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STRATEGIC ATTACKS ON OUR NATIONAL INTERESTS

WORLD 8

NEPAL GOVERNMENT SCRAMBLES TO RUSH AID TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS

MONEY 10

INDIA'S POWER CONSUMPTION GROWS 9.4 PER CENT IN APRIL-OCTOBER

NEW DELHI, MONDAY NOVEMBER 6, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹3



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FRUSTRATION, BUT BELIEF NOT SHAKEN: BUTTLER
12 SPORT

India Vanquishes the Proteas

PTI ■ KOLKATA

On his 35th birthday in one of the game's iconic venues packed with the most exuberant fans, Virat Kohli equalled his idol Sachin Tendulkar's record of most ODI centuries with his 49th hundred, laying the foundation for India's 243-run pummelling of South Africa in the World Cup on Sunday.

This, perhaps, was written in the stars.

Entering the Eden Gardens after a run of seven successive wins by his team, Kohli was up against an in-form and ambitious South African side seeking to shed the choker's tag and win its maiden World Cup title.

But, by the time the game got over, South Africa were left bruised and battered after being bowled out for 83 in 27.1 overs as India consolidated its top place in the pecking order, with Kohli finally matching Tendulkar after the whole country waited for weeks in anticipation.

Attempting to steel the thunder from Kohli was Ravindra Jadeja, who ended with excellent figures of 5/33.

Set an imposing target of 327 after Kohli's 121-ball 101 not out, Shreyas Iyer's fluent 87-ball 77 and some fireworks towards the end by Suryakumar Yadav and Jadeja, the Proteas crumbled like a pack of cards.

India captain Rohit Sharma also deserves special mention for his 24-ball 40, putting South Africa on the back foot straight-



Ravindra Jadeja with teammate Virat Kohli celebrates after India thrashes South Africa by 243 runs in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 match played at Eden Gardens in Kolkata on Sunday. Birthday boy Kohli hit a record-equaling 49th ODI century while Jadeja took a five-wicket haul

away with his attacking intent. When the Proteas' turn to bat came, the pitch remained pretty much the same but the Indian bowling was again at a different level altogether, running through the side with the same relentlessness and potency they have been doing through the tournament.

South Africa were in dire straits in no time, tottering at 40/5 and then 67/7 as India had the match all wrapped up.

The menacing pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, and Mohammed Shami was once again on the money before star all-rounder Jadeja did the star turn with his turn, bounce and accuracy.

Not content with his cameo with the bat (29 off 15 balls), Jadeja got the ball to behave in whichever way he wanted it to and finished with fine figures. The first to go was the in-form Quinton de Kock, who got an inside edge against Siraj after smashing him for a boundary. Losing De Kock was a big blow for the South Africans, and skipper Temba Bavuma too fell cheaply to continue his quest for one substantial knock in the showpiece, bowled by a beautiful turning delivery from Jadeja.

South Africa were three down inside the powerplay as Shami, with a good length ball that jagged away off the seam, induced an edge from Aiden Markram and KL Rahul completed a low catch.

Rassie van der Dussen thought he was saved when Shami's loud appeal for an lbw failed to

impress the on-field umpire but the Indian seamer and his wicket-keeping colleague Rahul's decision to review was vindicated when the technology showed that the ball would go on to hit the middle and leg stump.

South Africa bat deep but Jadeja, meanwhile, snared Heinrich Klaasen (1) and David Miller (11) to inch closer to a massive win, which was achieved when Kuldeep Yadav bowled Lungi Ngidi.

The match was over in South Africa's 28th over and with a lot of time still left to play.

Earlier, the setting was ideal for Kohli to equal Tendulkar's record after missing the magic three-figure mark more than once in the tournament.

He was dismissed for 95 and 88 against New Zealand and Sri Lanka but the Indian run-machine did not disappoint the ecstatic full house at the Eden Gardens.

The monkey was finally off his back in the 49th over when Kohli gently pushed Kagiso Rabada for a single. The century came off 119 balls with 10 fours, showing that Kohli toiled hard for his runs.

For Kohli, the milestone ton came in 277 innings, while Tendulkar had brought up his 49th ODI century in 452 innings. A comparison, though, is not fair considering the different playing conditions in the two eras.

The relief was evident as he took his helmet off, kissed his bat, and saluted the crowd that gave him a standing ovation.

Canada in a Conundrum

Ottawa cannot stand against Delhi

PTI ■ OTTAWA

Canada's investigation into the murder of a Sikh extremist has been tainted by a high-level Canadian official's public statements, India's High Commissioner to Canada Sanjay Kumar Verma has said as he asked Ottawa to provide evidence to back up its allegations.

In an interview with the Globe and Mail newspaper, Verma on Friday said there "is no specific or relevant information provided in this case for us to assist in the investigation."

"Where is the evidence? Where is the conclusion of the investigation? I would go a step further and say now the investigation has already been tainted," Verma was quoted as saying by the newspaper.

"A direction has come from someone at a high level to say India or Indian agents are behind it," he said on Saturday, without naming anyone.

The ties between India and Canada came under severe strain following Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations in September of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani extremist separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar in the Canadian town of Surrey in June.

India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020.

India rejected the allegations as "absurd" and "motivated".

Days after Trudeau's allegations, India temporarily suspended the issuance of visas to Canadian citizens and asked Ottawa to downsize its diplomatic presence in the country to ensure parity. Canada has withdrawn 41 diplomats and their family members from India.

Verma strongly denied Canada's allegation and said India made 26 requests to Ottawa over the past five or six years to extradite people, but Canada did not take any action.

He also spoke about security threats to him and other Indian diplomatic staff in the country. On Saturday, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi said there is room for diplomacy to address the diplomatic row between India and Canada.

He said both sides have been in touch and hoped that a way would be found to resolve the row. At the same time, he asserted that "sovereignty and sensitivity" cannot be one-way streets.

"My hope certainly would be that we find a way...Sovereignty, sensitivity — these cannot be one-way streets. They may have their concerns. I have never ever with any country said that I am not willing to talk to them about their legitimate concerns," he said.

Delhi NCR Gasps AQI at a new low before Diwali

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

As the air quality index (AQI) of Delhi has worsened and reached hazardous category and there is no sign of respite in the coming days, the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) decided to invoke the highest level of restrictions as part of Stage IV of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP). It entails banning the construction activities and the entry of all trucks, commercial four-wheelers in the entire National Capital Region with immediate effect.

Only CNG, electric, BS VI vehicles from other States are allowed entry in the NCR areas. The fourth stage of the GRAP allow public, municipal, and private offices to operate at 50 per cent strength, with the rest working from home. The CAQM advised people, especially children, the elderly, and those with health



Commuters on a road shrouded in smog amid hazy weather conditions, in New Delhi, on Sunday

conditions, should minimise outdoor activities and stay indoors. The Delhi Government on Sunday announced primary schools will remain closed till November 10 as pollution levels continue to remain high in the national Capital.

However, schools are also being given the option of shifting to

all actions already outlined under Stages I, II, and III of the plan. GRAP functions as an emergency response mechanism, triggered by the city's AQI's levels.

A toxic haze lingered over Delhi and NCR for the seventh consecutive day as the air quality index (AQI) reached at 482 on Sunday due to a gradual drop in temperatures, calm winds that trap pollution, heavy construction works, dust and a surge in post-harvest paddy straw burning across Punjab and Haryana. The AQI has touched a new low before Diwali. The highest level of air pollution recorded at 641 in JNU, Wazirpur 602, Jhangeripuri 477; Punjabi Bagh 475; Patparganj 461; Sonia Vihar 455; ITO 450; Vivek Vihar 445; Lodhi Road 418, Major Dhyanand Stadium 540, and Dilshad Garden 369. Noida sector also saw AQI at 602.

Technology will track terror

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

In order to prevent the terror accused out on bail from falling into the trap of their original handlers, the Jammu and Kashmir Police have introduced GPS tracker anklets to track down their movements. This is the first of its kind initiative taken by any police force across the country.

According to a Jammu and Kashmir police spokesman the devices were introduced after a Special NIA Court, Jammu, passed an order directing the police to affix a GPS tracker ankle on a terror accused — the importance of which was highlighted by the prosecution department of the police. The GPS tracker ankle is a wearable device affixed around the ankle of the person to monitor and track their movement.

The device is already being used in Western countries such as the USA, the United Kingdom, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand to track the movement of accused persons on bail, parole, and house arrest and accordingly de-congest prisons to a large extent.

The officials of the State Investigation Agency (SIA) of the J&K Police have introduced the GPS tracker ankle for monitoring of bail-out terror accused.

Giving details of the case, the police spokesman said in an FIR registered



under various sections of UAPA, accused Ghulam Mohd Bhat had applied for bail. During the pendency of the bail hearing, the accused sought to be released on interim bail. The accused is undergoing trial for being associated with different terrorist organisations and being involved in terror financing at the behest of the proscribed terrorist organisation Hizbul Mujahideen (HM).

Bhat was arrested in the current FIR while attempting to transport the proceeds of terrorism to the tune of ₹2.5 lakh at the behest of Hizbul.

The accused is also convicted by the NIA Court Patiala House, New Delhi, in

Marine debris hits India's coastal economy

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Marine debris with high buoyancy, such as bottles, rubber, household items, and plastic bags, carries along with it a large number of invasive species to the Indian shores, thus becoming a new source of threat to the livelihood of the locals, including fishermen already grappling with climate change impacts, overexploitation, sewage, and unregulated tourism, among others.

The research published recently in Marine Pollution Bulletin by a team of Indian and foreign researchers while conducting a study in the southeast coast of India highlighted the threat that looms large on the Indian coastline of 7,516 km of which the mainland accounts for 5,422 km.

Nearly 250 million Indians live within a distance of 50 km from the coastal areas of India. "The results highlight the increasing risk of invasive species colonisation on plastics along the southeast coast of

India. This is particularly worrying at a time when plastics are becoming a more and more common substrate for marine organisms, especially in India, which is one of the top countries contributing most to ocean plastic pollution.

"Our study thus serves as a call to immediate action to address plastic pollution and its related threats in India," explains Dr Blanca Figuerola, a member of the Medrecof Group and the last author of the study.

The research team, led by the Institut de Ciències del Mar (ICM-CSIC) and the Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology in collaboration with the University of Barcelona (UB), the Abdelmalek Essaadi University (UAE), and the University of Oslo (UiO), had conducted a comprehensive examination of fouling organisms on various types of stranded litter, including plastic, glass, rubber, foam sponge, cloth, metal, and wood. They found a total of 3,130 specimens/colonies belonging



to seven phyla and representing 17 species stuck on these litterers.

For instance, invasive mussel Mytella strigata was found attached in high density groups to fishing nets. "This discovery emphasises the significant role of marine litter in facilitating the spread of invasive species, potentially disrupting the ecological balance of Indian waters," explained Dr Gunasekaran Kannan, the first author of the study.

"Litter items with high buoyancy, such as bottles, buoys and plastic bags supported abundant macroinvertebrate assemblages, suggesting the potential for long distance transport," pointed out Dr Kannan.

Among the most commonly found organisms associated with marine litter were the cosmopolitan bryozoans Jellyella tuberculata and J eburnea, the barnacles Lepas anserifera, Amphibalanus amphitrite, and Amphibalanus sp., and the oysters Sacostrea cucullata and Magallana bilineata.

The IUCN in a report observed marine invasive species as one of the most "insidious threat". Alien species can be trans-

ported by various means: in ship ballast water or by attaching to hulls, as 'hitchhikers' clinging to scuba gear or packaging, as consignments of live organisms traded to provide live bait or gourmet food and as pathogens, carried by other organisms.

An estimated 7,000 species are carried around the world in ballast water every day.

The invasive alien species means reductions or complete collapse in fisheries production due to competition, predation and displacement of the commercially important fish species through invasion, say the experts.

According to yet another report, invasive species with adverse impacts globally such as water hyacinth and fish species common carp are posing a threat to native species in the coastal state of Kerala.

Overall, India has lost \$127.3 billion (₹8.3 trillion) in the last 60 years to as many as 10 invasive alien species (IAS), out of 330 that are known to be inva-

sive in India, making the South Asian nation the second most invasive-cost bearing country after the United States.

Researchers said simple tweaks to national policies and setting up institutions to exclusively deal with invasive species as a biosecurity issue, both from research and management perspectives, would go a long way.

"The negative economic impacts are documented and available only for 3 per cent of the known invasive species and unavailable/masked/underrepresented for the rest 97 per cent of invasive species in India. That's a huge knowledge gap," evolutionary biologist Alok Bang said in a report.

"Based on this global analysis, going by India's GDP, we must have spent about \$3.4 trillion on invasive species in the last six decades; going by India's population, we must have spent about \$1,700 trillion in the last six decades," Bang said as per the report.

Dr Anna Sanchez-Vidal, Associate Professor in the UB

Department of Earth and Ocean Dynamics, member of the UB's Marine Geosciences Consolidated Research Group and co-author of the study published in the Marine Pollution Bulletin too called for effective waste prevention and management, education, and awareness campaigns to mitigate the introduction of invasive species via marine litter.

Local and global stakeholders must come together to address this critical issue and protect the fragile marine ecosystems along India's southeast coast, he opined.

The team has already warned that plastic debris in the sea was contributing to the introduction and transport of non-native marine species in the Catalan coast in a recent study. Coastal areas are already facing pressures such as climate change, overexploitation, sewage, nutrient pollution and recreation activities which can exacerbate the impacts of invasive non-native species, as per experts.

I have been trapped, Didi knows all: Mallick

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

I have been implicated by using the BJP.... The BJP has trapped me. Mamata didi and Abhishek Banerjee know everything. I am innocent and will be free on 6th (November). These are four different syntax formations made by arrested Bengal Forest (formerly Food) Minister Jyoti Priya Mallick — in a single go — to the media that seems to have kept the Trinamool Congress on tenterhooks. With the State BJP and Left leadership immediately demanding interrogation of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to “get to the bottom” of Mallick’s remarks a section of the TMC has lambasted the former Food minister — arrested for his role in multi-crore ration scam — for draw-

ing Banerjee’s role in the matter. “Every time Mamata Banerjee gets away by sacrificing a scapegoat whenever some of her leaders are arrested... but this time Jyoti Priya Mallick has spilled the beans saying Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee know everything and that he is innocent... if it is so then the ED should interrogate the persons whose names he has taken to get to the bottom of the puzzle,” Bengal Opposition Leader Suwendu Adhikari said. CPI(M) central committee member and former MP Sujan Chakrabarty too demanded Banerjee’s interrogation saying “not a twig moves in Bengal without the Chief Minister’s nod.” Referring to the arrested minister’s remarks he said: “when a senior politician and minister of Jyoti Priya Mallick’s



status makes such statements then it carries implication... if according to him BJP has been used to implicate him then the question who has done so... besides the ED has also to dig out as to what Mamata and Abhishek Banerjee know that the Agencies don’t... so their

interrogate is not an option but imperative... if they are not interrogated then the theory of ‘setting’ between BJP and TMC will be more obvious.” Pradesh Congress leader Kaustav Bagchi too said that no scam could have taken place without the Chief

Minister’s Office not having its knowledge. “Long before the ED took up the case the State police had filed FIR two years ago but they stopped after arresting some pygmies and recovering some trucks of wheat... had the police pursued the case they would definitely have reached the doors of Jyoti Priya Mallick... as Mamata Banerjee is the Police Minister too then she will have to answer as to who stopped the police from pursuing the case,” he said. According to sources under Mallick the Food Department might have presided over a mighty scam of Rs 28,000 to Rs 35,000 crore. A senior official in the Department who was transferred from his office said, how “there were 1.66 crore fake ration cards against which wheat food grains were being lifted for 10 years... If a person gets 60 kgs of rice an

year and if such rice is sold for Rs 28 to Rs 35 a kg then the scam could well cross Rs 30,000 crore mark.” The official also alleged that the police had suddenly stopped the case after reporting “unclaimed wheat” when about 175 trucks loaded with bags were intercepted a couple of years ago. Those bags were allegedly being smuggled to Bangladesh. “Who stopped the investigations then... could it be the same person or persons who were the final or end gainers from this scam,” a senior State BJP leader asked, saying whether Mallick already has revealed everything to the ED or else “why will he be so confident of his release on November 6.” He also wondered whether the topmost TMC leadership had sacrificed him leading to his anger following which he was willing to turn approver.

Governor Arif slams Kerala Government for extravagant Keralayeen

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

A major stand off has erupted between Governor Arif Mohammed Khan and Government of Kerala over the latter organising a week long extravaganza titled Keralayeen at a cost of Rs 30 crore when the State is reeling under severe financial crunch. “The Government itself is claiming that the State is witnessing major financial crisis. So there is no justification for holding this event at this juncture,” Governor told media persons on Sunday in the sidelines of a private function where he was the chief guest. He lambasted the Pinarayi Vijayan-led CPI(M) government for squandering public money despite the Government submitting an affidavit in the Kerala High Court stating that the treasure is empty and the State has gone broken financially.

moves. “If I have held back the Bills, it has got its own reasons and this I’ll state in the Supreme Court. I have full trust in the country’s apex court,” he said. He also stated that the Chief Minister never meets him or calls him up. “When two of his ministers came to meet me with a request to speed up the clearance of the Bill, I had asked him for some clarification. They replied that the chief minister alone could answer it,” he said. The Keralayeen which began on 1 November, the 67th anniversary of the formation of the State, has been labeled as an attempt to promote Chief Minister Vijayan, his family members and leaders owing allegiance to the latter by leader of opposition V D Saheeshaan. The opposition UDF led by the Congress is boycotting the event in protest against the carnival.

The event has created a law and order situation in the State as fights and scuffles between various factions of the party has become a routine event in the venues of the festival and police has declared an alert throughout night hours. Interestingly, the Government of Kerala submitted the affidavit to the High Court over the financial troubles on November 1, Keralayeen, a star studded show was inaugurated at the capital city by the chief minister and watched by his close family members including the new son-in-law Mohammed Riaz, a minister in the council of ministers, Speaker A N Shamseer, ministers V Abdul Rehman, Ahmed Deverkovil, Veena George, Saji Cherian, Antony Raju, Roshy Augustine, film stars Mammooty, Sobhana, Kamal Haasan and Mohan Lal.

Governor’s statement comes at a time when the Government of Kerala has moved the Supreme Court asking it to declare the former has failed in exercising his Constitutional duties. Responding to queries in this regard the Governor stated that the Government has failed to keep him abreast of their intentions and reason for passing such legislation. The Bills held by the Governor include the move to appoint former Chief Justice of Kerala Manikular as chairman of the State Human Rights Commission in lieu of the services rendered by him and also the appointment of vice-chancellors of the universities in the State. Arif Mohammed Khan said that as per Constitution, the Government is bound to keep the Governor informed of its

‘State trying to give Maratha quota at cost of OBC quota’

PTI ■ THANE

The Maharashtra government is trying to provide reservation in jobs and education to Marathas at the cost of the quota for Other Backward Classes but the move won’t be tolerated by the OBCs, said former MP Haribhau Rathod on Sunday. Following protests spearheaded by activist Manoj Jarange, the Eknath Shinde government is working towards giving Kunbi certificates to Marathas, said Rathod, an OBC leader, at a news conference here. One of the demands of Jarange is that Marathas be given Kunbi caste certificates. The agrarian Kunbi community already gets quota benefits in

the OBC category. “This means there will be gross injustice to the OBCs,” he said, adding that they will not tolerate if the government starts providing Kumbi certificates to crores of Marathas. OBCs will take to the streets, he said. The former Lok Sabha member said Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis has stressed that the reservation to the OBCs would not be disturbed. “Chief Minister Eknath Shinde says that while giving quota to Marathas, there will be no injustice to other communities. But in the assurance given to Jarange Patil and as per the GR on Kunbi-Marathas, crores of Marathas will be given Kunbi certificates,” he claimed.

