OPINION 6

SAM BAHADUR

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF

WORLD 8

HEAVY FIGHTING ACROSS GAZA

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Amit Shah dares Pakistan on Pok

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

Home Minister Amit Shah thundered categorically in Parliament on Wednesday, declaring, "PoK is ours." His statement was met with a huge round of applause from the members in the Lok Sabha. justifying

PoK region in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, the Home Minister blamed India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru for two major blunders declaring a ceasefire without winning the entire Kashmir and taking the issue

reservation of seats from the

to the United Nations. These, he argued, have resulted in the sufferings of the people of Jammu and Kashmir over seven decades. Replying to a debate in the Lok

Sabha on the Jammu and Reservation Kashmir (Amendment) Bill and the Kashmir Iammu and Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill, Shah said if Nehru had taken the right steps, a large chunk of territory would not have been ceded and Pakistanoccupied Kashmir would have been part of India.

"I support the word that was used here — Nehruvian blunder. Because of the blunder that was committed during the time of Nehru, Kashmir had to suffer. With responsibility, I want to say the two big blunders that

Jawaharlal Nehru, happened due to his decisions, because of which happened due Kashmir had to suffer for years," Shah said.

"Kashmir had to suffer due to Nehruvian blunders. One was that when our Army was winning and as soon as Punjab area was reached, ceasefire was declared and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir was born. If the ceasefire would have been (declared) three days later, PoK would have been part of India," the Home Minister said. The ceasefire made without

winning the entire Kashmir was one "blunder" and the other was taking the issue to the UN. There was an uproar by the

Opposition benches over the remarks on Nehru and they staged a walkout but returned

After their walkout, BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahtab said the Home Minister should also talk about the "Himalayan blunder", a reference to Nehru's actions leading up to the war with China in 1962. Shah quipped that his talking

about two blunders had upset the Opposition benches and if he had used the phrase "Himalayan blunder", they would have resigned.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said the remarks made were

Says Kashmir is ours



Parliamentarians in the Lok Sabha during the Winter session of Parliament, in New Delhi, on Wednesday

were only made to put things in context.

In his remarks, Shah also alleged that the Kashmir not an insult to anyone and matter was taken to the UN in the UN Charter," he said,

a hurry. "If at all it had to be taken to the UN, it should have been sent under Article 51 rather than Article 35 of

asserting that he of course believes that the issue should not have been taken to the UN in the first place. Shah also quoted Nehru as

saying later that the ceasefire was a "mistake". Shah said it was not Nehru's mistake but a "So much land of this country was lost, it was a historic blunder," the home minister added. "Those holidaying in England

will not notice any change in Jammu and Kashmir," he said, in sarcastic way, hitting former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, who was raising questions frequently.

Shah said when terrorism started in Kashmir, people were targeted and they had to flee. "I have seen many leaders who shed crocodile tears and consoled well with words. But Modi is the only leader who has worked to wipe out their tears," he said. He said about 46,631 families and 1,57,967 people were displaced in their own country and were displaced in such a way that they were uprooted from their own homeland and this Bill is going to give them rights and representation.

He said after the delimitation exercise in Jammu and Kashmir, there will be 43 Assembly seats in Jammu region — up from present 37 and in Kashmir Valley it will be 47 from 46.

Under the Jammu and Reorganisation Kashmir (Amendment) Bill, two members from the Kashmiri migrant community and one representing the displaced persons from the Pakistanoccupied Kashmir (PoK) will nominated to the legislative assembly. As many as 24 seats will be

Talking about the abrogation of Article 370, Shah said it had nothing to do with going back on promise as it was a temporary article and had to

go.
"You did not have the courage, PM Narendra Modi showed courage and did away with it," he said, referring to the Opposition benches. Shah pointed out that the two Bills on Jammu and Kashmir seek to nominate two Migrant Kashmiri community members, including a woman, to the assembly.

One seat in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly will be set aside for people displaced from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the Home Minister said. More than 45,000 people have lost their lives due to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir so far, he said. Shah said the Government's focus is on ending the terror ecosystem in Jammu and

Kashmir. believe the Government will return to power in 2024 and by 2026, I hope there will be no terror incident in Jammu and Kashmir," he said. The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Bill and the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Amendment) Bill were passed by the Lok Sabha afer

KHALISTANI THREATENS TO ATTACK PARLIAMENT New Delhi: The Delhi Police are on alert after the US-based Khalistani supporter Gurpatwant Singh Pannu released a video message threatening to "shake the very foundation of Parliament" on December 13 the anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attack on Parliament. The threat came in the backdrop of American prosecutors last month linking an Indian official to a man charged with conspiring to assassinate Pannu. Last week, the US federal prosecutors charged Nikhil working with overnment employee in the conspiracy to kill

PORTALS BLOCKED FOR OFFERING FAKE JOBS New Delhi: The Union Home Ministry on Wednesday said more than 100 websites that were being operated from overseas and involved in organised illegal investments and part-time job frauds have been blocked. These frauds typically involve targeted digital advertisements using keywords like "ghar baithe job" (Do jobs sitting at home) and "ghar baithe kamai kaise karen" (how to earn while sitting at home) in multiple languages.

PAKISTAN WOMAN ARRIVES IN INDIA TO MARRY Chandigarh: Karachi resident Javeria

Khanum crossed over into the Indian side from Attari in Amritsar district where she was welcomed by her fiance Sameer Khan and some members of his family to the beats of 'dhol'. Khanum has been granted a 45-day visa after two previous visa rejections and the Covid pandemic stalled their plans for around five years. The couple, in a brief interaction with reporters at Attari, said the marriage will be solemnised in January. P5

Victorious BJP MPs head back home to their States

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE **NEW DELHI**

midst the parley at the highest Allevel of the party regarding the naming of Chief Ministers for Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Narendra Singh Tomar and Prahlad Singh Patel resigned from the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The BJP has decided that all 12 of its MPs recently elected to State Assemblies will resign from Parliament to join the new Governments in the Hindi heartland.

Three BJP MPs contested in the Telangana Assembly, where the Congress catapulted to power; thus, they continue to hold their Lok Sabha membership.
With this the BJP's tally in the Lok

Sabha has come down to 292 and in the Rajya Sabha one down with 93 members. Sources in the Government said all three Union Ministers will also be quitting the Modi Government as a procedural formality. The move has given rise to the view that the party leadership may bring in new faces at the helm in all the three States. With the Lok Sabha elections less than five months away, the party is likely to send a larger message about its social agenda with its chief ministerial choices.



Sources also did not rule out the possibility of having Deputy Chief Ministers in the States to balance social equations and enhance administrative effectiveness.

The BJP swept to power in the three Hindi-speaking States, dismissing the challenge from the Congress in all of them as it raced to a two-thirds majority in Madhya Pradesh and comfortable majority the Congress-ruled Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan in the polls where Narendra Modi and his guarantees powered its

president JP Nadda accompanied 10 of them as they tendered their resignations from Parliament

Two others, Union Minister Renuka Singh and Mahant Balaknath, will also be quitting, party leaders said Other quit are Rakesh Singh, Udya Pratap Singh and Riti Pathak from Madhya Pradesh; Kirodi Lal Meena, Diya Kumari and Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore from Rajasthan and Gomati Sai and Rajasthan and Gomati Sai and Arun Sao from Chhattisgarh. All except Meena are Lok Sabha members. Meena is a Rajya Sabha member.

Patel said the 10 MPs took Modi's blessings before tendering their resignations. The BJP
Parliamentary Party will hold its
first meeting during Parliament's
Winter Session on Thursday and is
likely to felicitate Modi for leading the party to massive wins in three

Assembly polls.
The BJP Parliamentary Party, which includes all its Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members, generally meets every week during the session. In the meetings, its leaders, including Modi, speak on different issues germane to the agenda in Parliament and also to its organisational and political

Distasteful remarks by DMK **MP** in the House

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

Δ huge political row has alliance partner. 'Gaumutra Remarks' by DMK Lok Sabha MP DNV Senthil Kumar's followed by some Opposition leaders on the North-South divide remarks with the Centre taking exception to the comments by accusing the Congress of hatching a conspiracy to insult Indian culture and identity, instead of analysing the reasons for its defeat in the elec-

The BJP asked if DMK chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin has asked party leaders, who had spoken against Sanatan Dharma, to also apologise after MP DNV Senthil Kumar expressed regret in Lok Sabha for referring to Hindi heartland States in a derogatory manner in the

Others political parties from the Opposition were yet to react on the statement though the Congress has distanced

itself and said they do not buy such irresponsible comments by their southern India Dharma and Gau Mata, we don't agree with DMK's statements," said Congress general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Rajiv Shukla.

Union Minister Anurag Thakur questioned the silence of former Congress presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on the issue and wondered whether the remarks on the North-South divide, reference to North India as "gaumutra States" and criticism of Sanatan Dharma had their sanction. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is spreading the message of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' but Opposition has started using foul language and blaming the EVMs and regionalism for their loss in the Assembly Rajasthan, elections in Pradesh Madhya Chhattisgarh," the Union Minister said at a Press conference.



Jaipur

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Markets were closed in Jaipur and some other Rajasthan districts and protesters blocked roads and stopped trains on Wednesday after a bandh call by the Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena over the killing of its chief Sukhdev Singh Gogamedi.

Governor Kalraj Mishra spoke to Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the phone and summoned the State Chief Secretary, Home Scretary, Home Secretary, Police chief and Jaipur Police Commissioner to review the law and order

situation in the State. The police set up a special investigation team (SIT) to probe into the killing of the Rajput leader who was shot dead by two men at his house here on Tuesday. They also killed an "accomplice" who had accompanied them to the house.

On Facebook, gangster Rohit Godara — said to be linked to the Lawrence Bishnoi gang has claimed responsibility and said Gogamedi was killed for

"backing" his enemies. The police have identified the two alleged killers as Rohit Rathore from Jaipur and Nitin Haryana's from Fauii Mahendragarh,

announced a cash reward of ₹ 5 lakh for information leading to their arrest. Markets remained closed in Jaipur, Kota, Bundi, Ajmer,

Madhopur, Chittorgarh, Jhalawar, Baran and some other districts while a mass rally was taken out in Udaipur and a demonstration was held at the collectorate circle amid heavy deployment

Gujarat's Garba finds a global audience

ARCHANA JYOTI NEW DELH

Garba, an all encompassing icon-ic dance of Gujarat performed for nine days during the Navratri festival, has now earned a place on the global cultural map. It has been included in the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity by the United Nations Educational, Scientific Cultural

Organization (UNESCO). The inclusion has been made under the provisions of the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage during 18th meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage which began in Kasane, Botswana on Tuesday.

In August 2022, India had nominated garba for inclusion in the UN cultural agency's list. Soon after the announcement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took to the social media X expressing his happiness. celebration of life,

unity and our deep-rooted traditions. Its inscription on the Intangible Heritage List showcases to the world the beauty of Indian culture. This honour inspires us to preserve and

promote our heritage for

generations.



global Congrats for this acknowledgment," he posted. Incidentally, the inclusion of the iconic garba of Gujarat in the prestigious list comes a few days after the Prime Minister released a music video titled 'garbo,' based on a garba song penned by him. "The 190-second song was penned years ago," Modi wrote

"Garba of Gujarat is the 15th ICH element from India to join this list. This inscription underscores garba's pivotal role as a unifying force that fosters social and gender inclusivity. "Garba as a dance form is entrenched deeply in ritualistic and devotional roots, involving people from all

thrive as a vibrant living tradition bringing communities together," an official release from the Gujarat Government said. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel

called it as a 'proud moment.' Patel wrote on social media X, "Garba's inclusion in the Unesco Intangible Cultural Heritage list is truly a proud moment for Gujarat and India. It is an honour given by the world the ancient culture India.

Union Minister of

Culture G Kishan Reddy also shared a post on the same, saying the listing is a testimony to the "tireless efforts of this government under the leadership of Modi to our rich culture, showcase traditions heritage to the

world' Meenakashi Lekhi. Minister External of Affairs, too took to the social media to express her happiness calling it 'a proud moment for Bharat as Gujarat's vibrant Garba is now inscribed as the 15th recognised element in @ U N E S C O's Representative

Cultural

(ICH) of Humanity.

List of Intangible

Fog witnessed in several parts of the State due to cyclone

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

¬he impact of cyclone 'Michong' that formed over Bay of Bengal on December 2 is now witnessed in Madhya Pradesh as fog prevailed in Bhopal, Rewa, Gwalior and Chambal divisions as well as Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Niwari districts

on Wednesday morning. The cold wind continued to make conditions harsher. There was light rainfall in Jabalpur in the afternoon. Meteorological

Department (IMD) forecasted the impact of the storm will be visible on Wednesday and due to which the changes were visible. Light rain also occurred in the districts of Jabalpur-Shahdol division. Earlier on Tuesday, most parts of the state were covered

fog in Jabalpur. Due to the storm, the cold during the day has also increased. Indore and Dhar Pradesh were coldest on Tuesday. In Indore the temperature dropped by 6.3 degrees in a single day. The day temperature here was recorded at 20 degrees.

The state capital Bhopal day temperature at 20.6 degree celsius which was 7.1 degree celsius and deviation of 4.3 degree celsius in the past 24

Meteorologist said that due to the storm, the districts of Jabalpur and Shahdol divisions were more affected. On Wednesday, there may be drizzle in Jabalpur, Balaghat, Chhindwara, Katni, Mandla, Narsinghpur, Seoni, Shahdol, Umaria, Dindori and Anuppur districts.

with clouds. There was dense There was rain and hailstorm in Madhya Pradesh for seven days due to Western Disturbance, Cyclonic Circulation and Trough Line, which stopped on December 3. However, there was light rain in Gwalior and Datia during the night.

Rainfall started in the city from November 26, which continued till December 3. The weather had cleared due to the weakening of Western Disturbance, cyclone and trough line. Due to this the day's temperature reached 29.8 degree celsius. However, the weather changed again during the night and the weather changed on Monday. It remained cloudy throughout the day. At the same time, cold winds also started blowing. Similar weather prevailed on Tuesday also.

While the mercury has reached 20.6 degree celsius during the day, the night temperature has also fallen by 1.2 degrees. The temperature on Monday night was 17.5 degrees.

According to this, the difference in temperature between day and night is only 3.1 degrees. Due to humidity the night temperature is not falling much.

Amidst the increasing cold, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan reached Rain Basera located near Shahjahani Park and Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal on Tuesday night. Took stock of the arrangements here and talked to the people. When some people said they were ill, he gave instructions to set up a medical camp in the rain shelter. Besides, officers have also been asked to light bonfires at major intersections of the city in case of a cold wave.

It was 23 degrees in Betul, 21.4 degrees in Dhar, 25 degrees in Guna, 25 degrees in Narmadapuram, 24.5 degrees in Khandwa, 27.2 degrees in Khargone, 25.6 degrees in Pachmarhi, 23.2 degrees in Raisen, 23.2 degrees in Ratlam, 24 degrees in Shivpuri, Shajapur recorded 23.6 degrees. 21.4 degrees in Chhindwara, 25 degrees in Damoh, 25.4 degrees in Khajuraho, 20.3 degrees in Mandla, 24 degrees in Narsinghpur, 25.6 degrees in Nowgong, 23.6 degrees in Rewa, 23.4 degrees in Sagar, 25.4 degrees in Sagar, 25.4 degrees in Sagar, 25.4 25.4 degrees in Satna, 25.4 degrees in Sidhi, It was 25 degrees in Tikamgarh and 21.5 degrees in Umaria.



Karni Sena stages

Newly weddede woman dies under mysterious circumstances in Aishbagh locality

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

newly wedded woman died under suspicious circumstances in Aishbagh, a month ago her husband had beaten her brutally and was undergoing treatment during which she died on Wednesday morning. After the woman was injured she was admitted to the hospital. However, she was discharged from the hospital. On November 26, the woman's health deteriorated again, after which she was admitted to the hospital

The woman died during treatment on Wednesday morning. The brother of the deceased alleged that the sister was brutally beaten by her brother-in-law. He hit her head against the wall and smothered her with a pillow.

The exact cause of death will be revealed after receiving the postmortem report, claimed

SI GP Singh said that Tabassum B (32), wife of Akbar Ali, resident of Indra Nagar Colony, was a housewife. Four years ago she was married to Akbar, a catering contractor. They have a daughter from the marriage. There used to be disputes between the two on petty matters frequently. Last month, on November 7, the husband had beaten his wife Tabassum. After this she went

to her maternal home. A case was registered against the husband on the complaint of the victim. The woman was discharged from the hospital after treatment. On November 26, the woman's health suddenly

deteriorated and she was admitted to a private hospital where he died during treatment on Wednesday morning. A case has been established and investigation has been started. The exact cause of death will be revealed in the PM report. After which further action will be decid-

Tabassum's brother Sameer told that brother-in-law Akbar used to beat his sister every day. Used to force her to bring money from her parents. He also used to ask for bringing household expenses from his maternal home. On November 7, the sister had asked her husband to bring milk for the child. There was a dispute between the two regarding this matter and she was assaulted by husband in the dispute.

CM expresses grief over Seoni, Rajgarh incidents

Bhopal: Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has expressed grief over the death of 3 people by drowning in a well in Dhapara village under Dhuma area of ??Seoni district. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that this is extremely painful, he paid tributes to the deceased and prayed to God to give strength to the bereaved family to bear this grief. A relief amount of Rs 4 lakh will be provided to the families of those deceased in this heartwrenching accident.

Chief Minister Chouhan has said that the news of the death of a young girl while undergo-ing treatment at Hamidia Hospital in Bhopal after she fell into a borewell in Pipliya Rasoda in Rajgarh district is extremely painful. In this hour of grief, we stand with the family of the deceased and financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh will be given to them.

Scindia convenes meeting of AAI officials

PNS GWALIOR

Jyotiraditya Scindia on Wednesday called a meeting of senior civil aviation officials, including officials of the Airport Authority of India in which he sought informa-tion on the work being done at Ayodhya airport. Scindia took updates of all the development works and directed the officials to complete the works on top priority. According to sources the airport work will be completed along with the completion of

Ram temple. Officials in the Ministry of Civil Aviation said that in the first phase the area of the new terminal building will be of 6500 square meters with ATC tower, fire station, car parking and related city side infrastructure. The terminal will have a capacity to handle 600 passen-



handling capacity of 1.0 million passengers. Passenger amenities like nine check-in-counters, three conveyor belts, one departure and access halls and two arrival halls and tactile paths

will be provided.
They further said that the facade of the terminal building (both urban and aerial) will reflect the architecture of the Ram Temple. The interior of the new terminal building is being enlivened with local art from across India, art and paintings depicting the life of Shri Ram

It is proposed to be decorated at different heights to convey the feeling of grandeur of the struc-

In the proposed Phase-2 of the project, another new terminal building with an area of 50,000 square meters will be constructed and the runway will be extended from 2200 meters to 3700 meters.

road, disrupting movement of vehicles on the busy square in the state capital. In Indore, workers of the Rajasthan-headquartered

inated in an encounter".

Statewide protest

embers of the Shri

Rashtriya Rajput Karni

■Sena on Wednesday

staged protests in several cities

of Madhya Pradesh, including

state capital Bhopal, Indore and Jabalpur, to denounce the killing

of the outfit' chief Sukhdev

Gogamedi was shot dead on

Tuesday by unidentified gun-men at his house in the

Rashtriya Rajput Karni Sena

activists in Bhopal staged a road blockade at Jyoti Talkies Square in MP Nagar demand-

ing that the assailants involved

in Gogamedi's killing be "elim-

Protesters burnt tyres on the

Singh Gogamedi in Jaipur.

Rajasthan capital.

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

organisation staged a protest in front of the District Collector's

Rajput Karni Sena district president Rishiraj Singh Sisodia told reporters, "We want the real culprits behind the murder to be arrested and given the death sentence." The outfit's workers, including women, gathered in large numbers during the protest and insisted on submitting a memorandum containing their demands to Indore district

magistrate Ilayaraja T. They ended their protest, which lasted for around 90 minutes, after the district collector personally came out of his office and collected the memoran-

In Jabalpur, Rajput Karni Sena workers staged a protest in front of the district collector's office and submitted a memo-

In Gwalior, the outfit's activists submitted a memorandum to the Superintendent of Police (SP). Protests were also held in Dhar, Ratlam, Khargone and Damoh, among other districts. A similar protect also held at Sehore.



Woman lodges sexual harassment

Lecture held at AIIMS on fungating cancer ing and medical manage-

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

ursing College, AIIMS Bhopal, organised a Guest College, Lecture Session on "Fungating Cancer and Malodour and Vocational

The lecture was delivered by Prof. (Dr). Reena George, is one of the pioneers of palliative care in India and currently leading the Department of Continuing Medical Education, CMC

Inaugurating the session, Prof (Dr) Ajai Singh, Executive Director and CEO, of AIIMS Bhopal, stressed the need for compassionate patient care among healthcare professionals including nurses. He emphasized the various initiatives undertaken at the institute level to improve patient care at AIIMS Bhopal to fulfill regional and

The lecture was delivered by Prof Reena George, is one of the pioneers of palliative care in **India** and currently leading the Continuing **Medical Education, CMC Vellore**

national health needs. He stressed the need for all employees and staff to adhere to the institutional ethos with devotion and commitment. In this respect, compassionate patient care and effective communication play a pivotal role.

In her lecture Professor Dr. Reena George highlighted the various aspects of nurs-

ment of painful distressing symptoms of fungating wounds, and malodour in ulcerative advanced cancer. She also underlined the need to maintain motivation and commitment to fulfill the unmet needs of patients. The involvement of the family and community also plays an important role in delivering such holistic care. Under the "KARUNYA" initiative, AIIMS Bhopal has conducted various activities to improve compassionate patient care.

The session was attended by more than 200 participants, including nursing students, nursing officers, nursing and medical faculties. Deputy Director (Admin) Col. Ajit Kumar, Associate Dean (Nursing and Allied Health) Dr Saikat Das, Associate Dean (Acad) Prof. Ashwani Tandon were present during the session.

Health check-up of citizens living in night shelters to be conducted: CM

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

hief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took ✓stock of the arrangements made for the citizens in two night shelters of the capi-

Earlier tonight, he reached the night shelter located near Yadgar-e-Shahjahani Park and inspected the arrangements there. Chief Minister Chouhan apprised himself from the citizens living here about the arrangements and provision of warm clothes to protect them from cold. On reaching the night shelter, the residents welcomed Chief Minister Chouhan joyously by calling him Mama. Chief Minister Chouhan said that there will be arrangements for health check-up of the citizens living in night shelters in Bhopal city and other cities of

Citizens coming for work in big cities are busy during the day, so at night a team of doctors will come for health checkup. If serious diseases including common diseases are identified, arrangements for treatment will be made. The Chief Minister said that arrangements will be made to protect the citizens from cold by doing

neccesary arrangements in the night shelters.

