman Force which openly confesses to killing patriot Baloch fighting against Pakistani illegal occupation of Balochistan. Sarfaraz Bugti had countless meetings with another notorious radical death squad Shafiq Mengal involved in the abductions, and killings of Baloch in district Khuzdar, Wadh, Sorab, and Kalat areas. His proxy militia is also involved in sectarian violence such as targeting Shia communities living in Balochistan, he enjoys the full support of the Pakistan army. Pakistan army distributed ministries to all of its proxy assets, one of them is Jamal Raisani 20 years 20-year-old boy, who is the son of Siraj Raisani who openly advocated assassinations of pro-independent seeking leadership and activists. He was killed in a suicide attack in Mastung along with his 100+ party members. Islamabad had given them ministries as compensation to acknowledge their contribution to facilitating the army and the ISI. Pakistan is repeating the Bangladesh style of Baloch genocide and hiring death squads like Al Shams and Al Badr who were used against Mukti Bahini the freedom fighters of Bangladesh in 1971.It is very sad that on 27 March 1948, Jinnah



BALUCH PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING A PEACEFUL FUTURE FREE OF FEAR; THEY WANT COMPLETE INDEPENDENCE AND GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA

ordered its army to invade Balochistan in a similar fashion Russia invaded Ukraine. They attacked the Palace of Balochistan’s King, they fired artillery shells and opened indiscriminate firing. The mosque of the King of Kalat still bears the marks of bombing. Hence the instrument of annexation was signed by force with the Prince of Balochistan. The people of Balochistan did not join Pakistan willingly and they reserve the right to regain their independence. After the invasion of Pakistan, they kept resisting on various occasions but unfortunately, none gave any heed to their suffering and problems.China is exploiting the resources of Balochistan For many decades China made entry into Balochistan and extracted minerals of Balochistan such as Gold, Copper, Silver, and Uranium from Balochistan’s Rekodet, Saindak and other areas. Pakistan is brutally suppressing the voices of ordinary Baloch people. Baloch people are demanding a peaceful future free of fear, they want complete independence and good relations with India and the rest of the world.Reports are emerging that Pakistan and China are abducting Baloch civilians, among them are women being raped, children being terrorized, and students being made victims of enforced disappearances. Pakistan under the nose of the United Nations and civilized world, is repeating the atrocities its army perpetrated against Bengalis in 1971. Baloch people are being butchered and bombed which must be a matter of worry for the civilized world. How can we sleep when humanity in Balochistan is under constant threat and Baloch people

are facing heinous crimes by the Pakistan army? To quell their liberation movement, the Pakistan establishment is using air force to bomb ordinary unarmed Baloch people which is against the international laws. About 30,000 Baloch prisoners are being kept in secret detention centers and 2 lakh Baloch have been killed since 1948. This is a huge ratio of ethnic cleansing and it must be recognized genocide of Baloch people.Pakistan is repeating the same cruelty that its army did in Bangladesh in 1971. Today Baloch people are being butchered, their land is being occupied and their resources are being exploited. If Balochistan becomes independent I believe there will be peace because they are not radicals, they are not against India, they are not against peace, and they are not pursuing any sort of policy to invade any country.I urge the government of India to speak about the massive scale of the Baloch genocide taking place and how people over there are deprived of fundamental rights to independence. There is no harm in inviting pro-independent Baloch leadership to India because Balochistan historically is not part of Pakistan and they don’t accept Pakistan’s occupation. We must listen to them and accept the genuine stance of the Baloch people rather than relying on Pakistan’s fabricated lies and illegal rule of Balochistan. Our leadership of both countries must sit together and help their cause so we can have a friendly country of Balochistan to end Pakistan’s day-to-day border infiltration, terrorism, proxy wars, and use of other anti-India elements.Balochistan is not an internal issue of Pakistan and we have the right to talk about

Balochistan in the open, in parliament, in the media and globally. India is a strong country it has the guts to take a strong position to help Balochistan get its liberation. Liberating Balochistan is tantamount to solving many problems internally and internationally at a time. The situation in occupied Balochistan is pathetic and deserves international attention. The aspiration of 1.4 billion Indians echoes the current government to make appropriate decisions by giving a helping hand to support the aspirations of millions of Baloch people.Who Leads the Balochistan Movement? In the world liberation movements are led by one leader who has the vision, and background of not compromising on a national cause and people trust him/her. Balochistan liberation movement is led by Baloch nationalist leader Hyrbyair Marri who from his childhood is attached to Balochistan cause. He is the son of Baloch veteran leader late Nawab Khair Bakhsh Marri. He enjoys the full support of his people from Balochistan and the overseas population. He had never accepted the slavery of Pakistan. His determination and commitment to his people are adorable. Marri is an international calibre leader and the world community has always given him immense respect and space. He urged the Baloch community to join hands and work for the independence of united Balochistan. (The writer is a Baloch human rights activist covering Balochistan, Central Asia and the Middle East. Views are personal) This is the second part of the two-part series on Balochistan. **Concluded**

Climate change: Challenges and COP28

India’s unique and novel initiative– Mission LiFE and Green Credit Program (GCP) can be replicated by other countries

The whole world is concerned about climate change and its ill effects. Climate Change concerns have attained centre stage in all environmental, social and economic deliberations at the National as well as Global levels. In this sequence, again during the 28th session of the COP (Conference of Parties) related to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which started November 30 in Dubai, UAE, more than 190 countries are deliberating on various issues. In this conference, countries around the world are discussing the challenges related to climate change and reviewing the progress made in the decisions taken in previous conferences as well as global brainstorming.



VIVEK SAXENA

India has taken several concrete initiatives at the national and international levels in recent years to address the challenges of climate change. To take this movement forward, the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Government of India has notified the Green Credit Scheme (GCP) and rules in October 2023. Its objective is to encourage every individual and community to promote a healthy and environment-friendly lifestyle. The concept of the Green Credit Scheme will be based on a very simple process to benefit from environmentally favourable conditions. Therefore, common people, community organizations, industries and corporations will be encouraged to adopt

and support environment-positive actions under the Green Credit Program (GCP), proposed at the National Level.The program will also enable India to meet Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), submitted to UNFCCC. The program envisages incentives for voluntary environmental actions of various stakeholders. Presently the guidelines and rules have been notified for tree planting and water conservation-related activities. Sustainable Agriculture, Waste Management, Air Pollution Reduction, Mangrove Conservation and Restoration, Ecomark-based trading by manufacturers, Sustainable Building and Infrastructure are the other sectors that will also be covered under the

Green Credit Program (GCP) for financial incentives. Under this scheme, various stakeholders will be encouraged to voluntarily adopt environment-friendly activities by encouraging competitive market-based trading for availing benefits of green credits. The main objective of this scheme is to encourage environmentally positive actions so that the challenges of environmental protection and climate change can be faced at the individual and community levels.It aims to allocate credit as per the activity and also to encourage the process of measuring and verifying the progress of the activity and also to encourage environment-positive actions to raise awareness at the grassroots level on a large scale and fulfil the vision of Mission Life.

This will also support the adoption of environment-friendly lifestyles and meeting sustainable development goals (SDGs), based on values and policies. GCP will also encourage individuals, farmer producer associations, environment-friendly agriculture, industries, urban and rural local bodies, private sector, industries, NGOs and community organizations etc. to adopt environment-friendly positive actions in the form of tradable ‘Green Credits’, for which market-based system is being envisaged under the program.Green credits, certified as per the notified format of the Green Credit Program will be verified by the Program Administrator as a unit, the benefits of which will be determined as per market-based

assessment. The eligible entity has to register to generate green credit units. There will be a system of third-party certification to certify the activities of the registered units as units of green credit. Under this, any activity by the consumer or community to obtain or spend green credit is subject to market-based verification. The quantum and value of green credit will be determined by the authorized agency and will be determined on the environmental positive benefits associated with the activity. The quantity and value of green credit will be determined by the authorized agency as per the rules and norms approved by the Central Government.The promotion of green credit will have many benefits, such as the

promotion of green industries, and pollution control which will ensure improvement in air and water quality and protection of biodiversity. The pace of community and individual-driven planting of trees will increase. Challenges of climate change will also be addressed. The Green Credit Scheme is a novel and unique initiative to achieve the goals and objectives of Mission LiFE, launched by Prime Minister Modi. This unique initiative can be adopted by other nations at the global level by adjusting environment-friendly lifestyles.

(The author is Dy Director General in the Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Views are personal)

Israel orders evacuations as it widens offensive

AP ■ DEIR AL-BALAH

Israel's military renewed calls on Monday for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombarded targets across the Gaza Strip. The expanded operations, following the expiration of a weeklong cease-fire, are aimed at eliminating Gaza's Hamas rulers, whose October 7 attack into Israel triggered the deadliest Israeli-Palestinian violence in decades.

The war has already killed thousands of Palestinians and displaced over three-fourths of the territory's population of 2.3 million people, who are running out of safe places to go.

Already under mounting pressure from its top ally, the United States, Israel appears to be racing to strike a death blow against Hamas — if that's possible, given the group's deep roots in Palestinian society — before any new cease-fire. But the mounting toll of the fight-

ing, which Palestinian health officials say has killed several hundred civilians since the truce ended on Friday, is likely to further increase international pressure to return to the negotiating table.

It could also render even larger parts of the isolated territory uninhabitable.

The ground offensive has transformed much of the north, including large areas in Gaza City, into a rubble-filled wasteland. Hundreds of thousands of people have sought refuge in the south, parts of which could meet the same fate, and both Israel and neighbouring Egypt have refused to accept any refugees.

FIGHTING IN GAZA

Residents said on Monday they heard airstrikes and explosions in and around Khan Younis overnight after the military dropped leaflets warning people to relocate farther south toward the border with Egypt. The military has ordered the evacuation of nearly two dozen neighbourhoods in and around the town. Later in the day, the



Owat Suriyasri a Thai hostage who was freed from Hamas, center, hugs his wife Kanyarat Suriyasri on the arrival at Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Samut Prakarn Province, Thailand on Monday. Twenty-three Thai hostages kidnapped by Hamas in its attack on southern Israel have been freed so far, and Thailand's foreign ministry says nine remain in captivity in Gaza. There were about 30,000 Thai overseas workers in Israel, mostly in the agricultural sector, but more than 8,000 have returned home since the attack.

military warned civilians to avoid the main north-south highway between Khan Younis and the central town of Deir al-Balah, saying the road had become a "battlefield" and was "extremely dangerous". That

indicated Israeli troops were approaching Khan Younis from the northeast, possibly with plans to cut central Gaza off from the south.

Al-Jazeera television aired footage of medics rescuing

people wounded by what appeared to have been a strike on a car on that stretch of highway. An Israeli tank could be seen just up the road.

Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, the Israeli military spokesman, said the army is pursuing Hamas with "maximum force" in the north and south, and said it was trying to minimise harm to civilians.

He pointed to a map that divides southern Gaza into dozens of blocks in order to give "precise instructions" to residents on where to evacuate.

Many Palestinians, however, have ignored past evacuation orders, saying they do not feel any safer in the areas where they are told to seek refuge — which have also been repeatedly bombed. The military has meanwhile barred those who fled the north from returning, even during the cease-fire. "The level of human suffering is intolerable,"

Mirjana Spoljaric, the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross, said during a rare visit to Gaza. She also called for the immediate release

of scores of hostages captured by Palestinian militants during the October 7 attack.

"It is unacceptable that civilians have no safe place to go in Gaza, and with a military siege in place there is also no adequate humanitarian response currently possible."

RISING TOLL

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said the death toll in the territory since October 7 has surpassed 15,500, with more than 41,000 wounded. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but said 70 per cent of the dead were women and children. A Health Ministry spokesman asserted that hundreds had been killed or wounded since the cease-fire ended early on Friday.

"The majority of victims are still under the rubble," Ashraf al-Qidra said.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir al-Balah received 32 bodies overnight after Israeli strikes across central Gaza, said Omar al-Darawi,

an administrative employee. Associated Press footage showed women in tears, kneeling over the bodies of loved ones and kissing them.