Have exact transcript of ethic panel’s questioning: Mahua

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Trinamool Congress MP Mahua Moitra facing cash-for-query charges has once again lashed out at the BJP leadership — for trying to expel her from Lok Sabha — for employing an Ethics Committee which asked “Behuda (stupid), Besharam (shameless)” questions. Once again taking to X handle the TMC MP who has till now not received any active support from her party reminded the Committee that she had “exact transcript” of the Chairman’s “cheap” and irrelevant” questions and warned before trying to expel her, “Also BJP - before you push out women MPs



with fake narrative, remember I have the exact transcript of record in Ethics Committee verbatim. Chairman’s cheap sordid irrelevant questions, Opposition’s protests, my protests --- all there in official

black and white.” The MP who had earlier told journalists in Kolkata that there was a concerted effort on the part of the BJP government to expel her from Parliament... which they cannot without suffering its consequence” wrote in a ridiculing manner, “shaking in my skin to know BJP is planning criminal cases against me. Welcome them -- only know that CBI and ED need to file FIR against Adani for Rs 13,000 crore coal scam, before they question how many pairs of shoes I have.” Moitra had on Thursday walked out of the Ethics Committee meeting along with other Opposition members protesting against alleged “per-

sonal” and “nonsensical” and “humiliating” questions being asked to her. “They did not ask from me questions relevant to the matter... I would have answered everything... instead of doing so they started asking questions from a pre-scripted list of questionnaire on my personal life... and very personal things which is humiliating for a woman,” Moitra had said after coming out of the meeting where she was summoned to explain her conduct regarding alleged acceptance of bribe for asking questions in parliament for one business group against a rival house. She has also been accused by the BJP of revealing her Lok Sabha

Woman geologist found murdered at her residence in Bengaluru

PTI ■ BENGALURU

A senior geologist with the Mines and Geology Department was found allegedly murdered at her residence here, police said on Sunday. The deceased has been identified as 43-year-old K S Pratima. Officials suspect that the incident took place on Saturday night after she returned to her residence at Doddakallasandra under the Subramanyapura police station limits. According to police, the death was due to strangulation and slitting of the throat. “As usual, around 8 pm on Saturday, the deceased Pratima returned home. As she did not respond to phone calls last night and this morning, her elder brother came to her house to check and got to know about her murder. He informed the police,” DCP, South Division, Bengaluru City, Rahul Kumar Shahapurwad told reporters here. He said, “Forensic and technical teams are at work on the spot. Three teams have been formed for investigation. We will be able to share further information, once we get to know exactly what happened.” Noting that Pratima was residing in the same house for the last four-five years as she has been working in Bengaluru Urban for the last four years, the DCP said she was living alone. “The death is because of strangulation and slitting of the throat,” he said.

Chhattisgarh village that ‘elects’ two legislators

PTI ■ ANJORA (CHHATTISGARH)

A village with a population of mere 5,000 is drawing a lot of attention ahead of the upcoming Chhattisgarh assembly elections, with candidates from two constituencies visiting the place to seek votes. Anjora sits on the border between the Durg and Rajnandgaon districts in such a manner that its one half is a part of the former, while the second belongs to the other. The village is split into territories of the two districts just by streets. While the houses on one side of the street fall under the Rajnandgaon constituency (Rajnandgaon), those on the other come under the Durg Rural constituency. The village, located around 10 km from Durg town on the Mumbai-Howrah National Highway-53 between Durg and Rajnandgaon cities, is also governed by two panchayats - Anjora village panchayat (Rajnandgaon) and Anjora ‘kh (B)’ village panchayat (Durg). The interesting juxtaposition has led to candidates from Durg Rural and Rajnandgaon constituencies making trips to Anjora for canvassing ahead of the elections. “Sometimes people get confused as candidates from both constituencies visit the village for campaigning,” quipped Anju Sahu, sarpanch of Anjora.



panchayat (Rajnandgaon side). Though the village is divided by streets, people here have coexisted peacefully and celebrate festivals and other functions together, said Sahu, also a Congress leader. Sahu said her paternal home is in Anjora B area which votes for the Durg rural seat, while her in-laws vote for the Rajnandgaon constituency. Polling to the 90-member Chhattisgarh assembly will be held in two phases this month. While Rajnandgaon is among the 20 seats that will go to polls in the first phase on November 7, the remaining 70 constituencies, including Durg rural, will vote in the second phase on November 17. Makhanlal Sahu, husband of Anjora B panchayat sarpanch Sangeeta Sahu, said Rajnandgaon district was formed in 1973 after being carved from Durg district (in erstwhile Madhya Pradesh). Since then, the village has been divided into two panchayats. The delimitation for assembly

seats was also done in such a manner that half of the village falls in one constituency and the other half in the other segment, he said. There are also such families in the village whose half of the members had to vote for Rajnandgaon constituency and the other half for Durg Rural, he said. Both Rajnandgaon and Durg Rural are prominent constituencies where high-profile candidates like former chief minister Raman Singh and the state’s incumbent home minister Tamradhwaj Sahu are in the fray. BJP has fielded Raman Singh from his incumbent Rajnandgaon seat, whereas Girish Dewanagn, current chairman of Chhattisgarh State Mineral Development Corporation, is the Congress’ nominee. In Durg rural seat, the Congress has fielded minister Sahu, a prominent OBC leader of the ruling party in the state, while the BJP has fielded a new face, Lalit Chandrakar.

NIA chargesheet against 7 accused in Pune ISIS terror module case filed

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a charge-sheet against seven ISIS members accused of being involved in a conspiracy to carry out terror attacks in different parts of the country, an official said on Sunday. They were charge-sheeted before the NIA Special Court here under various sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the Explosive Substances Act, the Arms Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in the Pune-based ISIS module case, the spokesperson of the federal agency said. The official identified the charge-sheeted accused as “Mohammad Imran-Mohammad Yusuf Khan alias ‘Matka’ alias ‘Amir Abdul Hameed Khan’ and Mohammad Yunus-Mohammad Yakub Saki alias ‘Adil’ alias ‘Adil Saleem Khan’” of Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh; “Kadeer Dastagir Pathan alias ‘Abdul Kadeer’ and Seemab Nasiruddin Kazi” of Kondwa in Maharashtra’s Pune; and “Zulifkar Ali Barodawala alias ‘Lababhai’ alias ‘Saif’, Shamil Saquib Nachan and Aakif Ateeque Nachan” of Padgha in Maharashtra’s Thane. The accused were involved in collecting and raising funds for the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) with the intention to further its activities related to terror and violence, the spokesperson said. The official said it was found that the accused organised ter-



rorist training camps, harboured known and wanted terrorists, and committed acts preparatory to the fabrication of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). “In addition, they were also found in possession of IEDs, firearms, and ammunition,” the spokesperson said, adding that they had hatched a conspiracy to further the terrorist activities of the ISIS, with the intention to strike terror amongst the people and threaten the security, integrity and sovereignty of India. “Investigations uncovered a larger conspiracy with international connections and the involvement of foreign-based ISIS handlers in the ongoing case. The investigation has unveiled a complex network of individuals committed to propagating the extremist ideology of the ISIS within India,” the official said. The official said the accused, as part of this network, also took



Local body polls likely to be delayed in J&K: Official

PTI ■ JAMMU

The Jammu local body and panchayat elections in Jammu and Kashmir are likely to be delayed as the administration is mulling changes to municipal acts and rules as well as a delimitation exercise to address skewed distribution of electors, officials said on Sunday. The Union Territory’s administration is considering the delimitation exercise for municipal wards and panchayat segments in the backdrop of a delimitation exercise that was carried out by the Election Commission for assembly and parliamentary seats, said the officials, requesting anonymity. The housing and urban development department is actively pursuing a communication from the office of the chief electoral officer, which, among other things, suggested transfer of mandate to conduct the municipal electoral processes to the State Election Commission (SEC) in accordance with constitutional provisions, they said. In Jammu and Kashmir, the chief electoral officer (CEO) is the authority to hold urban local body (ULB) elections in addition to Lok Sabha and assembly polls, while the SEC -- headed by a state election commissioner -- is mandated to conduct elections to Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI). On September 23, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee president Vikar Rasool Wani in a letter to Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had demanded holding of ULB elections under the SEC as mandated by the 74th amendment of the Constitution.

PUBLIC NOTICE

My client Mrs. Vimmi Nirmal (1/2 undivided share) and Mr. Sudhir Nirmal (1/2 undivided share) had purchased Entire First Floor without roof rights of Property No. BL-78, Plot No. 78, Block-L, measuring 200 Sq.Yards, Khasra No. 871-872, Anand Vihar, L-Block, Hari Nagar, Village Tihar, New Delhi from Smt. Alka Sahni wife of Sri Sanjay Sahni by virtue of Sale Deed registered as Document No. 23749, registered on 13.09.2023 with the Office of the Sub-Registrar-IIB Janakpuri, New Delhi, and my clients is mortgaging the same to LIC HFL. If anybody including Bank, Financial Institutions, persons, relative has any claim, right, interest whatsoever in the said property shall inform within 15 days to the undersigned with documentary evidence. In the event of no response to this notice, than our client shall presume that title of the said property is unencumbered and clear. Karnail Singh, Advocate, K-8, Basement, Jungpura Extension New Delhi Contact No. 9811163363 & 9953683363.

BJP releases fifth list of picks for Rajasthan

PTI ■ JAIPUR

The BJP on Sunday released its fifth list of 15 candidates, which includes some fresh faces, for the November 25 Rajasthan Assembly elections. With the fifth list, the party has so far announced candidates for 197 out of 200 seats in the state. The party has dropped sitting MLA from Mawli (Udaipur) Dhammarayan Joshi and fielded K G Palival instead. The party has also changed two candidates announced earlier. Among the new faces fielded by the party are Gopal Sharma, a journalist, from Civil Lines, businessman Ravi Nayyar from Adarsh Nagar, and Upen Yadav,



who held demonstrations and agitations on the issues of unemployed youths during the Congress rule, from Shahpura. The party is yet to declare the candidates for Barmer, Pachpadra and Badi seats. The BJP had announced Poonam Kanwar Bhati, the

daughter-in-law of former minister Devi Singh Bhati, and Sarika Chaudhary as candidate from Baran-Atru seat in the third list on November 2. However, in the fresh list, Poonam Kanwar Bhati was replaced by her son Anshuman Singh Bhati in Kolayat seat. The BJP has also replaced Sarika Chaudhary with Radheshyam Bairwa in Baran-Atru seat. While Amit Chaudhary has been fielded from Hanumangarh, Chandramohan Batvada from Kishanpur, Vijay Bansal from Bharatpur, former MLAs Rajkumar Rinwa from Sardarshahar, Prahlad Gunjal from Kota North and Babu Singh Rathore from Shergarh.

The candidates for Rajakhera, Masuda, Pipalda and Baran-Atru seats were also announced. Journalist Gopal Sharma has been fielded from Jaipur’s Civil Lines against Congress candidate and minister Pratap Singh Khachariawas. Former MLA Prahlad Gunjal has been made the party’s candidate from Kota North seat, which is held by Rajasthan Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal. Gunjal is considered to be former chief minister Vasundhara Rajé’s loyalist. The Congress is yet to announce its candidate for this seat. The last date of filing nomination is November 6.

India sends relief materials for quake victims in Nepal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Sunday sent medicines and other relief materials to Nepal for its earthquake-affected people. Over 150 people have been killed and more than 160 injured after an earthquake struck several areas in western Nepal on Friday. India sent the relief materials in a military transport aircraft of the Indian Air Force (IAF). “Providing emergency relief assistance to earthquake-affected areas of Nepal. As a first responder, India delivers medicines and relief material. PM

@ n a r e n d r a m o d i ’ s Neighbourhood First policy in action.” External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on X. The relief consignments were handed over to Nepalese authorities by Indian Ambassador to Nepal Naveen Srivastava. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday had expressed anguish over the loss of lives and damage caused by the earthquake in Nepal. Modi said India stands in solidarity with its neighbouring country and is ready to extend all possible assistance.

'Farm fires in UP, Haryana major contributors to city's air pollution'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

With the city's toxic air showing no signs of improvement for the seventh straight days, Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Sunday blamed Haryana and Uttar Pradesh Governments saying the impact of stubble burning in Punjab is not as significant for the national Capital as the smoke emanating from farm fires from these two States.

According to Rai, as per the Central government's data, "Central Government figures show that less stubble has been burned in Punjab this year in comparison to last year. Punjab's stubble smoke does not have as much impact on Delhi as that of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. This is because there is no movement in the wind. Only if the wind blows, the smoke of Punjab will reach Delhi. Right now, there is smoke all around Delhi. The smoke of stubble from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh is reaching Delhi".

However, since there is an AAP government in Punjab, Rai almost given a clean hit to the stubble-burning incidents



in Punjab, claiming that the number of stubble-burning incidents in Punjab has halved in a year. He also cited the low wind speed to assert that the smoke from Punjab does not reach Delhi.

AAP has been saying that stubble burning has come down heavily in Punjab, but the latest mapping of fires across the world by US space agency NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) shows the overwhelming majority of fires in

North India are concentrated in Punjab.

The rest of the states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh only have isolated incidents of fire. Earlier Rai on Saturday wrote to Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav, asking him to convene an emergency meeting with the NCR States to address the issue. Rai urged the Centre to permit only CNG, electric, and BS VI-compliant vehicles in Delhi-NCR to combat vehicular pollution.

Blaming Uttar Pradesh for the pollution in Delhi, Rai had said, "Delhi government has been trying its best to curb the air pollution. Anand Vihar has the highest AQI. I came here and found out that all buses are BS3 and BS4 coming from Uttar Pradesh. I appeal to Yogiji to not send these vehicles to Delhi. Electric buses and CNG vehicles ply in Delhi. Bus depot manager and traffic staff have also been careless to allow these banned vehicles inside Delhi."

Primary schools shut till Friday as air remains hazardous



Ranjan Dimri

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

As the air quality index (AQI) of Delhi has been increasing which already reached hazardous category and there is no sign to end this in the coming days, Delhi Education Minister Atishi on Sunday said primary schools in Delhi will remain closed till November 10 given the worsening air pollution situation in the national capital. Schools in Delhi have been given the option of shifting to online classes for students of grades 6-12.

"As pollution levels continue to remain high, primary schools in Delhi will stay closed till 10th November. For grades 6-12, schools are being given the option of shifting to online classes," Atishi said in a post on X. "In view of the AQI of Delhi breaching the 'Severe' category (with 400+ AQI), it is ordered that physical classes from Pre School to Class V shall further remain suspended upto November 10, 2023. For classes VI onwards, the Heads of Schools shall have the option either to call students for physical classes or to have these classes conducted online - depending on the digital infrastructure & readiness of the school to conduct online classes," stated in the order issued by the Directorate of Education. "Wherever the classes are not being held physically, all teachers shall continue to come to schools regularly and take online classes sincerely. HoDs to inform parents of students about these arrangements

immediately. Further orders will be issued in due course of time," it said.

The Centre on Sunday ordered a ban on construction work related to linear public projects in Delhi-NCR and the entry of polluting trucks and commercial four-wheelers into the capital as an air quality crisis gripped the region. These measures constitute the final stage, Stage IV, of the Centre's air pollution control plan, which is activated at least three days before the Air Quality Index surpasses the 450 mark in the Capital.

The development comes as the air quality in Delhi and its surrounding areas continues to remain in the 'severe' category for the third straight day. The Commission of Air Quality Management (CAQM) on Sunday ordered a ban on construction work related to linear public projects in Delhi-NCR and the entry of polluting trucks and commercial four-wheelers into the capital as an air quality crisis gripped the region. These measures constitute the final stage, Stage IV, of the Centre's air pollution control plan, which is activated at least three days before the Air Quality Index surpasses the 450 mark in the capital. The overall AQI of Delhi stood at 460 as of 7 am on Sunday. The AQI stood at 490 in Dwarka Sector 9, 482 in IGI Airport T3, 479 in Bawana, 478 in Wazirpur, 465 in Jahangirpuri, 464 in Aya Nagar, 430 in Lodhi Road, and at 478 in Siri Fort.

MANUAL SCAVENGING Strictly comply with SC ruling: HC to city Government, MCD



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the city Government and civic authorities to ensure compliance with the decision of the Supreme Court on strict implementation of law for eradication of manual scavenging.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma observed that the top court has passed various directions on the issue, including enhanced compensation amount of Rs 30 lakh for sewer deaths and minimum ₹20 lakh compensation in case of permanent disability.

"The apex court has issued various other directions to ensure that the practice of manual scavenging stands completely eradicated. The Government of NCT of Delhi, the Delhi Jal Board, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and all other authorities are directed to strictly comply with the judgment delivered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court," said the bench, also comprising Justice Tushar Rao Gedela, in a recent order. "The apex court has enhanced the compensation amount for sewer deaths from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 30 lakh, and in case of sewer victims suffering disabilities, the compensation is to be fixed depending on the severity of the disabilities. The minimum

compensation to be awarded to sewer victims suffering from disabilities has been fixed at Rs 10 lakh and in case the disability is permanent and renders the victim economically helpless, the compensation must not be less than ₹20 lakh," the court observed.

The high court's order came on a batch of petitions seeking strict enforcement of the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR Act) and its rules. The bench observed that in view of the Supreme Court's order, which was passed while dealing with a prayer for the implementation of the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 and the PEMSAR Act and for the imposition of a blanket ban on manual scavenging, no further orders were required to be passed on the present batch of petitions.

"The Hon'ble Supreme Court in the aforesaid judgment has issued various directions for strict enforcement of the 1993 Act and the PEMSAR Act... In light of the aforesaid judgment delivered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, no further orders are required to be passed in the present writ petitions and the same are, accordingly, disposed of," said the court.

Owner unleashes Pitbull onto woman for questioning dog's defecation near her home

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

A woman was attacked and injured by a Pitbull dog in the Suroop Nagar area on Friday. The incident took place after a dispute over Pitbull peeing and defecating in front of the woman's house. According to the police, the woman, Riya Devi, who works as a doctor at a local clinic, had objected to the dog peeing and defecating outside her house when its owner allegedly unleashed it on her. Devi tries to fight off the dog, and nearby people also rush to her aid. In the end, the owner, with help from his other family members, succeeds in freeing the woman from his pet and carries the animal inside. She also alleged she was chased and the dog bit her multiple times. Devi's injuries included bites on her hands, legs, and face. She was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment.

As per her complaint, she was standing outside her house on Friday afternoon when she saw the Pitbull defecating. She also alleged she was chased and the dog bit her multiple times. A video of the incident shows the woman standing outside a house and the dog near her. After a while, it is seen jumping on her and attacking her. Residents are then seen rushing



to help her and removing the dog. The owner is later seen taking the Pitbull inside. The police said the dog owner also pushed Devi to the ground. They said she suffered injuries to her hands, legs, and face, and was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment. The police have registered a case against the owner under Indian Penal Code (IPC) Section 289 (negligent conduct with respect to animals). The owner was also detained and released later. The woman and other residents alleged the owner allowed the Pitbull to defecate in front of other's houses and that the dog had previously attacked children. The police said they are probing the allegations. Devi alleged that the neighbour allowed his dog to defecate outside her house every day. She said that she had objected to it in the past as well.

16 JNU students get notice for protesting outside VC's house

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Four representatives of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students Union (JNUSU) and 12 hostel presidents have received an inquiry notice for protesting outside the Vice Chancellor's residence, according to an official notification. No immediate response from Proctor Satish Gargoti was available in this regard. The students have been directed to appear before the proctor on November 7 for the inquiry. The inquiry has been called based on a complaint received by the chief security officer regarding the involvement of these students in a protest in front of the VC's residence on September 19. "Students of JNUSU and hostel presidents demonstrated outside the residence of the vice chancellor after water supply in at least five hostels were halted for several days," one of the students who have received the notice and JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh said. "Till date, some of these hostels which house around 700-800 students face shortage of water with the supply running for only five hours a day," she claimed. JNUSU has called for a meeting of all students' organisations on Sunday to discuss the

matter. The students' union will visit the proctor's office on Monday for negotiation. Man receives multiple stab injuries on neck, hand in attack in Delhi's Nihal Vihar New Delhi, Nov 5 (PTI) A 25-year-old man received multiple stab injuries on his neck and hand in an alleged attack by two men in Delhi's Nihal Vihar, police said on Sunday. According to police, a PCR call was received on Saturday evening that a man received multiple stab injuries on his neck and hand after two men attacked him near Hanuman Mandir.

"A police team was dispatched to the location, which got to know that the victim had been shifted to a hospital. He was identified as Hashim, a resident of Nagloi," said a senior police official. Police said Hashim told them that he was attacked by two unknown men all of a sudden over unknown reasons. An FIR under sections 307 (attempt to murder) and 34 (criminal act done by several persons in furtherance of the common intention) of the IPC has been lodged, police said. "We are scanning the CCTV footage to know about the sequence of events. The accused will be arrested soon," said the police officer.