Chief Minister Chouhan discussed with Bhupendra Sahu of Sagar, Dashrath Prasad of Hoshangabad, Deepak of Jabalpur, Surendra Sharma of Bhopal and Babulal Kushwaha of Lalitpur (Uttar Pradesh) and sought information about the arrangements. Here, Chief Minister Chouhan tasted the food being provided to the citizens and also inspected its quality. The night shelter has approximatly 400 beds. Today about 200 citizens are living

Chief Minister Chouhan visited the night shelter situated in the Hamidia Hospital complex and sought information about the arrangement of beds, warm clothes and food for the citizens. Chief Minister Chouhan also interacted with the citizens. Dalpat Singh Yadav of Narsinghpur district and Sonu of Bhopal told that they are getting necessary facilities in the night shelter. İn this night shelter of Hamidia Hospital, Prerna Seva Trust also provides assistance in arranging food. Today 23 citizens are availing the night shelter facility with a total capacity of 66 beds.

Awareness program at Kasturba hospital

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

general awareness program on "How to help someone in an emergency" in case of Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation was jointly organised by Kasturba Hospital and Kasturba Nursing College in Dr. Kalam Hall of Kasturba Nursing College, Habibganj. In the program, training was imparted through video on how someone's life can be saved by giving CPR in an emergency situation.

In the program, Dr. Deepamalika Atram told what is CPR and what is its importance. Dr. Ram Naravan Hiranya provided information on how CPR is given.On this occasion, Dr Alpana Tiwari, Head of Medical Services, Kasturba Hospital, Dr (Mrs.) P. Sachdev, Head of Medical Services (Gynecology), Hansie Collins, Principal of Kasturba Nursing College and B Vinod Kumar, Nodal Officer of program present.Employees of Kasturba Hospital, DNB participated in

the program. Students, nursing

students, faculty of Kasturba

Nursing College and various

employees from BHEL factory

participated in the CPR aware-

ness program and also learned

by doing it themselves.

case against her fiance **Even before this**

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

24-year-old woman of Ayodhya Nagar area has Ayodhya Nagar area nas lodged complaint of sexual harassment against her fiance; accused made relationship with the victim after the marriage was fixed and later refused to marry.

After the victim reported the atrocity police registered a case against the accused and started searching for the accused. A case of attempt to murder has also been registered against the victim girl in the past.

Even before this complaint of sexual assualt the victim had filed a rape case against a youth in Narmadapuram dis-

SI Gaurav Singh said that the 24-year-old girl, originally from Narmadapuram district, lives with her parents in a rented house in the area. She formerly worked in a call centre. Meanwhile, in the month of June, her marriage was scheduled with a youth Vijay

Ahirwar of Narmadapuram,

Sohagpur. After the relation-

ship, the young man reached

the girl's house to meet her on

advantage of the girl being alone at the house he promised

complaint of sexual assualt the victim had filed a rape case against a youth **Narmadapuram** district

to marry her and developed physical relations with the vic-

Recently the youth refused to marry the girl. On this, the victim reached the police station on Tuesday and complained. The police have registered a case of rape against the accused. During the investigation, the police came to know that in the year 2020, the girl had filed a case of rape against a young man in a police station in

Narmadapuram district. After this, in the year 2021 Bhopal Police arrested the girl along with other accused in the case of fatal attack on a cab driver. After this the girl had served jail for some time. The October 23 where taking girl was released and after the youth came to know about the girl he refused to marry her.



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan with BJP State President VD Sharma pays tribute to BR Ambedkar on his death anniversary in Bhopal on Wednesday

CM garlands statue of Bharat Ratna BR Ambedkar

STAFF REPORTER BHOPAL

hief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan gar-✓ landed the statue of Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. Ambedkar at Board Office Square on his Mahaparinirvan Diwas. Paying tribute to Baba Saheb, Chief Minister Chouhan said that our

government is building the India of Baba Saheb Ambedkar's dreams under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Constitution given by him is our guide.

The work to fulfill his resolve of becoming educated and welfare of the last man of the society is being done under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Madhya Pradesh government is also committed to fulfill this goal. On this occasion, Bhopal Mayor Malti Rai, MLA Krishna Gaur, Khajuraho MP Vishnudatt Sharma and State Organization General Secretary Sharma were present.

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Two BJP MPs from Chhattisgarh quit

 $T_{\text{Chhattisgarh, Arun Sao}}^{\text{wo BJP MPs from}}$ and Gomati Sai, resigned on Wednesday in New Delhi as members of the Lok Sabha. They are among the 10 who have quit as MPs.

Sao and Sai won Assembly elections from Lormi and Pathalgaon respectively.

The move has given rise to speculation that the party leadership may bring in new faces at the helm in all three states where the BJP won Madhya Chhattisgarh, Pradesh and Rajasthan.



accompanied the 10 as they

BJP president J.P. Nadda tendered their resignations

Two others, Union Minister Renuka Singh from

Balaknath from Rajasthan, will also be quitting, party leaders said.

Submitting resignation, Sao said: "The benefit of the meditation done in Parliament is dedicated at the feet of Chhattisgarh Mahatari.

"The BJP has entrusted me with the responsibility of contributing to the service of Chhattisgarh Mahtari," he

The two took blessings Prime Minister Narendra Modi and thanked Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla for his support.

Dhamtari keeps its record in electing Oppn party MLA

STAFF REPORTER

History has repeated in the Dhamtari Assembly seat in Chhattisgarh for a fourth time as it elected a MLA from a party which ended up occupying the opposition benches in the Assembly.

In the 2023 polls, Omkar Sahu of the Congress defeated BJP's Ranjana Sahu. The BJP won the overall elections while the Congress will be the main opposition party.

BJP's Sahu was elected in 2018 defeating Congress sitting MLA Gurumukh Singh Hora. It was the year when the Congress won the elections while the BJP became the



Congress Similarly, candidate Hora beat the BJP candidates in both 2008 and 2013. Both years, the BJP ended up ruling the state while the Congress became the opposition party.

In 2000, Harshad Mehta of the Congress won from the seat and in 2003 BJP's Inder Chopra was elected.

Over 2.5K benefit from free hemodialysis unit

STAFF REPORTER ■ **SURAJPUR**

 $A^{
m total}$ of 2,550 kidney-related patients have benefited from the free hemodialysis unit at the district hospital in Chhattisgarh's Suraipur district, an official communiqué said Wednesday.

A majority of these patients are residents of remote forest areas of Surajpur, Korea and surrounding districts.

Earlier, the kidney-related patients had to travel to other districts for dialysis.

Patients from surrounding regions such as Korea, Manendragarh, Chirmiri, Bharatpur, Balrampur and more are also among the



Continuous efforts are being made by the district administration and the Health Family

Department to expand and strengthen health facilities in remote parts of Chhattisgarh,

BJP MLA richest in Chhhattisgarh Assly

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) legislator Bhawna Bohra is richest MLA in Chhattisgarh followed by outgoing Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel (Congress) and former minister Amar Agrawal (BJP) in the 90member Assembly.

This was stated on Tuesday the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and the Chhattisgarh Election

Bohra owns assets worth Rs 33,86,42,624 while Baghel has assets valued at Rs 33,38,92,433. Agrawal has assets totaling Rs 27,00,65,891. BJP legislators Gomti Sai



and ex-trooper Ramkumar Toppo and Congress MLA Ramkumar Yadav have the least assets.

Also, there are 72 crorepati MLAs including 43 from BJP and 29 from the Congress.

Also, the BJP has 12 MLAs with criminal cases which include four MLAs with serious criminal cases. The Congress has five MLAs with criminal cases including two

with serious criminal cases. As many as 33 elected MLAs have declared their educational qualification

between primary (5th) and matriculation (12th) while 54 are graduates and above. Two MLAs are diploma

holders and one of them is just literate. Also, 44 MLAs are aged between 25 and 50 years while 46 are between 51 and

Donate on Armed Forces Flag Day today

STAFF REPORTER RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh Sainik Board Secretary and the Director of Sainik Welfare, Brigadier Vivek Sharma, has urged people to donate as much as possible on the Armed Forces Flag Day on Thursday.

The donations can be made in the name of 'Secretary, Amalgamated Fund Special Rehabilitation and of Ex-Reconstruction Servicemen of Chhattisgarh'

to account no. 20246292607, IFSC Code: IDIB000R518. The money is used for the



rehabilitation and welfare schemes for widows of the soldiers, he said.

The Armed Forces Flag Day is observed in India on December 7.

Balanced use of chemical fertilizers for soil health stressed



BIJAPUR

hhattisgarh Deputy Director of Agriculture Department Pratap Kusre stressed the need for balanced use of chemical fertilisers for soil health.

He said this at a programme held on the occasion of World Soil Day at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Bijapur district.

On this occasion, senior scientist

and head of Krishi Vigyan Kendra, Arun Sakni, emphasised the nutritional value of soil as well as its health management.

Agnuis Tirkey, a progressive farmer, urged the farmers to adopt a balanced use of chemical fertilisers and soil testing-based crop feeding

Senior scientists, along with officials from the agriculture, horticulture and silk departments were present.

Rabi crops to be insured until Dec 31



STAFF REPORTER **GARIABAND**

Inder the Pradhan Mantri Under the Frank.
Fasal Bima Yojana, crops for the Rabi year 2023-24 will be insured until December 31, it was announced on Wednesday.

Collector Gariaband

Akash Chhikara flagged off a publicity chariot at the Collectorate premises.

This scheme will cover damages caused to the crops due to natural calamities, including adverse weather, drought, flood, inundation, pest attack, hailstorm and more. Farmers can get their crops insured at the nearest Jila Sahakari Kendriya Bank, Chhattisgarh Rajya Gramin Bank, commercial banks and general convenience centres.

Detailed information is available at Toll free no 1800-209-5959. Grievances can be redressed at 14447 or through the Farmmitra mobile app.

scam accused found dead

STAFF REPORTER

The father of the accused named in the Mahadev betting app scam was found dead in suspicious condition in Durg district Chhattisgarh, police said on Wednesday.

The body of Sushil Das (62) was found in a well at Achhoti village on Tuesday, Durg Senior Superintendent of Police Ram Gopal Garg said.

Das, who worked as a security guard in a private company, was missing since Sunday evening.

Prima facie, it seems to be a suicide but the reason behind the death is yet to be ascertained, the official said.

He was the father of Asim Das, the alleged cash courier named in the Mahadev betting app



Father of Mahadev betting app

Das and another accused constable, Bhim Singh Yadav, were arrested Enforcement Directorate (ED) on November 3.

The ED had claimed that a forensic analysis and a statement made by a 'cash courier' Das had led to "startling allegations" that Mahadev betting app promoters paid about Rs 508 crores to outgoing Chhattisgarh

Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel has denied the allegations and accused the BJP of misusing the

> Das was arrested in Raipur after it recovered Rs 5.39 crore cash from him. He was allegedly sent by the app promoters from the UAE to deliver a large amount of cash to the Congress ahead of elections, the ED said.

> "Asim Das admitted that the seized funds were arranged by the Mahadev app promoters to be delivered to one politician 'Baghel' for election expenses," the agency alleged.

> On November 25, Das told a special PMLA court that he had been framed as part of a conspiracy and he never delivered cash politicians.

Fatty foods can dent body's ability to fight stress: Study

IANS

Estressful periods can impair the body's 'recovery' from the effects of stress, new research suggests.

The study, published recently in Frontiers in Nutrition and Nutrients, showed that consuming foods high in fat before a mentally stressful episode reduce oxygenation and cause poorer vascular function in adults.

Researchers from the University of Birmingham took a group of young, healthy adults and gave them two butter croissants as breakfast

They then asked them to do mental math, increasing

in speed for eight minutes, alerting them when they got an answer wrong.

They could also see

themselves on a screen while they did the exercise. The experiment was designed to simulate everyday stress that we might have to deal with at work or at home.

The team found that eating high-fat foods cerebral attenuated oxygenation in the prefrontal cortex, with lower oxygen delivery (39 per cent reduction in oxygenated hemoglobin) during stress compared participants consumed a low-fat meal.

Furthermore, consumption had a negative effect on mood both during and after the stress episode.



The scientists were also still able to detect reduced arterial elasticity -- which is a measure of vascular function -- in participants up to 90 minutes after the stressful

event was over. "When we get stressed, different things happen in the body: our heart rate and blood pressure go up, our blood vessels dilate, and blood flow to the brain increases. We also know that the elasticity of our blood vessels declines following mental stress," explained Rosalind Baynham, doctoral researcher at the University.

found that consuming fatty foods when mentally stressed reduced vascular function by 1.74 per cent (as measured by Flow-mediated dilatation, FMD)." "Previous studies have

shown that a 1 per cent reduction in vascular function leads to a 13 per cent increase cardiovascular disease risk. Importantly we show that this impairment in vascular function persisted for even longer when our participants had eaten the croissants," Baynham said.

For people who already have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, the impacts could be even more serious, the researchers said.

"We all deal with stress all the time, but especially for those of us in high-stress jobs and at risk of cardiovascular disease, these findings should be taken seriously," said Jet Veldhuijzen van Zanten, Biological Psychology at the University.

The research also suggested that by consuming low-fat food and drinks. people's recovery from stress is less affected.

After eating a low-fat meal, stress still had a negative effect on vascular function (1.18 per cent decrease in FMD), but this decline returned to normal 90 minutes after the stressful event. Further research has shown that by consuming 'healthier' foods, particularly those rich in polyphenols, such as cocoa, berries, grapes, apples and other fruits and vegetables, this impairment in vascular function can be completely prevented.

'No proposal to raise OBC quota as per population in local body polls'

Centre informs Rajya Sabha

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

The Centre informed the Rajya Sabha on Wednesday that there was no proposal to increase reservation for Other Backward Castes(OBC) as per population in the local body

Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Kapil Moreshwar Patil, during the Question Hour in Rajya Sabha, said OBCs are provided onethird reservation under Article 243D of the Constitution.

"However, 21 state governments have increased the reservation up to 50 per cent. The member has sought increasing the reser-

vation for OBCs as per the population in the local body elections. There is no such proposal before us," he said. In local bodies, there is a 50 per

cent reservation for women. Under this quota, there is a provision to accommodate OBCs, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Patil added. However, the state governments have the right to provide reservations for OBCs. "On this subject, the states should take a call at their level," the Union minister said while replying to another supplementary ques-

He said local body elections could not be held in Maharashtra due to the OBC



quota issue. The Supreme Court has said that the reservation cannot be increased beyond 50 per cent without empirical data. About women's reservation in local bodies, Patil said the Centre has made several efforts to empower elected women panchayat leaders, including providing them six months of training. There has been a rise in the participation of women in the governance process, he

The minister was responding to queries raised by YSRCP MP Ryaga Krishnaiyya, the DMK's

Vandana Chavan. Responding to another ques-

tion, Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda said the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) with a budget outlay of Rs 24,000 crore was being implemented from this year to undertake tribal welfare initiatives. "It is one of the largest Central schemes targeting the tribal community's development and

aims to uplift the particularly

vulnerable tribal groups

(PVTG)," he said. In the previous five-year plans PVGT groups with less than 500 members were not covered which led to backwardness of many tribal communities. However the PM-JANMAN scheme targets to empower PVGT groups with 100 mem-

Modi to launch global investors summit in Dehradun

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 'Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023' in Dehradun on December 8 as the hill state looks to boost investment in the coming years, his office said in a statement on Wednesday. Modi will also address the

gathering on the occasion, the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said in its statement. The 'Uttarakhand Global Investors Summit 2023' is a step towards establishing Uttarakhand as a new investment destination and the theme of the two-day event is 'Peace to Prosperity[']

The summit will be attended by thousands of investors and



delegates from across the

It will witness participation of Union ministers and ambassadors of various countries along with leading industrialists, among others, the state-

has sought ₹18,000 crore relief from Centre: Kharge

Karnataka facing draught,

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

rarnataka is reeling under the impact of severe drought and the state government has sought Rs 18,171 crores as relief from the National Disaster Response Fund(NDRF), Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge said on Wednesday.

Raising the matter in the Upper House during the Zero Hour, the Congress president said Karnataka is grappling with the most severe drought in 123 years and the damage to crops is estimated at over Rs 35,162 crore. According to him, the damage

to crops ranges from 40-90 per

Kharge said the state govern-

ment has sought Rs 18,171 crore from the NDRF to help the affected people. 'This financial support is cru

cial for providing input subsi-dies, gratuitous relief and implementing other immediate growth measures due to low rainfall (in Karnataka)," the senior Congress leader said. He further highlighted that

water levels in various reservoirs have reached an alarmingly low mark and there may also be a shortage of drinking water in the coming days. Kharge also spoke about the flood situations in certain parts of Tamil Nadu, including Chennai. He also accused the BJP of not paying heed to the problems being faced by peo-

ple as they have "won elec-

Has Stalin also asked DMK leaders to apologise for insulting Sanatan Dharma: BJP

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

 $T^{
m he\ BJP}$ on Wednesday asked if DMK chief M K Stalin has asked party leaders, who had spoken against Sanatan Dharma, to also apologise after MP DNV Senthilkumar expressed regret in Lok Sabha for referring to Hindi heartland states in a derogatory manner in the Addressing a press conference a question that has to be at BJP headquarters, Union Rajeev

Chandrasekhar also slammed the "silence" of Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on "repeated objectionable remarks about Sanatan".
"I heard Mr TR Baalu say

today that Chief Minister has told MP Senthilkumar to not make such statements. But there is

ered a gateway to lifelong

tobacco habits, these new-age

gateway devices are fostering

uals becoming habituated to

these products. This rising

trend is not only prevalent

globally but also noticeable in

India. Similar to the con-

cerns raised by Scottish par-

liamentarians, our own par-

liamentarians should engage

in discussions with experts to

ensure that vaping and e-cigarettes do not take root with-

in our country, said Bhavna

Barmi, internationally-

acclaimed clinical psycholo-

gist, public speaker and head

psychologist at Fortis Escorts Heart Institute.

"Recent trends indicate a shift

where more young individu-

als are initiating nicotine use through vaping rather than

traditional cigarettes. This presents a significant chal-

lenge - a new generation becoming addicted solely

through the use of e-ciga-

rettes, which in turn will give

rise to various psychological

challenges among users,"

This predatory targeting of children has also been high-

lighted by experts globally,

and most recently it was

raised in discussions in the

Epidemiologist Professor

Emily Banks underscored to

the Members of the Scottish

Parliament or MSPs the con-

cerning and immoral inten-

tions of vaping and tobacco giants to create 'lifelong cus-

tomers' in children and

teenagers. Her remarks

aligned with growing expert support for a complete ban on

disposable e-cigarettes in

More than 45 nations which

include Australia, Singapore,

Thailand, Argentina, Japan,

Brazil have implemented ecigarette bans. In 2019, India

commendably banned vaping

and e-cigarettes under the

Prohibition of Electronic

Cigarettes (Production,

Manufacture, Import, Export,

Transport, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement)

Scotland.

Parliament.

Barmi added.

asked to Mr Baalu and (M K) Stalin.

What about Udyanidhi Stalin's statement? Has he (M Stalin) Udhayanidhi Stalin to apologise? What about A Raia? Has he (DMK chief) advised A Raja to apologise?" the BJP leader said.
"Why can't Stalin apolo-

gise?" he said. He alleged that the opposition



INDIA bloc parties have started a "new chapter of divisive politics" with north-south divide remarks as their efforts to drive a wedge on religious lines for votes did not work in the just-concluded assembly

The BJP will "firmly oppose" such politics played by the Congress and other members of the "INDI Alliance", Chandrasekhar said.

"People of the country will

also totally oppose such politics and expose them," he said at a press conference at the BJP headquarters.

Senthilkumar had on Tuesday used a pejorative to describe Hindi heartland states while attacking the ruling BJP. The comments led to a ruckus and adjournment in the House and were expunged by Speaker Om Birla.

BJP leaders had decried his remarks as "hate speech" and

said the voters will "wipe out" the INDIA bloc from southern India as well in the next elections. Facing flak, the DMK MP had later apologised.

"Commenting on the results of the five recent state assembly elections, I have used a word in an inappropriate way. Not using that term with any intent, I apologise for sending the wrong meaning across, Senthilkumar said in a post

'Companies using vaping products to trap kids into life threatening menace'



¬iting various studies indifrom electronic devices such as e-cigarettes and e-hookahs can cause fatal health conditions such as lung inflammation, DNA damage and lung cancer, Mothers Against Vaping, a united front of concerned mothers combatting the escalating vaping crisis among youth, has expressed concerns that companies are using such products to trap kids into life-threatening

The group called out international tobacco and vaping firms for deliberately targeting children to establish a consumer base for their addictive and harmful products including all kinds of new-age gateway devices such as e-cigarettes and heat-notburn electronic devices. Stressing on the critical need for increased awareness, the body has repeatedly highlighted on the urgency of educating the public about such intentions of these com-

Despite the ban on vaping devices and e-cigarettes in India, their availability is cultivating a generation addicted to these habits, potentially leading them towards

tobacco use. "It's crucial to debunk misconceptions that paint e-cigarettes as harmless vapor inhalation. Recent research underscores the substantial harm caused by inhaling these substances, posing risks to lung health and impacting various facets of children's development, including cognitive abilities and brain development," said Varuna Pathak, former Professor of Gynaecology and Obstetrics at the Gandhi Medical

College. Experts have highlighted that e-cigarettes and many new age gateway products are reported to contain approximately 900 to 2,000 distinct chemical entities with a substantial number still being

'More tremors due to activation of Almora fault in Western Nepal'

NEW DELHI

the activation of the Almora fault in Western Nepal, the Government told the Parliament on Wednesday informing that there have been 97 earthquakes between

'The activation of the Almora fault in western Nepal was the reason for earthquakes in parts of north India and Nepal," Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijiju said in a written reply in Lok Sabha. Almora fault triggered significant mainshock earth quakes on January 24 (5.8 magnitude), October 3 (6.2), and November 3 (6.4).

These mainshocks, accompanied by subsequent after-shocks, led to an increased frequency of earthquakes in 2023, Rijiju said, adding that the background seismicity remained unchanged during

"It is common for northern India and Nepal to occasionally experience moderate earthquakes, and fluctuations

northern part of India, situated near the active faults of the Himalayan region, are highly seismically active areas prone to frequent earthquakes due to collision tectonics. where the Indian plate subducts beneath Eurasian Plate," he said.