The military said aircraft struck some 200 Hamas targets overnight, with ground troops operating "in parallel", without elaborating. It said troops in northern Gaza uncovered a militant hideout in a school after coming under attack.

Inside, they found two tunnel shafts, one of which had been booby-trapped, as well as explosives and weapons, the military said.

It is not possible to independently confirm battlefield reports from either side.

Israel says it targets Hamas operatives, not civilians, and blames civilian casualties on the militants, accusing them of operating in residential neighbourhoods.

It adds that it takes measures to protect civilians. In addition to leaflets dropped over Gaza, the military has used phone calls and radio and TV broadcasts to urge people to move from specific areas.

Dutch lawyers seek court order to halt export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel

The Hague (AP): Human rights lawyers went to court in the Netherlands on Monday to call for a halt to the export of fighter jet parts to Israel that could be used in attacks on Gaza.

The organisations allege that delivery of parts for F-35 jets makes the Netherlands complicit in possible war crimes being committed by Israel in its war with Hamas.

The civil case in The Hague opened as the Israeli military renewed calls for mass evacuations from the southern town of Khan Younis, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians have sought refuge in recent weeks, as it widened its ground offensive and bombarded targets across the Gaza Strip.

The rights lawyers want The Hague District Court to issue an injunction banning the exports of F-35 parts that are stored in a warehouse in the town of Woensdrecht.

"The state must immediately stop the delivery of F-35 parts to Israel," lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld told the court.

Citing government documents, Zegveld said that Dutch customs asked the government if it wanted to continue exports after the October 7 attacks by Hamas that triggered the Israel-Hamas war.

"The warning that the fighter jets can contribute to serious breaches of the laws of war does not, for the (Dutch) state, outweigh its economic interests and diplomatic reputation."

Government lawyer Reimer Veldhuis urged the court's single judge to reject the injunction, saying that even if it were to uphold the rights lawyers' legal arguments and ban exports, "the United States would deliver these parts to Israel from another place." He added that Israel has the right to self-defence.

Global warming could cost poor countries trillions

AP ■ DUBAI

A prominent developing-world leader on the issue of climate change said on Monday that global taxes on the financial services, oil and gas, and shipping industries could drum up hundreds of billions of dollars for poorer countries to adapt and cope with global warming.

Barbados Prime Minister Mia Mottley focused on how poorer countries, with help from richer countries and international finance, could shoulder the astronomical costs to adapt to climate change, reduce its future impact, and pay for losses and damage caused as climate trouble like floods, forest fires and heat waves rip through communities.

The UN climate summit known as COP28, which is being presided over by the head of the United Arab Emirates' biggest oil company, put its attention on Monday on how developing countries could possibly pay trillions of dollars that experts say they will need to cope with global warming.

"This has probably been the most progress we've seen in the last 12 months on finance," Mottley told reporters about pledges to fund the transition to clean energy, adapt to climate change and respond to extreme weather events.

"But we're not where we need to be yet," she said.

World Bank President Ajay Banga laid out five target areas in climate finance. His bank wants to lower methane emissions from waste management and farming; help Africa with greener energies; support "voluntary" carbon markets such as for forest projects; and allow developing countries hit by natural disasters to pause debt repayments.

The multilateral development bank, above all, wants to boost its role in climate finance in short order. "Forty-five per cent of our financing will go to climate by 2025," Banga said, with have going to adapting to the warming climate and the other half on slashing emissions.

"We cannot make climate only be about emissions. It has

to be about the downstream impact that the Global South is facing from the emission-heavy growth that we have enjoyed in other parts of the world."

That alluded to a major theme in climate talks: Developing nations are especially vulnerable to climate catastrophes, but far less responsible for global warming than industrialised countries, which have been belching carbon into the atmosphere for generations as they grew richer — and that excess greenhouse gas in the air has trapped heat near the Earth.

Small island nations have been pushing for climate finance in the negotiations, saying it's vital for countries to be able to adapt to rising seas encroaching onto their land.

Cedric Schuster, the minister for natural resources of Samoa, said he's optimistic that the climate talks could make headway on the finance issue, but urged that countries are still a long way off where they need to be.

Schuster, who's also chair of the Alliance of Small Island

states, said Samoans "want to be assured that they will survive ... Their trust in us is to be here, to amplify their voices and for the world to understand the outcome of their concerns and for us to make sure the right global decisions are made."

Climate activists chimed in on the issue at the two-week conference in Dubai, by staging a protest at the sprawling venue that's taking in tens of thousands of leaders, economists, business leaders, philanthropists and others to find a way to revamp the way the world generates and uses energy in the 21st century.

"Billions, not millions! Fill the fund now!" they chanted, referring to the loss and damage fund for countries impacted by climate change. Countries, including Germany and UAE, have been pledging hundreds of millions into the fund. But Eric Njuguna, an activist from Kenya, said, "we need the rich countries to pay into the loss and damage fund on the scale of hundreds of billions". Mottley praised the formal launch of a "loss and damage" fund at COP28 that organ-

isers say has already drawn some USD 720 million in commitments, but said that a far cry of the USD 420 billion — with a "B" — needed.

Mottley said a tax on global financial services, set at a 0.1 per cent rate, could raise USD 420 billion for it, "not USD 720 million where we are today." "If we took 5 per cent of oil and gas profits last year — oil and gas profits were USD 4 trillion — that would give us USD 200 billion," Mottley said.

"If we had a 1 per cent tax on the value of shipping — that, last year, the value of that was USD 7 trillion — that would give us USD 70 billion."

The G20, a group of key developing and industrialised countries that are responsible for four-fifths of all greenhouse gases, said in New Delhi earlier this year that developing countries will need USD 5.9 trillion by 2030 to meet their climate goals. They say another USD 4 trillion is needed if they're to get on track to have net-zero emissions by 2050. The Secretary-General of the Climate

Vulnerable Forum said he didn't think that amount of funding would be pledged any time soon. "We are stuck in millions," Mohamed Nasheed, who's also the former president of the Maldives, said. "So, I cannot see it going up to trillions."

The United States, the world's richest country, has never adopted a global tax and Republicans in the US Congress are loth to adopt new taxes and are especially hesitant to fund many multilateral institutions and programmes. "It's not easy to levy an international tax. It needs countries agreeing to make those taxes," said Lord Nicolas Stern, a co-chair of a panel of experts looking into the cost of financing the fight against climate change. And poorer countries need money up-front to make investments in renewables possible.

"Where we're talking about climate change, I think the maritime, and oil and gas, and travel are of particular relevance to this issue," Stern said. "And that means countries getting together."

'Wreckage and remains found from Osprey aircraft that crashed off Japan'

AP ■ TOKYO

US and Japanese divers have discovered wreckage and remains of five crew members from a US Air Force Osprey aircraft that crashed last week off southwestern Japan, the Air Force announced on Monday. The CV-22 Osprey carrying eight American personnel crashed last Wednesday off Yakushima island during a training mission. The body of one victim was recovered and identified earlier.

The Air Force Special Operations Command said two of the five newly located remains have been recovered but their identities have yet to be determined. The joint US-Japanese search operation is still working to recover the remains of three other crew members from the wreckage, it

said. The search is continuing for the two people who are still missing, it said.

"The main priority is bringing the Airmen home and taking care of their family members. Support to, and the privacy of, the families and loved ones impacted by this incident remains AFSOC's top priority," it said in a statement. The US military identified the one confirmed victim as Air Force Staff Sgt. Jacob Galliher of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on Saturday. On Monday, divers from the Japanese navy and US military spotted what appeared to be the front section of the Osprey, along with possibly five of the missing crew members, Japan's NHK public television and other media reported. Japanese navy officials declined to confirm the reports, saying they could not release details without

consent from the US

The US-made Osprey is a hybrid aircraft that takes off and lands like a helicopter but can rotate its propellers forward and cruise much faster, like an airplane, during flight.

Ospreys have had a number of crashes, including in Japan, where they are used at US and Japanese military bases, and the latest accident rekindled safety concerns.

Japan has suspended all flights of its own fleet of 14 Ospreys. Japanese officials say they have asked the US military to resume Osprey flights only after ensuring their safety. The Pentagon said no such formal request has been made and that the US military is continuing to fly 24 MV-22s, the Marine version of Ospreys, deployed on the southern Japanese island of Okinawa.



In this photo provided by South Korea Defense Ministry, the third test flight of solid-fuel space rocket is launched from a barge in waters near Jeju Island, South Korea, Monday. AP/PTI

Indian-origin Dev Sharma sworn in as Aus Senator

Melbourne (PTI): Dave Sharma, who became the first Indian-origin lawmaker in Australia's Parliament in 2019,

was sworn in as a Senator on Monday after his victory in the New South Wales Liberal Senate race. Sharma, who represented the Sydney seat of Wentworth until his defeat at the 2022 election, beat former New South Wales (NSW) minister Andrew Constance, a frontrunner backed by Opposition Leader Peter Dutton.

The 47-year-old leader will replace ex-foreign minister Marise Payne, who has retired from the Senate, the Canberra Times reported.

"An honour to escort our newest Senator, Dave Sharma, for his swearing-in today. Congratulations Senator Sharma," Senator Maria Kovacic wrote on X. Sussan

Ley, Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, said Sharma is a "welcome addition" to the federal Liberal team.

"He has strong experience in Parliament and senior diplomatic postings. Dave's keen foreign policy intellect will be particularly welcome given we are in the most dangerous set of geopolitical circumstances since WWII," Ley wrote on X.

In a vote by the New South Wales Liberal Party members, Sharma defeated Constance 251-206 in the final ballot.

Sharma, who served as Australia's ambassador to Israel from 2013 to 2017, was backed by the moderates within the party.

Senator Sharma will reportedly set up his office in Sydney's west as the Liberals look to claw back support and win predominantly Labor-held seats.

North Korean leader calls for women to have more children

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has said it is a duty of women to halt a fall in the country's births in order to strengthen national power, state media said Monday, as his government steps up the call for the people to have more children.

While getting a detailed read on North Korea's population trends is extremely difficult because of the limited statistics it discloses, South Korea's government assesses that the North's fertility rate has declined steadily for the past 10 years. That is a concerning development for a country that depends on mobilized labor to help keep its broken, heavily sanctioned economy afloat.

Kim's latest appeal for women to have more children was made Sunday during the country's National Mothers Meeting, the first of its kind in 11

years.

"Stopping the decline in birthrates and providing good child care and education are all our family affairs that we should solve together with our mothers," Kim said in his opening speech.

According to South Korea's government statistics agency, North Korea's total fertility rate, or the average number of babies expected to be born to a woman over her lifetime, was at 1.79 in 2022, down from 1.88 in 2014. The decline is still slower than the wealthier rival South Korea, whose fertility rate last year was 0.78, down from 1.20 in 2014. South Korea's fertility rate, the lowest in the developed world, is believed to be due to a potent cocktail of reasons discouraging people from having babies, including a decaying job market, a brutally competitive school environment for children, traditionally weak child care assistance and a male-centered corporate

culture where many women find it impossible to combine careers and family. While North Korea is one of the poorest nations in the world, the change in its demographic structure is similar to that of rich countries, some observers say.

"Many families in North Korea also don't intend to have more than one child these days as they know they need lots of money to raise their kids, send them to school and help them get jobs," said Ahn Kyung-su, head of DPRKHEALTH.ORG, a website focusing on health issues in North Korea.

Ahn, who has interviewed many North Korean defectors, said the smuggling of a vast amount of South Korean TV dramas and movies in the past 20 years that showed an elevated social status for women has also likely influenced women in North Korea not to have many children.

Guinea-Bissau's Prez dissolves nation's Parl

Bissau (Guinea-Bissau) : Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo has dissolved the West African nation's parliament, according to a presidential decree issued on Monday that cited last week's shootout which the government said was a failed coup. "The date for holding the next legislative elections will be set in due time in accordance with the provisions of ... the Constitution," the decree stated. "This Presidential Decree comes into force immediately." The order referred to the "seriousness" of the shootout which started in the capital, Bissau, between members of the Presidential Palace Battalion and the National Guard as the former tried to rearrest two ministers released from custody while being investigated for alleged corruption.