Schoolchildren enact life journey of danseuse Sudha, athlete Arunima

STAFF REPORTER ■ NOIDA

In a departure from the conventional practice of fulfilled cultural events at the secondary schools, Noida-based Father Agnel School (FAS) on Saturday mesmerised the audience by enacting on the theme "sky is the limit" even for differently-abled who can reach the zenith of Mount Everest. In its annual day celebrations titled -Aparajita- the senior wing students depicted the journeys of legendary danseuse Sudha Chandran and athlete Arunima Sinha beginning with rendering of motivational poem 'Agneepath' by Harivansh Rai Bachchan.



The students conducted a narration and then enacted the life of Sudha, 1965 born, Bharatanatyam dancer. She lost her leg in a road accident near in Tamil Nadu when she was 16 but decided not to give up and started performing with one leg and then she got a prosthetic leg. She was awarded National Film Award for the Telugu film Mayuri based on her life. She also worked in films during her prime career. Sudha was enacted by class 10 student, Pavaki Jha, who justified the role from early hood, the tragic accident and then going back to stage perfor-

mance. Pavaki danced on one leg for almost five minutes leaving the audience spellbound and with moist eyes. The another awestruck performance were by Adrija Roy of class 11th and Vidya of class nine, for childhood and later life, respectively, who played the role of Arunima Sinha, world's first female amputee to scale Everest. Arunima had lost her left leg after she was pushed from a running train by robbers in 2011 while she was resisting them. She had also suffered injuries of the spinal cord. She did not give up and then she aimed to climb each of the con-

tinents' highest peaks and hoist the national flag of India and she did it with artificial legs. Present on the occasion were FAS Director Rev Jose Alarico Carvalho, FAS Noida Principal Alexander Coates Reid, the school administration of all the FAS Delhi-NCR, parents, students and other special invites. A day earlier the same performance was presented for the visiting school students from France and Germany. The other events of the day was songs and themes based on the recent ongoing international conflicts as well as the domestic like that of Manipur. In his address to the gathering,

Carvalho said Agnel School has always relished the fact that we are different and that is stated loudly in Institutional Logo "Love Your Neighbour As Yourself", as well as in the School crest; "Big Hearts, Brave Minds". "Both are challenging because both demand choosing a different way. When we are generally inclined to do what is best for us, our logo urges us to look at the other, as our neighbour. As we know it, we are not referring to a physical neighbour but to someone who needs our help, our understanding, and our forgiveness," Carvalho said.

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ASK Automotive Ltd, is proposing, subject to applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, receipt of requisite approvals, market conditions and other considerations, to make an initial public offering of its Equity Shares and has filed the RHP dated October 30, 2023 with the Registrar of Companies, Delhi and Haryana at New Delhi, Delhi ("RoC"). The RHP shall be available on the website of the Company at www.askbrake.com/inspection-material-document1, the website of the SEBI at www.sebi.gov.in, websites of the book running lead managers JM Financial Limited at www.jmfi.com, AxisCapital Limited at www.axiscapital.co.in, ICICI Securities Limited at www.icicisecurities.com, IIFL Securities Limited at www.iiflcap.com and websites of the Stock Exchanges i.e. BSE and NSE at www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com, respectively. Potential Investors should note that investment in equity shares involves a high degree of risk. For details, potential investors should refer to the RHP which has been filed with the RoC, including the section titled "Risk Factors". Potential investors should not rely on the DRHP filed with the SEBI in making any investment decision. The Equity Shares offered in the Offer have not been and will not be registered under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933, as amended ("U.S. Securities Act"), or any state law of the United States and, unless so registered, may not be offered or sold within the United States, except pursuant to an exemption from, or in a transaction not subject to, the registration requirements of the U.S. Securities Act and applicable state securities laws. Accordingly, such Equity Shares are being offered and sold, outside of the United States in offshore transactions in reliance on Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act and the applicable laws of the jurisdiction where those offers and sales occur. There will be no offering of the Equity Shares in the United States.

Adfactors

Campaigning for Mizoram, 1st phase Chhattisgarh polls ends

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/RAIPUR/AIZWAL

Campaign for the first phase of Assembly elections that begins on Tuesday came to an end on Sunday evening for the single phase Mizoram Assembly elections and first phase Chhattisgarh with top political leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi shutting for rallies between the north eastern state and the Chhattisgarh and another poll bound Madhya Pradesh which goes to polls on November 17. The other States which would vote in assembly elections this month are Rajasthan single phase on November 25 and Telangana on November 30.

Sending polling parties to the inaccessible and Maoist affected polling booths in the first phase of elections started on Sunday. 42 polling parties in Sukma district and 34 polling parties in Bijapur district were transported to the polling stations through helicopters. The second phase Chhattisgarh polls will be held on November 17 and counting for all is scheduled for December 3. On the last day of the campaign, Modi visited Dongargarh, a pilgrimage spot, and met Jain seer Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj. The PM also prayed at Maa Bamleshwari Devi temple. Apart from Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Uttar

Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma campaigned in the first phase, while the Congress' bid to retain power was led by Rahul Gandhi, party president Mallikarjun Kharge, Priyanka Gandhi and Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel. In the 2018 Assembly polls, the Congress had won 17 out of the 20 seats that will go to polls in the first phase. The Congress has 71 seats in the 90-member House. The second phase of polls to 70 seats will take place on November 17, while results will be counted on December 3. The north eastern state Mizoram this time witnessed a high voltage campaign with



the political landscape shifting from bi-polar to multi-corner contest which saw presence of more national and regional parties in the electoral fray indicating a stiff fight across all constituencies. The ruling Mizo National Front is banking on its achievements and "Zo" nationalism while the Congress is looking for a comeback by pushing the agenda of "Trang Puihna. The Zoram People's Movement is fighting for a new system of governance - "Kalphung Thar" while the BJP is pushing the agenda of Good Governance and Development. The new entrant Aam Aadmi Party is fighting on the plank of "Corruption Free Mizoram".

While Mizoram will go for a single phase of Assembly polls on November 7 to elect 40 members of the Mizoram Legislative Assembly, polling for the first phase in Chhattisgarh will be held in 20 assembly constituencies same day. Counting will take place on December 3 alongwith all other states where are elections are scheduled this month. Meanwhile, incidents of Maoist violence have been reported in some areas of Bastar division. Maoists killed a BJP leader in Kausalnagar village of Maoist-affected Narayanpur district in Bastar division today evening while he was campaigning. The slain BJP leader was the district vice president of the party.

Earlier, on November 1, Maoists had abducted and killed three villagers in the border area of Maharashtra in Bastar division. The first phase of campaigning in Chhattisgarh saw Prime Minister attacking Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel over the alleged Mahadev betting app scam, while other leaders of the BJP spoke on religious conversion, deteriorating law and order and corruption. The ruling Congress based its campaign on the slew of welfare schemes of the Baghel government for farmers, women, tribals and Dalits, and also attacked the BJP-led Centre for "handing over" resources to "industrialist friends".

Panel likely to adopt draft reports on Bills to replace criminal laws today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Parliamentary committee scrutinising three bills to replace the existing criminal laws will meet on Monday to adopt draft reports, days after some Opposition members had sought an extension for the panel to go through the measures in greater detail. On October 27, the standing committee on Home could not adopt the three draft reports as some Opposition members pressed for more time to study it. Some opposition members had urged panel chairperson Brij Lal to seek an extension of three months in its tenure and "stop bulldozing these bills for short-term electoral gain". For making a robust legislation that serves the marginalised, the committee should not adopt a final report in the next



few days or in November. "We will be mocking the process of legislative scrutiny if we do so," an opposition MP had said in a communication, according to opposition sources. However, BJP sources said the committee has engaged in an extensive consultation process and will meet its deadline of

three months. The committee will now meet on November 6, according to a notice sent to members for adopting the three drafts. Sources said the panel may adopt the draft reports despite protests by some of its members from the opposition parties. Seeking a complete overhaul of

colonial-era criminal laws, Home Minister Amit Shah had introduced in Lok Sabha during the Monsoon session three bills to replace the Indian Penal Code (IPC), The Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 and the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 with Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam, respectively. The House later sent the bills after their introduction on August 11 to the committee for scrutiny and asked it to submit its report within three months. Sources have said that the committee is likely to recommend a raft of amendments in the three bills but will be sticking to their Hindi names, something fiercely contested by opposition MPs, including from the DMK. They have demanded English names for the proposed laws as well.

Rajnath approves extension of rules for maternity, child care leaves for women in Armed forces

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for extension of the rules for maternity, child care and child adoption leaves for women soldiers, sailors and air warriors in the Armed Forces on a par with their officer counterparts. With the issuing of the rules, the grant of such leaves to all women in the military, whether one is an officer or any other rank, will be equally applicable. Giving details of this important decision here on Sunday, defence ministry officials said the decision is in line with Rajnath's vision of inclusive participation of all women in the Armed Forces, irrespective of their ranks. The extension of leave rules will go a long way in dealing with



women-specific family and social issues relevant to the Armed Forces. This measure is going to improve the work conditions of women in the military and aid them to balance the spheres of professional and family life in a better manner, they said. At present, women officers get maternity leave of 180 days with full pay for each child, subject to a maximum of two children. Childcare leave of

360 days is granted in total service career (subject to the child being less than 18 years of age) to women officers, according to officials. Child adoption leave of 180 days is granted after the date of the valid adoption of a child below one year of age, they said. Furthering Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government's commitment towards utilising Nari Shakti, the three Services have spearheaded a paradigm shift with

inclusion of women as soldiers, sailors and air warriors. With the recruitment of women Agniveers, the Armed Forces will be empowered with the bravery, dedication and patriotism of women soldiers, sailors and air warriors to defend the land, sea and air frontiers of the country. From being operationally deployed in Siachen, the highest battlefield in the world to being posted on warships as well as dominating the skies, Indian women are now breaking barriers in almost every field in the Armed Forces. In 2019, a significant milestone was also achieved through recruitment of women in the Indian Army as soldiers in the Corps of Military Police. Rajnath has always been of the view that women should be on a par with their male counterparts in every field.

RS ethics panel to meet on Nov 7 to adopt draft on charges against Mahua

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha's Ethics Committee will meet on Tuesday to consider and adopt its draft report in relation to the 'cash-for-query' allegations levelled against TMC MP Mahua Moitra by BJP's Nishikant Dubey. The meeting for adopting the draft report means that the committee headed by BJP MP Vinod Kumar Sonkar has finished its enquiry and will now be making its recommendation after its members split along party lines in their last get-together on November 2. There are indications the committee may make a recommendation against her in its report to Speaker Om Birla amid a possibility of dissent notes from opposition members. BJP members are in a majority in the 15-member committee which is likely to take a grim view of Moitra's conduct, more so after she accused Sonkar of asking filthy and personal questions to her in the last meeting, a charge he denied. While Opposition members had echoed Moitra's view as they stormed out of the November 2 meeting, Dubey has accused Moitra of asking



questions in Lok Sabha to target the Adani Group at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani in exchange for bribes. He said it was Hiranandani who used her login to file questions from different places, mostly Dubai. All five opposition members had stormed out of the November 2 meeting, alleging that Sonkar asked personal and indecent questions to her regarding her travels, hotel stay and telephone calls. She later alleged that she was subjected to a "proverbial vastraharan" in the meeting. The committee chairperson dismissed opposition members' claims as a case of unethical conduct aimed at shielding her. Moitra has admitted that he

used her login details but has rejected any pecuniary considerations, asserting that most MPs share their login credentials with others. The decision of Moitra, who appeared before the panel as a subject of enquiry and thus lacked the privileges bestowed on its members, to walk out of the meeting is likely to be taken up critically by the committee in its report. Dubey has accused Moitra of asking questions in Lok Sabha to target the Adani Group at the behest of businessman Darshan Hiranandani in exchange for bribes. He said it was Hiranandani who used her login to file questions from different places, mostly Dubai.

Congress attacks BJP for its poll promises

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday alleged that the BJP's poll promises in State elections can be aptly described as "Modi's jumlas" as the Prime Minister had earlier dubbed such measures as "revidis". On his part Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge appealed to people in Mizoram to vote for his party, saying while the Congress had helped bring peace and stability in the state, the BJP and the RSS were "hell-bent on destroying" Mizo culture and way of life. In his appeal Kharge asserted the Congress stands for the protection of the northeastern state's people, land and natural resources as enshrined under Article 371-G of the Constitution, he asserted ahead of the November 7 assembly polls. The Article is a special provision for Mizoram. It states that no central law relating to religious or social practices, customary law and procedure, and ownership and transfer of land will be applicable unless the Mizoram assembly ratifies the same. Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh also accused the BJP of copying the Congress "guarantees" in their



manifestos for the upcoming assembly elections in five states. The Congress on Saturday dubbed the BJP's manifesto for the Chhattisgarh Assembly polls as a 'copy-cat'. "For almost a year now, the Prime Minister has been criticising what he derisively called 'revidis', which the Congress called its 'guarantees' to provide relief and assistance to crores of families suffering from the Modi Government's insensitive and anti-people economic policies," Ramesh said in a social media post. "Now, his party has shamelessly copied the Congress' 'guarantees' and has announced poll promises that would be termed in self-styled Vishwaguru's book as 'revidis'. The main difference is, not

surprisingly, they are being propagated as 'Modi's guarantees'. The apt description for these are 'Modi's jumlas,' the Congress leader said. "Yet another example of 'Modi Hai toh hypocrisy ki koi seema nahin hai', Ramesh said in his post. Assembly elections in five states of Mizoram, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana are beginning on November 7 and the counting of votes would be held on December 3. Congress is seeking to retain power in Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan and wresting it back from the BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram, where the BJP is in a coalition government. In Telangana, the Congress is seeking to oust the BRS.

Crest of Navy desi warship 'Surat' to be unveiled today

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Crest of Indian Navy's latest, indigenous under-construction, guided missile destroyer, 'Surat', will be unveiled by Gujarat Chief Minister in presence of Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar in Surat on Monday. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had earlier launched this warship on March 17, 2022 at Mumbai. This is the first warship of Indian Navy to be named after a city of Gujarat and this is also the first time that unveiling of the crest of a warship is being undertaken in the very city after which it has been named, navy officials said here on Sunday. Amongst the latest frontline 'Warship Projects' under construction, the 'Project 15B' programme involves construction of four next generation stealth guided missile destroyers, of which 'Surat' is the fourth and the last ship. It is presently under construction at the Mazagon Docks Shipbuilders Ltd. Mumbai. Construction of this warship testifies the nation's dedication to indigenous cutting-edge warship building technology and commitment



to strategic military advancements. It is a well-known fact that the city of Surat was the most important maritime trade link between India and many other countries from the 16th to the 18th century. The city was also a flourishing centre for ship building activities and the vessels built in Surat, during this period, were especially renowned for their longevity as some ships continued to be in service for more than 100 years. It is a maritime tradition and a naval custom according to which many of the Indian naval ships have been named after prominent cities of our nation. Indian Navy is therefore immensely proud of naming its latest and technologically the most advanced warship after the city of Surat.

BSF installs beehives on fence to check border crimes

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/KOLKATA

In a unique experiment to stop instances of cutting the hedge for cattle smuggling and other crimes, besides generating livelihood for the locals, the Border Security Force (BSF) has installed beehives on the India-Bangladesh border fence in West Bengal. The first-of-its kind initiative was launched recently by the BSF's 32nd battalion in the border areas of Nadia district with an aim of ensuring border security and helping the local populace through apiculture as part of the Centre's 'Vibrant Village Programme'. India and Bangladesh share a 4,096-km frontier, with West Bengal accounting for about 2,217 km. Officials said Ayush ministry

has been roped in by the BSF for the project. The ministry has provided the border-guarding force with the beehives and required expertise to fix those on the alloy-made "smart fence". The beehives on the fence will be a deterrent for the smugglers trying to cut the fence as any such attempt will disturb the bees and a swarm attack of the bees can seriously injure them, a BSF official explained. Honeybees hover over flowers to collect food and as pollinators, play a vital role in the production of many crops that are needed to feed the world's population. Bees are responsible for pollinating almost all crops worldwide, including fruits, vegetables and nuts. It has been estimated that without bees,



global crop yields could decrease by up to 35 per cent, the officials said, quoting Ayush ministry experts.

According to Sujeet Kumar, Commandant of the 32nd BSF battalion who conceptualised the idea, the force has

undertaken the initiative under the Centre's "Vibrant Village Programme" (VVP) and gone a step further by

requesting the Ayush ministry to provide it with medicinal plants that bear flowers and can be planted around these bee boxes so that the bees can pollinate in abundance. "The idea of tying beehives to the India-Bangladesh border fence was launched on November 2. The BSF will ensure that these bee boxes are accessible to the locals engaged in apiculture and there has been a very warm response from the villagers to this initiative," he said. Officials said the border areas under the South Bengal frontier of the BSF in Nadia district are prone to cross-border crimes like cattle, gold, silver and narcotics smuggling, and there have been instances in the past when miscreants and smugglers have either cut or attempted to cut the fence for

their illegal activities. While the exact numbers cannot be disclosed, the bee boxes are being put on the fence using a wooden support frame at regular intervals and in smuggling-prone vulnerable areas, the official said, requesting anonymity. He said the Ayush ministry has provided the BSF with saplings of medicinal plants like tulsi, ekangi, satmul, ashwagandha, aloe vera and the force personnel, along with the locals, are planting those in the border areas. Mustard too is being planted and a public camp was recently held in Kadipur village of Nadia where the locals were informed that the honey that they extract from these beehives will be sold through the established setup and shops of the BSF Wives' Welfare

Association. The profits made from the sale of the honey will go to the locals, the official said. Ayush ministry officials have also told the BSF that the locals have informed them about the Mango trees in the area not bearing good-quality fruits, but due to beekeeping in the border area, these plants could start producing good-quality fruits, which will help increase the income of the villagers. The BSF is the designated central force tasked with guarding the India-Bangladesh front. The "Vibrant Village Programme" launched recently by the Union government aims to ensure all-round development of the far-flung and remotely-located regions on the front.

11 lakh 'diyas' to be lit at Ganga ghats on Dev Deepawali

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

On the auspicious occasion of Dev Deepawali, the internationally famous 88-odd ghats on the banks of holy Ganga, known as Uttarwahini (flows towards the north) as well as its sandy land across the river will be illuminated with about 11 lakh diyas (earthen lamps) on November 27. When Maa Ganga is decorated with garlands of lamps on the half-moon (semi-circled) shaped

ghats of river Ganga, it seems amazing as it looks like the stars have come down to the ground. Lakhs of Indian and foreign tourists come to Kashi to see this memorable event every year.

The state government has made an arrangement that out of 11 lakh diyas to be lighted, one lakh will be made from cow dung.

Deputy Director of Tourism department Rajendra Kumar Rawat said that out of

11 lakh lamps, one lakh lamps will be made from cow dung. According to him, about six lakh diyas will be lit on the ghats, while five lakh will make the sandy areas across the river illuminated on the auspicious occasion.

Besides, attractive electric skirting will also be installed on the sand across the Ganga so that the sand areas can also be completely illuminated. The tourists will also be able to enjoy pollution-free green

crackers on the sand across the Ganga.

Meanwhile, preparations including repair of damaged ghats and cleanliness are going on to make the festival a memorable one. Besides, thousands of diyas will also be lit on ponds and other water resources including the ghats of river Varuna. Due to the popularity of the festival, rush of booking hotels, guest houses, boats, cruises etc has already started being seen.

AYUCON-23 organised at IMS BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Vice-Chancellor of Uttarakhand Ayurveda University Prof Arun Kumar Tripathi said that Ayurveda therapy can easily benefit the prevention of various diseases the people are suffering in the present time and treatment of acute fever can be avoided by consuming basil leaves and black pepper orally only throughout the year. He was speaking as the chief guest at the inaugural function of 'AYUCON-23: A National Conference on Mainstreaming of Ayurveda in Primary Health Care', organised by the All India Ayurvedic Specialist PG Association (AIASPGA), Varanasi branch, in association with Department of Dravyaguna, Faculty of Ayurveda, Institute of Medical Science (IMS), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) at Seminar Complex, IMS BHU here on Saturday.

Prof Tripathi, while speaking about the AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres being run by the Union Ministry of AYUSH, said that Uttarakhand is the first state where AYUSH and yoga policies are applicable and emphasised that Ayurveda education should be such that students are multi-directional, making them successful doctors.

IMS BHU Director Prof SN Sankhwar, while speaking as the special guest, said that Ayurveda has been protecting the health of people since ancient times.