Almora fault is a high angle west-northwest-east-southeast to northwest-southeast trending tectonic plane that separates the Garhwal group of inner lesser Himalaya in the north from Jaunsar and Dudatoli Groups of outer lesser Himalayas in the south. Rijiju said the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has published the Seismic Zoning Map of India, ranging from Zone II to V and offers guidelines for implementing the essential engineering codes and practices to construct earthquake-resistant build-

The National Disaster

On January 24, an earthquake of magnitude 5.8 hit Nepal. It was strongly felt in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■

Earthquake activity has increased in 2023 owing to magnitude 3.0 to 3,9 in 2023 compared to 41 in 2022.

this period.

in seismic activity.

Nepal and the neighbouring

Management Authority (NDMA) has been the agency responsible for various precautionary measures such as earthquake drills, awareness programs, earthquake management to enhance preparedness and response to earthquake related incidents.

on Tuesday. The influential minister said the aim of the new initiatives was to ensure "warmth and convenience" to the overall experience of the pilgrims.

Girls who start menstruating as they turn 13 years at risk of developing type 2 diabetes in midlife: Research PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ating before turning 10 was linked with a more than dou-

AUS research published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ) Nutrition Prevention & Health has found that girls turning 13 years old who start to menstruate risk developing type 2 diabetes in mid-life. The researchers from Tulane University and Brigham and Women's Hospital in the US also found that having periods early in life, especially before 10 years of age, is also associated with an increased risk of getting a stroke before the age of 65 in those having diabetes, researchers found after analysing data of more than 17,000 women aged between 20 and 65.

an observational study, they couldn't establish the causes behind these associations. "Earlier age at [first menstru-

Saudia taking

measures for

more fulfilling

Saudi Arabia has rolled out a series of "transformative"

measures like improving visa

processing, accessibility and logistical support to ensure a

more enriching experience for

Indian pilgrims undertaking

the journey to Mecca, Saudi

Minister of Hajj and Umrah

Tawfig bin Fawzan Al-Rabiah

In an interview to PTI, Al-

Rabiah said the initiatives are

specifically designed to pro-

vide Indian pilgrims with

enhanced flexibility through-

out their journey, particular-

ly benefiting women embark-

ing on independent Umrah

The new steps like extension of the Umrah visa to 90 days

and introduction of a four-day

transit visa are tailored to

accommodate the growing

"By promoting gender equality and cultivating a safer,

more embracing environment,

these changes collectively aim

to ensure a more fulfilling and

secure pilgrimage experience

Al-Rabiah, currently on a visit

to India, held talks with Union

Minority Affairs Minister Smriti Irani and External

for all travellers," he said.

influx of Indian pilgrims.

said on Wednesday.

trips.



indicators of the cardiometabolic disease trajectory in women," they suggested in their study.

The women included in the study came from the nationally representative cross-sectional 2018. The women had specified the age at which they had had their first menstrual cycle. Of the women studied, about 10 per cent, or 1773, reported a diagnosis of type 2 diabetes. Further, 11.5 per cent of these, or 203, reported some type of cardiovascular disease, the researchers found.

They quantified the increased risk of type 2 diabetes due to National Health and Nutrition beginning to menstruate early at age 10 or before) through 14 per cent (age 11) to 29 per cent

They also found that menstru-The researchers said that these

findings supported the possibling in stroke risk among women below the age of 65 with diabetes. Specifically, they calculated the risk to be 81 per cent among those having their first period at the age of 11, 32 per cent at 12, and 15 per cent

"One potential pathway explanation may be that [such] women are exposed to oestrogen for longer periods of time, and early [menstruation] has been associated with higher oestrogen levels,"

researchers explained. They also said weight could be another important factor influencing the results, as when they adjusted the data for weight, the observed associations between stroke complications weakened slightly, albeit remaining

bility that age of getting the first period may be incorporated into early-life strategies for preventing diabetes and progression of diabetes complica-"These findings add another

dimension to the potentially less well understood determinants of cardiometabolic risk, particularly in women who have been relatively underrepresented in this area of research," said Sumantra Ray, Executive Director of the NNEdPro Global Centre for Nutrition & Health, which co-BMI owns Nutrition Prevention & Health.

"And they provide a clear steer on the need to design interventional studies looking at the disease in ethnically diverse groups of women who start menstruating at a young age,"

CDS Chauhan presides over 1st leadership conclave

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan presided over the first session of Combined Leadership Conclave and interacted with the senior leadership of the Armed Forces here on Wednesday. The CDS provided an insight into modern warfare and

The three-day conclave is focussing on 'geo-strategic issues, national security and defence, contemporary and emerging security challenges and integration and jointness for capability enhancement as well as 'Aatmanirbharta' in defence.

interact with participants enlightening them about issues of national importance, defence ministry said. The conclave aims to serve as

a development programme for senior officers of the three services, focused on regional and national security issues with a view to enhance synergy, both at operational and strategic levels within the Armed Forces.

Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman, Chiefs

1st nationwide CPR awareness event held journey for Hajj



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELH

 \mathbf{F}^{or} the first time in the country, a nationwide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) awareness programme was launched in the country with over 20 lakh participants including students, professionals and paramedical staff being given training in a sin-

gle sitting online. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya after launching the much-needed programme stressed the need for raising awareness among people and about the importance of training to provide immediate help in case of car-diac arrest and save lives. The move follows shocking reports from across the country of healthy young people succumbing to cardiac arrests during routine daily activities when they had almost no prior health issues, much less cardiac problems..

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar The programme was prepared by the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences on CPR training along with Ministers of State for Health Bharati Pravin

Pawar and SP Singh Baghel. "It should be our effort to keep our heart healthy by taking a balanced diet and doing exercise regularly. However, in the proximity of someone suffering from cardiac arrest, if one is trained in CPR technique, it will enable them to save lives," Mandaviya said.

"It is imperative that a patient is administered treatment immediately upon suffering a cardiac arrest. Hence awareness and adequate training in CPR is paramount," he added while lauding the initiative of the NBEMC.

Mandaviya said, "It (CPR) is of critical importance as the victim of cardiac arrest needs help administered urgently. In light of this, it is crucial that there is heightened awareness amongst the public with adequate knowledge and training so that we can save someone's

Praising people's participation in the training, Mandaviya said, "Anyone can suffer from cardiac arrest at any given point in time and enhanced knowledge and training will aid in administering the right procedures and save a life.'

2 days 16th MCSG meeting held: Ministry



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

The 16th edition of the India-Germany Military Cooperation Sub Group (MCSG) meeting was conducted for two days starting Tuesday here, defence ministry said here on Wednesday.

The meeting was co-chaired from the Indian side by Brigadier Vivek Narang, Deputy Assistant Chief of Integrated Staff IDC (A), HQ IDS, and Col (GS) Christian Schmidt, Director, Department International Cooperation Armed Forces Office from the German side.

The meeting was conducted in a friendly, warm, and cordial atmosphere. Discussions focused on new initiatives under the ambit of existing bilateral defence cooperation mechanisms and further strengthening ongoing defence engagements.

India-Germany Military Cooperation Sub Group (MCSG) is a forum established to boost defence cooperation between both nations through regular talks at the strategic and operational levels between the Headquarters, Integrated Defence Staff, and the Department of International Cooperation Armed Forces.

session of combined

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ **NEW DELHI**

national security.

Eminent personalities with renowned experience in respective fields will also

of Staff Committee (CISC) Lt Gen JP Mathew and other senior officers of HQ, Integrated Defence Staff were also present during the

Parts of Chennai suffer from inundation

Residents grappled with stagnant water and power disruption in parts of the city and its suburbs on Wednesday, two days after Cyclone Michaung wreaked havoc in the metropolis and neighbouring districts, even as civic agency personnel stepped up relief and rehabilitation efforts.

The government said power was kept suspended in some areas as a "preventive measure" since the power cables were under water, while asserting all efforts were being taken to restore normalcy.

Another day's holiday was

declared for schools and colleges in Chennai on December 7.

The cyclone-triggered heavy rainfall had led to inundation in localities including Velachery and Tambaram. On Wednesday too, people were seen leaving their homes in the areas surrounded with water to safer zones, carrying their children and wading through the stag-

including pressing more boats to ferry people to higher ground. Chief Minister M K Stalin visited some of the affected areas and distributed food and essential commodities to people put up at a relief centre in the city. He inspected activities undertaken by the city civic body to drain water.

the pioneer

He also wrote to the Centre seeking an interim flood relief of Rs 5,060 crore to tide over the situation.

Many users on social media site 'X' shared videos of residential localities still being surrounded by stagnant water, claiming many residents were stuck inside. The hashtag #Velachery was trending on the microblog-

A user lamented that her relatives were stuck in their home for the last three days without power, drinking water and milk. There were complaints of delay in supply of milk in many affected parts including Velachery and Tambaram and residents alleged it was being sold for extra price.

'I am also not in a position to attend today's meeting as I am

not well. But, I will attend the

next meeting of the INDIA

coalition", said Kumar, who

played an instrumental role in

bringing together different par-

He said the opposition leaders

will discuss issues related to seat sharing and also finalise sever-

al other strategies.
"My only wish is to unite the maximum number of parties

before the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. Everything should be

The 26-party opposition alliance, which has been formed

to jointly take on the ruling BJP

at the Centre in next year's elec-

tions, have already held meet-

ings in Patna, Bengaluru and

Asked about Union Home

Minister Amit Shah's proposed

visit to Bihar, Kumar said, "Yes,

he is coming to chair the Eastern Zonal Council (EZC)

meeting in Patna on December

The meeting is expected to be joined by the CMs of other

member states Jharkhand,

He claimed that the grand alliance government in Bihar is

working for the overall devel-

'This is the reason that we

raised the quota for deprived

castes in state government jobs

and educational institutions,

based on our caste survey

report. We want that the Centre

should also conduct caste-based

census in the country and

accord special status to Bihar

for its growth," Kumar added.

10. We all will be there."

Odisha and West Bengal.

opment of the state.

finalised at the earliest. I have

desire for myself," Kumar

ties opposed to the BIP.





A drone visual shows an area that is flooded after the landfall of Cyclone Michaung, in Chennai, on Wednesday

Power supply had not resumed in parts of the city including Kilpauk and Kattupakkam. The state government said relief

and that people in many of the affected areas were being rescued through inflatable boats even during midnight.

Chennai Corporation were overseeing the rescue and relief activities, the civic agency said. The Greater Chennai Police also announced helpline num-

for rescue and relief activities. An update from the city police on Wednesday said six rain-related deaths were reported while many persons in need were rescued by the cops in different parts of the city. Among the rescued were aged persons and a number of pregnant women, and a woman and her newborn, an official release

Further, 11 subways in the metro remained closed for vehicular movement due to water-logging. There were no disruptions in operations at the airport while the Southern Railway announced cancelling a number of services and diversion of many oth-

However, it announced resumption of the suburban services on the Chennai Egmore-Chengalpet and Chennai Beach-Arakkonam routes with frequency of 30 and 45 minutes, respectively. Services on the Tiruvottiyur-Sullurpeta line will be operated in a hourly frequency, it said in

Cyclone damages infrastructure in Andhra

PTI ■ AMARAVATI

official.

The severe cyclonic storm Michaung, which crossed the Andhra Pradesh coast close to Bapatla on Tuesday and subsequently weakened into a cyclonic storm, left a trail of destruction in its wake. Michaung is expected to sub-

side into a deep depression

over the next six hours, said an

The storm damaged 770-kilometre roads, uprooted 35 trees and killed three livestock, among others.

According to data shared by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), nearly 40 lakh people from 194 villages and two towns were affected by Michaung's impact, including the inundation of 25 villages. Though there was no loss of human life on Tuesday, And-hra Pradesh State Disaster Management Authority Director BR Ambedkar told PTI that a four-year-old boy died after a hut wall collapsed on him in Tirupati district on Monday. While another person died in Bapatla district, Superinten-dent of Police Vakul Jindal told PTI that the cause of death was

not related to the cyclone. "The lone deceased person was found in a drunken state on a road by his motorcycle, which was not submerged under water, in the Inkollu village," Jindal said. Across the state, 204 relief camps are accommodating 15,173 evacuees. As part of relief efforts, 18,073 food packets and more than 1 lakh water packets were distributed. Eighty health camps were also organised.



INDIA Bloc must act swiftly to finalise future strategies, says Nitish

 $B_{\text{Kumar on Wednesday}}^{\text{ihar Chief Minister Nitish}}$ sought to downplay BJP's victory in three states in the Hindi heartland, stating that there is "no need to discuss much" on such wins of the saffron party, and said the opposition INDIA alliance must act swiftly to finalise its future strategies.

Kumar said he is now focusing on the next meeting of the INDIA coalition, which is scheduled in the third week of December.

well in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chattisgarh. These things happen in electoral politics. Earlier, there were Congress governments in these states...Now BJP has won. There is no need to discuss much on such issues. The Congress has won Telangana this time," the JD(U) leader told reporters here while responding to queries about the BJP's win in

three states. The meeting of the INDIA coalition, which was scheduled to be held on December 6, has been deferred as some senior leaders were unable to attend the same due to their preoccupations, Kumar said.

"I want the INDIA coalition to act swiftly to finalise its future strategies, including the seatsharing issue, in the next meeting, which is scheduled to be held in the third week of December," he said.

RJD president Lalu Prasad had on Tuesday claimed that top leaders of the INDIA bloc would meet on December 17 in Delhi to chalk out the strategy for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls.

Female foeticide ring busted in Karnataka PTI ■ MANDYA (K'TAKA)

Health officials on Wednesday launched a crackdown on medical scanning centres after a large-scale female foeticide ring was exposed carrying out medical termination of female foetuses at a makshift surgical facility set up at a jaggery factory in a remote village of Mandya district. The raids were carried out by

the Mandya District Family Welfare Officer Venkataswamy and Pandavapura Sub-division Assistant Commissioner Nandish. They sealed scanning centres that did not comply with government guidelines and keep their records up to

The police recently arrested 10 people including doctors, nurses and agents, who had allegedly carried out over 900 female foeticides.

The gang used to contact pregnant women and persuade them to get a sex determination test done, for which they charged between Rs 20,000 to Rs 25,000, according to police. They used to conduct the tests in the jaggery factory where all the required equipment was



kept, police said "If the tests showed a female child, they would ask those women whether they wanted to abort

Once the women agreed, the team would charge about Rs 50,000 to do the work. At least 900 female foeticides were carried out by the gang," a senior police official said. Meanwhile, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah noted that a CID probe has been ordered into the female foeticide case. Based on the report, stringent action will be taken against the culprits, he told reporters in the district headquarters town of Belagavi.

CHHATTISGARH 72 newly elected MLAs crorepatis

PTI ■ RAIPUR

As many as 72 out of 90 MLAs in the newly-elected Chhattisgarh legislative assembly are crorepatis, four more compared to the previous Vidhan Sabha.

The BJP, which won a landslide victory in the recently-held elections, tops this list with 43 crorepati MLAs, followed by Congress. Out of 90 seats, the BJP has won 54 and Congress 35.

A total of 72 newly-elected MLAs (80 per cent of the House strength) are crorepatis. The BJP tops the list with 43 (80 %) of 54 MLAs each having declared assets valued at more than Rs 1 crore.

At 29, 83% of 35 MLAs of Congress are crorepatis, as per the analysis done by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) and the Chhattisgarh Election

The average of assets per winning candidate in the state assembly elections held this time is Rs 5.25 crore compared to Rs 11.63 crore in the 2018 assembly polls

With assets worth Rs 33.86 crore, BJP's firsttime MLA Bhawan Bohra (Pandariya seat) tops the crorepati club, followed by the outgoing chief minister and Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel (Patan constituency) with assets worth Rs 33.38 crore. BJP's Amar Agrawal (Bilaspur seat) stands at a third position with assets valued over Rs 27 crore. Congress MLA from Chandrapur, Ramkumar Yadav, and his BJP counterparts Ramkumar Toppo and Gomati Sai, the



incumbent MP who contested the assembly elections, are at the bottom of the list of MLAs with the lowest assets.

Yadav has declared assets worth Rs 10 lakh, the lowest among all MLAs, Toppo Rs 13.12 lakh, and Sai Rs 15.47 lakh, as per the analy-

The report also states that 33 out of 90 MLAs (37 per cent) have declared their educational qualification as having passed class 5 to class 12. At 54, a maximum of 60 per cent of the total MLAs hold graduate

degrees or higher qualifications. Two others hold diplomas while an MLA has declared himself as just "literate". A total of 44 winning candidates (49 per cent) have declared their age between 25

and 50 years while 46 others (51 per cent) are between 51 and 80 years. BJP's Domanlal Korsewada (75), elected from the Ahiwara (SC) seat is the oldest MLA in the newly-elected assembly while Congress' Bilaigarh (SC) legislator Kavita

Pran Lahrey (30) is the youngest of all.

Will meet Shah, Jaishankar over refugees issue: Lalduhoma

PTI ■ AIZAWL

Lalduhoma, chief minister-designate of Mizoram, on Wednesday said he will soon meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Union External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to discuss the issue of refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh, and internally displaced people from Manipur.

Around 44,000 people from the two neighbouring countries and state have taken shelter in Mizoram due to several problems including ethnic strife. Lalduhoma, the Zoram People's

Movement (ZPM) leader, called on Governor Dr Hari Babu Kambhampati at Raj Bhavan and staked claim to form the new government following his party's victory in the assembly polls. His government is likely to take oath on Friday. "I have telephonic conversa-

tions with the Home Minister

and External Affairs Minister on Tuesday. I will soon meet them in Delhi to discuss how the Centre and the state government can work together to look after the refugees and displaced people," Lalduhoma told reporters after meeting the governor. The 73-year ZPM leader said his

government will continue to provide shelter to the refugees from Myanmar and Bangladesh and displaced people from Manipur on humanitarian grounds. He said that his government will

also see if it can provide better relief to them compared to that by the outgoing MNF government.

The ZPM dethroned Zoramthanga-led Mizo National Front (MNF) on Monday, bagging 27 of the total 40 assembly seats. Lalduhoma, an ex-IPS officer who had served as the security in charge of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, said



that he would discuss the country's policy towards refugees from Myanmar with Jaishankar, who is his civil service batchmate. He expressed hope that the Centre will extend help to the state government to look after the Myanmar refugees as it is a humanitarian issue.

More than 31,300 Myanmar nationals and over 1,100 Bangladeshi nationals are currently in Mizoram, according to the state home department. These Myanmar nationals

belonging to the Chin community, who share ethnic ties with Mizos, have taken shelter since February 2021 following a military coup in the neighbouring country. The Bawm or Mizo community from Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill Tracts, who fled gunfights between the Bangladesh army and an ethnic insurgent group, fled to the northeastern state from November last year.

Besides, nearly 12,000 internally displaced people from Manipur have taken refuge in different parts of Mizoram since May this year due to ethnic

clashes. The outgoing MNF government had in May urged the Centre to provide financial assistance to the tune of Rs 10 crore for the internally displaced people from Manipur. In September, the Centre told the state government that it would assist it in



Pakistan woman arrives in India to marry Kolkata man

to get married.

added.

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

 $P^{\text{akistan woman arrives in}}_{\text{India to marry Kolkata res-}}$ ident Karachi resident Javeria Khanum crossed over into the Indian side from Attari in Amritsar district where she was welcomed by her fiance Sameer Khan and some members of his family to the beats

Khanum has been granted a 45-day visa after two previous visa rejections and the Covid pandemic stalled their plans for around five years.

The couple, in a brief interaction with reporters at Attari, said the marriage will be solemnised in January next

here. In the first week of January the marriage will be solemnised," she said.

ly to attend his wedding.

'Illegal Bangladeshi immigrants changing demography in Jharkhand, Bihar, WB'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

 $B^{\mbox{\scriptsize JP}\mbox{\scriptsize MP}\mbox{\scriptsize Nishikant Dubey}}_{\mbox{\scriptsize Wednesday claimed the}}$ demography in many parts of Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal was changing because of a rise in infiltrations by illegal Bangladeshi immigrants and demanded the Centre implement National Register of Citizens (NRC) in these states. During the Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, the MP from Jharkhand's Godda said, "I am raising this issue for the 100th time in 15 years as MP."

"We talk about Schedule Castes and Scheduled Tribes. My state Jharkhand was separated from



Bihar as a tribal majority state. In 1951, the population of tribals was 36 per cent in Jharkhand. Today it is only 24 He claimed that in Jharkhand the tribal population has gone

'The result is such that there is delimitation in the whole country but Jharkhand is a state where delimitation could not be done in 2008 because it will reduce one tribal seat in Lok Sabha and three tribal seats in the assembly," Dubey said.

'Today the situation is that Bangladeshi infiltrators come and marry tribals. The Muslim opulation, especially in districts like Godda, Pakur, Sahibganj, Deoghar, and Jamtara, is increasing. This is not a Hindu-Muslim issue," he said.

The BJP MP claimed that a sim-

ilar situation was being witnessed in neighbouring Bihar and West Bengal. 'When Mamata Banerjee was

MP she had said the demography of Bengal was changing because of Bangladeshis. Since she became chief minister, Malda, Murshidabad and Kaliachak, is full of Bangladeshi infiltrators. Same is the situation in Katihar, Kishanganj, Araria, Purnia, and Bhagalpur (of Bihar). Demography is changing because of Bangladeshis," he

"The Government of India should bring the NRC and send away all Bangladesh infiltrators," the MP said.

amid Rajasthan CM suspense **PTI** ■ JAIPUR a BJP legislature party meeting

Vasundhara Raje heads to Delhi

mid a suspense over the Amid a suspense over the BJP's chief ministerial pick for Rajasthan, senior party leader and former CM Vasundhara Raje was headed to New Delhi Wednesday night. She was scheduled to take a flight

to Delhi. Sources in the Raje camp said she would be meeting the party high command on Thursday. The development came after nearly 60 of the newly elected BJP MLAs met her at her Civil Lines residence on

Monday and Tuesday. The party sources said the name of the chief minister will be decided by the party's parliamentary board and before that, However, the party has not yet made any announcement regarding the legislature party meeting.