At least 47 killed in Tanzania landslides

AP ■ NAIROBI

At least 47 people are dead and 85 others injured following heavy flooding and landslides in northern Tanzania, authorities said on Monday. The government has deployed the military to help rescue hundreds of people trapped by the flooding which has been described as the worst in years in the East African nation.

The flooding occurred near Mount Hanang in the north. Houses, roads and bridges have been destroyed, complicating ongoing rescue efforts.

President Samia Suluhu Hassan, who is attending the UN climate summit in Dubai, said she was cutting short her trip to return to Tanzania due to the tragedy.

"I send my sincere condolences to the affected families and have directed all our



Zambian Army special forces officers follow the rescue operation of miners on Sunday in Chingola, around 400 kilometres (248 miles) north of the capital Lusaka, Zambia. AP/PTI

security forces to deploy to the area and help those affected," she said in a video message.

Other East African coun-

tries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan have been hit by raging floods made worse by the El Niño phenomenon.

Hundreds have died across the region and millions have been displaced since the heavy rains began in late October.

Khan, Qureshi to be indicted in cipher case again on Dec 12

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A special court in Pakistan on Monday ruled that jailed former prime minister Imran Khan and his close aide ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi would be indicted again on December 12 in the cipher case for allegedly leaking state secrets and violating the laws of the country.

Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqernain heard the case in the Adiala Jail Rawalpindi where the two leaders have been incarcerated in the case. The in-prison hearing of Khan, 71, and Qureshi, 67, began from the start on Saturday after a ruling by the Islamabad High Court last month declared the jail trial illegal on procedural grounds and also nullified its proceedings.

The judge said that fresh indictment was mandatory in the light of the Islamabad High Court judgment which declared all proceedings illegal after ruling against the jail trial on procedural grounds.

It resulted in a fresh process to initiate an in-prison trial of the due after completing all procedures and starting the case from the start. Hence, it announced to indict them on the next hearing fixed for December 12.

Khan has been incarcerated at the high-security Adiala jail since September 26. Qureshi was also arrested in the cipher (secret diplomatic cable) case and is imprisoned in the



same prison. The hearing of the cipher case was again shifted to jail after the order by the trial judge, followed by its approval by the Cabinet and notifications issued by the Ministry of Law and Justice as required under the law. On Monday, Judge Zulqernain adjourned the hearing till December 12 and said charges would be framed against the PTI leaders of the same day.

Meanwhile, Khan's lawyer Babar Awan told the media that the former premier asked the court to summon the ex-army general and a US embassy representative in the cipher case.

"Imran Khan has said that the US embassy representative should be called and he also took the name of a former general," Awan said during an informal conversation with journalists.

The Dawn newspaper reported that Awan stopped



short of naming the former top army general but media persons who attended the cipher case hearing on Monday said Khan named former army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, the cricketer-turned-politician predicted that his party would win the February 8 polls, adding that he was arrested under a plan. He also said that he did not face any difficulties in jail.

Khan also spoke about the allegations put forward against him by Khawar Maneka - the former husband of his wife Bushra Bibi. He stated that he saw his wife's face for the first time after their nikkah. The former prime minister also claimed that Bushra's sons were being forced to give a statement against their mother.

Meanwhile, Qureshi, the co-accused in the cipher case, said that the PTI was in his

heart and no one could take it out of there. "I do not need any post in PTI anymore," Qureshi told journalists. Family members and lawyers of the incarcerated leaders attended the hearing along with special prosecutor Zulfikar Abbas Naqvi and Rizwan Abbasi. Six members of the media were allowed to attend the proceedings. The cipher case was launched in August this year after a case was filed against Khan for allegedly violating the Official Secrets Act by disclosing a secret diplomatic cable - called the cipher - sent by the country's embassy in Washington in March last year. The diplomatic cable reportedly went missing from Khan's possession.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on September 30 filed the charge sheet against Khan and Qureshi who signed its copies. The FIA invoked in the charge sheet sections 5 and 9 of the Official Secrets Act which may lead to a death sentence, or two to 14 years' imprisonment if convicted.

Khan and Qureshi, who had claimed that the cable contained a threat from the United States to topple the PTI's government, were indicted on October 23. Both Khan and Qureshi have pleaded not guilty to the charges.

Khan was ousted through a vote of no-confidence in April 2022. More than 150 cases have been registered against him since his ouster from power.

SA intercepts buses carrying more than 400 kids from Zim

AP ■ JOHANNESBURG

Border officials in South Africa say they have intercepted dozens of buses carrying more than 400 young children from Zimbabwe without parents or legal guardians in an anti-trafficking operation. The officials say the children were being "trafficked" into South Africa, although an organization representing foreign nationals living in South Africa says it's likely the children were being sent to visit their parents, who are working in South Africa, for the end of year holidays.

The buses were sent back to Zimbabwe. More than 1 million Zimbabweans live in South Africa, many of them illegally, having moved to their southern neighbor over the past 15 years to escape Zimbabwe's economic turmoil. South African Border Management Agency commissioner Mike Masiapato said Sunday that South African police stopped and searched 42 buses entering from Zimbabwe on Saturday night and found 443 children under the age of 8 traveling unaccompanied.

"We denied them entry and activated the Zimbabwean officials to process them back into Zimbabwe," Masiapato said. The buses were allowed through on the Beitbridge border side of the Beitbridge border post, South African border officials said.

HK activist Chow jumps bail, moves to Canada

AP ■ HONG KONG

One of Hong Kong's best-known pro-democracy activists who moved to Canada to pursue her studies said she would not return to the city to meet her bail conditions, becoming the latest politician to flee Hong Kong under Beijing's crackdown on dissidents. Agnes Chow, a famous young face in the city's once-vibrant pro-democracy movement, was arrested in 2020 under a Beijing-imposed national security law that was enacted following 2019 anti-government protests. She was released on bail but also served more than six months in jail in a separate case over her role in the protests.

After Chow was released from prison in 2021, she had to regularly report to the police. She said in an Instagram post on Sunday night that the pressure caused her "mental illness" and influenced her decision not to return to the city.

Many of her peers have been jailed, arrested, forced into self-exile or silenced after the introduction of the security law in 2020. The suppression of the city's pro-democracy movement highlights that freedoms promised to the former British colony when it returned to China in 1997 have been eroded drastically. Both Beijing and Hong Kong governments have hailed the security law for bringing back stability to the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Chow said the authorities in July offered to return her passport so she could pursue studies in Canada under the condition that she travelled to



mainland China with them. She agreed, she said, and her trip in August included a visit to an exhibition on China's achievements and the headquarters of tech giant Tencent. The authorities later returned her passport.

After considering the situation in Hong Kong, her safety and her health, Chow said she "probably won't return" to the city again.

"I don't want to be forced to do things that I don't want to do anymore and be forced to visit mainland China again. If it continues, my body and my mind will collapse even though I am safe," she wrote.

Chow told TV Tokyo on Monday that she was still weighing her next steps, including the option of seeking asylum in Canada, the broadcaster reported. Asked whether she would take up political activism there, she said she wanted to do something in Hong Kong's interest, TV Tokyo said.

Hong Kong police on

Monday "strongly condemned" Chow's move, without naming her, saying it was "against and challenging the rule of law".

"Police urge the woman to immediately turn back before it is too late and not to choose a path of no return. Otherwise, she will bear the stigma of fugitive' for the rest of her life," the police said in a statement.

The police did not respond to questions from The Associated Press on Chow's mainland China trip.

Asked about Chow's case at a daily briefing, China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said Hong Kong is a law-based society and no one has a privilege beyond law. Any illegal acts will be punished, he said. The Hong Kong government also strongly condemned Chow's acts in a statement and said her credibility had gone "bankrupt".

"Unless fugitives surrender themselves, otherwise they would be pursued for life," it wrote. Chow rose to fame with other prominent young activists Joshua Wong and Nathan Law as a student leader, including in pro-democracy protests in 2014.

She co-founded the now-defunct pro-democracy party Demosisto with Wong and Law, but the party was disbanded on June 30, 2020, the same day the security law was enacted. Wong is now in custody and faces a subversion charge that could result in life imprisonment if convicted. Law fled to Britain and the police in July offered a reward of 1 million Hong Kong dollars (USD 127,600) for information leading to his arrest.

US out of money, nearly out of time to avoid 'kneecap' to Ukraine, WH warns Congress

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration on Monday sent Congress an urgent warning about the need to approve tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance to Ukraine, saying Kyiv's war effort to defend itself from Russia's invasion may grind to a halt without it.

In a letter to House and Senate leaders and also released publicly, Office of Management and Budget Director Shalanda Young warned the US will run out of funding to send weapons and assistance to Ukraine by the end of the year, saying that would "kneecap" Ukraine on the battlefield.

She added that the US already has run out of money that it has used to prop up Ukraine's economy, and "if Ukraine's economy collapses, they will not be able to keep fighting, full stop."

"We are out of money — and nearly out of time," she wrote. Biden has sought a nearly USD 106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs, but it has faced a difficult reception on Capitol Hill, where there is growing scepticism about the magnitude of assistance for Ukraine and where even Republicans supportive of the funding are insisting on US-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants as a condition for the assistance.

Meanwhile, the GOP-controlled House has passed a standalone assistance package for Israel, which is fighting a war with Hamas in Gaza, while

the White House has maintained that all of the priorities must be met. Congress already has allocated USD 111 billion to assist Ukraine, including USD 67 billion in military procurement funding, USD 27 billion for economic and civil assistance and USD 10 billion for humanitarian aid. Young wrote that all of it, other than about 3 per cent of the military funding, had been depleted by mid-November.

The Biden administration has said it has slowed the pace of some military assistance to Kyiv in recent weeks to try to stretch supplies until Congress approves more funding.

"We are out of money to support Ukraine in this fight," Young wrote. "This isn't a next year problem. The time to help a democratic Ukraine fight against Russian aggression is right now. It is time for Congress to act."

The letter followed a classified Capitol Hill briefing on November 29 for the top House and Senate leaders on the need for the assistance. Defense and other national security officials briefed the "big four" congressional leaders as Congress is debating President Joe Biden's nearly USD 106 billion funding package, which includes USD 61 billion for Ukraine but has become snared by Republican demands for US-Mexico border security changes.

"They were clear that Ukraine needs the aid soon — and so does our military need the aid soon," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer told The Associated Press in an interview.

China blames US Navy for intrusion into SCS

AP ■ BEIJING

The Chinese military said that an American naval ship had "illegally intruded" on Monday into waters near the Second Thomas Shoal, the site of a hot territorial dispute between China and the Philippines in the South China Sea.

A Chinese naval force was mobilized to track the USS Gabrielle Giffords during the operation, according to a statement from the People's Liberation Army Southern Theater. The U.S. Navy did not respond immediately to a request for comment.

Chinese and Philippine naval and coast guard ships have confronted each other repeatedly around the Second Thomas Shoal in recent

months as China tries to prevent the Philippines from resupplying and repairing a rusting warship that it intentionally ran aground in 1999 to serve as a military outpost.

Dwarfed by China's military might, the Philippines has sought America's help, agreeing to an expansion of the U.S. military presence in the country earlier this year and launching joint sea and air patrols with the United States late last month. China says the U.S. is meddling in waters far from its shores and renewed its accusation that America is the one raising regional tensions following the sailing of the USS Giffords, a littoral combat ship designed to operate in coastal areas, near Second Thomas Shoal.

"The US deliberately dis-

rupted the situation in the South China Sea, seriously violated China's sovereignty and security, seriously undermined regional peace and stability, and seriously violated international law and basic norms governing international relations, fully demonstrating that the U.S. is the biggest threat to peace and stability in the South China Sea," the statement from the Chinese military's Southern Theater said. China has staked claim to virtually all of the reefs and other outcroppings in the South China Sea, building some into islands with runways that could be used by the military. Vietnam, Malaysia, Taiwan and Brunei also say they are the rightful owners of territory in the same waters in a complex web of overlapping claims.