He advised people to use more and more harmless medicines like Ayurveda and Panchakarma. In the beginning, the organising president



AYUCON-23 being organised at IMS BHU in Varanasi on Saturday.

of the programme Prof Rajendra Prasad, Prof JS Tripathi, organising secretary Dr Rashi Sharma and coordinator Dr Ajay Kumar welcomed the guests. Prof Rajendra Prasad threw light on the organisation AIASPGA, its establishment, and its main purposes. Dr Ajay Kumar talked about the theme of the conference and the outline of the programme.

The programme was inaugurated by lighting the lamps in the presence of Prof Arun Kumar Tripathi, Prof SN Sankhwar, Dean of Faculty of Ayurveda (IMS BHU) Prof PK Goswami, Padma Shri Prof Manoranjan Sahu, former Director, All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi; and former Dean, Faculty of Ayurveda and Prof Shashi Singh, Principal, Government Ayurveda College in front of portrait of Lord Dhanvantari. They also offered floral tributes

to the bust of Mahamana Madan Mohan Malviya.

Prof PK Goswami, while explaining the new research on Ayurveda being done in the Faculty of Ayurveda, said that if the patient comes to the treatment of Ayurveda in the initial stage, then he/she can get rid of diseases soon. Padma Shri Prof Manoranjan Sahu spoke prominently on the reasons hindering the backwardness of Ayurveda and emphasised on more and more evidence-based research in Ayurveda, with an emphasis on increasing the budget for Ayurveda.

Prof Shashi Singh discussed the use of Ayurveda in gynaecology and obstetric diseases and various dietary methods and the programme was presided over by Prof VD Agrawal.

The seminar was attended by 300 people from about 10 states and about 200 research papers were presented in a

total of four plenary and 20 scientific sessions. Apart from these, there were 10 special lectures in which eminent scholars like Prof M Sahu, Prof Anand Chaudhary, Prof Ramakant Yadav and Dr SP Gupta delivered their lectures. On the occasion, Prof B Ram, Dr Rashi Sharma, Dr Anubha and Dr Ajay Kumar of the Department of Dravyaguna were awarded the Ayurveda Bhushan Award for their outstanding contributions in the field of Ayurveda.

The inaugural function was conducted by Dr Devanand Upadhyay and Dr Anubha Srivatsav while the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Rashi Sharma. Prof Sangeeta Gehlot, Prof CS Pandey, Vaideya Sushil Kumar Dubey, Dr Mangala Gauri, Dr Nitin Sharma, Prof Paliwal, Dr Sanat Kumar, Prof Neeru Nathani, Dr Mamta etc were present on the occasion.

Increase in chikungunya cases

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The number of chikungunya cases has gone up to 258 this year in Sangam city due to higher exposure to the infection in urban areas, health officials said.

Figures of the Health department revealed that out of 258 cases, 255 cases were reported in urban areas while remaining three in rural areas.

District malaria officer (Prayagraj), AK Singh, said, "This was the first time when cases of chikungunya were reported on UDSP (Urban Disease Surveillance Portal) in the city. As there was much more exposure to this virus from the last couple of months, it is spreading to some specific urban pockets."

Eight localities of city west areas, including Kalindipuram, Mundera, Sulemsarai, TP Nagar and adjoining areas are already under the scanner of health department.

The DMO said, "Chikungunya is transmitted

to humans when infected female mosquitoes bite them. Most commonly, the mosquitoes involved are Aedes aegypti and Aedes albopictus. These two species can also transmit other mosquito-borne viruses including dengue. They bite throughout daylight hours, although there may be peaks of activity in the early morning and late afternoon."

Senior medical officer, Dr Anupam Dwivedi said, "For protection during outbreaks of chikungunya, clothing which minimises skin exposure to day-biting mosquitoes is advised. Treatment is done on a case-to-case basis," he added.

Those infected show symptoms within three to seven days after a mosquito bite. The virus can cause acute, subacute or chronic disease. Most patients get better within one to two weeks, while some may suffer joint and muscle pain for months.

"The patients had a set of concerning symptoms, including fever, joint pain, and skin rashes. Doctors said that to

address these health issues effectively, a proactive approach to prevention is recommended. This entails safeguarding oneself from vector-borne diseases, primarily transmitted by mosquitoes. Besides, individuals are encouraged to take precautions such as wearing full-sleeve shirts to reduce exposure to mosquito bites and utilising mosquito repellent as an additional protective measure," added Dwivedi.

Moreover, it is essential to collectively engage in environmental responsibility by eliminating stagnant water sources nearby as they serve as breeding grounds for disease-carrying mosquitoes, contributing significantly to the prevention efforts. Apart from this, weather conditions are optimal for virus and mosquitoes' survival due to easily available stagnant water and relatively warmer temperatures. Hence, there is an increase in the number of cases of chikungunya.

PROTEST: Students protested in front of the Union Gate of the university and

demanding action against the chief proctor who allegedly resorted to lathicharge.

Students said is highly condemnable that the district administration is not taking action. The district administration is registering cases against the students for entering the campus, while the chief proctor who 'lathicharge' is being given 'protection'.

They said that suspension, expulsion of students, restricting entry into the campus etc. by the university administration is 'undemocratic' and a violation of freedom of expression. Suspended research student Manish Kumar said the protest will continue until chief proctor is arrested.

Sudhir, a student, said that the university administration and the district administration are together suppressing the students. This oppression of students will not be tolerated at all, he added.

Avinash, Harendra, Navneet, Ashu, Vivek, Aman, Gaurav, Anurag etc were present on this occasion.

Atiq's benami property worth ₹ 12.42 crore detected

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Another benami property worth ₹ 12.42 crore of slain mafia Atiq Ahmed has been detected. Atiq had got land worth ₹ 12.42 crore registered in the name of mason Huhlah allegedly by threatening him. He reached the police commissioner's house on Saturday and handed over all the documents related to the land to the official.

Police investigation

revealed that on August 14, 2015, gang leader Atiq invested his money and bought the houses of 14 poor people in different areas located in Kathula Gauspur whose total area is 23,447 square metres. It was allegedly forcibly purchased in the name of a poor person. These lands have been identified by the police and revenue department. According to circle rate, the total value of these lands is ₹ 12,42,69,100.

Deputy Commissioner of

Police Deepak Bhukar said a report has been sent to the police commissioner to take action for confiscation. The other benami and known properties of Atiq are also being investigated. As soon as they come to notice, other illegally acquired properties will also be confiscated by taking action as per Section 14(1) of the Gangsters Act.

A case under Gangsters Act has been registered in Dhoomanganj police station

against gang leader of IS-227 gang, Atiq Ahmed, son of Haji Firoz Ahmed, of 95 D Chakia police station, Khulabad. During investigation the police administration has so far seized properties worth ₹ 1,800 crore of Atiq. Prayagraj Development Authority's bulldozer has roared on these illegal properties. After freeing the illegally occupied land in Lukerganj, the Yogi government has built 76 flats on it and given the keys to the poor.

Closing ceremony of vigilance awareness campaign held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The closing ceremony of vigilance awareness campaign was held at the community centre of IFFCO Ghyanagar Ghulpur in which the chief guest was Mukesh Mishra, member of the Public Service Commission. The programme started with lighting of lamp by the dignitaries at the idol of Goddess Saraswati. He said that the first step of nationalism is morality. He said IFFCO ranks first in the world in the cooperative sector and being an agricultural country, the importance of this institution is even greater.

Senior Executive Director (Unit Head) Sanjay Kudesia said that vigilance is an idea that paves the way to take our thinking in the right direction. Chief Vigilance Officer Ajay Kumar Mishra said the importance of honesty and eradication of corruption is the foundation of sustainable development. He said that we are determined to spread the importance of transparency to every person.

The programme was conducted by Manoj Tripathi and vote of thanks was proposed by Hemlata Sijoria. General Manager Sanjay Vaish and MD. Mishra, Joint General Managers AP Rajendran and SK Singh, IFFCO Officers' Association president Anurag Tiwari and general secretary Swayam Prakash, IFFCO Employees' Union president Pankaj Pandey and general secretary Vinay Yadav, PRO Sonu Tiwari and a large number of employees, women and children were present. During the vigilance awareness campaign, various competitions were organised and the winners were rewarded. Their names are as follows- Quiz competition by headquarters — Employee category: Animesh Singh, Vivek Yadav, Sukriti Singh, Arvind Chauhan, Ujjwal Khare

Slogan Competition (Topic: Resist corruption, be dedicated to the nation)

Employee category: AK Srivastava, Santosh Kumar Shukla, Anirudh Tiwari, Manish Singh

Dependent category: Dr Madhu Singh, Vandana Pandey, Shrishti Shivhare, Divya Singh

Discussion Competition (Topic: How effective is the role of education in eradicating corruption.)

Employee category: SK Singh, Arvind Chauhan, Neetu Singh, JS Dwivedi

Dependent category: Savita Dwivedi, Shubha Patel, Subodhna Sharma, Yashita Sharma

Essay competition (Topic: Role of Information Technology in Eradicating Corruption)

Employee category: SK Singh, Neetu Singh, Amarnath Mishra and others were present. Encouraging the children the governor said during the tour not only have fun and but also expand knowledge. The governor told the children that if they wanted to move forward, do something, then set a goal and take a resolution that no matter what the world says they had to move forward and accomplish the goal of becoming a doctor, engineer, IAS, PCS.

CHILDREN VISIT RAJ BHAVAN: For the children living in slums of various Dalit and slum areas of Prayagraj city South Assembly constituency, meeting the governor at the Raj Bhavan was no less than a dream. But UP Industrial

Development Minister Nand Gopal Nandi turned their dream into reality. He made around 900 people, including children and their parents from 51 Dalits and slums of his assembly constituency, the guests of the Raj Bhavan.

The governor also had lunch with these children and their parents. Seeing the affection of the governor, the grandeur of the Raj Bhavan and magnificent decorations and arrangements, the children were filled with joy. Apart from the minister, former mayor, his wife Abhilasha Gupta Nandi and Prayagraj mahanagar president Rajendra Mishra and others were present. Encouraging the children the governor said during the tour not only have fun and but also expand knowledge. The governor told the children that if they wanted to move forward, do something, then set a goal and take a resolution that no matter what the world says they had to move forward and accomplish the goal of becoming a doctor, engineer, IAS, PCS.

Varanasi Cyclothon 2023 organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Varanasi Cyclothon, 2023 contest was organised from two places in the city on Sunday under Sansad Khel Pratiyogita Kashi, 2023. The contest for the participants aged below 18 years was organised from Uday Pratap College, while the same for the participants aged above 18 years was organised from Sarnath Museum.

The MLA Saurabh Srivastava flagged off the Varanasi Cyclothon, 2023 contest organised from Uday Pratap College for the participants aged below 18 years. It culminated at Sarnath Museum by passing through the areas of Police Line crossing, Pahadia and Ashapur crossing.

The Varanasi Cyclothon, 2023 organised from Sarnath Museum for the participants



The DM S Rajalingam flagging off Varanasi Cyclothon, 2023.

aged above 18 years, was flagged off by the District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam. It culminated at Uday Pratap College by covering the areas of Ring Road, Harahua Crossing and St Atulanand Convent

School. The participants in large numbers participated in the Varanasi Cyclothon with their bicycles. As many as 50 male participants and 10 female participants were honoured at

Uday Pratap College and Sarnath Museum each with medals.

The Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal, and other officers were present on the occasion.

Heart India Conclave held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Heart India Conclave, 2023 was on Sunday organised at Indian Medical Association (IMA) building in Chetganj here.

The expert cardiologists expressed their concern over the increasing number of sudden cardiac death, heart failure, hypertension and other heart related diseases particularly in youths and advised the youths to make practice in gym under the skilled trainers and pay serious attention to their weight.

They also advised the youths to pay attention to life station modification.

The senior doctor of city Dr PR Sinha was honoured with LifeTime Award by the Heart India Conclave and Dr Rajani Sharma was honoured with the Best Paper Award,



while Dr Vikas Tiwari was honoured with Best Paper Revolver Award.

In the beginning, the organising secretary Dr Alok Kumar Singh welcomed the

guests and participants. Dr Manoj Kumar Srivastava offered the vote of thanks at last. Dr Daldit Kaur, Dr Madhuri Nagori, Dr Ashutosh Marwa, Dr Umesh Pandey, Dr

Manoj Gupta, Dr Monika Gupta, Dr Vikas Agrawal, Dr JS Meharwal, Dr Bhupendra Verma, Dr Alankar Tiwari, Dr AK Singh and others were present on the occasion.

People's grievances heard on Samadhan Diwas

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan asked the officials to take the cases related to Sampurna Samadhan Diwas seriously and ensure disposal on merit.

While hearing the grievances of the people on 'Sampurna Samadhan Diwas' in Sadar tehsil on Saturday, she said people come with expectations that their problems will be solved on priority so it was our duty to do so in the same spirit. On the complaint lodged by Dhannu Pasi of Bhainsa village he was deprived of a proper route to his house, she directed BDO Majhawaan to solve the problem if possible under the provisions. On the complaint of Ram Sahare Saroj of Chehra village under Chhanbey block that someone had encroached the chak road by constructing a building, the DM directed the tehsildar to visit the spot and take action. Out of 243 cases the DM disposed of 15 on the spot and 15 teams were formed for disposing of the remaining cases. Superintendent of Police (SP)



District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan hearing the grievances of the people in Sadar tehsil on Saturday

Abhinandan, Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS, joint magistrate Alok Prasad and others were present. Additional District Magistrate (ADM/Finance and Revenue) heard the public grievances in Lalganj tehsil, ADM (land revenue) at Madihan tehsil and ADM (Namami Gange) at Chunar tehsil.

INSPECTED: Divisional Commissioner Dr Muthukumarasamy B inspected the brief voters' list revision drive at AS Jubilee Inter College on Saturday. During it he interacted with the BLOs and said the eligibility date is January 1, 2024, and the names of those completing the required age on that date will have to be included. He asked the BLOs to work

with transparency and without any discrimination. He said the special drive will end on December 9. During the inspection he was accompanied by ADM (Finance and Revenue) Shiv Pratap Shukla.

ARRESTED: The Adalahaat police arrested an accused of rape on Saturday. A young woman in a named complaint lodged on Friday alleged that the accused had raped her.

After registering the case the police investigated the matter and arrested a resident of Kolna village under Adalahaat police station after completing the legal formalities the police sent him to jail.

Meanwhile the Rajgarh police on Saturday arrested an accused of enticing a minor girl away. One person had lodged a named first information report FIR at the Rajgarh police station on October 13 alleging that the accused had enticed his minor daughter away. The police registered the case. The police team succeeded in arresting the accused a resident of Ataari village under Madihan police station on Saturday.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Gasping for breath

Delhi is practically unliveable for humans as air quality index breaches the 460-mark

It is barely winter yet, but Delhi's air has already turned so toxic that it poses a serious health risk for the National Capital Region (NCR) residents. The existing pollution levels may prove even fatal for bronchial patients. Birds and animals, suffering from breathing problems, are being brought to animal hospitals in large numbers. The National Zoological Park is giving its inhabitants diets with multivitamins to mitigate the impact of polluted air. The Capital's air quality index (AQI) has spiked beyond 400, with the recommended figure being less than 50, leading to smog amid a surge in farm fires and unfavourable weather conditions. The concentration of poisonous PM2.5 is over 80 times the WHO limit. The issue primarily stems from a combination of factors, including vehicular emissions, industrial pollution, construction dust and stubble burning. The onset of winter, which traps pollutants in a temperature inversion, only exacerbates it. Delhi's poor air quality has won it the dubious distinction of being the most polluted city in the world. The city is choking, and the lip service by the Centre and Delhi Governments has achieved precious little. Under the Centre's air pollution control plan, all emergency measures, including a ban on polluting trucks, commercial four-wheelers and all types of construction are mandated to be initiated and enforced in the NCR if the AQI crosses the 450-mark. The AQI in Delhi had already deteriorated from 415 at 4 pm on Saturday to 460 at 7 am on Sunday as toxic haze lingered over the NCR for the sixth consecutive day. Already, all primary schools have



been ordered shut till November 10. The worsening crisis is a stark reminder of the misplaced emphasis on procrastination rather than concrete action. It is high time for the authorities to recognise the gravity of the situation as their constituents endure the consequences of Delhi's alarming descent into the world's most polluted city. It is not only a matter of environmental concern but a public health emergency in NCR as Ghaziabad (410), Gurugram (441), Noida (436), Greater Noida (467) and Faridabad (461) have also reported very poor air quality. The hazardous pollution levels have compelled many to forgo their morning walks, sports and other outdoor activities. Parents are concerned as health experts say children breathe faster, taking in more pollutants. Indeed to close primary schools, by the government, is a step in the right directions but still it would have a debilitating effect on them. So far, almost non-existent efforts have been made to create awareness about the harmful effects of air pollution and the steps citizens can take to protect themselves and reduce their carbon footprint. Initiatives such as tree planting drives, car pooling and waste reduction can make a significant impact when adopted on a large scale. So when are we going to start?

PICTALK



Devotees carrying a clay idol of Goddess Kali, to be taken to Kolkata, ahead of Kali Puja, in Nadia

Israel and India share common interests

Both India and Israel have hostile neighbors. India can take a cue from Israel in defending its borders and sovereignty

Ever since the brutal and dastardly attacks on Israel earlier in October, the Indian public—especially those who are conversant with the intricacies of this Arab-Israeli conflict—have been strenuously debating what the course of action should be. The sheer intensity of the surprise attacks on the Jewish state by diabolical terrorists was shocking. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's explicit and equivocal support for Israel astonished many. The second official statement by the Government of India was a little more balanced as it underscored the importance of peaceful negotiations between Israel and Palestine. The question is what if the country witnesses something similar in magnitude to what transpired in Israel earlier in October?



People in India are no strangers to the scourge of terrorism. The gruesome atrocities inflicted by Hamas evoked mixed sentiments as many dwelled on past events. It was the year 2008 when Islamic terrorists unleashed horror and violence in the cosmopolitan city of Mumbai. The targets also included the Jewish community when the perpetrators broke into Mumbai Chabad House. Post the reprehensible terror attack which led to many casualties, inflamed speeches condemning the attacks were a frequent feature. Many thought that India's response would be punitive. But lamentably, nothing substantial took place. It was only in 2016, when India's patience threshold with Pakistan-sponsored Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad was breached, that the political establishment under the exceptional leadership of Modi, authorised limited cross-border strikes which involved Indian commandos crossing the Line of Control in Kashmir and conducting specific strikes on

terror launch pads. Days earlier Pakistan sponsored terrorists had launched a terror attack on the Indian army in Uri situated in the restive state of Jammu and Kashmir. But unlike Israel, India's arch-enemy is a nuclear-armed state. Many in India, praise how Israel defends its territory and sovereignty. It always has. As it prepares itself for a situation like the Yom Kippur war in 1973 where it is clearly in disharmony with the Arab world and the entire Muslim Ummah, the ramifications of such a discord will have profound security implications. Many here ask why India did not undertake a daring strike like 'Operation Opera' in 1981 when Israeli jets flew over enemy territories and struck Iraq's nuclear plant which was in its infancy. Plans were underway in India to strike Pakistan's nuclear plant Kahuta later in 1981 but the then Prime Minister shelved the plan due to mounting pressure. That diminished the covert nature of the pre-emptive strike. The situation in South Asia would have been strikingly different had India

struck Kahuta and diffused the 'Islamic bomb'; a term frequently used by Pakistan. There is one thing that is abundantly clear in this evolving discourse. Although the world can encourage both parties to adhere to the rules of war and uphold humanitarian law, war and its concomitant sufferings are a fact. When religious fanaticism is strident and the rhetoric to annihilate a state like Israel is loud across the Islamic world, the use of its extensive military apparatus seems justified. There is no room to negotiate with an adversary who does not speak your language. To expect that peaceful overture would outweigh years of brainwashing and indoctrination is naive thinking. Religious bigotry is bound to determine the trajectory of such a conflict which is emotionally explosive. To usher in peace, fanaticism must recede. The only way to contain such a distorted picture is to employ tools that your adversary understands. (The writer is a foreign affairs commentator. Views expressed are personal)



ISHAAN SAXENA

Strategic attacks on our national interests

As India's economic clout grows, we can expect more attacks from foreign powers, that specifically target companies engaged in nation building

The impediment to action advances action. What stands in the way becomes the way.