Raje, a two-time chief minister, is among the frontrunners for the post of chief minister. In the assembly election results declared on Sunday, the BJP got

115 seats while the Congress secured 69 seats. Elections on 199 out of 200 seats in the state were held on November 25. Polling in Karanpur, where the election was adjourned due to the demise of the Congress candidate, will be held on January 5

and results will be declared on

"I have been granted a 45-day visa. I am very happy to be here. Just on arrival, I am already getting so much love

She had tried to get a visa on two occasions, but got lucky the third time. "It is a happy ending and a happy beginning," she said, expressing her happiness at being able to travel to India

mother's phone. 'This started in May 2018. I had come home from Germany where I was studying. I saw her photo on my mother's phone and expressed my interest. I told my mother that I want to get married to

Earlier, the visa was rejected

Everyone back home was very

happy. I can't believe I have got

the visa after five years," she

Sharing how the couple got in

touch, Khan said he expressed

interest in marrying Khanum

after seeing her photo on his

twice and in between there was the Covid pandemic, Khan said, adding that he was thankful to the Indian Government for the visa. 'My mother is very happy now

Javeria," he said.

that we will be getting married in January next year," he said. Khan said his friends from his time in Germany – from Africa, Spain, the United States and other countries - are like-The couple then left to catch a

flight from Amritsar to

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

INDIA hits roadblock

With certain satraps demanding their pound of flesh, Congress forced to be on the defensive

The Congress seems to be spiralling down the goodwill and credibility meter. After the drubbing it received in three recent Assembly elections, its partners in the INDIA bloc are also not extending it the courtesy it has grown accustomed to. After burning most bridges with its co-parties on account of its preoccupation with the State elections, where it miserably failed to score a point, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge had convened a meeting of the INDIA bloc on December 6, but key alliance partners cocked a snook at the abrupt invite and expressed unavailability to attend, forcing Congress to reschedule the gathering. The absence of prominent figures, including TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, JD(U)'s Nitish Kumar, SP's Akhilesh Yadav and DMK's MK Stalin underlined the growing discontent within the alliance. Mamata cited commitments, Nitish is reportedly down with viral fever, and Stalin is engaged in relief efforts after cyclone Michaung. The unexpected nature of these



absences left the Congress in an awkward position. The lack of communication and coordination reflected poorly on the Congress's ability to manage the alliance. To address the discontent, the Congress scaled down the meeting to include only floor leaders, rescheduling the heads of parties' meeting to the third week of December. This move aims to accommodate the busy schedules of alliance leaders and foster better participation, which should have been the priority right from the start. However, the rescheduling indicates the need for Congress to reassess its approach to alliance management and communication.

These are difficult times for the Congress. The decimation of the party must have had a demoralising effect on the INDIA alliance as well, which was keenly watching the elections and hoping for a turnaround in the northern region. The development also indicates that though Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra created good impact, it failed to translate into votes. The fissures in the alliance were actually visible even before the elections. Several bloc parties, including the TMC, AAP, SP and JD(U), expressed frustration with the Congress for stalling alliance activities, such as seatsharing talks, citing Assembly polls. The delay raises concerns about the cohesion and effectiveness of the alliance, with some members believing that the political momentum gained after previous meetings has been lost. The Congress must address the issues of perceived dissension, EVM tampering controversy in Assembly elections and work towards restoring the alliance's stability, effectiveness and cohesion for the political battle ahead. The rescheduled meeting presents an opportunity for the Congress to regroup, re-establish communication with alliance partners and chart a course that strengthens the unity and purpose of the coalition. It will also be the litmus test of the INDIA bloc's ability to survive together.



Eminent dancer Dona Ganguly's troupe performs on 29th Kolkata International Film Festival, in Kolkata

The significance of Sam Bahadur



The biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw depicts him as a fearless man of honour and integrity but skips the scruffy treatment he got in his twilight years

ndoubtedly, many parents will be writing about Sam Bahadur, the biopic on Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw. It not only shines a light on the life and times of a genuine military hero but also on what it means to be an officer and a gentleman. Whatever one's views about the movie or its shortcomings, of which there are a few, it is undeniable that the director, Meghna Gulzar, has brilliantly caught the very essence of the Field Marshal, both as a human being and a military leader nonpareil. For that, she and the cast certainly deserve ample praise and accolades.

For unknown reasons, the biopic has skirted the issue of the horrendous treatment meted out to the Field Marshal in his twilight years by our political establishment and the bureaucracy. That is rather unfortunate. For instance, though appointed Field Marshal in January 1973, he only received the arrears of his pay and allowances in 2007, a full thirtyfour years later, and that too because of the personal intervention of President Abdul Kalam. Interestingly, in 1972, when Mrs Gandhi first proposed to promote him to the rank of Field Marshal, she also wanted him appointed Chief of Defence Staff. A proposal vigorously opposed by bureaucrats not unexpectedly, but also by the other two Services as well. Unfortunately, we are still paying a very high price for the shortsightedness of our military hierarchy to this day. On his demise in June 2008, while

the Government did honour him with a State Funeral, neither the President and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, Pratibha Patil, nor Prime Minister Manmohan Singh nor his defence minister AK Antony, could spare time to attend. Instead, the Government was represented at the funeral of India's greatest military icon since Independence, by the Minister of State for Defence, Mr. Pallam Raju. What it says about our oliticians needs no elaboration! Indeed, one would not be sur-prised if the unflattering depiction as increasing politicisation within the military has startof politicians and bureaucrats in ed taking its toll. Today, interthe movie was deliberate and not ference in purely military mat-



judgement on their part and

reflected very poorly on them. Coincidentally, the Army

Chief, General Deepak

Kapoor, was also absent, but

on an official visit to Russia,

and was represented as per protocol, by the Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Naidu. The significance of their absence was not lost on the serving and veteran community, as it clearly reflected the direction the military was heading, where displaying fealty to political masters overrode the necessity to live up to the traditions and ethos of the military. A trend, that has only taken deeper roots over time,



MANY AMONGST **OUR TOP MILITARY** HIERARCHY ARE **COMPROMISED AS** THEY OWE THEIR PRESENT **POSITIONS** MORE TO **POLITICAL** MUNIFICENCE, THAN THEIR OWN **PROFESSIONAL ABILITIES**

ters by politicians and bureaucrats, who have neither military experience nor domain knowledge, and will never be held accountable is clearly visible. The unviable Agnipath Scheme that is causing grave damage to our military ethos and capability is just one exam-

That there has been no opposition from within the military to all of this can be attributed to the sad fact that many amongst our top military hierarchy are compromised as they owe their present positions more to the political munificence, than their own professional abilities. Moreover, reputations, standing and self-respect were greatly damaged by the unwillingness of the Service Chiefs to speak up when military veterans and families were illegally and mercilessly beaten up by the Delhi Police as they sat in peaceful protest at the Jantar Mantar against the Government's failure to grant OROP, a promise that incidentally it has yet to honour in full. Indeed, those unwilling to defend their own will never arner any respect.

Ironically, the situation our military is in presently has created a fundamental problem for the political leadership,

have failed to comprehend this as yet. One aspect that stands out in the movie is the fact that the Field Marshal endeared himself to Mrs Gandhi not by submitting to her every whim or a flagrant display of personal loyalty, but by giving her straightforward professional advice, regardless of consequences. Thus, despite all her inherent fears regarding the Field Marshal's likely motives or ambitions, she came to place implicit trust in his professional judgement and abilities. The results were there for all to see. Unfortunately, Prime Minister Modi does not have that luxury, which probably explains our weak-kneed response to Chinese provocations. As Napoleon so aptly put it, "If you build an army of 100 lions and their leader is a dog, in any fight, the lions will die like a dog. But if you build an

though it appears they may

(The writer is a military veteran and a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Visiting Fellow with the Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. Views are personal)

army of 100 dogs and their

leader is a lion, all dogs will

fight as a lion".

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Insurtech is the next big thing after FinTech



By merging insurance with technology, this burgeoning sector promises to revitalise the traditional insurance sector

n the past decade, FinTech's revolutionary Limpact has been marked by the integration of cuttingedge technologies across various sectors. Thriving on innovation, these FinTech companies have disrupted traditional processes, raising billions in the process. Even with a funding slowdown, the sector managed to secure \$1.3 billion in H1 2023.

Building on this momentum, Insurtech emerges as India's new digital frontier. Merging insurance with technology, this burgeoning sector promises to revitalise the traditional insurance. Its innovative solutions aim to enhance customer experiences, streamline operations, and increase insurance accessibility. Currently valued at US\$ 20,667.5 million, Insurtech is projected to surge to an estimated 210,664.3 million by 2033, growing at a CAGR of over 26%. This remarkable growth trajectory positions Insurtech not just as a trend, but as a transformative force in India's digital economy

Insurtech and its scope Insurtech (made of two words: Insurance and



Technology) refers to the use of technological innovations designed to squeeze out savings and efficiency from the current insurance industry model. It is not just limited to digitising the existing insurance framework; rather, it's a reimagining of insurance operations using cutting-edge technologies like AI, blockchain, and IoT to create more personalised, automated, and customer-centric ser-

Insurtech in India represents a transformative force within the traditionally manual and paperwork-heavy insurance sector. Leveraging technological innovations, Indian Insurtech start-ups are streamlining policy management, claims processing, and risk assessment. This simplification makes insurance more accessible and userfriendly. There is still a large proportion of the population uninsured, for instance

do not have access to any health insurance. This significant presence of an uninsured population, coupled with growing digital adoption, positions Insurtech for substantial growth

Success of the Fintech

The success of fintech companies and the rapid adoption of the services offered by these enterprises have laid the groundwork for the emergence and growth of Insurtech. The current trajectory of Insurtech which promises high growth rates and is also characterised by disruptive innovation and swift market penetration, is quite similar to how the Fintech sector has evolved in the past decade.

Investors are for Insurtech Even though the comparison of numbers with the fintech sector would not be fair, it is critical to mention that Insurtech enterprises have raised more than \$2.6 billion in the past five years. With exciting forecasts, it is rather a surety that VCs and investors would be more than happy to pour more money into a sector that has a forecasted CAGR of more than around 40 crore individuals 25%. Here are some of the

most critical reasons, besides the growth trends, that have enhanced investors' interest in

Filling gaps in insurance Traditional insurance models are often hindered by inefficiencies like lengthy claim processes and limited customer interaction. Insurtech addresses these gaps through technological solutions that streamline operations and enhance customer engagement. This ability to solve longstanding problems in insurance makes Insurtech a particularly attractive investment for those looking to fund ventures that combine innovation with practical,

Data-Driven Insights The fundamental appeal of

market-driven solutions

the sector is based on data analytics and AI. These technologies enable more accurate risk assessment, personalised policy offerings, and predictive analytics to anticipate future trends and customer needs. For VCs and investors, the efficiency and customercentric nature of these datadriven solutions presents a compelling investment case. (The writer is the founder, of Alwrite; views are personal)

Sir — On the face of it, predicaments for cricketer-turned-politician and former Pak Prime Minister Imran Khan are turning from bad to worse with each day passing and seeming far from over given that Mr Khan has been on the tenterhooks since he put in his papers as Prime Minister following a no-confidence motion passed against him in the National Assembly with 174 votes on April 10 in 2022. Mr Khan and his close aide and exforeign minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi are already behind bars in Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, a special court judge on Monday ruled that Mr Khan and Mr Qureshi would be again indicted in the cypher case on December 12 for allegedly leaking state secrets in violation of the country's laws. Judge Abual Hasnat Zulqernain heard the case in the Rawalpindi prison where the duo is incar-

IMRAN KHAN CRIES OVER HIS DOINGS

To remind you, the Federal Investigation Agency(FIA) filed the chargesheet against the PTI leaders duo on September 30 under sections 5 and 9 of the Official Secrets Acts which entails a death sentence or up to 14 years in jail in case of conviction. Given that the Army in Pakistan has largely been in the driver's seat since the creation of the country in 1948, Pakistanis have taken the army rule in their country in their stride.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

COP28 CONTINUES TILL NEXT WEEK

Sir — The COP28 global climate conference will continue for another week. That means its formal completion will be announced on the 12th of December. But this meeting held in Dubai, in many cases, seems to be entangled in a web of controversies even before it has started. First, there was controversy over the name of its chairman, Sultan al-Jaber, who is himself the head of an oil company. Secondly, that document became public, which also includes the draft which states that the UAE is going to use this platform to

Opposition parties must introspect



t is indeed a pity that opposition parties are still not sensitised on the need to exhibit unity among themselves to bring about the much-

sensus was not seen on an agreement that pledged to triple installed renewable energy capacity by 2030. Only 118 out of 200 countries signed it. China, the world's second-largest country in terms of emissions, and India, the third-largest, did not sign. This historic decision was discussed at that time only. India, as G20 chairmanship, had also given its consent to this drafting. No one can understand India's sudden rejection of it.

Anyway, all the COP series meetings are also held, and so far, we have seen only a boom in tourism. No concrete achievement from this is visible in any part of the earth. The temperature is increasing exponentially. Forests are being reduced to ashes by wildfires. With the expansion of the sea coast, cities and towns are coming under submergence. The world is becoming plagued by floods, storms and extreme heat. The countries of the world are still looking at every agreement from the perspective of their profit and loss.

Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

COUGH SYRUP IS SWEET POISON Sir —As per a report more than 40 comincrease the sales of its oil. Second, conpanies manufacturing cough syrups in the

needed change in the political course of the country. People seem to have acted in desperation and kept the non-BJP parties at a distance. Telangana stands apart as the leader of the Congress party in the state and could success-

fully take all the factions with him. In Rajasthan, at least, Congres has only two major factions whereas in Telangana the party has too many leaders and each leader leads a faction. But they all acted under a single command in exposing the misrule of BRS and emerged successful. But, at least, now the party should act with more sense of responsibility and spirit of nationalism as advised by the Prime Minister, though his utterance was more sarcastic. A bigger task is before them and let us hope better counsel will prevail in their mind.

A G Rajmohan | Anantapur

country have failed quality tests, a Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) report said, citing lab tests conducted in different states in the aftermath of reports potentially linking India-made cough syrups to 141 child fatalities globally. As per the CDSCO report, of the 1,105 samples tested, 59 were declared "not of standard quality". The report was released by CDSCO in November under a list of drugs, medical devices and cosmetics declared as "not of standard quality", "spurious", "adulterated", or "misbranded". The move came after several deaths were reported among children globally after consuming India-made cough syrups. Concerns surrounding these cough syrups were raised after the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that about 70 children in Gambia had died from acute kidney injury potentially linked to cough and cold syrups produced by Indian manufacturer Maiden Pharmaceuticals Ltd. With this, the image and credibility of India have fallen in the world.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

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FIRST COLUMN DISCIPLINE YOUR SENSES

Our senses would always seek their objects but we must keep them on a leash



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

e have six senses, which are actively looking for gratification by contact with their objects. For example, our tongues look for tasty foods except when we are full. There is nothing wrong with it if these pleasures are within 'dharma'/ 'maryada' (within allowable limits). God has allowed it, as stated by Lord Krishna in verse # 7.11 of the Bhagavad-Geeta, in which He stated, "I am passion in beings, according to religious principles." He emphasised this point further in verse # 6.17, when He counselled, "One whose eating and recreation are appropriate; of one who strives appropriately in activities; of one who sleeps and stays awake, as required; his sufferings are less. Because sufferings there will be in this material world, described by the Lord as a place of miseries." (8.15) But despite such warnings, we are forever ready to transgress allowable limits hoping to escape punishment.

What happens will be clear as we go through the activities of these six active senses. Beginning with our tongue, all of us are guilty of indiscretions sometimes or other. Picture yourself invited to a very rich buffet dinner. You survey what is on offer, which will be a lot unless you are on a restricted diet. What should I eat? People load their plates as if they are starving. This explains our control over our senses. Shouldn't we consider what is best for us to eat? Is it on offer? Then, why think so much? Just eat enough because more food will be available in a few

hours for breakfast.



Let us go to our eyes next. It used to be okay till multiple channels came and now smartphones. There is so much to see, especially now one can watch with no one watching. Unfortunately, we are being watched all the time because 'karmaphalas' are being made by our acts. Wise people restrict themselves to what is useful and at worst, what is harmless like a sports programme.

The pleasure of speaking occupies a very high place in modern man's desires. Everyone is an expert on everything with Google playing its role. Doctors get frustrated when patients begin telling them what they should know. One doesn't want to consider that if one was so wise why should he or she be in so much trouble?

The fourth sense, which is also very active is our ears. What do we want to hear most? Our appreciation, which is how good we are compared to everyone around us. Again, like question begs an answer: why aren't we satisfied with our lives then?

Our skin occupies an important position in how we think. We place comfort in all considerations. Air conditioners, heaters, etc are all fine, but how about a little sweating it out with walks, yoga exercises, etc? What does a modern person value the most? Muscles of course to show off. People spend hours in gyms to build what is not needed which gives them trouble as they age

I have saved the next sense for the last, which gives us the maximum trouble. Yes, you have guessed it right. The sex pleasure is considered the topmost pleasure of all by almost everyone. Our thinking is normally defined by it. Lord Krishna has warned us about it in verse # 18.39, when He cautioned about 'pramad'.

The conclusion is obvious. We have senses and they would always seek contact with their objects. This is normal, but what is not normal is not restricting oneself to what is allowable. God would not have made such a system if it was not workable. It is very much so; only we have to be highly disciplined in thinking and acting, and we can live a satisfactory life.

(The writer is a spiritual teacher, views are personal)

Is India losing sheen for investors?

The slowdown in foreign direct investment in India is a cause for concern, as multinational corporations are finding other competitors more attractive

ndia's GDP grew by 7.6% in the second quarter (July-September) of the year, a positive sign of economic growth. However, the steepest declines in foreign direct investment (FDI) are a matter of concern, especially considering India's recent emergence as a promising investment destination and a viable alternative to China. This decline is particularly worrying as it is happening despite positive projections of India's growth by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank.

According to the latest report by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), FDI inflows have slowed down drastically. The decline in FDI inflows has been steep, and the situation has only worsened, with a further decline of -24% in April-September 2023. The current FDI inflows stand at \$20.48 billion, down from \$26.91 billion over the same period last year. Even the overall FDI inflows in 2022-23 witnessed a 16% decline, standing at \$71.3 billion from \$84.8 billion in 2021-22.

The steepest declines in FDI have been in

crucial sectors such as computer software and hardware, automobile, infrastructure construction activities, and metallurgical industries. For instance, inflows in computer software and hardware fell from \$14.4 billion in 2021-22 to \$9.3 billion in 2022-23, in the automobile industry from \$6.9 billion to \$1.9 billion, in infrastructure construction activities from \$3.2 billion to \$1.7 billion, and in metallurgical industries from \$2.2 billion to \$219 mil-

The slowdown in foreign direct investment (FDI) in India is a cause for concern, as multinational corporations (MNCs) are finding Vietnam, Indonesia, and other competitors more attractive. This is a clear indication that the "China plus one" strategy of MNCs is not working for India. During January-September of this year, FDI in Vietnam increased by approximately 8% compared to the same period last year, reaching about \$18 billion. In the case of Indonesia, FDI flows stood at around \$10 billion during January-September of this year, similar to the levels seen last year.

The factors that influence capital flows into countries include the global and domestic macroeconomic environment, the domestic policy and regulatory envionment, and political stability. Since India is expected to benefit greatly from the "China plus one" strategy, policymakers must pay closer attention to these FDI

It is well known that FDI flows are more likely to gravitate towards countries with broader and deeper trade agreements. Lower tariffs and other benefits negotiated through free trade agreements (FTAs) incentivise foreign investment. Therefore, the decline in FDI flows to India may reflect this. A deeper assessment of the country's prospects is needed to address this issue.

India is genuinely the alternative to China for companies looking to diversify if it is the "one" in China plus one strategy if the Government's PLI scheme is a powerful enough incentive to draw in investments, and if the solid foundations of India's growth forecasts are taken into account, then MNC investor should be long on India. Any concerns regarding an uncertain business environment, an uneven playing field, or the fear of arbi-



THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE CAPITAL FLOWS INTO COUNTRIES GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC MACROECONOMIC

ENVIRONMENT. THE DOMESTIC POLICY AND POLITICAL **STABILITY**

trary changes to the rules of the game must not deter investors from investing in India.

More states should be in the ambit of FDI: The scope of FDI must be expanded to more Indian states. FDI has been concentrated in only a few states due to their location and favourable business environment. Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Gujarat have together attracted a staggering 69% of the FDI inflows into the country, with Maharashtra being the top recipient. However, it is disappointing to note that Punjab ranks a lowly 12th in attracting FDI, with a cumulative investment of a meagre Rs. 7693 crore in the past four years, which is a paltry 0.49% of the total inflows of Rs. 15.08 lakh crore from October 2019 to September 2023.

In contrast, the neighbouring state of Haryana has been more successful, ranking sixth with FDI equity inflows of Rs. 67,502 crore, accounting for a substantial 4.17% of the total inflows during the same period. Punjab's successive governments have been striving to attract investments, particularly from foreign investors, but they have been facing major hurdles such as location disadvantage, poor connectivity, and frequent

The existing industry in Punjab has also been complaining about disruptions in their operations and movements due to the aforementioned issues. Haryana is way ahead in this regard with a significant advantage due to its proximity to Delhi NCR and superior connectivity.

It is high time that Punjab takes firm steps to improve its position in attracting FDI, as its highest ranking was only ninth in 2020-21, when it attracted FDI equity investment of Rs. 4,719.45 crore, primarily in food processing, auto components, engineering goods, and textiles. The declining trend in FDI inflows to Punjab since then is a cause for concern. Therefore, the state must create a more conducive environment for businesses and investors, and promote its potential in various sectors, to attract more FDI and boost its economy.

Disadvantage: Despite signing and negotiating bilateral free trade agreements, India has failed to secure a trade agreement with the European Union or become part of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) countries including China, Indonesia, Japan, and South Korea for free trade agreements. The trade agreement between the 10 member states of ASEAN and their free trade agreement partners -Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, and Korea - has deepened economic integration between these countries, which are at the heart of manufacturing supply chains.

As a result, India's exclusion from such agreements and the supply chains that run through these regions puts it at a significant dis-

advantage in this manufacturing ecosystem. The Way Forward: Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) have a far greater potential to facilitate the growth of the Indian economy than Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI). However, India needs to take swift and assertive action to speed up structural reforms, root out corruption, and reduce red tape in bureaucracy to strengthen its position as the most attractive investment destination for FDI. India has adopted a negative list approach in its FDI policy, which outlines only those sectors and activities where foreign investment is regulated. Sectors not mentioned in the document are open to obtaining 100% FDI under the automatic method.

The liberal and attractive policy regime for investors, combined with a favourable business climate and reduced regulatory framework, have resulted in higher FDI inflows. But this alone is not enough. India needs to complement this with a sound trade policy that boosts exports, encourages inclusive development, and incentivises R&D to make our manufacturing ecosystem globally competitive, thereby fetching FDI at a large scale.