'6 Nepalese killed fighting for Russian Army against Ukraine'

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Six Nepalese nationals serving in the Russian Army have been killed in the war with Ukraine, the government announced on Monday, urging Moscow not to recruit Nepali citizens into its forces.

Nepal's Foreign Ministry in a statement identified the deceased as Pritam Karki of Syangja, Ganga Raj Moktan of Ilam, Raj Kumar Karki of Dolakha, Rupak Karki of Kapilvastu, Dewan Rai of Kaski and Sandeep Thapaliya of Gorkha. The ministry has requested Russia to send the bodies of the Nepalis killed in the Russia-Ukraine war and provide compensation to the victims' families, the statement said.

Nepal has also requested

Russia not to recruit its citizens into the Russian army and if any Nepali nationals have been recruited, to immediately return them to Nepal.

The ministry also said that diplomatic efforts are on to release one Nepalese who has been made hostage by the Ukraine while serving in the Russian Army. It has also appealed to the general public to travel to Russia only with a No Objection Certificate (NOC) issued by the Department of Consular Services under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs except for those who are involved in government work, scholarship of the Russian government and those in a profession or business.

It is believed that around 200 Nepalis are currently serv-

ing in the Russian Army in different capacities despite the government's request not to risk lives there, the Kathmandu Post newspaper reported.

Similarly, according to foreign ministry officials, some Nepali youths are also serving in the Ukrainian Army, but their exact number is not known, the paper added. Earlier, several videos circulating on social media showed Nepali youths serving in Russian and Ukrainian armies. The videos claimed they could earn up to Rs 400,000 a month, the paper added.

Nepal only allows recruitment in the Indian and British Army in line with bilateral agreements with the respective countries.

UN call to rescue 2 boats adrift on sea with 400 Rohingya aboard

AP ■ BANGKOK

The UN refugee agency on Monday sounded the alarm for about 400 Rohingya Muslims believed to be aboard two boats reported to be out of supplies and adrift on the Andaman Sea.

The agency, also called UNHCR, worries that all aboard could die without efforts to rescue them, said Babar Baloch, its Bangkok-based regional spokesperson. "There are about 400 children, women and men looking death in the eye if there are

no moves to save these desperate souls," he told The Associated Press. He said the boats that apparently embarked from Bangladesh are reported to have been at sea for about two weeks. The captain of one boat, contacted by the AP on Saturday, said he had 180 to 190 people on board, they were out of food and water and the engine was damaged.

"They are worried they are all going to die," said the captain, who gave his name as Maan Nokim. On Sunday, Nokim said the boat was 320

kilometres from Thailand's west coast. A Thai navy spokesperson, contacted on Monday, said he had not received any information about the boats. The location is about the same distance from Indonesia's northernmost province of Aceh on the island of Sumatra, where another boat with 139 people landed Saturday, UNHCR's Baloch said.

He said they included 58 children, 45 women and 36 men, reflecting the typical balance of those making the sea journey.

11 bodies recovered following volcanic eruption in Indonesia

Padang (AP): The bodies of 11 climbers were recovered on Monday a day after a furious eruption of the Mount Marapi volcano as Indonesian rescuers searched for 12 apparently still missing. Marapi has stayed at the third highest of four alert levels since 2011, a level indicating above normal volcanic activity and prohibiting climbers or villagers within 3 kilometres of the peak, said Hendra Gunawan, the head of the Centre for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation.

"This means that there should be no climbing to the peak," Gunawan said, adding that climbers were only allowed below the danger zone, "but sometimes many of them broke the rules to fulfil their satisfaction to climb further."

About 75 climbers had started their way up the nearly 2,900-metre mountain on

Saturday and became stranded. Eight of those rescued Sunday were rushed to hospitals with burns and one also had a broken limb, said Hari Agustian, an official at the local Search and Rescue Agency in Padang, the West Sumatra provincial capital. All of the climbers had registered at two command posts or online through West Sumatra's conservation agency before they climbed, Agustian said. It was possible others took illegal roads or local residents were active in the area, but it couldn't be confirmed, he said. Marapi spewed thick columns of ash as high as 3,000 metres in Sunday's eruption and hot ash clouds spread several miles (kilometres). Nearby villages and towns were blanketed by tons of volcanic debris. Volcanic dust and rain smeared the faces and hair of evacuated climbers, according to video on social media.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mr. Khem Chand Baswala who is purchasing of Built up First Floor without roof rights part of Property bearing No. M-569, area measuring 270.11 Sq. Mtrs., Situated in the layout plan of The Hindustan Coop House Building Society Limited, now known as Guru Harkishan Nagar, Paschim Vihar, New Delhi., from Mr. Rajesh Mehta to Mr. Jagrit Lal Mehta and Mrs. Rajni Mehta who Mr. Rajesh Mehta who is the owner of the said property vide Conveyance deed, dated 28.10.214 Document No. 19293, in Book No. 1, Volume No. 5134, on Pages 69 to 71, on Dated 28.10.2014. SR. VII New Delhi, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. That the Death Certificate of Late Mr. Parkash Kaur w/o Mr. Kesar Singh is not available. To comply the requirements of BANK/NBFC, we give this public notice that if any person(s) having any objection regarding ownership and/or creating mortgage of the said property is/are hereby requested to intimate it in writing to the undersigned within 7 days at below address.

Lucern Legal LLP
Office No-G-03, at Ground Floor, on Plot No. D-61, Sector-2, Noida, UP-201301, Contact#0120-4193439

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given on behalf of Mrs. Nidhi Narwaha who is purchasing the Front Side Corner Built Up Property No. WZ-11, Old No. WZ-40, out of total area measuring 86.15 Sq. Mtrs., part of Khara No. 429/192, Village Nangra Raya colony known as Lajwanti Garden Jail Road New Delhi, from Mr. Bal Kishan Goyal, who is owner of aforesaid property vide Sale Deed dated 12.05.2022 duly registered vide Doc. No. 2515, at SRO-VIIA, New Delhi, and intend to mortgage against the financial assistance from Aditya Birla Housing Finance Limited. That 1)Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mrs. Champa Wati, 2) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Raj Kishan Goyal, 3) Death Certificate & SMC of Late Mr. Rook Kumar Gupta & 4)Death Certificate & SMC of Mr. Ashwani Gupta, is Lost/Misplaced/Not available. 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 is/are hereby requested to intimate it 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.

Lucern Legal LLP
Plot No.136, (Basement) Uday Park, PusaPahla, New Delhi-110049, Contact # 011-46046316

Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta Institute of Professional Studies
(Formerly Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta Institute of Technology & Management)
(A Unit of Babu Banarasi Das Educational Society)
FC-26 Shastri Park, New Delhi – 110 053.
Ph.No.: 011- 49905900-99. Fax: 49905977

This is to inform all concerned that the name of Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta Institute of Technology & Management, FC-26 Shastri Park, New Delhi - 110 053 has been changed to **Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta Institute of Professional Studies, FC-26 Shastri Park, New Delhi - 110 053** as per approval of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University.

DIRECTOR

Tender Notice Reference No. PGSC/Admin/ Capsule Simulator /2023/8
Punjab Gaural Science City invites online bids for the following:

Sl. No.	Item	Quantity
01	On-line Digitally signed open e -tenders are invited in two Bid system from the manufacturers or their authorized registered Indian agents for Supply, Installation, Integration, Testing and Commissioning of Integrated 3 DOF Capsule Simulator having seating capacity of minimum 30 persons with hardware and software packages, interfaces, tools and/ or drivers providing operational training, offering onsite comprehensive warranty of one year and post warranty non comprehensive maintenance for 5 (five) years having unlimited period licence of 4(four) selected educational 4K ride films with motion programming at Puspaha Gaural Science City, Kapurthala	01

Interested tenderers can submit online bids through <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> by 27.12.2023 (1500 Hrs).
Note: PGSC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to annul the process at any time, without any liability and assigning any reason thereof.

Closing date & time: 27.12.2023 (1500 Hrs)
For details log onto: www.pgsciencecity.org & <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>.
Note: Any corrigendum and addendum to the Tender Notice shall be published on the above websites only.

Administrative Officer,
Punjab Gaural Science City
Kapurthala

NA/12/20580/2023/30296 Dated CHD :- 12/4/2023



Municipal workers clear snow from the sidewalks after heavy snowfall in Moscow, Russia, on Monday. A record snowfall has hit Russia's capital bringing an additional 10 cm (to already high levels of snow and causing disruption at the capital's airports and on roads

AP/PTI

‘India to become \$5 trillion economy’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India will become a USD 5 trillion economy early in the ‘Amrit Kaal’ on the path to achieve the goal of becoming an advanced economy by 2047, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Monday. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has projected India to become a USD 5 trillion economy with the third largest GDP in 2027-28. The USD 5 trillion milestone will be crossed with the help of a strong rupee which will result from macro-economic stability, he said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. “The government has set the goal of becoming an advanced



economy by 2047. In the process, it will become a USD 5 trillion economy early in the Amrit Kaal,” Chaudhary said. At the end of 2022-23, the Indian GDP stood at USD 3.7 trillion. In 1980-81, size of the Indian economy was USD 189 billion, which increased to USD 326 billion after a decade. In 2000-01, the size of the GDP rose to USD 476 billion.

In 2010-11, India’s GDP jumped to USD 1.71 trillion, and further increased to USD 2.67 trillion in 2020-21. Chaudhary said the exchange rate is not an overlooked factor as it ranks India’s GDP size in the world. “India is a market economy, and the government monitors economic progress through market-determined GDP and exchange rate,” Chaudhary said. He further said both domestic and international markets are the mechanisms that determine India’s GDP, exchange rate and contribution of various sectors to GDP. Contribution of agriculture, industry and services to nominal GDP in 2022-23 stood at 18.4 per cent, 28.3 per cent, and 53.3

per cent, respectively. Chaudhary said the government also contributes to economic progress through policy interventions, including the measures announced in annual budgets. Major initiatives taken by the government in the last 9 years for directly increasing the GDP include, implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (IBC) Code, recapitalisation of public sector banks, rollout of Goods and Services Tax (GST), reduction in corporate tax, boost in effective capital expenditure, introduction of Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in 14 sectors, continuous liberalisation of the FDI regime, and building of digital infrastructure.

Indian Oil opens its first EV battery swapping station

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) on Monday opened its first battery-swapping station in Kolkata for electric vehicles (EV). The oil marketing PSU opened the facility at its retail outlet in New Town on the eastern outskirts of the city in collaboration with Sun Mobility, the company said in a statement, adding that this marks a significant step forward in promoting sustainable and accessible electric mobility solutions across the city. Battery-swapping technology for two and three-wheeler EVs has proven to be a game-changer across India.

IOC director (marketing) V Satish Kumar said, “The battery-swapping technology presents a significant opportunity for promoting sustainable electric mobility solutions. This facility is expected to play a pivotal role in the adoption of EVs and spearhead energy transition in eastern India.” In the coming months, IOC, in association with Sun Mobility, will install more battery-swapping facilities at its retail outlets, allowing drivers to access its convenient and efficient solution to quickly swap depleted batteries for fully charged ones. This enables faster turnaround times, making EVs more convenient for users.