Marcus Aurelius. The ongoing saga of TMC MP Mahua Moitra has once again opened a can of worms that we thought we had already shut about a couple of decades ago. The murky world of cash for questions! One of the perceived weaknesses of open parliamentary democracies is that state and non-state actors take perverse advantage of the freedoms offered and attempt to manipulate them for selfish gains. While in this case, the Hiranandani group seems to be the centre of the controversy, it will be nearly impossible to eradicate the chicanery in general. Many NGOs including foreign-funded ones, that too under the MHA watchlist, meet with government officials of various state and central governments and discuss issues. In some cases, grassroots politicians or their aides, who don't have a great grasp of policy issues, seek out external help to ask questions. Those perhaps would have happened a few times.

But what we read about the TMC MP's case is that she has allegedly run a persistent campaign against the Adani group with such a modus operandi. But what has been heartening is that the custodians of our freedoms-democratic institutions and leadership - have come to our rescue from the destructive propaganda. While the allegations against Ms Moitra are being investigated, it will also be pertinent to look at the lobbying ecosystem in India. It came into the limelight during the recent passage of the Data Protection Act, where half of Delhi's lawyers and sundry lobbyists were badgering the government continuously to open Indian data up. We should be cautious about going the US way, where K-street lawyers have been notoriously influential in all things policy. Coming back to the Moitra-Hiranandani story, what has been especially wicked is that a corporate rivalry has been used to attack Indian institutions, especially the Prime Minister of India



and besmirch his name. This happens when unimaginative politics takes over. When the opposition has little creativity in proposing strong alternate policies, they resort to chicanery and ad hominem attacks. The repeated disruption in parliament is also part of the tactic. The BJP has been running a campaign on foreign interference with India's affairs for a while now. It was the "toolkit gang" before and now it is the "Soros gang". And with the 2024 elections approaching, the stakes are high for these forces, as a third-time victory will be a body blow. Forces of darkness will be readying their army for a large-scale information war. The attack on the Adani group from Hindenburg is part of the stratagem. What is indefensible is that, as one of the senior-most bureaucrats pointed out, Hindenburg is both the producer of the dubious hit job of a report and also the benefactor of short positions against the Adani group shares. The short seller has no presence or domicile in India. Therefore, there would hardly be any legal repercussions against the short seller in this saga. This was followed by concerted attacks by activist foreign publications that never had anything good to say about India. The Supreme Court in its report did not point to any major wrongdoing by the



THE ATTACK ON THE ADANI GROUP FROM HINDENBURG IS PART OF THE STRATAGEM. HINDENBURG IS BOTH THE PRODUCER OF THE DUBIOUS HIT JOB OF A REPORT AND ALSO THE BENEFACTOR OF SHORT POSITIONS AGAINST THE ADANI GROUP SHARES

Adanis. The shares of Adani Enterprises share though have not recovered the highs of pre-Hindenburg, but have posted a smart upswing of 22% over the last six months. The Adanis to their credit have not acted in haste and have followed due process. Also, Mr. Gautam Adani is still the 23rd richest in the world! The Adani group has interests in ports, airports, power, mining, FMCG, cement, oil & gas and food processing. Some of these are extremely strategic for India's growth and the talent to execute large and complex projects is uncommon. Take ports for example. From Mundra to Vizhinjam to Haifa, it provides Indian control of the global supply chain. This harks back to our old sea-faring civilization that traded like total bosses! When India is projected to become the third largest economy in the world by the end of the decade, this expertise will be key to national security and trade security. Maybe that is why the attacks on the Adani group have been vicious and persistent. Along with the strength and recognition that comes with being a rising power, India will have to brace up to face great enemies too. Some will attack directly, some stealthily, some with our internal malcontents. That has always been the way of the world. And we as a

country have "been there, done that". We are wiser through our lessons from history and should phlegmatically surmount the odds. We should be cognizant that such foreign propaganda is aimed at undermining trust in our democratic institutions. By spreading false or misleading information, these foreign actors sow doubt in the minds of businesses. Such attacks also tend to slow down political decision-making. But confident and resurgent India's perception of "capital" is unlike the socialist "rich villain" era. New India's aspiration and nationalism are also among the reasons why the allegations on the Adani Group did not stick with the public. We should trust our institutions to safeguard us from such attacks. We should also constantly endeavour to strengthen our systems to face up to the new era of increased foreign interference. We should continue to take the side of the flourishing of Indian business that is quintessential to our economic heft and geo-political clout. As recent events have proved that we are resilient enough to make the obstacle, the path. (Banuchandar Nagarajan is an Independent Columnist and Public Policy Expert and holds a Master's degree from Harvard University; views are personal)



BANUCHANDAR NAGARAJAN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MAKE POLITICAL FUNDING TRANSPARENT

Sir—The Supreme Court has taken the right decision so far to instruct the Election Commission to prepare a detailed submission of electoral funding by parties. Why is the BJP government shying away from making revelations compulsory? The present dispensation is sending the CBI, ED, and the Income Tax authorities to probe political rivals. Demonetization was introduced to unravel black money. The BJP government has forced the people of India to link the Aadhaar card with the PAN card so that they will be able to have control over the finances of the people of India. The BJP government has taken measures to trace the sources and extent of people in India having money in foreign banks. But why are they scared of revealing the sources and quantum of their party's funding? Could anonymous sources be black money? The BJP government seemed to be portraying itself as holier than them. So why does the government hide the sources of its electoral financing? Just like the government wants everyone else to be transparent, should they also come clean on poll funding?

N Mateeni | Mumbai

RAMIFICATION OF INDIA-CANADA TURMOIL

Sir—The ongoing India-Canada turmoil can have serious ramifications, which may hamper diplomatic relations between the two nations. A recent turn of events is going on between the Indian and Canadian governments as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is supporting Jagmeet Singh's NDP Party, which means supporting the Khalistan Movement. India and Canada were about to sign a free trade agreement (FTA) called the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which has the potential to boost Indo-Canada trade. Agri-food products could have increased by 56%; and manufacturing goods by 57%, which will increase the economies of both countries. So, now that the agreement has been put on hold, both Indian and Canadian exporters have to suffer the losses. The

Pollution menace



According to a recent study, pollution is not only causing cancer or other fatal lung diseases but also causing anaemia (blood deficiency) in children. Pollution has become an unwanted but inevitable by-product of so-called development and has engulfed many big cities. In the last four days, AQI (air quality) in Delhi

and its surrounding cities reached above 500 and at one place reached 990, while above 300 is considered very dangerous. On the other hand, in a neighbouring agricultural state, more than a thousand incidents of stubble burning were reported in the last four days. Last Wednesday, 1921, such cases were registered in just one day. A total of 9594 incidents of stubble burning have taken place in this state so far. These are expected to increase in the next few days because farmers want to quickly prepare the fields for wheat sowing. Despite all the efforts of the government in the last ten years, the public consciousness has not become aware of the danger of pollution, whereas studies show that due to pollution, the lifespan of people gets reduced by about ten years. Apart from this, diseases lead to economic poverty. All efforts through law and mass media to stop the burning of firecrackers and stubble were unsuccessful.

N Mateeni | Mumbai

Indian student permit might affect their lives and could also affect the economy of Canada, as India alone contributes \$4.9 billion to the Canadian economy. The Indian government may consider the possibility of tightening the requirements for student visas. Also, the Canadian government might pull out its investments in India. Hence, it is a political rift that can lead to wide-scale economic consequences.

Tanisha Gupta | Ujjain

PM MODI'S DEEP THOUGHT

Sir—Since Hamas' attack on Israel, the conflict has been growing day by day. All countries in the world have failed to restore the situation between both groups. Presently, Indian PM Modi is trying to take part in mediation, as indicated by the following meeting with both parties. UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak spoke to his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi on Friday to discuss the 'deeply distressing situation' in West Asia amidst the Israel-Hamas con-

flict. The conversation was part of Sunak's ongoing outreach to world leaders regarding the situation following the October 7 attacks by Hamas. "The leaders discussed the deeply distressing situation in the Middle East and condemned Hamas' attacks on Israel. They reiterated that Hamas does not represent the Palestinian people and reflected on the need to deescalate tensions in the wider region," stated a Downing Street spokeswoman. There was no immediate readout from the Indian side regarding the conversation. On the other side, Mr Modi has spoken with the leaders of Israel, Jordan, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in recent days to discuss the situation in West Asia and how to protect innocent civilians in Gaza. Therefore, we are waiting to achieve peace and restore stability in Gaza.

Md Mofidul Islam | Howrah

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FIRST COLUMN

TO MOVE AHEAD, BE LIKE HOURGLASS

To move on in life, one should learn to be like an hourglass; let go of the past



RAVI VALLURI

The year 2011 was rather tumultuous, gripped with violence, rioting, economic collapse, rapes, and charges of corruption. Perhaps the only silver lining was India lifting the World Cup. The crimson sun sank on the 31st of December and the skyline was dotted with stars as the majestic moon made an appearance. The rapidity with which celestial bodies exchanged places gave fodder to thought that they too seemed depressed and oppressed by the clamorous events that had unfolded in society.

Yet there was hope for a better morrow.

The weather was cold as a group of friends from Delhi University heralded the New Year with their unabashed revelry. Bottles were uncorked as they gyrated to some hard rock music. Among them were two students of Zen Buddhism who eschewed liquor but did dance. Simultaneously, they were also involved in an animated conversation on the esoteric subject of Zen Buddhism and mindfulness.

"Zen Buddhism is an amalgam of Indian Mahayana Buddhism and Taoism. China is the country where this philosophy took birth and soon spread to Korea and Japan. It became extremely vogueish in the West in the mid-20th century. The essence of Zen is attempting to understand the meaning of life directly, without being misled by logical thought or language," proffered a student.

"Tell me friend, why does one equate Zen Buddhism with an hourglass?" was the riposte of the second student.

"I am not quite sure," was Lee's response to Wangchuk. They hailed from Sikkim.

On New Year's Day, the two wished their Master and posed the question of the hourglass and its relationship with Zen Buddhism. The erudite scholar was surprised at the question raised by his mentees.

"It appears that the demon cannonaded your mind on New Year's Eve instead of celebrations," remarked the professor.

"Well, an hourglass is a timing device with two connected glass bulbs containing sand that takes an hour to pass from the upper to the lower bulb and Zen Buddhism is observing the process," uttered the professor.



"Simply put it is nothing but mindfulness and keen observation," he added. Aeon's ago in ancient China a learned man once went to visit a Zen teacher. As the master spoke, the learned man frequently interrupted the teacher to express his own opinion. Eventually, the Zen teacher stopped talking and began to serve tea to the learned man. He poured the cup full and then kept pouring until it overflowed.

"Learned Zen Master, please halt," said the learned man. "The cup is already full and there is no more room to pour in additional tea," he said to the Zen Master.

"Exactly like this cup, you are brimful of your own opinions," replied the man of letters. "Unless you do not first empty your cup, how can you taste the cup of tea?"

The learned student at once accepted his ignorance and arrogance to realize that he was too self-opinionated to grasp any fresh idea and knowledge.

To reboot and re-engineer his mind, even a learned one needs to surrender, and become humble through intense meditation and breathing techniques. One has to become truly hollow and empty.

"As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being," Carl Jung was to say.

This is the mystery behind the hourglass...

(Ravi Valluri is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway and is a faculty of the Art of Living, views are personal)

The war is a profitable business

In general, wars profit the arms-selling countries who supply weapons to the warring sides and make money, no matter who wins or loses



ATUL SEHGAL



Economics is the crux of all human activities. It is the core of it all.

Whether it is the necessities of food, clothing and shelter or other derived needs of humans resulting from complexities of institutional existence, money is at the centre of all activities and endeavours. And it has to be so—because it is the medium of exchange of all goods and services meant for the satisfaction of human needs and also human greed. Whereas human need is limited based on definite and finite requirements of a person, human greed knows no bounds. It is this human greed that drives humans to self-aggrandizement through all means—more foul than fair.

But economic greed is not the only vice afflicting humankind. It is the lust for power and hegemony that has led to scuffles, strife and wars. Wars today have an economic dimension much more than at any time in known world history, because of gross material technologies behind modern weaponry and more importantly the economic consequences of war.

So war costs money, big money and the destruction caused by war makes way for huge economic activity in the form of reconstruction, in which many persons or institutions gain monetarily. Many wars between nations in the past 100 years are characterized by exactly these features. So there is a sound economic reason for war, though the economic benefits of war may be heavily skewed in favour of a nation or institution. This is the stark reality of the times. Glib justifications are given for waging wars. And media houses actively collaborate and cooperate in propagating such justifications which are poor excuses or apologies for actual reasons.



THE WORLD OF 21ST CENTURY AT PRESENT IS ON THE PRECIPICE OF ANOTHER BIG WAR, WHICH WILL INVOLVE MANY COUNTRIES

(The author is a management consultant based in New Delhi; views are personal)

The major wars of the 20th century—world wars 1 and 2 were fought for usurping states and expanding national territories. The world of the 21st century at present is on the precipice of another big war, which will involve many nation-states. Russia has been warring with Ukraine since February 2022. The war, which was expected to peter out in a few weeks, is still raging and doesn't seem to end any time soon. Continuous supply of arms and ammunition to Ukraine by the US and NATO countries and warfare equipment supplemental support to Russia by Iran overtly and China covertly kept the war on. The economic interests of all the above countries who thus backed Russia and Ukraine were behind this.

Twenty-one months into this protracted war, another war—in the Middle East, between Hamas in Palestine territory and Israel, with major countries losing no time in declaring support for either Israel or Hamas-Palestine. The big reason behind the Hamas attack on Israel was tacit and covert military support to Hamas by China, Iran and Russia whose short- and long-term economic interests were being served by such action. Diverting the attention of the US from the Taiwan Strait and Ukraine was in the politico-economic interests of China and Russia respectively. For China, the involvement of Israel will put the recently blueprinted India-Oman-UAE-Saudi Arabia-Jordan-Israel-Europe economic corridor project

in a quandary and reboot its tottering BRI. So, China is the greater gainer in inciting Hamas to this frontal attack on Israel.

In general, wars continue to profit the arms-selling countries that supply weapons to the warring countries.

The economics of war is not as simple as it is supposed to be by the countries planning or inciting wars. War leaves a terrible trail of death and destruction in its aftermath. It brings harm to all the actors involved in this game—the victor, the vanquished and the sideline supporters in a widely interconnected world. It also triggers a rat race in arms accumulation by the countries competing for territorial hegemony. It diverts resources overall from productive to nonproductive activities. Modern processes for the production of conventional and nuclear arms and much more so their usage inflict huge harm on the environment, an aspect which is, unfortunately, not seriously looked at.

The economics of war needs to be studied in a wider perspective than is done today. The economic cost of diverting valuable human and material resources from the positive and progressive activities that add value to human life to war preparedness and warmongering is humongous. This is not to say that countries should not spend on defence. But they should spend on military technologies that inflict the least harm on the common ecosphere and

environment which is shared by all global countries. War also leaves huge adverse cultural effects on the countries involved directly or indirectly in it.

It promotes an atmosphere of distrust, fear, suspicion and insecurity rather than boosting fraternity and camaraderie. In other words, it undermines and disrupts peace. Inciting wars between nations also accentuates communal and sectarian friction and leads to riots and community conflicts inside nations, which detriment those nations economically. We have witnessed the economic fallout of terrorism in many pockets across the globe—how it hinders investment and derails development. Since avenging is a natural human instinct, the nations inciting wars and terrorist activities have also faced the backlash of such actions and, of course, their adverse economic consequences. Such countries may have gained in the economic sense in the short term, but in the longer term, they will be put to huge loss. Hence, inciting wars is not an overall long-term profitable venture.

Let humanity of the present times collectively consider these important aspects and spend economic resources on national defence more prudently. Wars are destructive overall and economically regressive. A fresh new perspective on war economics and actions based thereon will make the world a better place to live in.

Harnessing the power of institutional memory

With the digital transformations in governance, the importance of preserving, managing, and transferring knowledge is vital

When a new government steps into power, with it, comes a wave of new ministers and key officials. While the faces in charge and the work allocations may change, the machinery of governance must maintain a steady pace, ensuring continuity and stability. How does the Government ensure that critical knowledge and experience are preserved in this transition? This necessitates a comprehensive strategy for safeguarding and leveraging institutional memory. It is the collective knowledge, experiences, and insights accumulated within an organization over time. It is not just static record keeping but a dynamic living library that constantly changes as the Government evolves. As India



MITUL JHAVERI

(The writer is a Technology and Public Policy Consultant at MoHFW, GOI, views are personal)

continues to undergo rapid digital transformations across all spheres of governance, the importance of preserving, managing, and transferring knowledge within Government machinery becomes increasingly pronounced.

We can broadly classify the different types of Institutional memory within the Government into four categories: First is the Administrative and Legislative data, which includes government files, laws, regulations, gazette notifications, office memorandums, parliamentary questions, matters raised by elected representatives, court orders, procurement, human resources, etc. Second is data on citizens and beneficiaries, such as comments on

public consultations, citizen grievances, and feedback, attributes of beneficiaries, etc. Third is the programmatic Data on surveys and studies conducted, data and knowledge on various programs and schemes, and last is more experiential and qualitative like Initiatives, Experiences, Qualitative data on ideas, experiences, failures, initiatives, and knowledge from media and civil society.

The next challenge is searchability: to bind all the knowledge together through a common set of identifiers. The AoB rules define the distribution of various subjects, functions, and responsibilities among different ministries and departments of the Central Government. Within the framework of AoB rules,

Ministries also have their Subject-wise work allocation. So, both these data points become like a hashtag that can be tagged to all different types of Institutional Knowledge.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has implemented the EPITOME Portal, a brainchild of Hon'ble Union Minister Dr Mansukh Mandaviya, which aggregates data on pending grievances and files, infrastructure projects, parliamentary matters, data on programs and schemes, tasks and vacancies, different ideas from citizens and officers all tagged with the Health Ministry's 300+ Subject areas. The Governments must create specialized teams or departments responsible for capturing, curating, and disseminating institutional

knowledge. One effective approach is establishing standardised templates for documenting projects, policies, and strategies.

These templates should include critical insights, challenges faced, and lessons learned. The Government can minimize information loss due to personnel changes by ensuring uniform documentation practices. In addition, a robust internal communication network should be established to facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences among departments and individuals.

Regular workshops, seminars, and knowledge-sharing sessions can foster a culture of learning and collaboration. Platforms such as webinars, online forums, and internal

knowledge-sharing portals can play a pivotal role in promoting the exchange of ideas and experiences across the government ecosystem. Officers' valuable insights and experiences should be preserved as they retire or move on to new roles. When officers transition out of their roles, they should be required to provide detailed briefs on ongoing projects, challenges, and strategies. The Anubhav portal was launched in March 2015 at the behest of the Prime Minister for retiring government officials to leave a record of their experiences while in Government service. However, this mechanism must be institutionalised well to connect serving officials with the retired ones. We must prioritise creating, managing, and transferring

institutional knowledge. The approach will involve investing in technology, nurturing a culture of continuous learning, and implementing structured processes for capturing and disseminating insights. By adopting mentorship programs the Government can bridge the gap between retiring officers and their successors. Institutional memory is not an abstract concept but a tangible asset that can shape the trajectory of governance in India. As the nation marches, let us recognise that the past holds the keys to a more informed and prosperous future. We must harness the power of institutional memory to drive meaningful change, foster efficiency, and ensure that the legacy of knowledge endures the tests of time.

Warplanes strike Gaza refugee camp

Israel rejects US push for a pause in fighting

Deir Al-Balah (Gaza Strip), Nov 5 (AP) Israeli warplanes struck a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip early Sunday, killing at least 40 people and wounding dozens, health officials said.

The strike came as Israel said it would press on with its offensive to crush the territory's Hamas rulers, despite US appeals for a pause to get aid to desperate civilians.

The soaring death toll in Gaza has sparked growing international anger, with tens of thousands from Washington to Berlin taking to the streets Saturday to demand an immediate cease-fire. Israel has rejected the idea of halting its offensive, even for brief humanitarian pauses proposed by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken during his current tour of the region. Instead, it said that Hamas was "encountering the full force" of its troops. "Anyone in Gaza City is risking their life," Israel's Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant said.

Large columns of smoke rose as Israel's military said it had encircled Gaza City, the initial target of its offensive. Gaza's Health Ministry has said more than 9,400 Palestinians have been killed in the territory in nearly a month of war, and that number is likely to rise as the assault continues.