(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, and Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are strictly personal)

Artificial Intelligence is transforming the steel industry

A step-by-step approach is the best to implement artificial intelligence. Scores of AI models are available for use in the steel units which can be tried without much hassle

⊣echnology is ever-evolving. While it becomes difficult to keep pace with rapid technological advancements in all expanses of life, it is equally difficult to discount them because these are highly value-accretive. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one such technology. The manufacturing sector, in general, and the steel sector, in particular, are integrating AI into their daily operations to improve productivity, health and safety, reduce operational costs and reap countless other operational and functional benefits. Survival will be at stake for those who will not. In a developing nation or the Global South, cheaper availability of steel is a prequel to ensure sustainable development. Since raw materials for



making steel are unlikely to be economical in the foreseeable future, adaptation of modern disruptive technologies and processes is the only way out. Estimates suggest that the proper adaptation of AI in the entire value chain of steelmaking can save between \$60 and \$100 per tonne. Apart from this, a key takeaway from the recently concluded ISA Steel InfraBuild Summit in Lucknow was that the use of AI in architecture will enable engineers and architects to design, plan, and build steel structures more efficiently, resulting in proper economics and savings in infrastructure

and real estate. In the steel sector, AI can be adopted from R&D and innovation to procurement, manufacturing and back-office sinter plant, blast furnaces,

process digitalisation to supply-chain inventory, marketing, and whatnot. All these can lead to a 60% growth in EBDI-TA in three years. Greenhouse gas emissions can also be reduced by 5-10%.

Maintenance is, as always, a difficult task. Each manufacturing unit has its maintenance plan tailored to its particularities. Proper implementation and use of AI can help predict the exact timing of maintenance, thereby reducing shutthe early adopter of AI.

down time, cutting maintenance costs, and enhancing the lifespan of the machinery. The Indian steel industry has been Adaptation of AI has the highest impact on steel manufacturing in the entire value chain. In the coke oven plant, continuous caster and rolling, among others, the implementation of AI has multiple benefits ranging from 1-2% yield improvement to a 50-80% reduction in quality losses. Energy consumption also improved by roughly 10%. Autonomous or semiautonomous data or content examination also makes predictions and recommendations easier. Integration of sales and production data improves revenue management and customer satisfac-With precise data, AI's ability

to predict market data and price fluctuations helps manufacturers adjust production, manage inventories, and respond swiftly to changing market conditions. Enhancing safety is also another essential

aspect. No wonder steel manufacturers worldwide are embracing AI to ensure faster delivery of business requirements. This is the age of intelligent manufacturing. Far from having a steel-producing smart factory, intelligent manufactur-ing encompasses all of it – sourcing raw materials to production to marketing products through an integrated intelligent supply chain.

Steel consumption mirrors the health of an economy. Aspiring to be in the league of a developed nation, India has miles to go to catch up with the global steel consumption average. The building, construction and infrastructure sector consumes nearly 70% of all steel in India. The growth of the steel sector will largely depend on the demand emanating

from the infrastructure sector. While AI adaptation will benefit the steel sector, implementing AI in the infrastructure sector will help assess the sector's specific needs - such as identifying cost-effective highstrength steel structure-based designs and offering tailormade products.

Adaptation, both in the steel and the infrastructure sector, is a challenging task. A mindset of experimentation and a determination to bring about positive changes are required. With AI, the ultimate goal is to implement an automated and unsupervised process linked with software and processes to improve performance over time. However, there is no substitute for human capital, and once integrated with AI, it will do wonders if used for the ben-

efit of mankind and planet Earth. The apprehension that AI will displace jobs is unfounded. However, the dynamics of the job will change, requiring manpower with digital skills. It also warrants upskilling existing employees. A step-by-step approach is the best to implement AI. Building on the following line from the learnings of the first will yield the best results. Scores of AI models are in use in different steel manufacturing units in the country. The use of transformative technology will only go up in the days ahead. We need to be ready to adapt to the changes and implement it. (The writer is the Secretary

General of, the Indian Steel Association (ISA), views are personal)

Heavy fighting across Gaza halts aid delivery

(GAZA STRIP)

Tsraeli forces battled Hamas **⊥**militants across Gaza on Wednesday after expanding their ground offensive to its second-largest city, further shrinking the area where Palestinians can seek safety and halting the distribution of vital aid across most of the territory. The assault on the south threatens further mass displacement within the besieged coastal enclave, where the U.N. says some 1.87 million people over 80 per cent of the population — have already fled their homes. North, including large parts of Gaza City, has been completely destroyed, and Palestinians fear the rest of Gaza could suffer a similar fate as Israel tries to dismantle Hamas, which has deep roots in the territory it has ruled for

Israel says it can no longer accept a Hamas military presence in Gaza after the October 7 attack that triggered the war, and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Israel will maintain open-ended security control over the territory, something opposed by the United States and much of the international community. The Israeli military said Tuesday that its troops were "in the heart" of the southern city of Khan Younis after what it described as "the most intense day" of fighting since the start of the ground operation five weeks ago, with heavy battles in the north as well.

PUSHED TO THE EDGE

For the past three days, aid distribution — mainly just supplies of flour and water has been possible only in and around Rafah, on the southern border with Egypt, because of fighting and road closures by Israeli forces, the U.N.'s humanitarian aid office said.

The aid group Doctors Without Borders said fuel and medical supplies have reached "critically low levels" at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in the central town of Deir al-Balah, north of Khan Younis. Up to 200 wounded people have been brought in every day since December 1, when a weeklong truce expired, it said. "Without electricity, ventilators would



Relatives of Israeli hostages Eli and Yossi Sharabi. Tsachi Idan and Idan Shtivi attend a ceremony and a prayer for their liberation at the synagogue in Lisbon. Tuesday. The families are in Lisbon to ask for the help of the Portuguese government in securing the

cease to function, blood donations would have to stop, the sterilization of surgical instruments would be impossible," said Marie-Aure Perreaut Revial, the aid group's emergency coordinator in Gaza. She said they are also running low on surgical supplies and external fixators for broken

Gaza has been without electricity since the first week of the war, and Israel has severely limited fuel imports, forcing several hospitals to shut down because they cannot operate emergency generators.

Thousands of people have fled to the Rafah since Israel resumed its offensive after the cease-fire, including many from the north who have been displaced multiple times.

Hamza Abu Mustafa, a teacher who lives near a schoolturned-shelter and is hosting three families himself, said "the situation is extremely dire."

You find displaced people in the streets, in schools, in mosques, in hospitals ... every-

A Palestinian woman who identified herself as Umm Ahmed said the harsh conditions and limited access to toilets are especially difficult for women who are pregnant or menstruating. "For women and girls, the suffering is double,"

COVID-linked deaths in the

country as a "shocking figure

and a terrible loss of life".

Johnson acknowledged that

was the "core of the tragedy"

and that "inevitably...we may

were operating on a fallacious,

inductive logic about previous

reasonable worst case scenar-

ios, and this one and this was

the one where I am afraid the

worst predictions turned out to

be correct," he told the inquiry.

best we could at the time,

given what we knew, given the

information we had at the

time, I think we were doing

our level best. Were there

things that we should have

ernment "underestimated the

scale and pace of the challenge",

thinking the peak of the virus

would come in May or June

2020. Johnson also said he took

responsibility for the speed of

the government's response to

the pandemic, the lockdown

decisions and their timelines.

His evidence is expected to last for two days and follows

the evidence of his Cabinet col-

leagues from the time, former

health secretary Matt Hancock

and levelling up secretary

Michael Gove. British Prime

Minister Rishi Sunak, who

was chancellor of the exche-

quer at the time, is expected to

give his evidence in the com-

He revealed that the gov-

Unquestionably," he said.

differently?

"I think we were doing the

'The tragedy is that we

have made mistakes".

she said. "It's more humiliation." Palestinian women have recently taken to social media to request menstrual pads, which are increasingly hard to find. "I apologize for raising such a matter," one user wrote on X, adding that there were 15 girls staying in her house. "What are we supposed to

HUNDREDS KILLED SINCE CEASE-FIRE

The war has killed more than 16,200 people in Gaza -70 per cent of them women and $children -- and \ wounded \ more$ than 42,000, according to the territory's Health Ministry, which released new figures late Tuesday. The ministry does not differentiate between civilian and combatant deaths, but its overall tally tracks with a figure released by the Israeli military this week.

The ministry says hundreds more have been killed since the cease-fire ended Friday, and many still are trapped under rubble.

The military accuses Hamas of using civilians as human shields when the militants operate in residential areas. But Israel has not given detailed accounts of individual strikes, some of which have leveled entire city blocks. Military Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi

said militants keep weapons in homes and other buildings so fighters in civilian clothes can use them to fire on troops.

"Striking them requires

significant use of fire, both to target the enemy but also to, of course, protect our forces," he said Tuesday. Israel says it must remove Hamas from power to prevent a repeat of the October 7 attack, when Hamas and other militants killed about 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took captive some 240 men, women and children after bursting through Israel's vaunted defenses. More than 100 hostages were released during last week's cease-fire, along with 240 Palestinians imprisoned by Israel. But an estimated 138 hostages remain in Gaza, mostly soldiers and civilian men, and accounts of widespread rape and other atrocities committed during the rampage have deepened Israel's outrage and further galvanized support

NO END IN SIGHT

Hamas' continuing ability to fight in the north, where Israel entered with overwhelming force weeks ago, signals that eradicating the group without causing further mass casualties and displacement — as Israel's top ally, the US has requested — could prove elusive.

Hamas raping Israeli hostages appalling: Biden

President Joe Biden has force-fully denounced the report-ed rape and sexual violence against Israeli girls and women by Hamas militants following the October 7 attack on Israel, calling on the world to condemn such conduct "without equivocation" and "without

Speaking at a campaign fundraiser in Boston on Tuesday, Biden noted that in recent weeks, female survivors and witnesses to the attacks have shared "horrific accounts of unimaginable cruelty".

"Reports of women raped repeatedly raped - and their bodies being mutilated while still alive — of women corpses being desecrated, Hamas terrorists inflicting as much pain and suffering on women and girls as possible and then murdering them," Biden

said. "It is appalling."

Israel has said it is investigating several cases of sexual assault and rape from the Hamas attack on Israel. Witnesses and medical experts have said that Hamas militants committed a series of rapes and other attacks before killing the victims in the October 7 attack, though the extent of the sexual violence remains unknown.

Experts have been piecing together evidence in recent weeks in a case that is complicated because there are no known victims to testify and limited forensic evidence. Biden's comments come as

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government has sought to put greater focus on the sexual violence it says Hamas committed during the October 7 attack that killed some 1,200 people on Israeli soil and led to another 240 being taken hostage. Some recently released hostages have shared testimonies of sexual violence and abuse during their time in

Hamas has denied that militants committed sexual assaults.

Netanyahu railed against the lack of international response during a press conference on Tuesday evening.

"I say to the women's rights organizations, to the human rights organisations, you've heard of the rape of Israeli women, horrible atrocities, sexual mutilation — where the hell are you," asked Netanyahu. Israel hosted a special event

at the United Nations on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, and former Meta chief operating officer Sheryl Sandberg were among those who criticised what they called a global failure to support women who were raped, sexually assaulted and in some cases

The comments from Biden came one day after White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre called the militants' alleged assaults on women "reprehensible".

Jean-Pierre, who underscored that she was speaking on behalf of the president, was responding to a question about comments made by Rep. Pramila Jayapal, a California Democrat, during a CNN interview in which she responded to question about rape by Palestinian militants by saying, "I think we have to be balanced about bringing in the outrages against Palestinians, 15,000 Palestinians have been killed." Jayapal later issued a statement clarifying that she "unequivocally" condemns "Hamas' use of rape and sexual violence as an act of war". As a senator, Biden was the author of the Violence Against Women Act, which was signed into law in 1994. He referenced his work on the issue as a lawmaker as he spoke out against the allegations of sexual violence by Hamas.

US President: If Trump wasn't running I'm not sure I'd be running

AP ■ BOSTON

President Joe Biden told campaign donors Tuesday that he wasn't sure he'd be running for reelection if Donald Trump wasn't also in the race, warning that democracy is "more at risk in 2024" and that the former president and his allies are out to "destroy" democratic institutions. The president was using a trio of fundraisers to caution against what might happen should his predecessor again claim control of the White House, noting that Trump has described himself as his supporters' "retribution" and has vowed to root out "vermin" in

"We've got to get it done, not because of me. ... If Trump wasn't running I'm not sure I'd be running. We cannot let him win," Biden said, hitting the last words slowly for empha-

Biden's forceful rhetoric came as Trump, the current GOP front-runner, who tried to overturn the 2020 election he lost and is facing criminal charges connected to those efforts, attempted over the weekend to turn the tables by calling Biden the "destroyer of American democracy."

Trump on Tuesday was asked by Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity to promise he 'would never abuse power as

retribution against anybody." "Except for day one," Trump responded. "I want to close the border and I want to

"After that I'm not a dictator," Trump added.

drill, drill, drill."

Biden, who said he is not alone in sounding the alarm over Trump, noted that Trump is the "only losing candidate" in US history to not accept the results.

Biden also said that on Jan. 6, 2021, as Trump supporters violently stormed the US Capitol in a failed attempt to stop the certification of the election results, Trump sat in his dining room just off the Oval Office, "watching them threaten his own vice presi-

Trump declines to rule out abusing power to seek retribution if he returns to WH

New York (AP): Former President Donald Trump declined to rule out abusing power if he returns to the White House after Fox News Channel host Sean Hannity asked him Tuesday to respond to growing Democratic criticism of his rhetoric.

The GOP presidential front-runner has talked about targeting his rivals — referring to them as "vermin" and vowed to seek retribution if he wins a second term for what he argues are politically motivated prosecutions against him. As Trump has dominated the Republican presidential primary, President Joe Biden has stepped up his own warnings, contending Trump is "determined to destroy American democracv."

"Under no circumstances, you are promising America tonight, you would never abuse power as retribution against anybody?" Hannity asked Trump in the interview taped in Davenport, Iowa.

"Except for day one," Trump responded. "I want to close the border and I want to drill, drill, drill." Trump then repeated his assertion. "I love this guy," he said of the Fox News host. "He says, You're not going to be a dictator, are you?' I said: 'No, no, no, other than day one. We're closing the border and we're drilling, drilling, drilling. After that, I'm not a dictator." Earlier in the interview, Hannity had asked Trump if he "in any way" had "any plans whatsoever, if reelected president, to abuse power, to break the law to use the government to go after people."

Ex-UK PM Johnson says 'sorry' for **COVID** pain & loss



PTI ■ LONDON

 $\begin{array}{c} B \text{ ritain's former prime minister Boris Johnson on} \\ \text{Wednesday said he is "deeply} \end{array}$ sorry" for the pain and the loss caused by COVID-19 as he gave his evidence to the ongoing official public inquiry into the government's handling of the pandemic which hit the country in early 2020.

Johnson, who was in charge as the prime minister of the day, admitted he should have "twigged" the widespread health impact of coronavirus but insisted he had to take "very, very difficult decisions" as the crisis was fast unfolding. Inquiry chair Baroness Heather Hallett, who has been hearing evidence in London since June, had to get a protester removed from the room as they held up a poster reading: "The dead can't hear your apologies".

"I am deeply sorry for the pain and the loss and the suffering of those victims and their families," said Johnson, after swearing on the 'Bible' for his evidence.

"I do hope that this inquiry will help to get the answers to the very difficult questions that those victims and those families are rightly asking so that we can protect ourselves better, help each other to protect ourselves better and prevent further suffering," he said.

The former PM was reminded by barrister Hugo Keith of the more than 230,000 diplomats agree to build on recent progress in ties **Beijing (AP):** The top US and

Chinese diplomats agreed on Wednesday to keep building on recent progress in bilateral ties and work together to keep the Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza from spreading. Both Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken referred in a telephone call to last month's closely watched meeting between the two countries' leaders in San Francisco following years of frigid ties. The important task for

both sides at present is to continue the positive impact of the San Francisco meeting, implement the consensus reached by the two heads of state, and consolidate the momentum of stabilising Sino-US relations, Wang said, according to China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Blinken also emphasised that the two sides should build on progress at the summit, according to the US State Department. President Joe Biden and President Xi Jinping agreed at their meeting to keep channels of communication open and resume military-tomilitary talks. Yet, major political differences between the countries remain far from

Wang and Blinken also discussed the Israel-Hamas war, where China has been trying to play a role in negotiations, and agreed to maintain communications on the situation. Last Wednesday, China presented a four-point peace plan to the United Nations on ending the conflict, although the plan lacked detail. Blinken also raised recent attacks on shipping vessels in the Red Sea by Yemen's Houthi rebels, an escalation in a series of maritime attacks in the Mideast linked to the Gaza war, and said it was important to keep the

conflict from spreading. Wang said any solution to the crisis in Gaza requires a two-state arrangement that reflects the will of the Palestinian people.

Top US, Chinese COP28 secures USD 83 bn in climate pledges

The first week of the COP28 cluded with a significant milestone with the operationalisation of the Loss and Damage Fund, pledges of over USD 83 billion and the draft text for Global Stocktake mentioning phasing out of all fossil fuels for the first time in years. However, even as over USD 83 billion was mobilised

in pledges questions persist about the voluntary nature of these commitments and the actual fulfilment by the participating nations.

Amidst the discussions, the issue of fossil fuels emerged as a focal point, with a new draft text of the Global Stocktake proposing options for the phase-out of unabated coal and an orderly and just transition away from fossil fuels which might be a contentious point for India. India has repeatedly stressed that



phasing out or phasing down coal language is something that it can't support.

India even skipped signing the pledge to commit to tripling the global renewable energy capacity by 2030 over this.

Over the reduction of greenhouse gases, India also refrained from signing the COP28 Declaration on Climate and Health.

The Global Stocktake, released on Tuesday, represented the first periodic review mented multilateralism of

of global efforts to limit temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. India, representing the BASIC bloc, played a prominent role in advocating for

accountability. The nation emphasised the necessity for the Global Stocktake to consider the failures of developed nations.

Delegates from the BASIC grouping, comprising Brazil, South Africa, India, and China, voiced concerns about the frag-

developed nations during preliminary negotiations, sources

substantive negotiations, the first week of COP28 witnessed a flurry of pledges.

An analysis by independent science-based assessment Climate Tracker revealed historic declarations on food systems transformation, health, renewable energy, and effi-ciency, along with initiatives to decarbonise heavy-emitting industries.

Key pledges and declarations included a groundbreaking agreement to operationalise and capitalise funding for Loss and Damage, with an impressive USD 726 million already pledged.

Additionally, efforts were made to replenish the Green Climate Fund (GCF) with USD 3.5 billion, bringing the total to USD 12.8 billion.

Contributions of USD 133.6 million to the Adaptation

The UAE further committed USD 200 million to help vulnerable countries through Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and USD 150 million to fund water security solutions. International financial

Fund were also announced.

Fund, USD 129.3 million to the Least Developed Countries

Fund, and USD 31 million to

institutions joined the effort, with the World Bank announcing an annual increase of USD 9 billion for 2024 and 2025 to finance climate-related projects. Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) collectively pledged over USD 22.6 billion toward climate action.

As COP28 transitions into its second week, anticipation builds for increased progress in substantive negotiations, with the hope that the momentum generated by substantial financial pledges will translate into meaningful actions to address the global climate crisis.

Bodies of 6 crew lost in Osprey crash recovered

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Air Force Special Operations Command said on Tuesday it has recovered the remains of six of the eight service members who were lost when their Osprey crashed off the coast of Japan last week, adding it is now focused on recovering the two bodies still missing and the aircraft debris. The CV-22B Osprey crashed on November 29 during a training mission. Ospreys have had a number of crashes, including in Japan, where they are used at US and Japanese military bases, and the latest has rekindled safety concerns.

Three bodies were recovered from the sunken wreckage, and a total of six of the eight crew members' remains that had been located have now been recovered, the Air Force said. The search continues for the remains of the two crew members still unaccounted for, it added. "The depth of sorrow is immeasurable," Lt. Gen. Tony Bauernfeind, who heads Air Force Special Operations Command, said in a statement announcing the names of the crew. "The honorable service of these eight airmen to this great nation will never be forgotten, as they are now among the giants who shape our his-President Joe Biden said he and first

lady Jill Biden were heartbroken by the loss. "We owe them everything," Biden said in a statement. "Jill and I are praying for the families and friends who lost a loved one in this terrible accident."

LOST CREW MEMBERS WERE:

US Air Force Maj. Jeffrey T. Hoernemann, 32, of Andover, Minnesota, was a CV-22 instructor pilot and officer in charge of training, assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. US Air Force Maj. Eric V. Spendlove, 36, of St. George, Utah, was a residency trained flight surgeon and medical operations flight commander assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan.

US Air Force Maj. Luke A. Unrath, 34, of Riverside, California, was a CV-22 pilot and flight commander assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan.

US Air Force Capt. Terrell K. Brayman, 32, of Pittsford, New York, was a CV-22 pilot and flight commander assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base,

US Air Force Tech. Sgt. Zachary E. Lavoy, 33, of Oviedo, Florida, was a medical operations flight chief assigned to the 1st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Kadena Air Base, Japan.

US Air Force Staff Sgt. Jake M. Turnage, 25, of Kennesaw, Georgia, was a flight engineer assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. US Air Force Senior Airman Brian

K. Johnson, 32, of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, was a flight engineer assigned to the 21st Special Operations Squadron, 353rd Special Operations Wing, Yokota Air Base, Japan. US Air Force Staff Sgt. Jacob "Jake" M. Galliher, 24, was a native of Pittsfield, Mass. His remains were the first to be found. Prime Minister Fumio Kishida sent a message

to Biden, offering his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who were lost and to the American people and his thanks for their dedication away from home for the peace and stability of Japan and the region.

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. The cause of the crash is under investigation.

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 Tokyo, Defence Ministry Press Secretary Akira Mogi said Tuesday that deployment of Ospreys is key to a defence buildup in southwestern Japan due to current regional security concerns but acknowledged the need to address the residents safety worries rekindled by the crash.

Putin visits Saudi & UAE as | Court rejects Imran's plea to withdraw Ukraine war grinds on

Russian President Vladimir Putin began a trip on Wednesday to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, hoping to shore up support in the Mideast from two major oil producers allied to the US as his war on Ukraine grinds on. Putin landed in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the Emirates, a federation of seven sheikhdoms now hosting the United Nations' COP28 climate talks. It marked his first trip to the region from before the coronavirus pandemic and the war and as he faces an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court over the war in

Neither Saudi Arabia nor the UAE has signed the ICC founding treaty, meaning they don't face any obligation to detain Putin over the warrant accusing him of being personally responsible for the abductions of children from Ukraine during his war on the country. Putin skipped a summit in South Africa over concerns he could be arrested on arrival

Sheikh Abdullah bin Zaved Al Nahyan, the UAE's foreign minister, met a smiling Putin after he bounded down the stairs of his presidential plane. As he arrived at Abu Dhabi's Qasr al-Watan palace to meet Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the country's ruler, the UAE's military acrobatics team flew in formation with red, white and blue smoke trailing them in the colours of the Russian flag.