Avg monthly GST mop-up at ₹1.66 lakh cr so far this fiscal: FM

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The GST collection has been showing an upward trend on an annual basis since its roll-out on July 1, 2017, and the average gross monthly mop-up in the current fiscal so far is ₹1.66 lakh crore, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday. In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, she said the GST collection crossed ₹1.50 lakh crore mark in every month of the current fiscal and had touched a record high of ₹1.87 lakh crore in April 2023. “GST collection has been showing an upward trend on year-on-year basis since the implementation of GST w.e.f. 1st July, 2017... The average gross monthly GST collection in FY 2023-24 now stands at ₹1.66 lakh crore and is 11 per cent more than that in the same period in the previous financial year,” Sitharaman said. The average monthly Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection in 2022-23 was over ₹1.50 lakh crore, higher than ₹1.23 lakh crore in 2021-22. In 2020-21, the average monthly mop-up was ₹94,734 crore. In reply to a separate question, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the monthly average gross GST collection for 2021-22 and 2022-23 have shown 30 per cent and 22 per cent year-on-year growth respectively. “GST is paid on self-assessment basis and tax administration at Central and State level is

empowered to take action against cases where GST is not paid and short paid. Detection of such cases and recovery of taxes not paid or short paid is a continuous process,” Chaudhary said. He said the government, on the recommendation of the GST Council, has been bringing several reforms in GST and these measures would improve the GST compliance and increase the GST collection. These include structural changes like calibration of GST rates for correcting inverted duty structure and pruning of exemptions; measures for improving tax compliance such as mandating e-way bill, ITC matching, mandating e-invoice, deployment of artificial intelligence and machine-based analytics, Aadhaar authentication for registration, calibrated action on non-filers, stop filers. Also, system-based analytical tools and system-generated red flag reports are being shared with central as well as state tax authorities to take action against tax evaders. In reply to another question, Chaudhary said the central government, on the recommendation of GST Council, has constituted State Benches of GST Appellate Tribunal. Giving details of the number of pending appeals over tax demands raised by Central GST authorities, Chaudhary said 14,897 appeals are pending as on October 31, 2023. This is higher than 11,899 appeals pending as of March 31, 2023.

Disbursement of ₹79 crore incentives under PLI for white goods expected

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government is expected to disburse ₹79 crore fiscal incentives under PLI for white goods in the last quarter of this financial year as certain selected beneficiary firms have started production, a senior official said. The production linked incentive (PLI) scheme on white goods seeks to encourage domestic manufacturing of air conditioners and LED light components. The official also said that the target of ₹11,000 crore incentive disbursement for different sectors under the scheme during the current fiscal may fall short. “Lot of the disbursement will come in the last fiscal. Lot of projects are in gestation period. In the white goods sector, we are expecting about ₹79 crore disbursement in the last quarter,” the official said. Of the 64 selected beneficiaries of the PLI scheme under the white goods segment, 15 have started production. These 15 beneficiaries had opted for a gestation period of up to March 31, 2022. Rest of the beneficiaries who opted for gestation period of up to March 31, 2023 are at different stages of implementation. The scheme is to be implemented over a seven-year period, from 2021-22 to 2028-29, and has an outlay of ₹6,238 crore. When asked about the plan to extend the scheme for sectors like toys, the official said: “It will



be decided after a review of the scheme. We are taking stock and what is the progress so far. The progress is better in some, and in some sectors, changes are required. So an inter-ministerial consultation is on.” Till March this year, incentives worth ₹2,900 crore have been disbursed under the ₹1.98 lakh crore PLI scheme. An additional ₹1,000 crore incentives for this year has been granted for companies engaged in electronics manufacturing. PLI schemes for sectors such as electronics, mobile manufacturing, pharma and food processing are doing well while in some sectors like textiles, certain course correction is expected. The scheme was announced in 2021 for 14 sectors such as telecommunications, white goods, textiles, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles, speciality steel, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones and pharma with an outlay of ₹1.97 lakh crore.

Gold surges ₹450 to hit record high of ₹64,300 per 10 gm

NEW DELHI, DEC 4 (PTI)

Gold prices on Monday increased ₹450 to hit a fresh record high of ₹64,300 per 10 grams in the national capital amid strong global trends, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at ₹63,850 per 10 grams. However, silver remained flat at ₹80,200 per kilogram. “Gold prices extended gains on Monday, trading at a record high of ₹64,300/10 gram, up by ₹450 following a bullish trend



in the overseas markets,” HDFC Securities’ Senior Analyst of Commodities Saamil Gandhi said. In the international markets, gold was trading higher at USD 2,077 per ounce while silver was down at USD 25.40 per ounce. Spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,077 per ounce, up USD 6 from its previous close. Comex gold reached a new all-time high on Monday, hitting an intra-day high of USD 2,146 per ounce in Asian trading hours due to increased geopolitical tension in the Middle East, Gandhi said.

8 crore ITRs filed till December 2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 7.76 crore tax returns for income earned in 2022-23 have been filed till December 2 and more are expected to be filed by this month end, Parliament was informed on Monday. In 2022-23 financial year, 10.09 crore PAN holders paid taxes for income earned in 2021-22. “For the corresponding period, 7.76 crore returns have been filed till December 2, 2023, and more returns are expected to be filed till the last date, i.e. December 31, 2023,” Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. The last date for filing income tax returns (ITRs) for income earned in 2022-23 was July 31, 2023. Assessee who wish to file return after the due date can do so by December 31 upon payment of a penalty. The total net direct tax collection during 2022-23 is ₹16.63 lakh crore out of which income tax collection is ₹8.08 lakh crore.

Govt says 28 virtual digital assets service providers registered with FIU-India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 28 Virtual Digital Assets (VDA) service providers, including WazirX, Coin DCX and Coinswitch, have registered themselves with the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-IND), Finance Ministry said on Monday. The Finance Ministry in March had said entities dealing in VDAs, crypto exchanges and intermediaries would be considered “reporting entity” under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Accordingly, crypto exchanges and intermediaries dealing with VDAs were required to perform KYC of their clients and users of the platform. To a question on whether these guidelines and reporting requirements are applicable to Offshore Crypto Exchanges servicing the Indian market, Minister of State for Finance



Pankaj Chaudhary replied in the affirmative. “The guidelines and reporting requirements are applicable to offshore crypto exchanges servicing the Indian

Market. The process of registration for the said VDA service providers has been initiated,” Chaudhary said in the Lok Sabha. Appropriate action under PMLA shall be initiated in cases of non-compliance by offshore platforms, he added. The minister further said 28 entities have registered themselves for providing services related to VDAs. These include Neblio Technologies Pvt Ltd operating trading platform Coin DCX, Zammai Labs Pvt Ltd (WazirX), Bitcipher Labs LLP (Coinswitch), Nextgendev Solutions Pvt Ltd (CoinswitchX), Awlencan Innovations India Ltd (Zebpay). Under the anti-money laundering law, reporting entities are required to maintain KYC details or records of documents evidencing the identity of its clients and beneficial owners as well as account files and business correspondence relating to its clients.

Spotify axes 17 per cent of workforce in third round of layoffs

AP ■ LONDON

Spotify says it’s axing 17 per cent of its global workforce, the music streaming service’s third round of layoffs this year as it moves to slash costs while focusing on becoming profitable. In a message to employees posted on the company’s blog on Monday, CEO Daniel Ek said the jobs were being cut as part of a “strategic reorientation.” The post didn’t specify how many employees would lose their jobs, but a spokesperson confirmed that it amounts to about 1,500 people. Spotify had used cheap financing to expand the business and “invested significantly” in employees, content and marketing in 2020 and 2021, the blog post said. But Ek indicated that the company was caught out as central banks started hiking interest rates last year. “We now find ourselves in a very different environment. And despite our efforts to reduce costs this past year, our cost structure for where we need to be is still too big,” he said. Ek said the “leaner structure” of the company will ensure “Spotify’s continued profitability.” Stockholm-based Spotify posted a net loss of 462 million euros (about USD 500 million) for the nine months to September. The company announced in January that it was axing 6 per cent of total staff. In June, it cut staff by another 2 per cent, or about 200 workers, mainly in its podcast division. Tech companies like Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta and IBM have announced hundreds of thousands of job cuts this year.

ReNew inks pact with Asian Development Bank

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Renewable energy firm ReNew Energy Global Plc has inked an initial pact with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for a funding of USD 5.3 billion. “The MoU was signed at COP28, Dubai by ReNew’s Founder, Chairman and CEO, Sumant Sinha and Suzanne Gaboury, Director General, Private Sector Operations Department, ADB,” a company statement said. According to the statement, the MoU identified potential investments in renewable energy projects, manufacturing, carbon offset projects, green hydrogen, to jointly support sustainable energy transition. ReNew Energy Global Plc and ADB will also collaborate on climate change mitigation and adaptation projects, it said. The initial pact covers lending of more than USD 5.3 billion between 2023 and 2028, it informed. The MoU, a first of its kind in the Indian Renewable Energy sector, is expected to draw interest from additional international investors to participate in financing long-term debt for significant Renewable Energy infrastructure projects, it stated. In addition, it will help ADB achieve its funding ambition of USD 100 billion in green energy projects by 2030.

Rupee falls 3 paise to close at 83.36 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled lower by 3 paise at 83.36 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday amid a recovery in the greenback in overseas markets. Forex traders said the rupee gained earlier in the day as domestic equity indices surged to record highs after the ruling BJP scored a spectacular win in three Hindi heartland states. Moreover, sustained foreign fund inflows also supported the local currency. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 83.28 and touched a low of 83.37 against the greenback. It finally settled at 83.36 (provisional) against the dollar, down by 3 paise from its previous close. On Friday, the rupee settled at 83.33 against the American currency. “The Indian rupee eked out opening gains and headed lower following the weaker Chinese currency. The mar-

ket ignored the positive political news and lower crude oil prices as traders worried about the central bank’s two-way interventions,” said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. Looking at the price actions, the rupee is facing resilience in crossing the 83.10 to 83.50 range, he said. “However, the seasonality patterns and expectations of year-end dollar inflows may support the rupee in limiting losses in case of short covering bounce in the greenback,” Parmar said. According to traders markets now await for RBI Monetary policy on December 8, and non-farm payroll data from the US on the same day in the evening for further cues. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback’s strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.06 per cent higher at 103.32. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.51 per cent to USD 78.48 per barrel.

Corporate bond market likely to double by 2030: Crisil

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Indian corporate bond market is poised for rapid growth despite clocking a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of nine per cent over the past five years. Crisil Ratings expects the outstanding size of the market to more than double from around ₹43 lakh crore as of last fiscal to ₹100-120 lakh crore by fiscal year 2030, a statement said on Monday. “The growth will be driven by a confluence of factors. Large capital expenditure (capex) in the infrastructure and corporate sectors, growing attractiveness of the infrastructure sector for bond investors, and strong retail credit growth are expected to boost bond supply, while the rising financialisation of household savings should drive demand. Regulatory interventions are also helpful,” Crisil senior director, Somasekhar Vemuri said. Capex in the infrastructure and corporate sectors is anticipated to be propelled by decade-high capacity utilisation, healthy corporate balance



sheets, and a favourable economic outlook, he said. Crisil envisions a capex of around ₹110 lakh crore in these sectors between fiscals 2023 and 2027, approximately 1.7 times higher than that of the past five fiscals. The rating major expects this pace of capex to continue beyond fiscal 2027. The corporate bond market is projected to finance about a sixth of the anticipated capex. Infrastructure assets are emerging as strong contenders for investment owing to their improving credit risk profile, promising recovery prospects, and long-term nature. Currently, infra-

structure accounts for only about 15 per cent of the annual corporate bond issuance by volume, the note said. However, structural improvements facilitated by a raft of policy measures are expected to make infrastructure bond issuances more attractive to patient-capital investors, particularly insurers and pension funds, who constitute the key investor segment in the bond market. Crisil estimates assets in the managed investment segment to double to around ₹315 lakh crore by fiscal 2027, and the trend is expected to continue well past fiscal 2027. These investments will be in both equity and debt and a good portion of it may flow to the corporate bond market. The agency stated that retail credit growth is expected to maintain its momentum, fueled by private consumption growth and the formalisation of last-mile credit flow. The bond market, being a crucial funding source for larger NBFCs and accounting for a third of the funding mix, will play a pivotal role in financing retail credit flow.