Airstrikes hit the Maghazi refugee camp in central Gaza overnight, killing at least 40 people and wounding 34 others, the Health Ministry said. It said first responders and residents were still digging through the rubble, hoping to find survivors. An Associated Press reporter at a nearby hospital saw eight dead children, including a baby, who had been brought in after the strike. A surviving child was led down the hospital corridor by an adult holding her hand, her clothes caked in dust, an expression of shock on her face.

Arafat Abu Mashaia, who lives in the camp, said the Israeli airstrike flattened several multi-story homes where people forced out of other parts of Gaza were sheltering.

"It was a true massacre," he said early Sunday while standing on the wreckage of destroyed homes.



An Israeli soldier inspects charred vehicles burned in the bloody Oct. 7 cross-border attack by Hamas militants, outside the town of Netivot, southern Israel, and Anti-war activists rally during a pro-Palestinian demonstration asking to cease fire in Gaza, at Freedom Plaza in Washington Saturday



'Option of nuking Gaza suspended by Netanyahu'

Jerusalem (PTI): An Israeli minister from the far-right Otzma Yehudit party on Sunday said that dropping an atomic bomb on the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip was "an option", prompting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to suspend him from government meetings indefinitely. In a radio interview, Jerusalem Affairs and Heritage Minister Amichai Eliyahu said that "there are no non-combatants in Gaza" and providing humanitarian aid to the Strip would constitute "a failure".

When asked if there are no non-combatants in Gaza in his view then if a nuclear attack on the Gaza Strip is "an option", Eliyahu responded, "That's one way".

His remarks infuriated members of both the ruling coalition and the Opposition, evoking calls to fire him from the government.

Following the uproar, Eliyahu backtracked from his statement, calling it a

"metaphorical" remark. "It's clear to anyone with a brain that the remark about the atom was metaphorical. We indeed must display a forceful and disproportional response to terror, which will clarify to the Nazis and their supporters that terrorism isn't worthwhile. This is the only formula with which democracies can deal with terror," he said. "Simultaneously, it is clear that the State of Israel is obligated to do everything to return the captives alive and in good health," Eliyahu wrote in a bid to defuse tensions.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu suspended Eliyahu from government meetings indefinitely, the PMO said.

Eliyahu is not a part of the security cabinet involved in the wartime decision-making, nor does he hold sway over the war cabinet directing the war against Islamist Hamas, it said. Netanyahu called the remark "detached from reality".

Blinken meets Palestinian leader in West Bank

AP ■ RAMALLAH (WEST BANK)

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken brought his frenetic Mideast diplomatic push on the Israel-Hamas war to the occupied West Bank on Sunday, meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in his latest bid to ease civilian suffering in the Gaza Strip and begin to sketch out a post-conflict scenario for the territory.

Blinken travelled to Ramallah for his previously unannounced visit in an armoured motorcade and under tight security just hours after Israeli warplanes struck a refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, killing at least 40 people and wounding dozens, health officials said.

Despite the secrecy and the State Department refusing to confirm the trip until after Blinken had physically left the West Bank, protests erupted against his visit and US support for Israel as word of his arrival leaked. Aside from pleasantries,

neither man spoke as they greeted each other in front of cameras and the meeting ended without any public comment. It was not immediately clear if the lack of words indicated the meeting had gone poorly.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said Blinken reaffirmed the US commitment to the delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance and resumption of essential services in Gaza and made clear that Palestinians must not be forcibly displaced.

Blinken and Abbas discussed efforts to restore calm and stability in the West Bank, including the need to stop extremist violence against Palestinians and hold those accountable responsible, Miller said, in reference to violence being committed by Israeli settlers. The meeting with Abbas, whose Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority has not been a factor in Gaza since Hamas took it over by force in 2007, came at the start of

29 protesters arrested in UK, 4 cops hurt

London (PTI): Four police officers were injured after pro-Palestinian protesters set off fireworks into crowds in central London, with 29 arrests made on suspicion of racially motivated crimes.

The Metropolitan Police said more than 1,300 officers were on duty on Saturday as tens of thousands of people demonstrated against the Israel-Gaza conflict, adding that it had adopted a more "sharpened and proactive" intervention approach to the protests. The protest came as both British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Home Secretary Suella Braverman called for tougher action against extremist acts during these protests, especially one planned next weekend to coincide with Armistice Day when Britain's war martyrs are commemorated. "It is disappointing that various splinter groups were again responsible for behaviour which has no place in London, and we are determined to deal with this

robustly. Fireworks were directed towards officers, and four officers were injured," said Met Police Commander Karen Findlay, who is responsible for policing in London this week.

"We dealt with breakaway groups from the main protest quickly. Officers intervened to prevent further disruption, using the full range of powers at their disposal. This effective intervention ensured Londoners were able to go about their business," she said.

Of the 29 arrests, nine people were held for public order offences, including racially aggravated crimes; two were arrested on suspicion of breach of the UK's Terrorism Act in relation to the wording of a banner; three were arrested for assaulting a police officer; 10 were arrested for breaching a police dispersal order; and the others have been held on suspicion of inciting racial hatred, causing actual bodily harm, violent disorder and possession of an offensive weapon.

US and Arab partners disagree on cease-fire

Rafah (Gaza Strip): The United States and Arab partners disagreed Saturday on the need for an immediate cease-fire in the Gaza Strip as Israeli military strikes killed multiple civilians at a U.N. shelter and a hospital in a growing assault on the besieged enclave's Hamas rulers.

Large columns of smoke rose as Israel's military said it had encircled Gaza City, the target of its offensive to crush Hamas. The Gaza Health Ministry has said more than 9,400 Palestinians have been killed in the territory, and that number is likely to rise as the assault continues.

"Anyone in Gaza City is risking their life," Israel's Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant said, adding that Hamas fighters were "encountering the full force" of Israeli troops.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Arab foreign ministers in Jordan a day after talks in Israel with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who insisted there could be no temporary cease-fire until all hostages held by Hamas are released. Jordan's Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Arab countries want an immediate cease-fire, saying "the whole region is sinking in a sea of hatred that will define generations to come."

Blinken, however, said "it is our view now that a cease-fire would simply leave Hamas in place, able to regroup and repeat what it did on Oct. 7."

He said humanitarian pauses can be critical in protecting civilians, getting aid in and getting foreign nationals out, "while still enabling Israel to achieve its objective, the defeat of Hamas." Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan told reporters in Beirut that Blinken "should stop the aggression and should not come up with ideas that cannot be implemented." The spokesman of the Hamas military wing, who goes by Abu Obeida, said in a speech that fighters had destroyed 24 Israeli vehicles and inflicted casualties in the past two days.

Nepal government scrambles to rush aid to earthquake victims

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's authorities on Sunday scrambled to rush aid to those affected by Friday's earthquake that killed 157 people and left a trail of destruction in the Himalayan nation's remote mountainous region. The earthquake with an epicentre in Jajarkot district, about 500 km west of Kathmandu, was recorded just before midnight on Friday. As the earthquake destroyed hundreds of houses in the mountainous region, several people had to spend Saturday night under the open sky. Out of a total of 157 people who died in the tragedy, the bodies of 120 have so far been handed over to the family members. About 253 people were injured in the quake, the most devastating in the country since 2015. The relatives of victims were now preparing for their cremations. Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal

Dahal 'Prachanda' on Sunday held a Cabinet meeting, during which he decided to provide Rs. 2 lakh cash each to the family of those killed in the Jajarkot earthquake as immediate relief, according to officials.

The Nepal government also decided to provide free medical treatment to those injured in the earthquake.

During the meeting, it was also decided to prepare an integrated action plan to construct earthquake-resistant housing within one year for the rehabilitation of those affected.

It was decided that Surkhet municipality in the Karnali province would be the main liaison office and Nepalgunj the auxiliary liaison office to make the search, rescue and relief distribution works effective, said Government spokesperson and Minister for Communications and Information Technology Rekha Sharma.

Quake victims face uphill task of rebuilding lives

Jajarkot (Nepal) (PTI): Residents of Nepal's Jajarkot district, the worst affected by Friday's deadly earthquake, on Sunday inspected the damages as they faced an uphill task to rebuild their homes and lives. Nepal was jolted by a 6.4 magnitude earthquake just before midnight Friday that killed 157 people and injured over 250 others.

Thousands of villagers in north-western Nepal spent Saturday night outdoors in the bitter cold. Locals used whatever materials they could find, including plastic sheets and old clothes, to create makeshift shelters to keep themselves warm through the night.

The house is in terrible

condition. There are cracks. Everyone is sitting outside their houses. Four people of the same family died here. In another village, six members of the same family passed away," said Romit Kesi, a resident of the Raut village.

People recalled the horror of the night the earthquake struck the area. "The houses which were old and made in traditional style with mud have been damaged. While the others which were built from RCC are not damaged at all," another resident said.

As the relief and rescue work progresses, the focus has now shifted to rehabilitation of those who have lost their houses.

Moldovans cast ballots in local polls amid claims of Russian meddling

AP ■ CHISINAU (MOLDOVA)

Moldovans are casting ballots in nationwide local elections on Sunday amid claims by Moldovan authorities that Russia has been conducting "hybrid warfare" to undermine the vote in the European Union candidate country. While local elections in Moldova, a country of about 2.5 million people situated between Romania and Ukraine, would not usually garner much international attention, ongoing accusations of Russian meddling add a geopolitical dimension to the vote.

Sunday's ballot will elect nearly 900 mayors and 11,000 local councilors for a four-year term, including key positions such as mayor of the capital, Chisinau. The ballot will be monitored by around 1,500 national and international observers. Two days ahead of

the election, Moldova's Prime Minister Dorin Recean announced a ban on candidates from the pro-Russia Chance Party, which came after Moldova's national intelligence agency published a report Friday alleging that Russia was trying to "influence the electoral process" via the party. About 600 candidates will be affected. "We are protecting the Republic of Moldova from a well-organised network of criminals. An organised criminal group is removed from the elections, not a political party," Recean said on Friday during a press briefing.

The Intelligence and Security Service, SIS, alleged in its 32-page report that the Chance Party had received about 50 million euros (\$53 million) of Russian money, which was channelled by exiled Moldovan oligarch Ilan Shor and used to destabilise the country and "buy" voters in

Sunday's election. Shor, who resides in absentia in April to 15 years in jail on fraud charges, reacted to the party's ban in a Facebook post, calling it an "unprecedented, illegal, raiding power grab" and providing a list of alternative candidate endorsements.

Addressing the party's ban on Sunday in Chisinau, Moldovan President Maia Sandu told reporters that "elections are about democracy and compliance with the law. Those who do not follow the law, bribe voters, use illegal money - do not meet democratic standards." Cristian Cantir, a Moldovan associate professor of international relations at Oakland University, said although Sunday's election is "very much about local issues" they are "also important geopolitically." "Moldova continues to be a very polarised country from a geopolitical standpoint"

he told The Associated Press. "The debate is going to really hinge on pro-EU and anti-EU messaging."

Cantir added that the "pretty damning" SIS report contained "a lot of evidence suggesting that Shor in particular has been working with the Kremlin to undermine the electoral process". In late October, Moldovan authorities blocked dozens of Russian media sites including major ones such as Russia Today, accusing them of running "disinformation campaigns" against Moldova.

Days later, six local TV stations allegedly linked to Shor and another exiled oligarch, Vladimir Plahotniuc, had their broadcast licenses suspended on the grounds that they were also conducting disinformation campaigns geared toward "influencing the local elections" and "promoting geopolitical narratives" in favour of Russia.

Hostage situation at Hamburg Airport ends, man in custody

AP ■ BERLIN

The hostage situation at Hamburg Airport ended Sunday afternoon, around 18 hours after a man drove his vehicle through the gates of the airport with his 4-year-old daughter inside, authorities said. The man was arrested and the girl appears to be unharmed.

Hamburg police tweeted that "the hostage situation is over. The suspect has left the car with his daughter. ... The child appears to be unharmed."

Police also said that "the man was arrested by the emergency services without resistance." The airport in the northern German city had been closed to passengers and flights cancelled since Saturday night when the man, who was armed, broke through an airport gate with his vehicle and fired twice into the air with a



weapon, according to German news agency dpa. The man drove the vehicle just outside a terminal building and parked it under a plane.

Authorities said the man's wife had previously contacted them about a child abduction. Police said that the 35-year-old man had his daughter inside the car after reportedly taking her by force from the mother in a possible custody

battle.

A psychologist had been negotiating with the man for 18 hours. Nobody was injured during the standoff after all passengers had evacuated the airport, police said.

The mother of the girl also arrived at the airport earlier on Sunday.

Police spokeswoman Sandra Levgruen said that officers were checking whether the suspect "still has any explosive devices on him or with him or whether they are still in the car," dpa reported.

"We are currently assuming that he is unharmed, but he is still lying on the ground in the care of the police," she said.

More than 100 flights were cancelled and several planes were rerouted.

Radio anchor shot during Facebook livestream

Manila (AP): A radio anchor was fatally shot by a man inside his southern Philippine station on Sunday in a brazen attack that was witnessed by people watching the program live on Facebook. The gunman gained entry into the home-based radio station of provincial news broadcaster Juan Jumalon by pretending to be a listener.

He then shot him twice during a live morning broadcast in Calamba town in Misamis Occidental province, police said. The attacker snatched the victim's gold necklace before fleeing with a companion, who waited outside Jumalon's house, onboard a motorcycle, police said. An investigation was underway to identify the gunman and establish if the attack was work-related. The Philippines has long been regarded as one



of the most dangerous places for journalists in the world.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. strongly condemned the shooting and said he ordered the national police to track down, arrest and prosecute the killers.

"Attacks on journalists will not be tolerated in our democracy and those who threaten the freedom of the press will face the full consequences of their actions," Marcos said in a statement.

Prince William reaches Singapore for annual Earthshot Prize award

AP ■ SINGAPORE

UK Prince William arrived Sunday in Singapore for the annual Earthshot Prize awards, the first to be held in Asia, to support environmental innovators with solutions to battle climate change and save the planet. Upon his arrival, dozens of people waving British flags welcomed him with loud cheers. William, 41, shook hands, signed autographs and sportingly took selfies with many of them during a walkabout. "It's fantastic to be back in Singapore for this year's Earthshot Prize, ceremony, after eleven years," he said in a statement upon landing. "Singapore's bold vision to be a leader for environmental innovation sets the standard for others to follow." "He has this charm," said Johannes Mario, a Singaporean wel-



coming William at the airport. "He really fights for...the climate. I believe this is really a good cause for the future of our generation," he added.

At Singapore's Changi Airport and before greeting the crowd, William stood on an upper floor for a stunning view of the 40-metre high Rain Vortex, the world's largest indoor waterfall that was illuminated green to mark his arrival. He was also shown a tree planted in his honour in the indoor garden at the foot of the waterfall.

The heir to the British throne last visited Singapore with his wife Princess Catherine in 2012. Travelling solo on the Earthshot Prize that he and his Royal Foundation charity launched in 2020 to promote innovative solutions and technologies to combat global warming and mitigate its impact on the environment.

BNP leader sent to prison, opp enforces transport blockade

PTI ■ DHAKA

A court in Bangladesh on Sunday ordered the imprisonment of opposition BNP leader and former home minister Altaf Hossain Chowdhury in a case filed over vandalism of the chief justice's residence during a clash between his party supporters and police that left two people dead. The direction of the Dhaka Metropolitan Magistrate Court came as clashes and clandestine arson attacks left dozens, including policemen, wounded and vehicles burnt amid a new 48-hour nationwide transport blockade called by the opposition.

Chowdhury, a former Air Force chief, was arrested by the elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) from the suburban Tongi area.

Hours after his arrest, the court ordered that the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) vice chairman be sent to jail. Besides Chowdhury, several other leaders of ex-prime minister Khaleda Zia's BNP were arrested in connection with the deadly violence in

Dhaka on October 28 in which two people, including a policeman, were killed and the city saw widespread clashes, including an attack on the chief justice's residence.

Police said they arrested 2,172 opposition leaders and activists last week under 89 cases of violence and sabotage in the capital alone, while media reports suggested that nearly 8,000 opposition figures were detained in a nationwide crackdown during the period.

BNP secretary-general Mirza Fakhru Islam Alamgir, who is considered the de facto leader of the party, and his number two Amir Khosru Mahmud Chowdhury are among the leaders who are in prison to face the charges.

A 79-year-old ailing Zia, who was serving a 17-year prison term on two graft charges, is now technically under house arrest since her release under a special legal arrangement that debarred her from taking part in political activities. She, however, is now being treated at a specialised private hospital for multiple health issues.

Meanwhile, Law Minister Anisul Huq told reporters on Sunday that BNP leaders were "not arrested for political reasons, but for their involvement in criminal activities (and) it has nothing to do with politics".

BNP's senior joint secretary general Ruhul Kabir Rizvi in a virtual press conference said Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League government "has turned the country into a big prison" by arresting thousands of opposition leaders, workers and supporters.

Political tensions mount in Bangladesh as BNP and its far-right allies like the Jamaat-e-Islami wage a street campaign demanding the resignation of the Awami League government to allow a non-party interim government to conduct the upcoming general elections in early January.

The ruling party has declined to accept the demand saying elections would be held under the incumbent premier. Hasina has also rejected proposals for dialogue with the opposition by the US and other major Western countries, call-

ing BNP a terrorist organisation. The opposition's fresh nationwide blockade came after the weekend of Friday and Saturday when rioters set on fire at least 11 buses, while violence in the past week saw the deaths of at least five people across the country.

Three policemen on street patrol were wounded as unidentified people hurled homemade bombs in the capital's Uttara area.

Authorities deployed paramilitary troops to guard highways and maintain order in major cities and asked police and other security agencies to intensify vigilance against sabotage. On October 28, a police constable was hacked to death in Dhaka where political violence left some 200 people, including journalists, wounded as BNP called a grand protest rally and Awami League a "peace rally" in the national capital. The rival programmes resulted in clashes mainly between opposition protesters and police, who used rubber bullets, tear gas and sound grenades to control the situation.

Russia test-fires intercontinental ballistic missile

Moscow (AP): The Russian military on Sunday reported a successful test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile designed to carry nuclear warheads from a new nuclear submarine.

The report comes as tensions are soaring between Russia and the West over the fighting in Ukraine. Adding to those tensions, President Vladimir Putin last week signed a bill revoking Russia's ratification of a global nuclear test ban in a move that Moscow said was needed to establish parity with the United States. The Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement that the Emperor Alexander III strategic missile cruiser fired the Bulava missile from an underwater position in Russia's northern White Sea, and hit a target in the far-eastern region of Kamchatka. It wasn't immediately clear from the statement when the test launch occurred. The Emperor Alexander III is one of the new Borei-class nuclear submarines that carry 16 Bulava missiles each and are intended to serve as the core naval component of the nation's nuclear forces in the coming decades.

Afghans fleeing Pak lack water, food and shelter



An Afghan refugee rests in a camp near the Torkham Pakistan-Afghanistan border in Torkham, in Afghanistan AP/PTI

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Afghans fleeing Pakistan to avoid arrest and deportation are sleeping in the open, without proper shelter, food, drinking water and toilets once they cross the border to their homeland, aid agencies said Sunday.

Hundreds of thousands of Afghans have left Pakistan in recent weeks as authorities pursue foreigners they say are in the country illegally, going door-to-door to check migrants' documentation. Pakistan set Oct 31 as a deadline to leave the country or else they'd be arrested as part of a new anti-migrant crackdown.

Afghans leave Pakistan from two main border crossings, Torkham and Chaman. The Taliban have set up camps on the other side for people to stay in while they wait to be moved to their place of origin in Afghanistan.

Aid agencies said Torkham has no proper shelter. There is limited access to drinking water, no heating source other than open fires, no lighting, and no toilets. There is open defecation and poor hygiene. UN agencies and aid groups are setting up facilities with thousands of people entering Afghanistan every day. Kaval Mohammad lived in the north-west Pakistani city of Peshawar for 17 years. He has five children and was deported to the

Afghan border almost a week ago. He told The Associated Press he wasn't allowed to take any household belongings with him. Everything he and his family own remains in Pakistan. His seven-year-old daughter Hawa weeps because she is cold. She drinks tea for breakfast from a cut-up plastic bottle and sleeps without a blanket.

Her father urged the international community for help. "We cannot ask the Taliban government," he said. "They have nothing because they are yet to be recognised as a government. There are families who have nothing here, no land, no home. They are just living under the open sky. No one is helping."

Thamindri Da Silva, from the relief and development organisation World Vision International, said most people are moved to a dry riverbed once they have gone through their initial registration and processing at a transit centre.