Soldiers on horseback and with camels lined his arrival route, Russian and Emirati flags also hanging from light-

The pageantry in the Emirates, which relies on America as its major security partner, highlights the UAE's expansive business ties to Russia that have exploded in the time since grinding Western sanctions have targeted Moscow.

Ukrainians on hand for the event expressed outrage over Putin being in the country at



United Arab Emirates Foreign Minister Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, right, greets Russian President Vladimir Putin upon his arrival at an international airport in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday

the same time they described him as committing environmental crimes in their country.

"It is extremely upsetting to see how the world treats war criminals, because that's what he is, in my opinion," said Marharyta Bohdanova, a worker at the Ukrainian pavilion at the United Nations COP28 climate summit in Dubai, wiping away tears. "Seeing how people let people like him in the big events, ... treating him like a dear guest, is just so hypocritical in my opinion."

Officials at Russia's pavilion at the talks declined to speak to The Associated Press.

Putin last visited the UAE in 2019, receiving a warm welfrom Mohammed, then the crown prince of Abu Dhabi. In the time since, however, the world has greatly changed.

The Russian president isolated himself during the coronavirus pandemic. He launched an invasion targeting Ukraine in February 2022, a grinding war that continues on today and has been a topic for Ukrainian diplomats at the COP28 talks.

Meanwhile, the Israel-Hamas war remains a major

"If we as the world accept

the Taliban's (80+) edicts on

girls and women, we are send-

ing a message everywhere that

they are less human. That their

rights are up for debate. That

we are willing to look away," she

said. Yousafzai, the youngest

Nobel laureate, said apartheid

was more than just a descrip-

Africans fought for racial

apartheid to be recognised and

criminalised at the international level. In the process, they

drew more of the world's atten-

tion to the horrors of apartheid.

By defining systemic oppres-

sion in legal terms, they named

it and made it easier to enlist allies against it," she said.

not been explicitly codified

yet, so Yousafzai called on

every government in every

country to make gender

apartheid a crime against

to do that right now. The UN

is currently drafting and debat-

ing a new Crimes Against

Humanity treaty. This is the

moment for world leaders to

stand with Afghan girls and

women. Adding and adapting

language on gender apartheid

to the treaty will codify it

under international law,"

Yousafzai said, adding that

South Africa could play an

important role in the process.

seem disconnected from every-

day life and human suffering,

but the international law is not

an obstruction - it is a practi-

cal tool," she said. She said this

would hold the Taliban to

account and render anyone who helps them legally com-

plicit."As we saw with South

Africa, it can spur and

strengthen collective action.

Codification will stop gender

apartheid from happening else-

where. Human rights activists

have a big role to play in build-

ing public pressure (to achieve

" Yousafzai said.

This legal approach might

'We have an opportunity

humanity.

But gender apartheid has

"It is a legal concept. South

concern for the Mideast, particularly the UAE, which reached a diplomatic recognition with Israel in 2020. Recent attacks by Yemen's Iranianbacked Houthi rebels also threatens commercial shipping in the Red Sea as Iran's nuclear program continues it rapid

the 2016 nuclear deal. Putin is scheduled to meet with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Thursday for what Ushakov has described as "a rather lengthy conversation." The two countries have been discussing ways to get around the Western sanctions targeting

advances since the collapse of

Putin will travel onto Saudi Arabia and meet with powerful Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the one-day trip, Ushakov said. Those discussions likely will focus on Moscow's other major concern in the Middle East — oil.

Russia is part of OPEC+, which is a group of cartel members and other nations that have managed production to try and boost crude oil prices. Last week, the group expanded some output cuts into next year and brought up-and-coming oil supplier Brazil

into the fold. Benchmark Brent crude traded Wednesday around USD 77 a barrel, down from nearly USD 100 in September, over concerns about a weakening economy worldwide.

The visit comes after COP28 saw a parade of Western leaders including US Vice President Kamala Harris, French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and others backing Ukraine speak at the summit. So did Belarusian President Aleksandr Lukashenko, long a Putin ally.

A readout on Putin's trip from the state-run Tass news agency published early Wednesday offered no suggestion Putin might come to the COP28 site, instead quoting Russian presidential aide Yury Ushakov saying he'd land and have a "meeting at the palace" and one-on-one talks with Sheikh Mohammed. Still, some reports suggest Putin could make an appearance at the climate talks.

The UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change's spokesperson Alexander Saier said at a press conference that he is "not aware that Mr. Putin will come to the conference, but I would also need to check the host country with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs." He declined to immediately answer whether UN police would be obligated to make an arrest.

The Emirati organisation committee for COP28 referred questions to the UAE's Foreign Ministry, which did not immediately respond. The UAE repeatedly feted the nowdeposed Sudanese leader Omar al-Bashir in the past despite an ICC warrant seeking his arrest over charges of genocide and crimes against humanity in

I'm talking about his crimes and this person is liter-ally right now here, some-where near me," said Alina Abramenko, another worker at the Ukrainian pavilion that highlights the environmental damage wrought by the war. "You know, it's really strange."

appeal against disqualification

TOSHAKHANA CORRUPTION CASE

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani high court on Wednesday rejected former premier Imran Khan's plea to withdraw his appeal Pakistani high court on against his disqualification in the Toshakhana corruption case, on a day when the election watchdog announced to conduct an in-prison hearing of a contempt case against

Khan, 71, has been in jail since August 5, when he was arrested after a conviction in the Toshakhana case. He was disqualified by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on October 21 in the case for failing to disclose the proceeds from the sale of gifts he got from the Toshakhana (state repository).

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party leader approached the Islamabad

decision, contending that he had purchased the assets legally; hence, there was no reason for him not to mention the gifts in his assets statement.

However, on January 18, the PTI filed a fresh plea in the IHC to withdraw the petition, saying the cricketer-turnedpolitician wanted the Lahore High Court (LHC) to hear the matter. A separate petition had been filed in the LHC against Khan's disqualification. A division bench of the IHC comprising Chief Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri announced the verdict, which was reserved on September 13, rejecting Khan's request to withdraw his petition against disqualification in the case.

In a written order, the IHC said the top election body had partially addressed argu-High Court Chief (IHC) ments in the case and sought

"In the interest of justice, an opportunity is allowed to the respondent to address arguments. On the next date of hearing, if the arguments are not addressed by the respondent, the matter shall be decided on the basis of available record," it stated and adjourned the hearing till December 11.

Separately, the top election body decided to conduct the contempt case proceedings against the former premier on December 13 at the high-security Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where he is currently incarcerated. The decision was made

after the Interior Ministry refused to produce Khan before the commission during the last hearing due to security concerns. Khan survived an November 2022. The ministry also urged for an in-prison trial, and the ECP, after hearing arguments, reserved its decision on the issue on

ECP to hold contempt case proceedings against ex-Pak PM Islamabad: Pakistan's election

commission on Wednesday decided that contempt case proceedings against former prime minister Imran Khan and his party colleague Fawad Chaudhry will take place on December 13 at the highsecurity Adiala jail.

Khan, the 71-year-old founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaaf (PTI) party, and Chaudhry are both currently incarcerated in multiple cases at the Adiala jail in Rawalpindi.

Khan has been in jail since August 5 when he was arrested after a conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had also disqualified him in the same case for failing to disclose the proceeds from the sale of gifts he got from the state repository.

The decision to hold the

trial inside the jail from December 13 comes a day after the ECP reserved its verdict on a petition that was filed to remove Khan as the head of his PTI party due to his conviction in the Toshakhana corruption

On Wednesday, the Dawn newspaper said, "The ECP issued its verdict in light of the Interior Ministry's denial to produce the former premier before the Commission during the last hearing, citing security concerns." Subsequently, on November 30, the ECP reserved a verdict and suggested the possibility of holding Khan's trial in the Adiala jail. Last year, the ECP had initiated contempt proceedings against the PTI chief, former party leader Asad Umar, and Chaudhry, the former information minister, for allegedly using "intemperate" language against the chief election com-

missioner, the Dawn said. PTI

Mount Marapi eruption: More bodies found, raising toll to 23 Marapi has stayed at the

Rescuers searching the haz-ardous slopes of Indonesia's Mount Marapi volcano found the last body of climbers who were caught by a surprise weekend eruption, raising the num-ber of confirmed dead to 23, officials said Wednesday. About 75 climbers started their way up the nearly 2,900-metre mountain in Agam district of West Sumatra province on Saturday and became stranded.

Some 52 climbers were rescued after the initial eruption Sunday, and 11 others were initially confirmed dead. New eruptions on Monday and Tuesday spewed more hot ash as high as 800 metres into the air, reducing visibility and temporarily halting search and recovery operations, said Abdul Malik, chief of the Padang Search and Rescue Agency.

The bodies of two climbers

were located on Monday and nine more on Tuesday, the National Search and Rescue Agency said.

West Sumatra's Police Chief Suharyono said the body of the last climber was found early Wednesday, just a few metres from the eruption site, bringing the death toll rise to 23.

The rescuers contended with bad weather and difficult terrain, along with winds that brought heat from the eruptions, while distraught relatives gathered at a relief post command in Batu Palano on the mountain slope, hoping for news of missing family members. Twenty bodies had been taken to a hospital for identification by Wednesday morning, as more than 300 rescuers, including police and soldiers, struggled to bring the others down the mountain and search for the missing climber, said Suharyono who goes by a single name like many Indonesians. third highest of four alert levels since 2011, indicating above-normal volcanic activity under which climbers and villagers must stay more than 3 kilometres from the peak, according to Indonesia's Center for Volcanology and Geological Disaster Mitigation. Officially, climbers were only

allowed below the danger zone and had to register at two command posts or online. However, local officials acknowledge that many people may have climbed higher than permitted. Marapi spewed thick

columns of ash as high as 3,000 metres in Sunday's eruption and hot ash clouds spread for several kilometers. Nearby villages and towns were blanketed by tons of volcanic debris that blocked sunlight, and authorities recommended that people wear masks to protect themselves from the

Malala calls for making 'gender apartheid' crime against humanity

PTI ■ JOHANNESBURG

ikening the restrictions Limposed by the Taliban on women in Afghanistan to the treatment of Black people under apartheid in South Africa, Nobel Laureate Malala Yousafzai has urged the international community to make "gender apartheid" a crime against humanity.

Yousafzai, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 when she was 17 for her fight for girls' education in Pakistan, was the speaker at the 21st edition of the annual Nelson Mandela Lecture here on Tuesday. At the event, international thought leaders share their views each year on the death anniversary of the global icon who became South Africa's first democraticallyelected president after serving 27 years as a political prisoner under the white minority apartheid government.

"The theme for this year is 'Leading for a just future," said the chairperson of the Nelson Mandela Foundation Board, Prof Njabulo Ndebele.

In her address, Yousafzai, now 26, said that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was enforcing "gender apartheid" by denying girls and women the right to education and work. In the same way that whites in South Africa believed that it was in the natural order of things to separate Blacks, in Afghanistan, the Taliban say that oppressing girls and women is a matter of religion, she said. "So let me say this as plainly as possible - that is only an excuse but it is also not true." Yousafzai, who miraculously survived an assassination attempt by the Pakistani Taliban in October 2012, said.

Many Muslim scholars, including those from Afghanistan, have made clear that Islam does not condone denying girls and women the right to education and to work, she said.

Amrita Sher-Gil's Lahore residence to turn into museum

Lahore (PTI): Hungary plans to turn Hungarian-Indian painter Mansions on The Mall here into a museum, a top diplomat of the country said as several art lovers and intellectuals gathered for the unveiling of a commemorative plaque and an exhibition to pay homage to the celebrated artist.

In connection with her 82nd death anniversary on Tuesday, the Hungarian embassy in collaboration with the Punjab University College of Art and Design held a ceremony to install a commemorative plaque at her residence here in the capital of Pakistan's Punjab province and an exhibition to pay homage to her.

The recreated works by 13 university artists were on display at the exhibition. They recreated the artworks of Amrita Sher-Gil with the amalgamation of their ideas to pay homage to the distinguished artist.

Iran sends capsule capable of carrying animals into orbit

Tehran (AP): Iran said on Wednesday it sent a capsule into orbit capable of carrying animals as it prepares for human missions in coming years. A report by the official IRNA news agency quoted Telecommunications Minister Isa Zarepour as saying the capsule was launched 130 kilometres into orbit.Zarepour said the launch of the 500-kilogram (1,000-pound) capsule is aimed at sending Iranian astronauts to space in coming years. He did not say if any animals were in the capsule.

He told state TV that Iran plans to send astronauts into space by 2029 after further tests involving animals.State TV showed footage of a rocket named Salman carrying the capsule.Iran occasionally announces successful launches of satellites and other space crafts. In September, Iran said it sent a data-collecting satellite into space. In 2013, Iran said it sent a monkey into space and returned it successfully.

Reports said the country's Defense Ministry built and launched the Salman rocket while the capsule was built by the Iranian civil space agency. Media reports did not say where the launch took place. Iran usually makes launches from Imam Khomenei Space Centre in northern Semnan province. It says its satellite program is for scientific research and other civilian applications. The US and other Western countries have long been suspicious of the program because the same technology can be used to develop long-range



This photo released by the Iranian Defense Ministry on Wednesday claims to show a rocket with a capsule carrying animals is launched from an undisclosed location into orbit, Iran. Iran said Wednesday it sent a capsule into orbit carrying animals as it prepares for human missions in coming years.

Taliban's abusive education policies harm boys as well as girls in Af

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

rhe Taliban's "abusive" edu-L cational policies are harming boys as well as girls in Afghanistan, according to a Human Rights Watch report published Wednesday. The Taliban have been globally condemned for banning girls and women from secondary school and university, but the rights group says there has been less attention to the deep harm inflicted on boys' education.

The departure of qualified teachers including women, regressive curriculum changes and the increase in corporal punishment have led to greater fear of going to school and falling attendance.

Because the Taliban have dismissed all female teachers from boys' schools, many boys are taught by unqualified people or sit in classrooms with no teachers at all.

rights group about a spike in the use of corporal punishment, including officials beating boys before the whole school for haircut or clothing infractions or for having a mobile phone. The group interviewed 22 boys along with five parents in Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Bamiyan and other communities in eight provinces. The Taliban have eliminated subjects like art. sports, English and civic edu-

"The Taliban are causing irreversible damage to the Afghan education system for boys as well as girls," said Sahar Fetrat, who wrote the report. "By harming the whole school system in the country, they risk creating a lost generation deprived of a quality education?

Students told Human Rights Watch that there are

Boys and parents told the hours during the school day when there are no lessons because there is a lack of replacement teachers. So they said they do nothing.

Taliban government spokesmen were not available for comment on the report. The Taliban are prioritizing Islamic knowledge over basic literacy and numeracy with their shift toward madrassas, or religious schools.

The Taliban have barred women from most areas of public life and work and stopped girls from going to school beyond the sixth grade as part of harsh measures they imposed after taking power in 2021. According to the UN children's agency, more than 1 million girls are affected by the ban, though it estimates 5 million were out of school before the Taliban takeover due to a lack of facilities and other reaPUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

My Client Sh. Dharmendra Seth S/o Sh. Brij Lal Seth is the owner of House No. 293/B Consisting of Ground Floor and First Floor Street No. 16 Measuring 125.41 Sq. Mtrs. Karkardooma Exth. Delhi-11092 Vide Registered Sale Deed Regd. No.159 Dated-31.01.2022 SR-IV-B Delhi Executed by Sh. Mohit Arya S/o Sh. Sudarshan Kumar Arya. This above-mentioned property is going to be Mortgage with Fed Bank Financial Institution having any claim/right, Lien. Any Objection Whatsoever in regard to Above Property, Should notified to the undersigned/Adv. Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi-110082 along with documentary evidence under Vishal Mehan, E-713, Karkardooma Court, Delhi 110092 along with documentary evidence unde address through registered a/d within 14 days from the date of publication of this notice failing which any claim, lien or objection shall be deeme

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RTP-142/23

Markets scale fresh lifetime highs

20,855.10

auity benchmarks Sensex and Nifty rallied for the seventh straight session to hit fresh lifetime highs on Wednesday, driven by gains in index majors Reliance Industries, ITC and L&T amid persistent foreign fund inflows.

Besides, receding crude oil prices in international markets also boosted sentiment, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex surged 357.59 points, or 0.52 per cent, to settle at a new record of 69,653.73. The barometer rose to 69,744.62 during

The broader index Nifty also climbed 82.60 points, or 0.40 per cent, to hit its fresh peak of 20,937.70. "Post-state elections, market optimism thrives, confirming policy continuity and meeting investor expectations. A robust FII reversal is fuelled by receding inflation and dropping yields in US and Indian

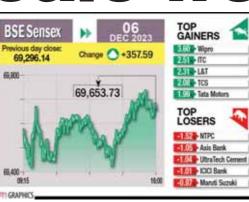
markets. The allure of Indian market gains post-China credit rating downgrade and decline in oil prices was followed by ease in geopolitical tensions," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geoiit Financial Services As many as 20 shares of the BSE benchmark index closed the session with gains, while 30 stocks in the Nifty ended in positive territory.

he pioneer

Among major Sensex movers, Wipro closed with the maximum gain of 3.85 per cent, followed by ITC -- 2.51 per cent higher. L&T and TCS gained 2.31 per cent and 2.13 per cent, respectively. Tata Motors, Nestle India, Infosys and Bajaj Finance were other gainers.

On the other hand, NTPC, Axis Bank, UltraTech Cement and ICICI Bank ended the session with a loss of up to 1.58 per cent.

In the broader market, the BSE large cap index rose 0.61 per cent, the midcap gauge gained 0.19 per cent, and smallcap advanced by 0.18 per cent.



"Further, lingering El Nino risks, a drop in reservoir levels, and reduced sowing may hold RBI to profoundly upgrade H2 FY24 growth and reduce future inflation estimates." Among sectoral indices, utilities surged 3 per cent, followed by power (2.41 per cent). While oil & gas jumped 1.96 per cent, the IT index

went up 1.48 per cent, capital goods advanced by 1.25 per cent, and teck rose by 1.18 per cent. In contrast, healthcare declined by

TOP LOSERS

Cipla

Adani Enterpris

Eicher Motors

slipped 0.58 per cent and bankex fell 0.50 per cent Analysts said the sustained equity

0.64 per cent, telecommunications

buying by foreign institutional

US bond yields, while the domestic players were betting big on favourable macroeconomic data and expectations of longer political stability in the country.
Besides, investors are also expecting the Reserve Bank to maintain the

investors was attributed to declining

status quo on the interest rate in its bi-monthly monetary policy decision to be announced on Friday, they

Foreign institutional investors pur-chased shares worth Rs 5,223.51 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, in Asian markets, Hang Seng and Nikkei 225 finished with gains of 0.90 per cent and 2.04 per cent, respectively, while China's Shanghai Composite lost 0.11 per

European markets were broadly higher, led by France's CAC 40, rising 1.08 per cent. London's FTSE 100 gained 0.29 per cent, and Germany's

The US markets ended on a mixed note on Tuesday, with the S&P 500 registering a marginal loss of 0.06 per

On Wednesday, global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.31 per cent lower to USD 76.96 a bar-

"The bearish formation around the crucial resistance of 21,000 (Nifty) amplifies the bearish sentiment. The support lies at 20,850, below which the market may witness a healthy correction in the short term. On the other hand, a move above 21,000 might trigger a resumption of the bullish trend," Rupak De, Senior Technical analyst at LKP Securities,

On Tuesday, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 431.02 points, or 0.63 per cent, to close at a record high of 69,296.14. Nifty also climbed 168.50 points, or 0.81 per cent to hit its lifetime peak of 20,855.30.

RBI MPC meet begins amid expectations of status quo on interest rate

"A strong rebound in IT, driven by

reduced US recession risks and in

anticipation of robust summer

demand, fuels the momentum in the

However, he cautioned that short-

term profit booking may occur due

to domestic premium valuation con-

power sector," Nair said.

PTI MUMBAI

The RBI's high-powered rate setting panel on Wednesday began its 3-day brainstorming on the next set of bi-monthly monetary policy amid expectation of continued pause on the short-term key lending rate as GDP growth is gaining momentum, and inflation manageable. RBI left the benchmark policy rate (repo) unchanged in its past four bi-monthly monetary policies. It had last increased the repo rate in February to 6.5 per cent, thus ending the interest rate hike cycle which began in May 2022 in the aftermath of Russia-Ukraine war and subsequent disruptions in the global supply chain resulting in high inflation

in the country. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das would unveil the decision of the six-member MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) December 8

On expectations from the MPC, Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist at ICRA said with the GDP data for the second quarter of 2023-24 appreciably higher than the MPC's last forecast, and continuing concerns on various aspects of food inflation, "we expect the MPC to pause in its December 2023 review, amidst a fairly hawkish tone of the policy doc-

According to Deutsche Bank Research, RBI will likely increase 2023-24 GDP forecast to 6.8 per cent year-on-year, from 6.5 per cent earlier, while holding the CPI forecast unchanged at 5.4

per cent.
"RBI will likely keep repo rate and stance unchanged, persist with tight liquidity and ensure that short-term rates remain around 6.85-6.90 per cent, resulting in an 'effective rate India retained the tag of the

world's fastest-growing major



economy, with its GDP expanding by a faster-than-expected rate of 7.6 per cent in the September quarter on booster shots from government spending and manufacturing.
Director of Medical Technology

Association of India (MTaI Sanjay Bhutani, said the central bank's recent MPC meetings have kept the policy rate unchanged, aligning with mar-

 $T^{\text{he airline industry is project-}}_{\text{ed to register a net profit of USD 25.7 billion in 2024 as more}$

normal growth is expected in

ket expectations.

"We anticipate a similar outcome for this upcoming meeting. However, with inflation on a downward trend, an easing of interest rates could be on the cards, potentially occurring as early as February-March 2024," he said, and added this would be a positive development for all sectors, particularly capital and research-intensive industries like

billion net profit in 2024'

the medical technology sector. The government has mandated the central government to ensure that the retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) stays at 4 per cent, with a margin of 2 per cent on either side

Retail inflation eased to a four-month low of 4.87 per cent in October, mainly due to cooling prices of food items. The Reserve Bank's MPC, in its October meeting, projected CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023-24, a moderation from 6.7 per cent in 2022-23.