Adani group firms rally in afternoon trade

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Adani group firms continued to attract heavy demand in the afternoon trade on Monday, with Adani Green Energy trading higher by 8 per cent. The rally in all the 10 listed group companies mirrored the broader upswing in the domestic markets, fuelled by optimism regarding the BJP government’s returning to power in 2024 after the party’s

victory in three heartland states’ assembly elections. On the BSE, the scrip of Adani Green Energy surged 8 per cent to ₹1,108.65 apiece, flagship firm Adani Enterprises rallied 6.61 per cent to ₹2,518.55, and ACC bounced 6.35 per cent to ₹2,021 per share. Adani Energy Solutions advanced 6.16 per cent to ₹908.65 per scrip and Ambuja Cements rose 6.06 per cent to ₹468.90 per piece. While

However, the company denied all the allegations. On the BSE, the scrip of Adani Green Energy surged 8 per cent to ₹1,108.65 apiece, flagship firm Adani Enterprises rallied 6.61 per cent to ₹2,518.55, and ACC bounced 6.35 per cent to ₹2,021 per share. Adani Energy Solutions advanced 6.16 per cent to ₹908.65 per scrip and Ambuja Cements rose 6.06 per cent to ₹468.90 per piece. While

Adani Power went up by 5.59 per cent to ₹464.80 apiece, Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) gained 5.58 per cent to ₹873.75 per piece. Also, shares of Adani Total Gas jumped 4.38 per cent to ₹731.95, NDTV climbed 4.13 per cent to ₹228.10 and Adani Wilmar moved 2.50 per cent higher to ₹348.95 per piece on the bourse. Meanwhile, the BSE Sensex

was trading 975.84 points or 1.45 per cent higher at its all-time peak of 68,457.03 and NSE Nifty gained 1.52 per cent to hit the record level of 20,575.75 points. Stock prices of Adani group companies have been on the rise since last week after the Supreme Court on November 24 reserved its verdict on a batch of petitions seeking examination of allegations of fraud against the conglomerate.



Tata Power-DDL distributes aids and appliances on International Day of Persons with Disabilities

MEN'S JUNIOR HOCKEY WORLD CUP OPENER

India start favourites against Korea

PTI ■ KUALA LUMPUR

Two-time champions India will look to make a winning start against Asian rivals Korea in their pursuit of another podium finish in the FIH men's Junior World Cup hockey tournament starting here on Tuesday. India have won the tournament twice, in 2001 in Hobart and 2016 in Lucknow, besides finishing runners-up once in Milton Keynes, England in 1997. In the last edition of the event in Bhubaneswar two years back, the Indians finished fourth and they would be hoping to clinch their fourth podium at the National Hockey Stadium in Bukit Jalil here. India are placed in a relatively easy Pool comprising Canada and Spain besides Korea. After Korea, India will play Spain on Thursday and Canada on Saturday. Pool A consists of defending champions Argentina, Australia, Chile, and Malaysia, while Pool B has Egypt, France, Germany and South Africa. Pool D is the toughest of the lot as Belgium, Netherlands, New Zealand and Pakistan will be vying for a quarterfinal berth. The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the quarterfinals. The quarterfinals, semifinals and final are scheduled for December 12, 14 and 16 respectively. Under forward Uttam Singh's captaincy, the Indians would be brimming with confidence as they have a better head-



to-head record against Korea. Out of the six matches played between the two teams, India have won three, Korea two and one match ended in a draw. The last time both the teams faced each other was during the semifinal of the men's Junior Asia Cup earlier this year, where India registered a massive 9-1 win over Korea. India skipper Uttam too sounded confident ahead of their campaign opener. "The wait is finally over for the World Cup, and we are very much confident of a good start. We recently played against Korea, so we are aware of the challenge but the focus will be on us, on executing our plans and playing good hockey," he said. Uttam has the experience of the big stage as he was part of the Indian team that finished fourth in the last edition of the tournament in Bhubaneswar. "As always, our focus has been to go match by match, and our priority is to get a winning start and then focus on the following matches to proceed to the next stage of the tournament," he said. India coach C R Kumar said they are fully prepared but won't take things for granted. "The players have worked hard, and are fully prepared for the tournament. Korea are a quality side, you can't take them lightly. "We have to respect every opponent, it is a bigger stage, so we will have to be cautious and back our strengths to get a good start in the tournament," he said.

JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

Amisha, Prachi, Hardik sign off with silver



9 Indian boxers to fight for gold

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian boxers Hardik Panwar, Amisha Keretta and Prachi Tokas signed off with silver medals after suffering defeats in their respective finals at the IBA Junior World Boxing Championships in Yerevan, Armenia. Asian junior champion Hardik (80kg) conceded a narrow 2-3 loss to Ashurov Bairamkhan of Russia in a closely-fought contest on Sunday. Both the boxers looked aggressive in the bout, grabbing every opportunity to score points and keeping the spectators on the edge of their seats. However, the Russian did enough to tilt the result in his favour. Meanwhile, Amisha (54kg) and Prachi (480 kg) suffered identical 0-5 losses

in their respective final bouts. While Amisha lost to Ayazhan Sydyk of Kazakhstan, Prachi gave her all against two-time Asian junior champion Sobirakhon Shakhobiddinova from Uzbekistan but fell short. India have already secured 17 medals, including five bronze, in the ongoing tournament. Payal (48kg), Nisha (52kg), Vini (57kg), Shrushti (63kg), Akansha (70kg), Megha (80kg), Jatin (54kg), Sahil (75kg) and Hemant (80+kg) are the country's nine pugilists who will fight for gold medals on the final day of the competition on Monday. Neha (46kg), Nidhi (66kg), Pari (50kg), Kritika (75kg) and Sikandar (48kg) had secured bronze medals earlier after concluding their campaigns in the semifinals.



Leverkusen stays unbeaten in Bundesliga

AP ■ LEVERKUSEN (GERMANY)

Victor Boniface kept German league leader Bayer Leverkusen's unbeaten start to the season intact with a goal to rescue a 1-1 draw with Borussia Dortmund. Leverkusen and coach Xabi Alonso looked on course to lose for the first time since May after Julian Ryerson's early goal for Dortmund. That all changed in the 79th minute when Patrik Schick, seconds after coming off the bench, found space to receive a pass from Odilon Kossounou in the penalty area and cross low for Boniface to score. It was Boniface's 13th goal of the season in all competitions but his first in the Bundesliga for nearly two months. Niclas Fullkrug tried a diving header to win the game for Dortmund deep into stoppage time but sent the ball over the bar. On a freezing and snowy evening, Dortmund defended for most of the game after full back Ryerson scored in the fifth minute off a pass from Fullkrug. It was the first time Leverkusen had conceded the opening goal since Harry Kane scored for Bayern Munich in a 2-2 draw in September - the only other time Alonso's team dropped points this season. Leverkusen had won all 14 of its games in all competitions since then. Leverkusen celebrated leveling the score when Florian Wirtz lashed a shot in off the crossbar just before halftime, but a video

review found a tight offside - Boniface's heel - much earlier in the move. Leverkusen kept Dortmund under pressure for almost all of the game but its attacking moves frequently broke down thanks to either poor crossing or wayward long-range shots hit out of apparent frustration. Leverkusen finished the game with 22 shots to Dortmund's six — though only a few were genuinely dangerous — and 16 corners to Dortmund's one. "It obviously wasn't easy after we conceded the goal. We tried, tried, tried," Alonso said. "In the end I think we did enough to win. A point isn't bad but it could be better." Leverkusen stays top of the Bundesliga by three points from Bayern Munich, but Bayern has an extra game to play after a postponement Saturday. Dortmund is fifth and has just five points from its last five Bundesliga games - a stark contrast to Edin Terzic's team's table-topping form in its Champions League group. Dortmund is 10 points off Leverkusen after 13 games, which Terzic admitted was "a big gap." Augsburg missed a penalty and had a goal ruled out on video review but still won 2-1 in the snow against Eintracht Frankfurt. Fredrik Jensen and Iago scored for Augsburg before Finn Dahmen's own-goal gave Frankfurt hope of a comeback. Frankfurt is seventh and Augsburg ninth.

Mourinho makes right moves in Roma comeback win

AP ■ ROME

Jose Mourinho's pre-match accusations aimed at the referee and Sassuolo's standout winger Domenico Berardi created plenty of controversy - and will likely result in another suspension for the veteran Portuguese coach. There was no questioning Mourinho's choices off the bench, though, as Roma earned its sixth win in its last eight Serie A matches on Sunday. Substitute Rasmus Kristensen earned a penalty that Paulo Dybala converted and then the Denmark right back scored to give Roma a 2-1 comeback win at 10-man Sassuolo. On Saturday, Mourinho had labeled referee Matteo Marcanaro unstable. "We had him three times as a fourth official and I don't think he has the emotional stability for games of this level," Mourinho

said, prompting the Italian soccer federation to open a disciplinary case against the coach. And Mourinho wasn't done. He then said Berardi "exaggerates fouls to draw yellow cards," adding that "if he was my player I wouldn't like that at all." So perhaps it was no coincidence that Berardi set up the first goal, threading a pass through the area that Matheus Henrique tapped in at the far post. Mourinho brought on Kristensen for Rick Karsdorp after halftime and the match changed when Daniel Boloca was sent off for a foul on Roma midfielder Leandro Paredes - after Marcanaro consulted the VAR. Kristensen was then taken down between two defenders and Dybala's penalty was accurate enough even though goalkeeper Andrea Consigli leaped in the correct direction. Six minutes later, Kristensen



produced a shot that took a big deflection off a defender and looped into the goal. Roma moved up to fourth, level on points but ahead of fifth-place Napoli, which lost 3-0 at home to Italian leader Inter Milan. Afterward, Mourinho made a statement in Portuguese and said that his Italian wasn't proficient enough to explain certain concepts in terms of his comments about the referee.

Mourinho was suspended for two matches at the start of this season for comments about a referee at the end of last season. He was also banned for four matches by UEFA in June for verbally abusing the Europa League final referee in a stadium garage after Roma lost to Sevilla. **BARELLA'S SLALOM:** Inter moved back into first place and made a statement about its title intentions with the 3-0 win at

Napoli. Hakan Calhanoglu scored with a powerful long-range shot at the end of the first half. Nicolò Barella slalomed through the defense midway through the second half for a score that could vie for goal of the season honors. And Marcus Thuram tapped in to seal it. Also, Inter goalkeeper Yann Sommer made a series of spectacular saves. Inter moved two points ahead of Juventus, which beat Monza 2-1 on Friday. Napoli winger Matteo Politano hit the crossbar in the first half. Barella's goal started with a cross from Lautaro Martinez. Then the midfielder went past Napoli center backs Leo Ostigard and Natan before shifting his weight again to prod the ball past onrushing goalkeeper Alex Meret. It was Napoli's fourth home loss this season after losing only

twice at the Stadio Diego Maradona during its title run. **102 GOALS:** Fiorentina is sixth with a 3-0 win over last-place Salernitana. Lucas Beltran converted a penalty kick for his first Serie A goal after his own backheel pass set up a foul on Arthur Melo. Riccardo Sottil scored with a long-range shot that bounced in off both the crossbar and the post. After the break, Giacomo Raspadori finished off a full team move. With 102 goals in 2023, Fiorentina set a team record for a year in which it reached the Conference League and Italian Cup finals. The Tuscan club beat Genk on Thursday to advance in this season's Conference League. Bologna is seventh following a 1-1 draw at Lecce. Rocks were thrown at a bus carrying Bologna supporters to the match.

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City's clash with Tottenham definitely lived up to the pre-match hype after a thrilling 3-3 draw at Etihad Stadium on Sunday. Not that Erling Haaland was too happy after referee Simon Hooper denied Jack Grealish the chance to score a stoppage-time winner for the defending Premier League champions. The Norway international reacted furiously when the whistle was blown for an earlier foul on him just as Grealish looked set to run through on goal. Haaland was booked for his response. "He's a little bit disappointed," City manager Guardiola said afterward. "Even the referee - if he played for Man City today, he would be disappointed for that action, that's for sure." Haaland had been brought down by Tottenham defender Emerson Royal as City went in search of a winner after Dejan Kulusevski's 90th-minute equalizer. But as the forward regained his feet, Hooper appeared to gesture for play to carry on, with Haaland releasing Grealish with a pass. It was then that the official blew his whistle, much to the anger of the home fans and City's players.