People enter Afghanistan with just the clothes on their back because their watches, jewellery and cash were taken at the Pakistani border, she added.

Arshad Malik, country director for Save the Children, said many of those returning are coming back without educational documents, making it difficult for them to continue their learning, as well as lack-

ing the local Afghan languages of Dari and Pashto because they studied Urdu and English in Pakistan.

He warned that child labour in Afghanistan as well as their involvement in smuggling are likely to increase due to poverty as most returning families were among the poorest migrants in Pakistan. "Smuggling at Torkham by children was one of the concerns from the past, so the involvement of children in smuggling and illegal goods' transfer will increase," Malik said. The Taliban say they have committees working "around the clock" to help Afghans by distributing food, water and blankets.

Pope Francis in public remarks on Sunday at the Vatican decried the situation of "Afghan refugees who found refuge in Pakistan but now don't know where to go anymore". Afghanistan is overwhelmed by challenges, compounded by the isolation of the Taliban-led government by the international community. Years of drought, a beleaguered economy and the aftermath of decades of war have led to the internal displacement of millions of Afghans.

Concerns have risen among the humanitarian community about the impoverished country being unable to support or integrate those currently forced to leave Pakistan.

Turkiye's main opp party elects Ozgur Ozel as new leader

PTI ■ ISTANBUL

Turkiye's main opposition party voted for fresh leadership in the early hours of Sunday, five months after a devastating election defeat that saw President Recep Tayyip Erdogan extend his two-decade rule. Ozgur Ozel replaced Kemal Kilicdaroglu after delegates of the Republican People's Party, or the CHP, elected him as new leader. The results in a second round of voting — held in a sports hall in Ankara — saw Ozel take 812 of 1,366 delegate votes to become the CHP's 8th leader.

Speaking from the stage in front of thousands of flag-waving CHP members, Ozel — his voice hoarse with excitement — promised the cheering crowd a brighter political future and "to make people smile".

Dissent spread among members of the CHP after the

party failed to capitalise on dire economic circumstances in Turkey and the fallout from February's earthquakes to oust Erdogan in parliamentary and presidential elections in May.

At the time, pre-election polls had predicted a strong showing for the CHP's former leader Kilicdaroglu in what many saw as the opposition's greatest chance to unseat Erdogan since he took office in 2003. But Erdogan secured his third presidential term in a run-off vote. Ozel said in his winning speech Sunday that he would mobilise the party immediately to "compensate for the great sadness" of May's election defeat. Kilicdaroglu, 74, had led the party since 2010, and ever since, the CHP failed to win a single national election although it scored significant victories in local elections in 2019, taking a handful of major cities — including Ankara and Istanbul.

The former party head was criticized for not standing down after losing May's election.

A call for change at the top of the CHP was led by Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, one of the party's most prominent figures and an outspoken critic of the way the party ran May's election campaign. Others also complained that the secularist CHP — established by Turkiye's founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk — had become undemocratic, with too much power in the leader's hands. Ozel, 49, is a former pharmacist who was elected to parliament in 2011. He will lead the party in local elections in March in a bid to hold onto the cities it took five years earlier. "We will not stop, we will work, we will work shoulder to shoulder, we will regain all the municipalities we (currently) have, we will add new ones and together we will win a great victory," Ozel said.

Afghan farmers face losses due to ban on poppy cultivation

Islamabad (AP): Afghan farmers have lost income of more than USD 1 billion from opium sales after the Taliban outlawed poppy cultivation, according to a report from the UN drugs agency published on Sunday. Afghanistan was the world's biggest opium producer and a major source for heroin in Europe and Asia when the Taliban seized power in August 2021. They pledged to wipe out the country's drug cultivation industry and imposed a formal ban in April 2022, dealing a heavy blow to hundreds of thousands of farmers and day labourers who relied on proceeds from the crop to survive.

Opium cultivation crashed by 95 per cent after the ban, the report from the UN Office on Drugs and Crime said. Until 2023, the value of Afghanistan's opiate exports frequently outstripped the value of its legal exports. UN officials said the strong contraction of the

opium economy is expected to have far-reaching consequences for the country as opiate exports before the ban accounted for between 9-14 per cent of the national GDP.

Afghans need urgent humanitarian assistance to meet their most immediate needs, absorb the shock of lost income and save lives, said UNODC executive director, Ghada Waly. "Afghanistan is in dire need of strong investment in sustainable livelihoods to provide Afghans with opportunities away from opium," she said. Afghans are dealing with drought, severe economic hardship and the continued consequences of decades of war and natural disasters.

The downturn, along with the halt of international financing that propped up the economy of the former Western-backed government, is driving people into poverty, hunger, and addiction.

Will hand over leadership to deputy PM by next election: Singapore PM

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Sunday that he will hand over the city-state's leadership to Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong before the next general elections, expected in November 2025, according to a media report.

Talking about the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) transition plans while addressing party members at the annual PAP awards and convention, 71-year-old Lee, who is the party's secretary-general, also said that "if all goes well", he will do so by the PAP's 70th birthday on November 21 next year, Channel News Asia reported.

The PAP, set up by founding Prime Minister, the Late Lee Kuan Yew on Nov 21, 1954, has been ruling the economically prosperous city-state.

During the award and convention ceremony, Lee addressed more than 1,000 party members, following speeches by Wong, Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat and several new PAP faces.

Wong was endorsed as the leader of the party's fourth-generation or 4G, team last year after the 62-year-old Heng stepped aside so that a younger leader with a "longer runway" could take over. Lee previously said he hoped to step down before his 70th birthday, which was in February 2022. However, the plan was disrupted by the pandemic.

During this year's National Day Rally, he said his succession plans are back on track with the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, adding that recent controversies involving ministers and Members of Parliament will not delay the timetable for political renewal.

He did not give a timeline then, according to a Channel News Asia report on Sunday. Lee reiterated to PAP mem-

bers that the next GE will coincide with the party's leadership transition to the 4G team. He noted that with Wong's endorsement as leader of the 4G team, there remains only one major decision to make: Should the handover take place before or after the next GE?

"Either I can continue to lead the party in the next GE, which would be my fifth as PM, and then hand over soon afterwards to Lawrence; or I can hand over to Lawrence before the GE, then he leads the party into the campaign, wins his own mandate, and takes the country forward with the full backing of the nation," Lee was quoted as saying.

He stressed that leadership transition for any country "is always tricky" and "many things can go awry", with Singaporeans and people outside Singapore watching this development closely.

"Everything depends on the success of this third transition in our history. I have thought this over carefully, discussed it thoroughly with Lawrence and the ministers, both 3G and 4G," Lee said.

Lawrence and the 4G team have been serving for many years now. They have taken on greater responsibilities, and they are preparing well to take the helm. They earned their spurs during COVID-19 and increasingly, they are setting the national agenda," he said.

Lee also spoke about the importance of preparing well to fight and win elections, aside from governing well and keeping the party clean.

He noted that while PAP's policies may be working, conviction, support and votes are harder to win, party members have to engage Singaporeans widely and help them understand how they and their families benefit from these policies.

Li seeks to bolster China's economic outlook at Shanghai export fair

AP ■ TAIPEI

Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Sunday pledged to continue deepening reforms, expand free trade zones and relax market access for foreign investment while seeking to generate excitement around a largely lackluster economy.

Li made the remarks when delivering a keynote speech at the opening of the 6th China International Import Expo in Shanghai, seeking to draw thousands of foreign businesses shopping for Chinese products and looking to expand trade and investment with the world's second-largest economy. China's economy expanded at a 4.9 per cent annual pace between July-September, beating analysts' forecasts of about 4.5 per cent, official data show. But that was much slower than the 6.3 per cent annual growth rate of the previous quarter.

The Chinese government has adopted various policies to help the economy; raising spending on build-

ing ports and other infrastructure, cutting interest rates and easing curbs on home-buying. But economists say wider reforms are needed to address long-term problems that are stifling growth. The expo between November 5-10 is an annual event launched by President Xi Jinping in 2018 with the theme of promoting China's image as being in favour of free trade.

"We will further relax market access ... protecting the rights and interests of foreign investment in accordance with the law, and continue to create a market-oriented, legal, and international business environment," Li said at the opening.

Foreign businesses have complained of a worsening investment environment in China, particularly with the passage of new legislation that could deem the possession of standard economic forecasts as being a form of espionage. American businesses have said current conditions make it almost impossible to invest in China without taking on significant risks.



This year's expo brought Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, currently paying an official visit to China which is largely focused on restoring trade links blocked for years due to economic and political tensions. From the outset of his prime ministership, Albanese had demanded that China immediately lift what

he described as "unjustified" official and unofficial trade barriers costing Australian exporters 20 billion Australian dollars (USD 13 billion) a year. Those barriers have since been substantially reduced and now cost around AUD 2 billion (USD 1.3 billion). "The fact that it is the first visit in seven years to our major trading partner is a very positive step and I look forward to constructive discussions and dialogue with the president and the premier during my visit to Shanghai and Beijing," Albanese said prior to his departure on Saturday.

At a luncheon in Shanghai on Sunday, Albanese said he was planning to discuss joint approaches to climate change, challenges to agriculture and cooperation in the arts, and said, despite its ups and downs, the relationship continued to be "based on respect, maturity, and mutual benefit".

"Australia will cooperate where we can, disagree where we must and engage in our national interest," Albanese said. "Dialogue with China

is vital to helping secure peace, prosperity and security in our region and globally, and to navigate the challenges and opportunities our region will face this century."

More than 200 Australian companies are being represented at the Shanghai fair. Albanese has signalled that Australia won't back China's bid to join the free trade agreement known as the 12-nation Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or the CPTPP, saying China did not live up to the proposed standards. He has also said he would protest a lack of transparency in China's treatment of a detained Australian democracy blogger Yang Hengjun when meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Despite that, Li said China would continue to "actively pursue the accession to the CPTPP and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement and negotiate for the conclusion of more high standard free trade agreements."

Australian PM to protest blogger's detention conditions while meeting China's leader

AP ■ CANBERRA

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has said he would protest a lack of transparency in China's treatment of a detained Australian democracy blogger when meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing during a trade-focused state visit. The detention of Yang Hengjun without conviction for almost five years will be one of the topics raised with Xi when they meet in the Great Hall of the People on Monday.

Yang is being held in a Beijing detention center awaiting the verdict of a 2021 closed-door trial on espionage charges. The 58-year-old's family fears he is dying.

"I'll be saying that Dr. Yang's case needs to be resolved and I'll be speaking about his human rights, the nature of the detention and the failure to have transparent processes,"

Albanese told reporters in the northern Australian city of Darwin hours before he flew to Shanghai. The Chinese Foreign Ministry this week defended Yang's prosecution, saying his case had been handled in strict accordance with the law.

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV announced that Albanese arrived in the Chinese financial hub Saturday afternoon along with his delegation, becoming the first Australian prime minister to visit China since 2016. The visit signals an improvement in strained relations between the two nations since Australia's center-left government was elected last year. "It's very good to be here," he told Australian reporters on the tarmac. "I look forward to the visit."

He was greeted by China's ambassador to Australia, Xiao Qian, and Australia's ambassador to China, Graham

Fletcher. Albanese was handed a bouquet of flowers by a young girl.

Albanese has been raising the plights of Yang and another detained Australian, journalist Cheng Lei, with Chinese leaders since he first met Xi on the sidelines of a Group of 20 summit in Indonesia a year ago.

Cheng was freed and deported last month after three years in a Beijing detention for breaking a government-imposed embargo by a few minutes. Her release was interpreted as a Chinese concession ahead of Albanese's visit.

Albanese is to meet on Tuesday with Chinese Premier Li Qiang, whose message of congratulations soon after the prime minister's election victory on May 21 last year raised the prospects of a reset in bilateral relations.

Beijing has previously refused top-level ministerial

contacts between the two countries. From the outset of his prime ministership, Albanese had demanded that China immediately lift what he described as "unjustified" official and unofficial trade barriers costing Australian exporters 20 billion Australian dollars (USD 13 billion) a year.

Those barriers have since been substantially reduced and now cost around AUD 2 billion (USD 1.3 billion).

Albanese on Saturday credited his government's different approach toward China for what he describes as "stabilizing" the relationship, after nine years of conservative rule in Australia. "My approach towards this relationship has been patient, deliberate and measured, making sure that both of our interests are put forward because that is the way that good diplomacy works," Albanese said.

High alert in Quetta hospitals after doc dies of Congo virus

Karachi (PTI): A young doctor suffering from the deadly Congo virus fever has died in Quetta, prompting authorities in Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province to issue a high alert in medical centres of the provincial capital.

The Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF) virus has claimed 17 lives in the southwestern province alone this year, according to the Secretary of the Health Department, Abdullah Khan. The emergency was issued in hospitals and medical centres after it emerged on Sunday that at least 16 healthcare professionals, including doctors working at two hospitals in the province, had been infected with the virus.

Initially, three doctors, including two females, were found to be infected with the Congo virus at the Civil Hospital in Quetta. Further testing confirmed

13 other healthcare professionals at the hospital and the Fatima Jinnah Medical Centre were also infected with the virus. Dr Arif Sultan of the Young Doctors Association said the doctors were flown by air ambulances to a private hospital in Karachi for treatment as they were in critical condition, while others were sent by road in ambulances to the city. One of the critical patients, Dr Shakarullah Baloch, passed away on Saturday night in Karachi, and the two female doctors are also said to be in critical condition.

"The infected healthcare professionals were also treating patients at other hospitals and medical centres," he said.

Khan said that attendants of patients who had visited the trauma centres were also being tested for the virus and were asked to refrain from visiting the centre to prevent further transmission of the virus.

India's power consumption grows 9.4 per cent in April-October

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's power consumption grew 9.4 per cent to around 984.39 billion units in the April-October period this fiscal compared to a year ago mainly due to improvement in economic activities and weather conditions.

Power consumption in the April-October period in fiscal year 2022-23 was 899.95 billion units, according to power ministry data.

Another indicator, peak power demand, was also higher at nearly 241 GW during the April-October period this fiscal against 215.88 GW in the same period in 2022.

The country's power consumption grew nearly 22 per cent to 138.94 billion units (BU) in October, showing a surge in electricity demand due to festivities and increased economic activities.

In the same month a year ago, power consumption stood at 113.94 BU, higher than 112.79 billion units recorded in October 2021, as per government data.



A spokesperson of Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd said, "In the last couple of months, electricity consumption has gone up substantially."

In October 2023, the power consumption in Tata Power Delhi Distribution Ltd area of operation went up by around 10.16 per cent to 845 MU (million units), compared to 767 MUs in October 2022.

"The demand has remained higher mainly due to delays in winter onset this year. The festive activities in the month of October have also contributed to the demand phenomena,"

the spokesperson explained. However, the spokesperson stated that due to mild summer this year, the electricity consumption during April-May was substantially lower in comparison to the same period last year.

The spokesperson pointed out that the demand started inching up since July due to extreme humid conditions.

The power ministry had estimated the country's electricity demand to touch 229 GW during summer. The demand did not reach the projected level in April-July due to unseasonal rain.

The peak supply, however, touched a new high of 224.1 GW in June before dropping to 209.03 GW in July. Peak demand touched 238.19 GW in August. In September this year, it was nearly 241 GW.

Industry experts said power consumption was affected in March, April, May, and June this year due to widespread rainfall.

They said power consumption grew in August and September, mainly due to humid weather conditions and also perk up in industrial activities ahead of the festive season.

They stated that the double-digit growth in power consumption in the month of October reflects the impact of festivities and better economic activities.

There were festivals of Navratri, Durga Puja and Dusshera in October.

The experts are of the view that power consumption growth will remain steady in coming months due to festivities and improvement in economic activities.

REITs, InvITs collect ₹18,658 crore in April-Sep on robust infra demand

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Strong demand for infrastructure investment, attractive returns, and favourable government policies have pushed fund mobilization through listed REITs and InvITs to Rs 18,658 crore in the April-September period of the current fiscal.

This came following a fund collection of Rs 2,596 crore through listed Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs) in the entire 2022-23, although the amount mopped up through listed Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) was nil, data with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

Going forward, experts believe that trends seen in REITs and InvITs will continue in the second half of the year too.

"The fresh savings will continue similarly as has happened in the last six months, and the investments will continue to be towards InvITs as both the central government and the state governments continue to focus more on infrastructure development,"

Karan Shetty, Co-Founder of Claravest, a fractional ownership real estate investment platform, attributed several factors for the massive jump in fundraising through the route to favourable government policies, huge demand for investment in real estate, and the government's focus on urbanisation and infrastructure development.



Himanshu Kohli, Co-founder of Client Associates, said.

Hence, the trends you have seen in REITs and InvITs will continue in the second half of the year, he said.

According to Sebi data, Rs 18,658 crore was collected through these emerging investment vehicles in the April-September period of 2023-24.

This comprises Rs 12,753 crore through InvITs and the remaining Rs 5,905 crore via REITs.

Karan Shetty, Co-Founder of Claravest, a fractional ownership real estate investment platform, attributed several factors for the massive jump in fundraising through the route to favourable government policies, huge demand for investment in real estate, and the government's focus on urbanisation and infrastructure development.

awareness and investor interest about the instruments, Feroze Azeez, Deputy CEO, Anand Rathi Wealth, said.

Moreover, the government and the capital markets regulator Sebi have played an active role in popularising and promoting REITs and InvITs in India.

Of the Rs 18,658 crore investment, Rs 12,753 crore was invested through InvITs, and the remaining Rs 5,905 crore via REITs. InvITs have been more popular than REITs in terms of fundraising, due to several factors as InvITs can invest in a wider range of assets than REITs, including roads, highways, bridges, railways, power transmission lines, renewable energy projects, and gas pipelines.

Additionally, other reasons for the surge in fund collection could be regular income provided by REITs and InvITs as these trusts are required to distribute 90 per cent of their income to investors regularly, gives diversification benefit, provides liquidity benefits as the units trade on stock exchanges and increased

Besides, InvITs are exempt from paying income tax at the trust level, which makes them more attractive to investors, Azeez said. "Further, the infrastructure sector in India is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, which is likely to drive the growth of InvITs," he added.

IOC acquires Mercator Petroleum for ₹148 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has acquired Mercator Petroleum for about Rs 148 crore in an insolvency proceeding, according to regulatory filings by the company.

"The resolution plan submitted by IOC for acquisition of 100 per cent stake in Mercator Petroleum Limited (MPL) has been approved by the National Company Law Tribunal, Mumbai Bench vide its order dated November 2, 2023 under the relevant provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016," the firm said in the filing.

MPL has an onland oil and gas exploration block located in Cambay Basin, Gujarat. The block CB-ONN-2005/9, which the company had won in 7th NELP bid round in 2008, has potential oil discovery of 45.5



million barrels of inplace reserves.

IOC's Koyali refinery is located about 60 km from the block and in November 2019 it signed a contract to buy oil from the block.

"IOC will implement the Resolution Plan and complete the regulatory processes, including obtaining necessary approvals, if any, for successful implementation of the

Resolution Plan," it said. As per the resolution plan, the company will pay Rs 135 crore to secured financial creditors, who had admitted claims of Rs 291 crore. No payment has been provided for unsecured financial creditors, who had admitted claims of Rs 118 crore. The resolution plan offers Rs 5.40 crore to operational creditors - vendors, workmen, employees and

statutory dues - against their total admitted claims of Rs 73 crore.

Additionally, IOC will bear insolvency proceeding cost of Rs 8.7 crore. Cayman Island-based oil services company Halliburton Offshore Services Inc had initiated insolvency proceedings in August 2021 after Mercator defaulted on payment of Rs 2.87 crore.

IOC's resolution plan for Mercator Petroleum was approved by the committee of creditors by 100 per cent vote. It then moved to the NCLT, which has now given its approval.

IOC is the second PSU to have acquired a company in an insolvency proceeding. In March this year, India's largest gas firm GAIL acquired insolvent private-sector chemical company JBF Petrochemicals for Rs 2,079 crore, helping the state-owned firm expand its foot-

print in the petrochemical business.

GAIL had outbid a consortium of IOC and Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) in the insolvency process run by IDBI Bank to recover Rs 5,628 crore of dues to financial and operational creditors.

JBF was incorporated in 2008 to set up a 1.25 million tonnes a year capacity purified terephthalic acid plant at Mangalore Special Economic Zone. The plant, which is a backward integration project for JBF Industries' polyester plants, was commissioned in 2017 but stopped operations after the company defaulted on its loans in the same year.