H S Bhatia, Managing Director of Kelwon Electronics and Appliances, manufacturing partner for Daewoo India, said RBI's monetary policy decisions will have a significant impact on the consumer durable industry.

The industry is hoping that RBI will keep interest rates stable or even reduce them slightly in the upcoming review so that consumers get enough purchasing power," he said.

Parijat Agrawal, Head - Fixed Union Income. Management Company said the US 10-year bond has corrected meaningfully from the peak in line with the incoming data and the central bank narrative, and concerns around oil prices too have reduced.

"Although MPC will emphasise on bringing inflation to the 4 per cent target, we expect MPC to remain on pause on rates and stance," Agrawal said.

The MPC comprises three external members and three officials

The external members on the panel are Shashanka Bhide, Ashima Goval, and Javanth R Varma. Besides Governor Das, the other RBI officials in MPC are Rajiv Ranjan (Executive Director) and Michael Debabrata Patra (Deputy

1,14,902 entities as startups recognised

The government has recognised 1,14,902 entities as startups as on October 31, Parliament was informed on Wednesday These eligible firms are allowed

to seek fiscal incentives under the Startup India Action Plan, which was launched in January 2016, and that includes income tax exemption for three years. Replying to a question in the Lok Sabha, Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal said the action plan includes 19 items spanning across areas such as simplification and handholding, funding support and incentives and industry-academia partnership and incubation.

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) "has recognised 1,14,902 entities as startups as on 31st October 2023," he said.

Replying to a separate question, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel said subdued demand in major export destinations such as the US, Hong Kong, the Middle East materials at competitive rates were some of the challenges faced by the gems and jewellery export industry.

Export of gem and jewellery during 2022-23 was at USD 38.11 billion, a decline of 2.95 per cent compared to the previous year's export of USD 39.27 billion, she informed.

The sector constituted 8.45 per cent in the total merchandise exports during 2022-23 and the industry employs around 5 mil-

lion skilled and semi-skilled workforce. In another reply, she said that to

ensure goods imported are not of substandard quality, the cus-toms authority follows a riskbased framework to intelligently prevent entry of non-compliant goods at the borders.

"A task force has also been constituted in CBIC (Central Board Of Indirect Taxes and Customs) for enforcing national standards," Patel said.

She added that as far as imported goods such as TVs and tyre, are concerned, the trade data indicates that there are several categories of import of such products where there has been considerable reduction in imports.

Citing certain examples, she provided data that showed imports of different size of TV sets, liquid crystal display television set, and different kinds of tyres declined during April-October this fiscal.

Imports of television sets of screen size exceeding 54 cm but not exceeding 68 cm dipped to USD 0.02 million during April-0.25 million in 2021-22.

Similarly, imports of radial tyres used in buses/lorries declined to USD 1.01 million during the seven-month period of this fis-cal as against USD USD 16.92 million in 2021-22.

The Department of Commerce has been regularly monitoring and sensitizing line ministries and other stakeholders from time to time and at various levels on the issue of imports," she

About 33,000 notices sent by CBIC officers for discrepancies in GST returns filed in FY18, FY19

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pentral tax officers have sent ⊿around 33,000 GST notices to businesses for discrepancies in returns filed and short payment of taxes in 2017-18 and 2018-19 financial years, a CBIC official said on Wednesday. The National Co-ordination

Committee of the State and Central GST officers, chaired by the Revenue Secretary, is likely to be held by the end of this month or early January, which among other things would also sensitise tax officers regarding issuance of notices, the official Speaking at the Assocham

National Conference on GST Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Member-GST Shashank Priya said the notices sent for 2017-18 and 2018-19 were a "small percentage" of the total returns filed for the two fiscal years He said the bunching up of

demand notices was also on account of extension in the deadline given to taxpayers for filing annual returns for the two years. Goods and Services Tax (GST) was rolled out on July 1,

The last date for filing annual returns for 2017-18 fiscal was extended till February 7, 2020, while for 2018-19 it was till December 2020

Under the GST law, every registered person is liable to file annual return for every financial year on or before December 31 of the next financial year. Accordingly, the last date of filing annual return for 2022-23 fiscal is December 31, 2023.

"At the request of the taxpayers the time for return filing was postponed. So returns also were filed at a late juncture and officers have come under a lot of pressure (to scrutinise the returns). So this has led to this unfortunate situation. One hopes that as we progress for-

ward this situation gets addressed and we will not have all the proposed notices pending at the same time. For 2017-18, it has happened like that and we will see how best to deal with it," Priya said.

The Central GST officers have sent around 30,000-33,000 notices to GST registered businesses for short-payment of taxes, he said.

"In our interaction with the field formations, we will try to sensitise them that they should put their officers on alert, they should do a critical scrutiny of details, documents, facts given by the registrants before coming to a conclusion and passing an order. I'm sure, we will take up this issue in the National Coordination Committee meeting so that all tax administra-tions are sensitised," Priya said. These disputes, he said, if are resolved out at the level of adjudicating authority, instead of approaching the GST appellate tribunal, would be a relief both for the tax administration as well as taxpayers.
"We are working on automated

scrutiny module that would give certainty on how scrutiny is to be done and what kind of issues will be looked into return scrutiny," Priya said.

Further, the officer said the GST appellate tribunal would be put in place in the next 4-5 months and efforts are also being made to identify infrastructure, following which selection process of members will

With regard to curbing fake registration under GST, Priya said in many tax administration. about 25-28 per cent of the businesses registered were found to

We are looking at how we further tighten the registration. We are also looking at how we make it less and less open for changing the GSTR-3B (monthly GST payment form)," he said.



ÍATA has more than 300 airlines as members. The airline industry's operating profit is expected to touch USD 49.3 billion in 2024 from USD 40.7 billion this year. In 2024, the total revenue is estimated to grow 7.6 per cent to USD 964 billion compared to

"Some 4.7 billion people are expected to travel in 2024, a his-

The rupee appreciated 5 paise

to close at 83.32 (provision-

al) against the US dollar on

Wednesday, helped by a bullish

trend in domestic equities and

sustained foreign fund inflows

Forex traders said elevated

American currency in the overseas markets and dollar buying

by the Reserve Bank of India

(RBI) capped sharp gains for the

The rupee consolidated in a nar-

row range as investors remained

on the sidelines ahead of the

RBI's monetary policy decision

later this week. At the interbank

foreign exchange market, the

local unit opened at 83.35

The rupee oscillated between an intra-day low of 83.37 and a high

of 83.29 against the greenback and finally settled at 83.32 (pro-

visional) against the dollar, high-

er by 5 paise from its previous

close, even as domestic bench-

mark indices touched new life-

On Tuesday, the rupee settled at 83.37 against the dollar.

'We expect the rupee to trade

with a slight negative bias on

positive tone in the US Dollar

and fresh foreign inflows. A

weak tone in crude oil prices and

positive domestic markets may

"However, the RBI intervention

also support the rupee.

against the greenback.

PTI MUMBAI

local unit.

time peaks.

Rupee rises 5 paise to

close at 83.32 against \$



'Airline industry to record \$25.7

pandemic level of 4.5 billion recorded in 2019," IATA said. Industry passenger load factor is nearing its 2019 level, which is supporting the financial recovery of the airlines, IATA Director Policy and Economics Andrew Matters said.

"The airline industry net profit is expected to reach USD 25.7 billion in 2024 (2.7 per cent net profit margin). That will be a slight improvement over 2023, which is expected to show a

RUPEE vs DOLLAR

may cap the sharp upside.

farm employment change data

Choudhary Research Analyst

The Reserve Bank is likely to

maintain the status quo on the

short-term interest rate in its

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das

headed Monetary Policy

Committee (MPC) is scheduled

to begin its three-day delibera-

tions on December 6. Das will

unveil the decision of the six-

member MPC on December 8

Meanwhile, the dollar index,

which gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six

currencies, was trading 0.07 per

cent lower at 103.97.

monetary policy review.

Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

per cent net profit margin)," IATA said, while releasing its review of 2023 and outlook for 2024 here.

The cargo volume is expected to be higher at 61 million tonnes next year compared to 58 million tonnes in 2023.

"From 2024, the outlook indicates that we can expect more normal growth patterns for both passenger and cargo... While the recovery is impressive, a net profit margin of 2.7 per cent is

Adani Group has plans to invest USD 75 billion on

energy transition initiatives by

2030, its chairman Gautam

The investments will boost the

group's vision to have 45

gigawatt of renewable energy

capacity by 2030, Adani said in

"We are committed to largescale

renewables, developing an

Adani said on Wednesday.

PTI NEW DELHI

a statement.

almost any other industry would accept," IATA Director General Willie Walsh said. According to him, the airlines

far below what investors in

will always compete ferociously for their customers but they remain far too burdened by onerous regulation, fragmentation, high infrastructure costs and a supply chain populated with oligopolies.

IATA said while some of the region's main domestic markets - China, Australia and India -

recovered quickly from the pandemic, international travel to/from the region was subdued as China only eliminated the last of its international travel restrictions in mid-2023.

The Asia Pacific region is expected to report a net loss of USD 0.1 billion in 2023 and have a net profit of USD 1.1 billion in

indigenous fully integrated man-

ufacturing ecosystem and green

hydrogen solutions. At the

Adani portfolio level, a total

investment of USD 75 billion by

2030 on our energy transition

initiatives will further our vision

to have 45 GW renewable ener-

gy capacity by 2030 and strengthen the pivotal role

played by AGEL in India's glide

path to decarbonization," the

The investments will be execut

group chairman said.



ed through Adani Green Energy Limited (AGEL). AGEL has emerged as the second-largest global solar PV developer in the US-based Mercom Capital Group's latest

annual global report.
"The company's outstanding performance and contribution to the renewable energy landscape have earned it the prestigious second rank among the world's foremost solar PV developers," the statement said.



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

to 125.21 MT

Country's coal import has cregistered a drop of five per cent at 125.21 million tonnes (MT) in the April-September period of the ongoing financial year, Parliament was informed on Wednesday. Replying to a question in the Lok

Sabha, coal and power minister

Pralhad Joshi said that, had the production through auction, commercial coal auction not started, then as per compound annual growth rate (CAGR) there would have been a need to import 150 million tonnes (MT) of coal, but the country has actually imported only 125.21 MT of coal during the April-September period of 2023-24. "In the current year 2023-24, coal import up to the month of September 2023, was 125.21 MT, which is a decline of 5 per cent over the corresponding period last year," the minister said.

PNB Housing Finance achieves ₹1,000 Traders may take cues from US ADP Trade balance and noncrore Ioan book under Roshni segment Investors may remain cautious ahead of RBI's monetary policy decision on Friday," said Anuj

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

PNB Housing Finance on Wednesday said its affordable housing segment Roshni has achieved a Rs 1,000 crore loan book in less than a year of its launch

This achievement represents the company's steadfast focus on financial inclusion by offering low ticket-size loans of Rs 5-35 lakh for home buying, plot purchases, construction and renovation, it added. Roshni Home Loans offers

employed, along with new-tocredit applicants. It provides a customer-centric approach, characterised by tailored financial products, innovative tech nology and seamless experiences, to meet the unique needs of individuals seeking affordable housing finance solutions.

on the salaried class and self-

There is a strong demand for affordable housing in the country, owing to the rapid rate of urbanisation, growing younger population, increasing per capiloans to individuals, focusing ta income and higher demand

of housing units beyond the metro cities. We are aligned with the government's mission of housing for all and are committed to fulfilling the homeownership dreams of individuals from all walks of life," said Girish Kousgi, MD and CEO, PNB Housing Finance. PNB Housing Finance recent-

ly inaugurated its 100th Roshni branch, also its first-ever allwomen branch, cementing its position as a leader in the affordable housing category, the lender said in a release.

Junior Hockey World Cup

India needs to guard against complacency against Spain

dheir campaign has started off positively, but India must guard against complacency when they face Spain in their second Pool C match of the FIH junior men's hockey World Cup here on Thursday.

Vice-captain Araijeet Singh Hundal came out to be India's saviour, scoring a hat-trick as India overcame some anxious moments to beat Korea 4-2 in their opener on Tuesday.

But India's coach C R Kumar was not too satisfied with the

performance and said his side needs to be more clinical and avoid conceding unnecessary penalty corners

ne pioneer

India conceded six penalty corners, while earned just two against Korea.
"We are very happy that we got

the three points and that's the positive side. But we have to more clinical in both circles. We conceded two goals in penalty corners which we need to pay attention to," Kumar said after the Korea match.

'We gave away too many penalty corners, six in the whole game where we had just



India are striving to secure their fourth podium finish in the event after having won the tournament twice in 2001 (Hobart) and Lucknow (2016). The country had clinched a silver medal way back in 1997 in Milton Keynes, England.

Skipper Uttam Singh and his deputy Hundal are the only two players who have experience of the big event, having featured in the last edition of the tournament, where India finished fourth in Bhubaneswar, losing to France in the bronze medal

The Spaniards, who have a bronze medal in their kitty at the 2005 edition in Rotterdam, are India's toughest opponent in the pool, comprising Canada as the other side.

But going by form, India will start as favourites against Spain on Thursday.

India's last pool match is against 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

Zealand and Pakistan will be vying for a quarterfinal berth. The top two teams from each pool will qualify for the quarterfinals.

The Indians played an attacking game from the onset on Tuesday and would look to continue in the same vein but their defence will have to be cautious against counterattacks which the Koreans used to great effect to earn penalty

Spain too would be looking to exploit that weakness against

2024 Australian Open

Former champion Wozniacki awarded one of first wild cards

AP ■ MELBOURNE

Former No. 1-ranked Caroline Wozniacki has been awarded one of the first wild cards for the 2024 Australian Open and is planning on bringing her two young children to the scene of her biggest Grand Slam tri-

Wozniacki, the 2018 Australian Open women's champion, and six Australian players were granted the first batch of wild cards.

The 33-year-old Wozniacki returned to top-flight tennis in August after more than three years off the tour. She played in Montreal and Cincinnati before making a run to the fourth round of the US Open, where she lost to eventual champion Coco

"I have so many wonderful memories of Melbourne, and of course winning the Australian Open is an all-time

Sinclair

ends her

23 years

Utop international goal scor-

er among both women and

men, played her final match

with the Canadian national

Sinclair, 40, ended her 23-year

national team career with a 1-

0 victory against Australia on

Tuesday at Vancouver's BC

Place - renamed Christine

Sinclair Place for the occasion.

Sinclair has scored 190 goals

since she made her national

team debut in 2000. Portugal's

Cristiano Ronaldo, the game's

top scorer among men, has

It was Sinclair's 331st appear

ance for Canada, second only in

international soccer to retired

US star Kristine Lilly, who

To see the growth of the game,

see where it's at now, and the

opportunities that are avail-

able, whether it's in the nation-

al team or playing pro. Honestly

I never thought in my career

that this was going to happen. And I just feel fortunate to be a

part of that growth and it's

incredible to experience the

change," she said before the

More than 45,000 fans were on

hand for the game. In addition

to Sinclair, the team also hon-

ored midfielder Sophie

Schmidt, who played in her final game after a 19-year national team career, and former goalkeeper Erin McLeod, who

"Tonight, the world's greatest

goalscorer - Christine Sinclair

is stepping onto the pitch with

Team Canada for the last time

@Sincy 12, thank you for inspir-

ing all of us. Your impact on the

game, and on sports in Canada

is something we'll be celebrat-

ing for quite some time,"

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau posted on social media. When Sinclair was subbed out

in the second half, Schmidt took

her place on the field after an

With Sinclair, Canada won the

gold medal at the Tokyo

Olympics. She won bronze

medals at both the 2012 and

emotional embrace.

2016 Games.

retired in January.

match.

128 international goals.

played in 354 games.

career

AP VANCOUVER

team.

career highlight," Wozniacki, ranked No. 242 this week, told Australian Open organizers

on Wednesday. Wozniacki won her only Grand Slam singles title in Australia a couple of years before she left the sport in early 2020 to start a family. She spent time working as a TV analyst, and now, she and former NBA player David Lee are the parents of two children.

Wozniacki said she planned to travel to the tournament at Melbourne Park with her daughter, Olivia, and her son James. "I can't wait to share it with my family and my kids," she said.

Tournament director Craig Tiley announced in October that three former Australian Open champions - Naomi Osaka, Wozniacki and Angelique Kerber - were set to return to the year's first major following maternity

AP ■ SAO PAULO

There's an old saying in Brazilian soccer: some

things only happen to Botafogo.

The reference to the club's his-

toric lack of luck has never rung

The club of World Cup winning

greats like Mané Garrincha,

Jairzinho and Mário Zagallo

squandered a 13-point lead in

the Brazilian league and now

Palmeiras is very likely to defend its title on Wednesday.

It's the first time a team has lost

such a big advantage in the

South American nation's top

The last round will take place

without any hopes for Botafogo

fans at Internacional but to fin-

ish in fourth position, which

would be enough to secure a

direct spot at the next Copa

Libertadores. The Rio de

Janeiro club is currently fifth.

Botafogo was on the top of the

standings for 31 of 38 rounds,

giving long-suffering support-

ers confidence their club would

lift its first national title since

But now Palmeiras is in a posi-

tion where it doesn't necessar-

ily have to win its last game to

secure another title. Even with

a loss at Cruzeiro, Palmerias can

clinch the league as long as

Atletico Mineiro doesn't erase

Flamengo has a slim title

chance, but that depends on an

even more unlikely combina-

a differential of eight goals.

Arsenal slew of late winners highlights resilience

AP LONDON

They say little should be read into the Community Shield, the traditional curtainraiser to the English soccer sea-

Maybe this year is an exception. Back in early August, Arsenal scored an equalizer through Leandro Trossard in the 101st minute in regulation time and went on to beat Manchester City in a penalty shootout at Wembley Stadium.

Aside from winning a piece of silverware, it was hailed by Arsenal's players as a statement victory - despite the uncompetitive nature of the fixture.
"The mental block is gone,"

goalkeeper Aaron Ramsdale said that day, a reference to his team stumbling late in last season's Premier League title race and finishing behind City. Well, maybe they are right.

And that's not just because Arsenal woke up Wednesday to a five-point lead in the Premier League. It's because of how the team has got there. Scoring late goals - a trait

demonstrating resilience and character - has become the

Botafogo squanders 13-point

lead to lose national league title

norm for Arsenal. Dare it be said, it's a sign of a champion

Just in the first 15 league games of this season, Arsenal has scored in the 96th and 101st minutes to beat Manchester United 3-1; in the 86th minute to beat Man City 1-0; in the 84th minute to draw 2-2 at Chelsea; in the 89th minute to beat Brentford 1-0; and, on Tuesday, in the seventh minute of stoppage time to win 4-3 at Luton.

That's nine points gained with goals scored from the 84th minute or later. Maybe that late rally in the Community Shield was a portent for how this season will go.

"We don't want a draw, we want to win," Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. "That drive, that energy, that risk and emotion that we put in the pitch, you can sense it The seeds of these comeback

wins were sewn last season when Arteta's teams produced a number of late recoveries in games to snatch crucial points in the title race.

The most memorable was Reiss Nelson's winning goal against

arrived in the middle of the sea-

son, told journalists on Sunday.

"We needed to leave our ego

outside so we could achieve bet-

ter results. I hope this is a good

teaching for all those who are

It was against Wednesday rival,

Internacional, that Botafogo

achieved its 13-point advantage

on August 12. By then, some

fans had tattooed the

Brasileirao trophy on their bod-

ies, laughed at rivals losing

points to relegation contenders

and started debating what

round the team would be

"Follow the leader!," Botafogo

fans chanted after every win by

their team of little known play-

crowned.

here. Soccer makes you pay."



fans wild at Emirates Stadium. That was in the 97th minute and gave Arsenal a five-point lead in the league, just like Declan Rice did with his winner against Luton.

Arsenal again looks to be the team most likely to stop City winning the Premier League. Last season, its title bid imploded in the final two months, weighed down by injuries to

ers such as goalkeeper Lucas Perri, defender Adryelson, mid-

fielder Eduardo and striker

But then ... It was some-things-

only-happen-to-Botafogo time.

Botafogo failed to win its 10 lat-

Last week, the team scored an

apparent winner from the spot

against relegated Coritiba in the

90th minute, only to see their

opponents equalize 49 seconds

"Making fun of a Botafogo fan

today is like finding a dead body on the sidewalk, kick it

and run away laughing," said

social media mogul Felipe Neto,

one of the club's most popular

supporters.
"The dead body can no longer

Botafogo's downfall accelerated

at the end of June after Portuguese coach Luis Castro

left for Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal

following a call from Cristiano

Ronaldo. Castro's replacements,

Bruno Lage, Lucio Flavio and

Tiago Nunes weren't able to

keep up the team's fighting

spirit and attacking mentality.

Some of Botafogo's losses came

in such shocking fashion that rival fans pitied the club's fate.

One glaring example was a

home match against Palmeiras

on November 1, when Botafogo

was already in a dwindling

form but still could have

extended its lead in the league

to six points. The team led 3-0

after 37 minutes.

feel anything."

Segovinha.

particular - and a naivety in dealing with holding off a fastfinishing juggernaut like City. Could this season be different? Arsenal has a few things going in its favor.

Rice, a club-record signing for \$138 million in July, is an upgrade in central midfield has already contributed crucial goals against United

There's better strength in depth across the squad, in terms of numbers and experience.

Arteta's approach also appears to be different this season, going for more control than chaos - before the Luton game, anyway - to help the team better last the distance in a grueling campaign that also includes playing in the Champions League. In this respect, Arteta seems to be using the playbook of City manager Pep Guardiola from last season. "Playing every three days and

you have to win every game and every game, the demands are there," Arteta said. "It's the way they go about it, how much they want it"

After the pain of the end of last season, Arsenal's players might want it even more. There are questions marks

about the wisdom of Arteta's decision to bring in goalkeeper David Raya and promote him above Ramsdale, last year's first-choice keeper. Raya was at fault for two goals against Luton and has looked shaky in other games, notably in the

AP ■ NEWCASTLE (ENGLAND)

Newcastle United goal-keeper Nick Pope will be out for "around four months" after dislocating his left shoulder, manager Eddie Howe said Wednesday, in the latest injury to hit the Premier League team.

time to make England's squad European the Championship, which starts

"He's naturally down because

FIA opens conflict probe into Mercedes head Toto, wife Susie side of F1, denied any allega-

The governing body of information or conflict of interest. "We wholly reject the allewife Susie, who heads the F1 Academy, following allegations of a conflict of interest and whether they have shared confidential information with the commercial rights arm of the global series

In a short statement issued on Tuesday, the FIA said it is "aware of media speculation" whether confidential information was exchanged, and that its compliance department is "looking into the matter."