Haaland went on to express his frustration at what had happened in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, when responding to a video of the incident. Guardiola was asked to comment on the referee's decision in his post-game news conference and was more careful with his response. "I don't want to criticize him (the referee)," Guardiola said. "On the touchline sometimes I lose my mind and my gestures are not proper... But I would say we didn't draw for that (reason)." City had twice been ahead in the match and looked to have scored a winner when Grealish came off the bench to make it 3-2 in the 81st. Kulusevski's header earned Tottenham a point and consigned City to a third straight draw in the league, leaving Guardiola's team three points off league leader Arsenal in third. Liverpool, which beat Fulham 4-3, is a point ahead of City in second place. Son Heung-min had put Tottenham ahead in the sixth,

but put through his own net three minutes later and Phil Foden struck in the 31st. Giovanni Lo Celso leveled the score in the 69th before strikes from Grealish and Kulusevski. City's recent winless run in the league has seen it concede eight goals in three games, following a 4-4 draw with Chelsea and 1-1 against Liverpool. "Football is about mistakes sometimes, but still we are there," Guardiola said. "After many years we still have the feeling that we want it (the title)." Tottenham ended its recent three-game losing run, which had seen it drop from first to sixth in the standings. "We weren't at our usual standard first half - Man City could have blown us away during that period," manager Ange Postecoglou said. "They missed a few chances, a lot like us last week to be honest. "We hung in there and second half was a lot better. We had more belief and conviction and we made it more uncomfortable

for them. Massive effort from the players, it would have been very easy to get blown away, but I thought they showed great character and it is important they get a reward. A point is a good reward." **HOME RUN:** Liverpool hasn't lost at Anfield since being routed 5-2 by Real Madrid in the Champions League in February. But a run that now stretches to 19 games looked on the verge of being broken when Bobby De Cordova-Reid put Fulham 3-2 ahead in the 80th on Sunday. The visitors had twice come from behind and De Cordova-Reid's goal looked like ending Liverpool's 100% winning record at home this season. That was until goals from Wataru Endo and Trent Alexander-Arnold in the 87th and 88th minutes completed a dramatic 4-3 win for Jurgen Klopp's team. Victory moved Liverpool to within two points of leader Arsenal and maintained its proud home record. **CHELSEA PREVAILS:** Chelsea

didn't spend a British record of more than \$130 million on Enzo Fernandez for his scoring prowess. But the Argentina international struck twice to secure a battling 3-2 win against Brighton to help Mauricio Pochettino's side quickly put last week's 4-1 rout by Newcastle

behind it. Fernandez scored his first Premier League goal to put Chelsea ahead in the 17th and converted from the penalty spot for what turned out to be the winner. Chelsea had to show resolve after going down to 10 men just before halftime when Conor Gallagher was sent off. Brighton threatened a comeback with a goal from Joao Pedro in stoppage time to make it 3-2 and then had a penalty overturned on video review.

Mbappe scores and PSG overcomes Le Havre

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain had no problem beating Le Havre 2-0 to extend its lead at the top of the French league standings despite playing for more than 80 minutes with 10 men after goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma was sent off for a reckless tackle. Goals from Kylian Mbappe and Vitinha ensured a seventh consecutive league win for Luis Enrique's team. PSG has a four-point cushion at the top after second-place Nice was handed its first loss this season on Saturday, a 1-0 defeat at Nantes. Le Havre got off to a strong start with several good moves but lacked accuracy to inflict any damage. The hosts produced 22 shots, but only seven of them

were on target. Donnarumma was sent off following a reckless foul outside his box. The Italy goalkeeper came out of the area as he tried to clear a long ball with a very high tackle, but instead made contact with Le Havre forward Josue Casimir's face. Referee Bastien Dechepy showed him a red card and Bradley Barcola made way for substitute goalie Arnau Tenas, who was happy to keep a clean sheet on his debut. "It's wonderful," he said. "I'd like to thank everyone for this opportunity, it's an incredible day today. The team was strong for every minute played, and I was able to stop the opposition's shots." PSG broke the deadlock on the break after Lee Kang-in set up

MARSEILLE BEATS RENNES 2-0



Ousmane Dembele down the right side. The winger then crossed the ball for Mbappe, who controlled with his right foot and curled a shot into the net from the edge of the box in the 22nd minute. It was Mbappe's 15th league goal this season.

Vitinha completed PSG's win in the 88th minute from Manuel Ugarte's assist. **MONACO IN THE HUNT:** Goals from Takumi Minamino and Wissam Ben Yedder gave Monaco a hard-fought 2-0 win against Montpellier. Monaco moved within two

points of its Cote d'Azur rival Nice. Minamino put the hosts in front in the ninth minute against a gritty Montpellier side which was later reduced to 10 players following Boubakar Kouyate's dismissal after a VAR check with 21 minutes left to play. Ben Yedder made it 2-0 in stoppage time. **LILLE KEEPS THE PACE:** Just one point behind Monaco, Lille remained in fourth place after beating Metz 2-0 with goals from Yusuf Yazici and Jonathan David. The northern side scored both goals in first-half stoppage time and stayed in control after the interval. **MARSEILLE BACK TO WINNING WAYS:** Marseille snapped a four-game winless run in the league with a 2-0 win against

Rennes. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang scored from the spot to put the nine-time champions in the lead and Azzedine Ounahi completed the scoring at the Stade Velodrome. Marseille moved up to ninth place, 16 points behind PSG. Elsewhere, Romain Del Castillo scored a brace as Brest beat Clermont 3-0, while Toulouse and Lorient drew 1-1. Also Sunday, the French league (LFP) mourned the death of a Nantes supporter who was killed before the match between Nantes and Nice on Saturday in the latest incident to mar French soccer this season. "The LFP would like to express its most sincere condolences to the victim's family and friends, and to the FC Nantes club," the league said.

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1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE BORROWER, CO-BORROWER'S / GUARANTOR'S, 2. LOAN ACCOUNT NO. 3. UIC NO. 4. SANCTIONED LOAN AMOUNT 5. DETAILS OF THE SECURITIES 6. NAME OF MORTGAGER 7. DATE OF DEMAND NOTICE 8. CLAIM AMOUNT IN INR. 9. DATE OF POSSESSION	
1. Priya House, 2. Rashmi Katiyar, 3. Preeti Katiyar, 4. Anita Singh Katiyar, 5. Ajay Katiyar, 6. Neeraj Katiyar, 7. Dhiraj Katiyar (Deceased Through Legal Heir) (A) Rashmi Katiyar, (B) Preeti Katiyar, (C) Anita Singh Katiyar, (D) Ajay Katiyar, (E) Neeraj Katiyar All R/o At (a) Jalgrh Marg Complex Tikrapara Raipur Raipur-492001 Chhattisgarh. (B) Bearing Kharsa No 115/5 comprising Area 0.011 Hect Mauja Mathpura Awadhupuri Awadhupuri Nagar Shyam Prasad Mukharji Raipur-492101, (C) 340/4 Ravatpura Nagar Mathpura Mathpura Mathpura Raipur-492001 Chhattisgarh. 2) Loan Account Number: 22217141, 3) Loan Amount In INR: 278000/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakhs Eighty Thousand Only), 4) Detail Description Of The Security: Mortgage Property :- All The Piece And Parcle Of Land Bearing Kharsa No. 115/5, Mauja Mathpura, Awadhupuri Nagar, Shyam Prasad Mukharji Ward No. 63, Ph No. 61 R.I.C. Raipur-1, Tehdist. Raipur - 492101 (Chhattisgarh) Admesurin Area- 1200 Sq. Ft. 5) Demand Notice Date: 15.7.2023. 6) Amount Due In INR: Rs.279945/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand One Hundred & Forty Five Only) As Of 13.07.2023 And Future Contractual Interest Till Actual Realization Together With Incidental Expenses, Cost And Charges Etc.. 7. Date Of Possession: 29.11.2023.	
Borrower And Co-borrowers: Aman Leather & Optical, 2. Husnara Begum, 3. Gulam Rasool, 4. Nazneen Begum, 5. Asif Ali, 6. Anvar Ali, All R/o At (A) Aman Leather & Optical Near Akbari Masjid Corona Chowk Bilaspur-495001. (B) Hig- 01 Ameri Road Ganesh Chowk Nehru Nagar Bilaspur - 495001, (C) Ward No-10 Santa Colony Talapara Bilaspur - 495001. 2) Loan Account Number: 3100071, 3) Loan Amount In INR: 2500000 (rupees Twenty-five Lakhs Only), 4) Detail Description Of The Security: Mortgage Property :- All The Part And Parcel Of The Property Bearing House Constructed On Survey/Khasra No. 43/12-14 Patwari Halka No. 22/35, Mother Teresa Ward, Ward No. 10, Development Block -bilha, Mauja Talapara, Tahsil & Dist- Bilaspur. Admesuring Area-2553 Sq. Ft. 5) Demand Notice Date: 19.8.2023 . 6) Amount Due In INR: Rs.286944.21/- (rupees Twenty Three Lakh Sixty Thousand Nine Hundred & Forty Four And Paise Twenty One Only) As Of 19.08.2023 And Future Contractual Interest Till Actual Realization Together With Incidental Expenses, Cost And Charges Etc. 7. Date Of Possession: 30.11.2023.	
1. The Borrower's Attention Is Invited To Provisions Of Sub-Section (8) Of Section 13 Of The Act, In Respect Of Time Available, To Redeem The Secured Asset. 2. For Any Objection And Settlement Please Contact: Mr. Aman Kumar. (Authorised Officer), Phone No. 880083718 (M) (O)/ Mr. Bharat Jorjoria - 920000522/ At HDB Financial Services Ltd. 3rd Floor, Simran Towers, Jeevan Beema Marg, in Front Of LIC, Pandri, Rajpur, Chhattisgarh Pincode-492004	
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BISHNOI EMERGES AS INDIA’S THIRD SPIN OPTION

PTI ■ BENGALURU

When Ravi Bishnoi was named in India’s T20I squad for the away series against South Africa, it, perhaps, was the clearest indication about his place in the think tank’s long-term plans with the next year’s T20 World Cup in mind. With only six T20Is remaining for India ahead of the showpiece, it can be assumed that the 23-year-old leg-spinner has moved ahead of veteran Yuzvendra Chahal in the pecking order, for now at least. Chahal is 33 and Bishnoi is 23, but the latter getting as much or more game time in T20Is is not just about a natural generational transition. Chahal has played nine T20Is this year, grabbing as many wickets whereas Bishnoi appeared in 11 matches and picked up 18 wickets. The difference is there for everyone to see. In the just-concluded series against Australia, Bishnoi was India’s go-to bowler and he rewarded the faith reposed on him by emerging as the ‘Player of the

Series, taking nine wickets from five matches. It was not just about the wickets but the whole attitude shown by him to bowl under any condition or situation was praiseworthy. In fact, Bishnoi had an eminently forgettable first match at Visakhapatnam, leaking 54 runs in four overs and his fielding too was in a shambles marred by a dropped catch and a few misfields. But he fought back with gusto and his run-rate never exceeded eight thereafter. Out of the 20 overs he bowled against the Aussies, seven were in the Power Play segment (1-6 overs). In this phase, he took five wickets at a fine economy rate of 6.45, besides bowling 20 dot balls. Australian skipper Matthew Wade admitted that facing Bishnoi even on some of the batting-friendly tracks here was not an easy job. “Their spinners bowled well. They got us tied down and we couldn’t really break away in that middle period. So, that was probably the biggest difference in the game. “Bishnoi, obviously, has been great throughout the four games. He has been quite hard to get a hold of. Some of our guys with less



experience will learn a lot from facing him,” said Wade. But if one watches from outside, Bishnoi’s bowling has this pattern wherein he tries to purchase wickets with a series of googlies. He is not a huge turner of the ball either, and hardly ever tries to outfox the batters like Chahal does with wide of the off-stump bowling. But Bishnoi is quick off the surface, making the ball skid to the batters to catch them napping. Legendary Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan underlined this part of Bishnoi’s game. “Bishnoi is different from any other leg spinner out there. He bowls quicker and he slides the ball a lot, and it is tough to face him on helpful wickets,” Muralitharan said on Jio Cinema. The young Indian spinner showed precisely through the dismissal of Travis Head. The Australian opener has been nothing less than a thorn in the flesh for India this year, crushing them at the WTC and World Cup finals with hundreds. The left-hander looked dangerous in Bengaluru as well en route his 18-ball 28 that contained five fours and a six. Indian skipper Suryakumar gave

the ball to Bishnoi in the fifth over. Head had initial success, slog sweeping the spinner for a six over mid-wicket. But in the very next ball, Bishnoi skidded the ball at a fair clip to beat a tentative prod by Head to rattle his timber. Australia’s early momentum was snapped. However, Bishnoi will face harder challenges from within the team itself to find a place in the 11 when senior pros like Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja return to take the mantle of lead spinners. But Bishnoi has made a strong impression for himself in the run-up to the marquee event next year. “Bishnoi has given this Indian side the option of a solid third spinner now. It is not easy to come in for someone like Chahal. But Bishnoi has made it look easy, and I hope he continues that,” a former India spinner told PTI. “The T20 World Cup is going to be played in the West Indies and the USA, and the pitches there might offer some assistance to the spinners. Having three quality players in that department will give the team a certain edge,” he added.

England won’t deviate from Bazball against India: McCullum



PTI ■ BENGALURU

‘Bazball’ has changed the dynamics of England’s batting approach in Test cricket and their Kiwi coach Brendon McCullum is very clear that irrespective of outcome, his team won’t deviate from its aggressive tactics against India in the five-Test series, where most tracks will offer substantial turn. The term ‘Bazball’, coined after McCullum’s nickname ‘Baz’ and the attacking philosophy that he endorses, has also found its pride of place in ‘Collins dictionary’. The meaning of ‘Bazball’ is “a style of test cricket in which the batting side attempts to gain the initiative by playing in a highly aggressive manner.” England will face India in five Tests at Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Rajkot, Ranchi and Dharamsala, starting January 25. “We have got a huge challenge against a very good Indian team in five Tests in India,” McCullum said at the Royal Challengers Bangalore Innovation Lab’s Leaders Meet India. “I am excited about it because you want to test yourself against the best side and I genuinely believe that India is the best in their own condition. It is going to be a good challenge for us. If we have success then fabulous, if we don’t, then I know we will go down in the style that we want to go down,” McCullum used the platform, signal his and

his team’s clear attacking intent for the marquee series. In his address, McCullum also expressed his thoughts on the essence of ‘Bazball’ and what it stands for. “We are playing the game, because we love cricket and we want to try and be as good at cricket as we possibly can. During the time that you are in the chair, you want to make sure you enjoy it and you shouldn’t wait till the end of your career to do so. We are very lucky that we have had some immediate success but I don’t think it is the ceiling for us.” The style of cricket has also allowed England to check the real potential of some of its younger players. “I think we have seen some guys who have unlocked their potential in the last 18 months or so and that’s what the job is as a leader; to get the most out of the people that you’re in charge of,” he added. The 42-year-old also recalled his fearless and unbeaten knock of 158 off 73 balls in the very first IPL game. He credited the knock as the inspiration for the Bazball phenomenon. “The reason why I daydream about that moment is because it literally changed my life. I was just a cricketer for New Zealand, where no one really knew what you did where you’re from, or what you’re capable of. But that day provided the platform, the forum, and the opportunity to change my life,” he said.

PTI ■ LONDON

England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has instructed Jofra Archer to skip next year’s Indian Premier League (IPL) in order to manage the injury-prone pacer’s workload in the run up to the 2024 T20 World Cup, according to a report. Archer, who was bought by Mumbai Indians ahead of the 2022 IPL for a whopping INR 8 crore, was released by the franchise last week. His name doesn’t figure in the list of players who have registered for the IPL auction, set to be held on December 19 in Dubai. Archer, who has been plagued

ECB tells Archer to skip 2024 IPL

To manage workload ahead of T20 World Cup



by multiple injuries, suffered a recurrence of his elbow stress fracture while playing for MI during the IPL in May. The 28-year-old Barbados born cricketer hasn’t played any professional cricket since then and also missed the ODI World Cup. “... The ECB believes that it will be easier to manage Archer’s comeback if he is in the UK in April and May under its supervision than if he is in India on the books of an IPL team looking to get their money’s worth from him,” ‘ESPNCricinfo’ reported.

As per the report, he has signed a new two-year contract with the ECB and ahead of the T20 World Cup in the West Indies and the United States from June 4 next year, the board has ‘opted to take as much control over Archer as possible.’ Archer had briefly travelled to India for the World Cup but returned to the UK after less than a week due to elbow pain. ECB is hopeful that the pace spearhead will be a part of England’s squad for the T20 World Cup “We take that bet with him that we want him back fit and able to

play for England, because of the upside,” former England opener and current managing director (men’s cricket) Robert Key had said last month. “You start looking at things like the Ashes in two years, the T20 World Cup... Jofra adds so much to that,” he had said back then. As many as 34 England players, including Harry Brook, Adil Rashid and Chris Woakes, have registered for the IPL auction. While the likes of Moeen Ali, Jos Buttler, Jonny Bairstow, Sam Curran, Liam Livingstone, Jason Roy, Mark Wood, Will Jacks and Reece Topley have been retained by their franchise.



Bavuma, Rabada rested for white-ball series against India

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma and pace ace Kagiso Rabada have been rested for the white-ball leg of this month’s home series against India with the duo set to return for the two Tests. The Proteas host India for a full series, which includes three T20Is, as many ODIs and two Tests, beginning with the shortest format on December 10 in Durban. “Captain Temba Bavuma and Kagiso Rabada are amongst a group of players that have been omitted for the white-ball leg of the tour in order to play red-ball cricket as emphasis is placed on the Test series for which both will return,” Cricket South Africa said on Monday. Both India and South Africa are gearing up for the new World Test Championships cycle, starting with the Boxing Day Test in Centurion on December 26. In Bavuma’s absence, Aiden Markram will lead South Africa in the white-ball fixtures. Wicketkeeper batter Tristan Stubbs, who has played 1 ODI and 16 T20Is, has been included in the Test side for the first time while Heinrich Klaasen has been left out of the red ball squad. Pacers Gerald Coetzee, Marco Jansen and Lungi Ngidi have also been left out of the ODIs, which is low priority after the conclusion of the 50-over World Cup. The trio is a part of the squad for the opening two T20Is and subsequently, the two Test matches.

With valuable WTC points at stake and next year’s T20 World Cup looming large, South Africa like India have named several new faces in their ODI squads, including uncapped duo of medium pacer Ottniel Baartman and all-rounder Mithali Pongwana. Batter David Bedingham (Test) and pacer Nandre Burger (all three) — have also earned maiden national call-ups.

SQUADS:

South Africa T20I squad: Aiden Markram (captain), Ottniel Baartman, Matthew Breetzke, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee (1st and 2nd T20Is), Donovan Ferreira, Reeza Hendricks, Marco Jansen (1st and 2nd T20Is), Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, David Miller, Lungi Ngidi (1st and 2nd T20Is), Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Tristan Stubbs, and Lizaad Williams
South Africa ODI squad: Aiden Markram (captain), Ottniel Baartman, Nandre Burger, Tony de Zorzi, Reeza Hendricks, Heinrich Klaasen, Keshav Maharaj, Mithali Pongwana, David Miller, Wiaan Mulder, Andile Phehlukwayo, Tabraiz Shamsi, Rassie van der Dussen, Kyle Verreynne and Lizaad Williams
South Africa Test squad: Temba Bavuma (captain), David Bedingham, Nandre Burger, Gerald Coetzee, Tony de Zorzi, Dean Elgar, Marco Jansen, Keshav Maharaj, Aiden Markram, Wiaan Mulder, Lungi Ngidi, Keegan Petersen, Kagiso Rabada, Tristan Stubbs and Kyle Verreynne.

‘You always have a lot more time than you think’, Hope reveals inspirational chat with Dhoni

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA)

Master chaser MS Dhoni’s advice to “take the game deep” inspired Shai Hope to lead his side to a thrilling victory against England in the opening ODI, the West Indies skipper revealed. Former Indian captain Dhoni is known for his calm demeanour and match-winning abilities, as he always looks to take the chase deep when the target is massive. And after West Indies were reduced to 213/5 in pursuit of 326 here on Sunday, Hope, a wicketkeeper batter just like Dhoni, recalled a chat with one of the best finishers in the game. “A very, very famous person, MS Dhoni — we had a chat a while ago, and he was saying, ‘You always have a lot more time than you think’ Hope said at the post-match presentation. “That’s one thing that has stuck with me throughout the years I’ve been playing ODI cricket,” Hope added. West Indies faced the uphill task of scoring



106 in the last 10 overs. But along side Romario Shephard (48; 28b), Hope smashed an unbeaten 109 off 83 balls, that included four hits to the fence and seven maximums, to take eke out a memorable win here on Sunday.

The 30-year-old struck three sixes in four balls off Sam Curran in the penultimate over of the chase to give West Indies a 1-0 lead in the three-match series. In the process, he also recorded his 16th ODI and fastest century of his career.

Once I got wicket of Wade, belief came in that we can win match: Singh

PTI ■ BENGALURU

After leaking 37 runs in his first three wayward overs on a languid Chinnaswamy Stadium pitch, Arshdeep Singh’s night was seemingly doomed. But then the left-arm pacer found a chance to redeem himself in the dying moments of the fifth T20I against Australia to seal a 4-1 series win. Arshdeep grabbed it with both hands, defending 10 runs in the final over to give India a six-run win, nailing a bouncer and yorkers that he looked so incapable of bowling during that horror start. So, what was going through his mind when captain Suryakumar Yadav tossed the ball to him ahead of the 20th over. “I did not feel that it was bowling-friendly conditions as I bowled a lot of loose deliveries,” Arshdeep began his post-match press meet, even allowing himself the luxury of a relieved chuckle. The 24-year-old had in front of him an in-touch Matthew Wade and Arshdeep surprised him with a bouncer outside the off-stump and to be fair to the Aussies captain that ball ought to have been called a wide for the height. The second ball was an inch-perfect yorker on the off-stump as Wade could only squirt it back to the bowler. Arshdeep missed a yorker again off the third delivery, but the low



full-toss was enough for him to get the wicket of Wade through a catch in the deep by Shreyas Iyer. Arshdeep thought the match turned in India’s favour at that moment. “I was just thinking that I have nothing to lose as I have already given away a lot of runs. Surya bhai was also saying the same thing that ‘let’s see how it goes.’ “My gut feeling was to bowl a bouncer off the first ball to put some doubt in Wade’s mind and once I got his wicket the belief came (in me) that we can win this match,” said Arshdeep.

The pacer was effusive in his praise for the way Suryakumar led the side during this series. “Surya bhai gives a lot of freedom. We had played in a few batting-friendly pitches earlier in the series but he said wherever there are challenges opportunities too will be there. “He was telling us not to worry about the results but to focus on the process and force the batsmen to score runs off good deliveries. He never put us under pressure,” he said. Arshdeep emphasised his point while giving context to it with the example of the last over here.

“He told me to bowl whatever you want to in the death overs and his full support will be there. Sometimes, he gives a bit of input, you know, this kind of ball will be good at this stage,” he added. Arshdeep was not yet ready to think deeper into India’s tour to South Africa, beginning in a week’s time. “Right now, we are focusing on this series. We are not looking too far ahead (in terms of South Africa tour) and once we go there and see the conditions, will take a call accordingly,” he said.