The probe comes after a report in BusinessF1 magazine that rival team executives raised concerns about whether Toto and Susie Wolff passed on information discussed in private meetings.

Susie Wolff is managing director of the all-female series F1 Academy, and reports to F1 chief executive Stefano Domenicali. The BusinessF1 report said team officials were alarmed when Toto Wolff made comments in a recent meeting that included details they felt could only have come from F1. The report did not detail what was discussed.

The Mercedes team and Formula One Management, which runs the commercial

investigating Mercedes team gation in the statement and esociated media cover which wrongly impinges on the integrity and compliance of our team principal," Mercedes said. Formula One said it has rules and procedures in place to prevent improper information sharing, and it believes the allegations are wrong.

tions of improper sharing of

HDFC BANK

Registered Office: HDFC Bank House, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai - 400 013 and having one of its office as

Retail Portfolio Management at HDFC Bank Ltd, 1st Floor, I-Think Techno Campus Kanjurmarg (East), Mumbai - 400042.

SALE INTIMATION AND PUBLIC NOTICE FOR SALE OF SECURITIES PLEDGED TO HDFC BANK LTD. The below mentioned Borrowers of HDFC Bank Ltd. (the "Bank") are hereby notified

regarding the sale of securities pledged to the Bank, for availing credit facilities in the Due to persistent default by the Borrowers in making repayment of the outstanding dues a

per agreed loan terms, the below loan accounts are in delinquent status. The Bank has issued multiple notices to these Borrowers, including the final sale notice on the below mentioned date whereby, Bank had invoked the pledge and provided 7 days' time to the Borrower to repay the entire outstanding dues in the below accounts, failing which, Bank would be at liberty to sell the pledged securities without issuing further notice in this regard. The Borrowers have neglected and failed to make due repayments, therefore, Bank in exercise of its rights under the loan agreement as a pledgee has decided to sell / dispose off the Securities on or after 14th Dec 2023 for recovering the dues owed by the Borrowers to the Bank. The Borrowers are, also, notified that, if at any time, the value of the pledged ecurities falls further due to volatility in the stock market to create further deficiency in the margin requirement then Bank shall at its discretion sell the pledged security within one (1 calendar day, without any further notice in this regard. The Borrower(s) shall remain liable to the Bank for repayment of any remaining outstanding amount, post adjustment of the roceeds from sale of pledged securities.

r. o.	Loan Account Number		Borrower's Name	Outstanding Amount as on 04th Dec 2023	of Sale		
	XXXX4585	SAVITRI	BAI	3,54,251.02	04-Dec-23		
ate: 07.12.2023 So							
ace : CHHATTISGARH HDFC BANK							

Viknesh appeal challenging two years ban rejected PTI ■ NEW DELHI 'Terbutaline', a common subhistory of the sport in the country. East Bengal defender Arun

tion of results involving other

Botafogo's title hopes vanished

for the season after a 0-0 draw

with Cruzeiro on Sunday, a

match that ended with some

supporters hurling insults at

players and burning team shirts

Only a few seasons ago the fans

would have been excited just to

finish near the top. But after

American businessman John

Textor bought the club's soccer

division last year, expectations

"We needed to be a little bit

more humble. We needed to

read every match, read the

moment of the club," veteran

striker Diego Costa, who

rose dramatically.

at the Nilton Santos Stadium.

teams.

erala footballer M Viknesh's Kappeal challenging a twoyear ban, imposed on him by disciplinary committee of the NADA for failing a dope test, has been rejected by the appeal panel in a rare doping case relating to the 'beautiful game' in the country.

Viknesh was handed a two-year ban by the NADA Anti-Doping Disciplinary Panel starting from November 12, 2022 after his dope sample collected during the National Games in Gujarat in September-October 2022 was found to contain banned

stance found in cough syrup. In an order passed on December 2, the appeal panel of the NADA upheld the disciplinary committee's decision but changed the date of its operation. The appeal panel of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) held that Viknesh's two-year ban will start from April 5, 2023, the date of decision of the disciplinary committee as the Kerala footballer was not provisionally suspended after he failed the dope test. Very few footballers have been

handed bans by the NADA pan-

els for failing dope tests in the

Malhotra was found positive for a banned substance in a test conducted before the national team's departure for the 2022 Busan Asian Games. The All India Football Federation (AIFF) slapped Malhotra a ban of 60 days. NADA was non existent then as it was established in 2009. Mumbai FC player Nishant Mehra had failed a dope test conducted after an I-League match in 2011 and was handed a two-year ban by the NADA. He was the first Indian footballer to be banned by the NADA for doping.

APPENDIX -IV-A
E-AUCTION-PUBLIC SALE
NOTICE OF IMMOVABLE
Finance Limited
C(r)Ar K i BAAP
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the borrowers/mortgagor(s)/Legal Heirs, Legal Representative, whether Known or Unknown), executor(s), accessor(s), acsignee(s) of the respective borrowers/mortgagor(s)/since deceased) as the case may be indicated in Column no-A under Rule-8(6) & 9 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 amended as on date. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in M/s PNB Housing Finance Limited/secured Creditor, we best the sale, please refer to the link provided in M/s PNB Housing Finance Limited/secured Creditor in the sale, please refer to the link provided in M/s PNB Housing Finance Limited/secured Creditor is website in the sale, please refer to the link provided in M/s PNB Housing Finance Limited/secured creditor's website in.e. www.nphbnousing.com.

Loan No. Name of the	Demanded	Nature of	Description of the	Reserve	EMD	Last Date of	Bid	Inspection	Date of	Known
Borrower/Co-Borrower/	Amount &	possession	Properties mortgaged	Price (RP)	(10% of	Submission	Incremen-	Date &	Auction &	Encumbrances/
Guarantor(s)/Legal heirs(A)	Date (B)	(C)	(D)	(E) ´	RP) (F)	of Bid (G)	tal Rate (H)	Time (I)	Time (J)	Court Case if any (K)
HOU/RAI/1115/250239,	Rs.	(Physical)	Smart NU-Town, 256, P. H.	Rs.	Rs.	21.12.2023	Rs.	13.12.2023	22.12.2023	*NIL/Not Known
ate Satyabrat Kumar Dubey	5,00,797.20	, , ,	No. 43, Mouza Pirda, Tehsil	13,50,000/-	1,35,000/-	before	10,000/-	Between	Between	
orrower)/ Late Urmila Dubey	as on date		and District Raipur, Near			04:00 P.M.	'	12:30 P.M.	01:30 P.M.	
Borrower)/ Yugal Kishor Nayak	07-09-2021		Wallfort Paradise, Raipur,					to	to	
(Guarantor), B.O.: Raipur			Chhattisgarh -492001					04:00 P.M.	03:00 P.M.	
ether with the further interest	@18% n.a. a	s applicable	incidental expenses, cost	charges et	c. incurred	unto the date	of navmer	t and/or rea	lization ther	eof. ** To the hest

**Together with the further interest @18% p.a. as applicable, incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. incurred upto the date of payment and/or realization thereof. ** To the best knowledge and information of the authorized Officer of PNB Housing Finance Limited, there are no other encumbrances/ claims in respect of above mentioned immovable/secured assets except what is disclosed in the Column No.-K. Further such encumbrances to be catered/paid by the successful purchaser/bidder at his/her end. The prospective purchaser(s)/ bidders are requested to independently ascertain the veracity of the mentioned encumbrances.

(1.) As on date, there is no order restraining and/or court injunction PNBHFL/the authorized Officer of PNBHFL from selling, alienating and/or disposing of the above immovable properties/secured assets and status is mentioned in column no-K. Including but not limited to the title of the document of the title pertaining thereto available with the PNBHFL and satisfy themselves in all respects prior to submitting tender/bid application form or making Offer(s). The bidder(s) has to sign the terms and conditions of this auction along with the Bid Form. (3.) Please note that in terms of Rule 9(3) of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002, the bidder(s)/the purchaser is legally bound to deposit 25% of the amount of sale price, (inclusive of earnest money) on the same day or not later than next working day. The sale may be confirmed in favour of (bidder(s) only after receipt of 25% of the sale price by the secured creditor in accordance with Rule 9(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The remaining 75% of the sale consideration amount within 15 days from the date of acknowledgement of sale confirmation elter and in default of such deposit, the authorized officer shall forfeit the part payment of sale consideration amount within 15 days from the date of expriny of mandatory of mand

Goalkeeper Nick will be out for four months

It leaves Pope in a race against

in June. The 31-year-old Pope sus-

tained the injury as he dived to his left in an attempt to save a shot by Manchester United defender Sergio Reguilon that was blocked in front of the Newcastle keeper. Howe said Pope will require surgery.
"The operation hasn't happened yet," Howe said, "but

we're thinking roughly around four months. So, it's a big blow to us but one that we expected after the game.

where we have so many games, huge games coming up - he's got, obviously, the Euros ahead of him as well, which he was determined to try to be involved in, and there's still chance of that for

We understand your world

ICC RANKINGS

Ravi becomes world number 1 T201 bowler



oung Indian leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi on Ravi Bishnoi on Wednesday rose to the top spot in the ICC T20I bowling chart on the back of his recent player of the series-winning

performance against Australia. The 23-year-old was India's goto bowler in the just-concluded series against Australia, taking nine wickets from five games. Bishnoi, who is on 699 rating points, has jumped five places to displace Áfghanistan spinner

Rashid Khan (692) from the top

Sri Lankan spinner Wanindu Hasaranga and England's Adil Rashid, who both have 679 points, are in joint third. Sri Lanka's Maheesh Theekshana (677) completes the top

held on to the top spot among five. Bishnoi is the only Indian batters, while opener Ruturaj bowler in the top 10 in the short-Gaikwad dropped a place to be est format even as Axar Patel climbed nine spots to be 18th. Meanwhile, the swashbuckling Suryakumar Yadav, who cap-

Hardik Pandya retained the third spot in the all-rounders'

list, despite missing the series against Australia due to injury.

ACC U-19 ASIA CUP-

India opens campaign against Afghanistan

Faces Pakistan on Sunday

India will face Afghanistan in the opening match of the ACC Men's U-19 Asia Cup cricket tour-

The tournament final will be played at the Dubai International Stadium on December 17. All group matches and semi-finals will be played at the ICC Academy Ovals 1 and 2.

Bangladesh takes control of 2nd test



After New Zealand reduced to 55-5 on eventful 1st day

AP ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

 $B_{\text{the final test against New}}^{\text{angladesh took full control of}}_{\text{the final test against New}}_{\text{Zealand after 15 wickets fell on}$ an eventful day one Wednesday as the hosts pursue a first ever test series win against the Kiwis. The home side was all out for 172 but hit back strongly to reduce New Zealand to 55-5 in 12.4 overs before bad light

forced stumps. Both teams' batters struggled on a wicket where most of the balls kept low and the bounce was uneven. The New Zealand bowling attack maintained a tight line and length to create pressure by conceding just eight runs in the first seven overs after Bangladesh captain Najmul Hossain Shanto opted to bat

Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner (3-31) and offspinner Glenn Phillips (3-65) shared six wickets to wreak havoc on the Bangladesh batting lineup. Ajaz Patel, another left-arm spinner, claimed 2-54 while skipper Tim Southee took one wicket without conceding a single run in 5.2 overs.

Mushfiqur Rahim made a teamhigh 35 before becoming the first Bangladeshi batter to be dismissed for handling the ball. While defending a delivery from fast bowler Kyle Jamieson, the team's most experienced batter used his right hand to push the ball away even though it wasn't

close to the off-stump. After New Zealand appealed for the out, the third umpire checked and then gave him out for obstructing the field.
Bangladesh's first boundary

came in the eighth over when Zakir Hasan drove Patel through cover for four. The pressure eventually got the better of Zakir (8) when he played a rash shot against Santner and chipped it straight to mid-on. In the next over, Patel dismissed Mahmudul Hasan (14) after he was beaten by the drift to give a catch at short-leg.

Mominul Haque (5) was the next to go when he was caught behind off Patel's bowling. But the biggest blow for Bang-ladesh followed in the next over when captain Najmul Hossain Shanto (9), who hit a century in the previous test, attempted a reverse sweep against Santner. The on-field Umpires turned

down the appeal but New

Zealand reviewed it successfully to leave Bangladesh 47-4. Mushfiqur and Shahadat Hossain, playing his only second test, shared a 57-run partnership which eventually kept Bangladesh ahead on a tricky wicket.

The dismissal of Mushfiqur

triggered another collapse, which began with Shahadat (31) being caught down the leg-side off the bowling of Phillips. The onus was on Mehidy Hasan to lead a fightback with the lower order but Santer came back to

order but Santer came back to dismiss him as New Zealand bowled Bangladesh out shortly after tea.

However, Mehidy led Bangladesh's bowling attack with 3-17 and left-arm spinner Taijul Islam, who took 10 wickets in the first test, took 2-29.

Tom Latham and Devon Conway started cautiously but Mehidy broke through with a delivery that Conway thought would turn. Instead it went straight to crash the stump as Conway was out for 11. Taijul then dealt a double blow

by dismissing Latham and Henry Nicholls.

New Zealand fell into deep trouble when Kane Williamson, the centurion of the previous test, ended up getting an inside edge towards short while defending a quicker delivery of Mehidy. Just a ball later, Mehidy fired

another quicker one that kept extremely low to trap Tom Blundell leg-before for a duck. Daryl Mitchell (12) and Glenn Phillips (5) were batting when play came to an end because of

Mushfigur becomes first Bangladesh batter to be out for obstructing field

PTI ■ MIRPUR (BANGLADESH)

Former captain Mushfiqur Rahim on Wednesday became the first Bangladesh batter to be given out for 'obstructing the field' in a bizarre dismissal on the opening day of Zealand here.

The 36-year-old Rahim defended a rising delivery from New Zealand quick Kyle Jamieson in the fourth ball of the 41st over and then extended his right hand to apparently keep the ball away after it bounced up wide outside off stump

The Black Caps were quick to appeal and the on-field umpires referred the matter to the TV umpire Ahsan Raza who gave

Rahim out According to Law 37.1.2, "The striker is out obstructing the field if, except in the circumstances of 37.2, in the act of

acques Kallis, one of the last

multi-skilled legends, says

quality all-rounders have

become a scarcity in modernday cricket, especially in Test

cricket, because of "too much

While Sir Garfield Sobers (8032

runs and 235 wickets) is consid-

ered 'greatest of 'em all' across

generations, Kallis (25,000-plus

runs and nearly 600 wickets in

three formats) is inarguably

one of the legendary all-

rounders the modern era has

In the 1980s, there were four

great all-rounders in Imran

Khan, Richard Hadlee, Ian

Botham and Kapil Dev while the

new millennium saw emer-

gence of Kallis and Andrew

But with advent of T20 cricket

and mushrooming leagues

across the globe with new rules

have actually discouraged development of multi-skilled crick-

"It is a tough question to answer,

all-rounders don't come around every day. There aren't many

throughout the history. Lot of

things, amount of cricket that is

played certainly plays a role," Kallis told PTI during an exclu-

The former Proteas captain is in

India to play the Legends League

sive interview.

Flintoff.

cricket across formats".

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

classified as "handled the ball" but a change in the laws in 2017 brought them under "obstruct-

scorer with his 35 off 83 balls as the hosts were bundled out for 172 inside 67 overs Bangladesh won the first Test in

Sylhet by 150 runs.

receiving a ball delivered by the bowler, he/she wilfully strikes the ball with a hand not holding the bat. This will apply whether it is the first strike or a second or subsequent strike. The act of receiving the ball shall extend both to playing at the ball and once in defence of his/her wick-

Earlier such dismissals were ing the field" category.
Former England captain

Michael Vaughan was the last batter to be given out 'handling the ball' against India in Rahim was Bangladesh's top-

tained India during their 4-1

T20I series win against Australia,

nament here on Friday. Pakistan will play Nepal in the other match of the opening day. Arch-rivals India and Pakistan will

face each other on Sunday.
Eight teams will compete for the top prize in the 50-over event which is being hosted by the Emirates Cricket Board.

The teams have been divided into two groups of four each. India, Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan are placed in Group A.
Bangladesh, Japan, Sri Lanka and hosts UAE fea-

ture in Pool B. The top two teams from each of the two groups will progress to the semi-finals which will be played on December 15.

All tournament matches will begin at 9:30 am local

Will play IPL until I cannot walk anymore: Maxwell

Star Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell has vowed to play in the world's biggest cricket league, the IPL "until he can't

The 35-year-old, who played a massive role in Australia's ODI World Cup-winning campaign in India recently, will once again don the colours of Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL next year.

'The IPL will probably be the last tournament I ever play, as I will play the IPL until I can't walk anymore," Maxwell was quoted as saying by Australian Associated Press (AAP) at the Melbourne Airport on Wednesday.

I was talking about how good the IPL has been to me through-out my career, the people I've



met, the coaches I have played under, the international players that you get to rub shoulders with, how beneficial to my whole career that tournament has been.

"You're rubbing shoulders with AB (de Villiers) and Virat (Kohli) for two months, talking to them while watching other games. It's just the greatest learning experience that any player could ask for," he said. Maxwell feels Australian cricketers should play in the IPL for experience ahead of the T20 World Cup in the United States

and the West Indies in June. "Hopefully, a lot of our Australian players can get over to the IPL and get to work in slightly similar conditions to the

West Indies, where it is a little bit drier, it will spin." Maxwell will return to action as captain of Melbourne Stars in the Big Bash League opener against Brisbane Heat in the opener at the Gabba

on Inursaay.

After winning the ODI World

Cup by beating favourites India
at home, Australia are now
looking to reclaim the T20
world title which they won in 2021.

'As soon as we won this World Cup, we all talked about the refocus towards the next one," Maxwell said. "I'm hoping it's going be a really exciting summer for the BBL, with what is just around the corner.

Hopefully a little bit more importance on putting your name up in the headlines for the right reasons and trying to push

for those spots," he added. possible and play those warm-

Du Plessis hints at return to international cricket

 $F^{ormer\ South\ Africa\ skipper}_{Faf\ du\ Plessis\ has\ hinted\ at\ a}$ comeback to international cricket ahead of the upcoming T20 World Cup, saying that he has been is discussion with the Porteas' white-ball coach Rob Walter for the past couple of

Du Plessis last featured in a T20I three years ago in 2020. While his last match for South Africa was a Test against Pakistan in February 2021. "I believe that I can return to international cricket," du Plessis told the broadcaster of Abu Dhabi T10 league.

"We have been speaking about this for the last couple of years. It's just figuring out the balance of the T20 World Cup next year. It's certainly something we have spoken about with the new coach," he added.

Despite not featuring for South Africa, du Plessis has been doing well in the domestic circuit as well as in T20 leagues across the

With 730 runs from 14 games for the Royal Challengers

Bangalore, du Plessis was the second highest run getter in the

IPL earlier this year. The 39-year-old led South Africa in the 2014 and 2016 T20 World Cups but wasn't considered for the last two editions of the tournament, despite never officially retiring from white-ball

cricket. On Monday, South Africa white-ball coach Walter had said the likes of du Plessis, Quinton de Kock and Rilee Rossouw will be considered for the T20 World Cup, scheduled to be played in June next year in the West

Indies and the USA. 'Given that some of our frontline bowlers are missing out and there are guys - let me throw it out there just to create some media hype - like Faf (du Plessis) and Rilee (Rossouw) as well as Quinny (De Kock) that could well be considered for a T20 World Cup and then also the SA20 that happens next year -80% of the side picks itself but there is definitely a space for other guys to get themselves into the conversation," Walter had

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Too much cricket is affecting development of all-rounders: Kallis Ravichandran Ashwin and



KKR coach isn't a great fan of 'Impact Player' rule where a team can change one player during its batting or bowling innings as per need.

"A few T20 competitions have substitutes (IPL) and I am not a big fan of that as it takes away the all-rounder out of your team. The teams that do not have good all-rounders are now playing with 12 men. I am not a huge fan of that.

There are lot of little things that add up on to why there aren't too many all-rounders at the moment, as it is surprising as While he didn't name Indian they add so much value to the

game. But it's a whole lot of lit-tle things coming together," Kallis said

CENTURION WILL BE TOUGH FOR INDIA: The Indian team would be embarking on a tough away tour of South Africa, the only major Test playing nation where it hasn't won a single Test series in 31

The focus will be on the two Test matches, which is a part of World Test Championship (WTC) cycle even as ODIs and T20s are part of the full tour. The stars from both sides (Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Kagiso Rabada) will only be playing the traditional format during the series. This is a good Indian team but

South Africa is tough to beat in South Africa. Centurion will probably suit South Africa and Newlands will probably suit India. It will be a good series and it will come down to one or two sessions that one team might play better than the other. It would be a closely-fought contest," said Kallis.

TRANSITIONS TOUGH, GET YOUNGSTERS **READY:** The Indian team's average age is in mid-30s. Skipper Rohit is 36 and main batter Virat Kohli is 35.

respectively while Mohammed Shami 33. There would be a transition sooner or later in another cou-

Ravindra Jadeja are 37 and 35

ple of years and Kallis feels that if talented youngsters are groomed by keeping them with senior team, the handing of baton becomes easier. "Older players obviously have

got the knowledge and you would combine that with younger players. That's the job of coaches and selectors to make sure so that even if younger players might not be playing, they are in that environment where they can learn from the older players," said Kallis, who scored 45 Test hundreds in his illustrious 18-year career in which he played 166 Tests.

It is imperative that youngsters are travelling to unfamiliar territories and soaking in all knowledge available watching those who have been there and done that.

from sitting on the side, try to

pick up as much knowledge as

"(They should) travel to these parts of the world that they are probably not used to and learn

up games where big players are resting for. Picking up knowledge helps a lot and transition when a few players are retiring, it becomes little bit easier," he elaborated. Having started his career in mid-90s just when players like Kepler Wessels, Peter Kirsten,

Andrew Hudson had all retired

or were on verge of retirement,

Kallis felt that back in the day, Proteas had a good system of changeover in place. 'Certainly, when I started, South Africa were very good at transitioning younger players into good international players and that obviously needs to be done

when senior players retire."

A BIT OF LUCK ON BIG DAYS: A part of the South African side that had to bear the label of "chokers" for not winning big-ticket events, Kallis understands the pain of the current Indian team that has now lost nine semi-finals or finals at marquee ICC competitions. You need a little bit of luck in these tournaments to go your way. You could end up being at the wrong end of the toss or bad end of the conditions, you need little bit of luck as players certainly don't go out there to lose. From that point of view, you can get beaten by a better team on the day and you have got to put your hand up and accept it.

Try to learn from those things,