Mercator Petroleum Ltd. (MPL) was a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mercator Ltd. MPL is engaged in the business of petroleum exploration, development and production in India and abroad.

Reliance returns to oil indexation for KG gas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Ltd and its partner bp plc of UK have reverted to oil indexation for pricing the gas they produce from India's largest private-sector operated field in KG basin as they look to tap into the upside from the buoyant oil market.

Reliance and bp in a tender have sought bids from buyers for 4 million standard cubic meters per day of gas from KG-D6 block in Bay of Bengal starting December 1, 2023.

They want users to quote a price indexed to Brent crude oil price, according to the tender document. The firm had in recent previous auctions, the last being in May this year, sold gas indexed to international gas benchmark, JKM.



"The consortium issued a notice inviting offer dated October 27, 2023 and invited offers from interested companies to offtake gas from the gas fields on the price basis specified in Request for Proposal (RFP), commencing from December 1, 2023 at the delivery point located in Gadimoga, Andhra Pradesh," the tender document said.

It asked bidders to quote a premium 'v' they are willing to pay over and above 12.67 per cent of dated Brent crude oil price. The starting bid price for 'v' has been kept at USD 1.08 per million British thermal unit.

At current Brent crude oil price, the starting price translates into a gas price of USD 11.8 per mmBtu (12.67 per cent of USD 85 plus USD 1.08). The maximum bid value against 'v' shall be USD 4.5 per mmBtu, the tender said.

BoM top among PSU lenders in loan, deposit growth in Q2

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) retained the top spot among public sector lenders in loan and deposit growth in percentage terms during the second quarter of the current financial year.

The deposit and advances of the Pune-based lender posted an over 20 per cent rise, the highest by any public sector bank during the July-September period.

With a growth rate of 23.55 per cent, gross domestic advances of the bank rose to Rs 1,83,122 crore at the end of September 2023, according to published quarterly numbers of public sector banks (PSBs).

It was followed by Indian Overseas Bank with 20.29 per cent growth, Central Bank of India (17.26 per cent growth) and UCO Bank with 16.53 per cent growth. The country's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) stood at the seventh spot with 13.21 per cent rise in domestic advances growth.



However, SBI's total loans were about 16 times higher at Rs 28,84,007 crore as compared to Rs 1,75,676 crore of BoM in absolute terms. With regard to deposit growth, BoM witnessed 22.18 per cent rise and mobilised Rs 2,39,298 crore at the end of September 2023.

Bank of Baroda was in second place with 12 per cent growth in deposits (Rs 10,74,114 crore), while SBI recorded an 11.80 per cent increase at Rs 45,03,340 crore, according to the published data.

BoM retained the top position in terms of garnering low-cost Current Account and Savings

Account (CASA) deposits at 50.71 per cent followed by Central Bank of India at 49.93 per cent.

Helped by high growth in loan and deposits, the bank's total business also recorded the highest growth of 22.77 per cent at Rs 4,22,420 crore, followed by Bank of Baroda at 13.91 per cent growth (Rs 19,08,837 crore) at the end of September 2023.

BoM was the top performer among PSBs in terms of deposit, advances, and total business with growth of about 25 per cent during the first quarter as well.

'Tyre demand to remain robust amid positive economic environment'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Demand for tyres in the domestic market is expected to remain robust going ahead as the automobile industry continues to scale new highs amid a positive economic environment, JK Tyre Chairman and Managing Director Raghupati Singhania said.

In an interaction with PTI, the veteran industry leader said that robust Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and the government's focus on infrastructure development, is expected to fuel growth for the automobile sector as well as the tyre industry.

"We see that the domestic demand will continue to be robust due to the healthy macroeconomic factors as well as the investments in infra and of course, overall feel good economic environment that we are running through," he said. Elaborating on some positive factors, Singhania said freight availability remains consistent, helping the commercial



vehicle segment.

Besides, robust GDP growth and more disposable income is helping in the enhanced offtake of cars, he noted.

"So, we foresee that car demand will go up and so will the demand for tyres," Singhania said. He said more and more people are now looking to travel by road as various high quality roads have come up in the last 18-20 months.

"This is going to open new venues of usage of cars in particular. And, therefore, the consumption of tyres," Singhania said. On JK Tyres, he said the com-

pany being a leader in the truck and bus radial tyres continues to focus on the segment.

"However, we will also have an enhanced focus on Passenger Car Radial (PCR) because the headroom is even better in the segment," he added.

Singhania said the company's topline has been growing consistently over the last few quarters and it expects to maintain it going ahead.

The company's consolidated net profit surged five-fold to Rs 249 crore for the September quarter, riding on a robust performance in the domestic market.

Jeep India expects to increase dealership network to 80 by 2023

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

Automaker Jeep India has strengthened its retail footprint with the inauguration of a new dealership — SGA Jeep, here, as it plans to increase its dealership network to 80 by the end of the year, the company said on Sunday.

Currently, Jeep India is present in 64 cities across the country and has over 72 touch points. The SGA Jeep, in the city, is spread across 2,100 sq ft and would offer the full range of JEEP - Grand Cherokee, Wrangler, Meridian and Compass in the region. Besides, it would also serve neighbouring districts including Erode, Nigiris and Tirupur.

"Tamil Nadu is an economic powerhouse and an important market for Jeep India. Our partnership with SGA in the strategic market of Coimbatore is a testimony for the growing demand for the Jeep brand in the region. It is further aligned

with the aim to strengthen our service footprint PAN India by increasing our network to 80 dealerships by the end of 2023," said Jeep India Operations Head and Stellantis India, Deputy Managing Director, Aditya Jairaj.

The continued expansion demonstrates Jeep India's firm commitment to the Indian market and to the Jeep community, he added.

The dealership besides sales, would also comprise a 12-bay dedicated workshop covering 25,000 sq ft operating with trained service personnel offering customers a world-class service experience backed by workshop infra, availability of spare parts and use of modern repair tools. The Jeep brand is part of the portfolio offered by global automaker and mobility provider Stellantis. India is the first country for Jeep, outside of North America, to make four models locally and for exports to other right-hand drive markets.

Restrictions, PLI, quality norms helping cut import of certain non-essential goods

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Steps such as curbs on inbound shipments of certain goods, production linked incentive scheme and mandatory quality norms are helping the country reduce imports of non-essential products such as TV, tyres, wallpaper and AC gas compressors.

These steps, among others like imposing antidumping and countervailing duties, have been taken to analyse and control non-essential imports and to augment domestic production capacity in import intensive sectors, an official said. According to an analysis of the commerce and industry ministry, import restrictions imposed on tyres helped cut

the inbound shipments by 74 per cent to USD 74 million in 2022-23 from USD 276 million in 2019-20. Calendar year wise, these imports declined to USD 36 million till July this year as against USD 353 million in 2018.

The government in June 2020 imposed import curbs on certain new pneumatic tyres used in motor cars, buses, lorries and motorcycles to promote domestic manufacturing and contain imports from countries like China.

Imports of wallpapers reduced by 77 per cent to USD 10 million during April-August this year from USD 44 million in the same month last year due to the launch of paper import monitoring system (PIMS).

The ministry in October last year made import registration under PIMS mandatory for inbound shipments of 201 types of paper and paper boards such as wallpaper, glazed newsprint, handmade paper and tissue paper.

Under this, an importer has to provide advance information online about import of these papers and obtain a registration number. The government has a similar system for coal and steel imports.

Similarly, implementing quality control order (QCO) for footwear has helped in reducing the imports by 54 per cent to USD 75 million during July-August this year from USD 163 million in the same period last year.



The order came into effect from July this year. It is aimed at containing imports of sub-standard goods and boosting local manufacturing.

According to an industry expert, imports of goods like sports footwear, sandals, and components like soles are coming down from countries like China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong

Kong and Bangladesh. Imports of AC gas compressors declined by 10 per cent to USD 177 million during April-August 2023 as against USD 197 million in the corresponding period last year.

The production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods (AC components and LED lights) was approved with

an outlay of Rs 6,238 crore. The official said that an inter-ministerial committee meets regularly to discuss ways to cut imports of non-essential goods.

"The commerce and industry ministry is sensitising other ministries to see areas where we have competitiveness and where we can increase our manufacturing and cut import of those goods," the official added.

The sensitisation initiative is yielding positive results as information flow among different ministries and departments has started. "The information flow is helping in analysing data and framing specific policy interventions like PLI," the official said. To cut imports, the gov-

ernment has increased customs duty on gold, imposed curbs on inbound shipments of television, levied minimum import price on some goods, introduced National Food Security Mission (Oilseeds and Oil Palm) Scheme, and blending of ethanol in oil.

The exercise is aimed at promoting domestic manufacturing of those goods where there is sufficient capacity within the country but are still being imported.

TV imports declined to USD 10 million during April-July this fiscal as against USD one billion in 2018-19.

Crude oil imports (USD 209.42 billion) accounted for over 29 per cent of India's total imports in 2022-23, when it

was USD 716 billion. Containing these imports would help reduce the trade deficit, which has declined to USD 116 billion during April-September this fiscal as against USD 140.83 billion in the same period last year.

Imports during the first half of this financial year dipped by 12.23 per cent to USD 327 billion.

The country's top import commodities include crude oil, gold, electronic goods, pulses, fertilisers, machine tools, and pharmaceutical products. The top ten merchandise import sources for India include China, the US, the UAE, Switzerland, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, Iraq and Germany.

Araújo's stoppage-time header snatches win for Barcelona

AP ■ BARCELONA

Uruguay defender Ronald Araújo scored deep in stoppage time to snatch a 1-0 win for Barcelona at Real Sociedad, while Girona leads the Spanish league after beating Osasuna 4-2. Araújo charged forward to join the attack in the dying moments in San Sebastián and guided home a lobbed pass by Ilkay Gündogan with a header to clinch victory for the visitors. The goal saw Barcelona move back ahead of Atletico Madrid and into third place. Barcelona trails Girona by four points and second-place Real Madrid by one. "Real (Sociedad) is a great team and pressured us all game," Araújo said. "We didn't play well, above all in the first half. But there are some games you just have to win any way you can." Sociedad, which is in sixth place, generated several scoring

chances - especially in the opening minutes of the game - and dominated possession but was unable to convert its strong start into an early goal. Marc-Andre ter Stegen kept the game scoreless. The Barcelona goalkeeper used one arm to block Ander Barrenetxea's shot just seconds after kickoff. Mikel Oyarzabal and Mikel Merino then both went close with chances before Ter Stegen saved an effort by Takefusa Kubo. Spain midfielder Pedri returned for his first action since August, when he injured his hamstring, coming on with just over half an hour left. Ferran Torres also replaced Robert Lewandowski, who made his first start in a month after recovering from injury recently. Barcelona finally started to click in attack in the final minutes. Araújo is a key defender for Barcelona, able to use his height at his natural position of central defender, and with enough speed to play at right back, like



he did against Sociedad and in the prior round against Madrid. The 24-year-old helped change the flow of the game by forcing the first decent save by Sociedad's Alex Remiro in the

final minutes. He beat Remiro by directing his header under the goalkeeper. The gutsy victory came a week after Barcelona lost 2-1 at home to Madrid in a "clásico" game. "I believe the clásico affected us more than I had thought," Barcelona coach Xavi said. "We had a clásico hangover. Our first 20 minutes were unacceptable. This (win) gives a boost to our confidence."

GIRONA ROLLS

Ukraine striker Artem Dovbyk scored one goal and set up two more to lead Girona to victory in Pamplona. Girona continued to surpass expectations with its convincing win after roaring ahead in a game in which it trailed 2-1 in the second half. Michel Sánchez's side has 10 wins in 12 rounds. Girona's only loss was against Madrid, which is three points behind before hosting Rayo Vallecano on Sunday. Girona went ahead in the 16th minute through Iván Martín

after Dovbyk set him free to cap a counterattack. Osasuna striker Ante Budimir pulled the hosts level in the 25th before adding a second goal with a header in the 55th. Dovbyk then took charge, heading in to make it 2-2 in the 71st after finishing off a long buildup. It was his sixth goal since joining Girona this season. Artem set up fellow countryman Viktor Tsygankov to help put Girona ahead in the 80th. Aleix García volleyed in the fourth goal from just inside the area in the 90th to quash any hope of a late equaliser by Osasuna.

CELTA ANGRY

Sevilla escaped with a 1-1 draw at 10-man Celta Vigo after the referee overturned the awarding of a stoppage-time penalty following a video review. Celta was leading until Renato Tapia was sent off with a second yellow in the 65th. Sevilla striker Youssef En-Nesyri equalized in the 84th.

John scores to give Brazil's Fluminense maiden Copa Libertadores title against Boca Juniors



AP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

John Kennedy, a 21-year-old striker with many ups and downs in his short career, scored the winning goal to give Brazil's Fluminense its maiden Copa Libertadores title against Boca Juniors. Substitute Kennedy netted Fluminense's second in its 2-1 victory against the Argentinians at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro in the 9th minute of overtime. Regular time ended 1-1. Kennedy was sent off for a second yellow after scoring with a powerful volley from the edge of the box, past the left corner of goalkeeper Sergio Romero. Shortly later Boca's Frank Fabra also saw a red card, which kept some balance between the two exhausted teams during extra time. "It was the most important goal of my life," Kennedy said. "I came to hug my family on the stands after I scored the goal, he sent me off for that, but nothing else matters. We are the champions." The Argentinian giants were playing for their seventh title in the tournament. Its tens of thousands of fans in Rio saw their hopes momentarily tank after their countryman

German Cano scored in the 36th minute after a low cross from Keno. The 35-year-old Cano netted 81 goals for the Rio-based club in 125 matches in the past two years. Boca lost some momentum, but managed to equalize in the 72nd minute with a powerful shot by Luis Advincola from the edge of the box, a goal allowed Argentinian fans once more to dream of the title, counting on Romero's great penalty saving skills. Eight minutes later, Kennedy stepped in. His goal in extra time came as Fluminense pushed forward, knowing a penalty shootout could make the final go Boca's way. The striker, who first appeared at the Rio club in 2021, struggled to get a starting position last year. He was loaned to a small club that was relegated in the Sao Paulo state league, and returned to Fluminense only months ago. Brazilian clubs won every edition of the Copa Libertadores since 2019 with Flamengo and Palmeiras. Boca, who would tie Independiente with a record seventh title, played its first continental decider since 2018. Five years ago, the yellow and blue club lost the final to archrival River Plate, with the last match played in Madrid because of fan violence in Buenos Aires. The 35-year-old Marcelo, who made most of his career as a left-back but has played often as a midfielder, was one of Fluminense's keys to control the match from the start. The 19-year-old Argentinian midfielder Valentín Barco, a big hope of creativity for Boca, could not deliver in the final.

Djokovic wins a 3-set battle with Rublev to set up Paris Masters final

AP ■ PARIS

Top-ranked Novak Djokovic was made to fight for more than three hours by Andrey Rublev in their semifinal match before earning the right to play for a record-extending seventh title at the Paris Masters. Djokovic overcame a slow start to rally past his Russian opponent 5-7, 7-6 (3), 7-5 and maintain his perfect record in the semifinals at the indoor tournament. The Serbian player will take on Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov in Sunday's final. "Rublev was suffocating me like a snake suffocates a frog for most of the match," Djokovic said. "He was playing an extremely high level that he possesses, but today he was off the charts, honestly. I don't think I've ever faced Rublev this good." Dimitrov overcame strong resistance from seventh-seeded Stefanos Tsitsipas with a 6-3, 6-7 (1), 7-6 (3) victory. The road to the final has not been an easy one for Djokovic, who defeated defending champion Holger Rune in three sets in the quarterfinals and also came out on top of a three-set contest in the third round. Djokovic said he has been hampered by a stomach virus that

made "him feel terrible the past three days." He took pride in "not giving up, fighting and believing that I can come back, which happened again and hopefully it can happen tomorrow." Against Rublev, Djokovic made some unusual mistakes from the baseline early on but improved as the match advanced. Rublev earned a set point at 6-5 in the opener when he made the most of a weak second serve by Djokovic with an excellent backhand return that he followed up with a forehand winner. Djokovic then fluffed a drop shot that bounced back in his own half. Rublev was in trouble in the fifth game of the second set at 0-40 but stayed calm to save the three break points. He was lucky on the third one when his backhand hit the net cord and bounced in Djokovic's side. Rublev continued to use his big forehand to good effect and held for a 4-3 lead after saving another break point. Djokovic made the difference in the tiebreaker with inspired shot making. He moved to a 4-2 lead after coming out on top of a long rally and was then 6-3 ahead thanks to a sublime forehand return.

Mvogo makes 7 saves as Lens is held 0-0 at Lorient

Marseille plays again with draw against Lille

AP ■ PARIS

Lens was held to a 0-0 draw Lat Lorient in the French league after goalkeeper Yvon Mvogo delivered a man-of-the-match performance to keep the hosts afloat. In windy and rainy conditions, the Swiss international made seven saves. He denied a

couple of excellent chances from Angelo Fulgini and Elye Wahi and was rescued by his crossbar when Florian Sotoca unleashed a 35-meter effort just after halftime. Lens was runner-up behind Paris Saint-Germain last season but endured a poor start this term. The team has improved in recent weeks and is now unbeaten in six matches. The northern side is ninth in the standings, two points above Lorient. The hosts thought they had taken the lead when Eli Junior Kroupi beat Lens goal-

keeper Brice Samba with a lobbed header but the goal was ruled out for an offside position confirmed after a VAR check. Kroupi had another good chance within nine minutes left but lost his duel with Samba. Marseille, which had not played since a Europa League win against AEK Athens on Oct. 26, drew 0-0 with Lille. The nine-time champions' match against Lyon scheduled for last weekend was postponed after a violent attack on buses carrying the visiting Lyon soccer team and fans.

The match against Lille at Stade Velodrome was played without incident off the field, and did not spark much excitement on it with the hosts mustering just one shot on target. Amine Harit had Marseille's best chance just before the interval but shot wide in front of an open goal. Marseille is six points behind fourth-place Lille in the standings, having played one game less. PSG moved to the top of league on Friday thanks to a comprehensive 3-0 win at home against Montpellier.



Vaishali dumps Zhongyi Tan, inches closer to GM title

PTI ■ ISLE OF MAN (UK)

On the verge of her Grandmaster title, R Vaishali outwitted former Women's world champion Zhongyi Tan of China to remain in sole lead after the end of the 10th and penultimate round of FIDE Women Grand Prix here. Vaishali, along with her younger brother Praggnanandhaa became the first brother-sister duo to qualify for the respective Candidates and they will be in action in Canada next year, fighting for a place in the World Championship finals. At 2498 live rating, Vaishali is just two points short of becoming a Grandmaster and when she does that, she and Pragg will also become the first siblings in the world to achieve this feat. Vaishali on eight points, is followed solely by Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine a half point behind. Another half point away is Vaishali's last round opponent Bathkuyag Mungtuul of Mongolia. Vaishali's second place is secured irrespective of her last round result.

Martínez scores again in 2-1 win for Serie A leader Inter at Atalanta

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan consolidated its position at the top of Serie A and Lautaro Martínez boosted his lead in the scoring charts as the Nerazzurri won 2-1 at Atalanta. Martínez doubled Inter's advantage in the 57th minute after Hakan Çalhanoğlu's penalty had given the visitors the lead on a rainy evening in Bergamo. They were the first goals Atalanta had conceded at home this season. Gianluca Scamacca reduced the deficit for Atalanta shortly after Martínez's stunning strike. It was Martínez's 12th league goal this season, double that of his nearest challengers - AC Milan forward Olivier Giroud and Napoli's Victor Osimhen. It was also the 33rd goal of the calendar year for Martínez,

who has been in lethal form since winning the World Cup with Argentina in December. Inter moved five points clear of second-place Juventus, which visits Fiorentina on Sunday, and six above Milan after the Rossoneri's problems increased with a humiliating 1-0 loss at home to lowly Udinese. Napoli remained seven points behind Inter but moved up to fourth with a 2-0 win at bottom club Salernitana. The defending champion moved two points above Atalanta. Things didn't start so well for Inter as Benjamin Pavard had to be replaced by Matteo Darmian in the 33rd minute after his left knee buckled under him. A stretcher was brought on and there were fears of a serious injury but Pavard insisted on getting off the stretcher and hobbling off the field.

Red Bull's Perez gets some solace at sprint race of Brazilian Formula One Grand Prix



AP ■ SAO PAULO

Red Bull's Sergio Perez has faced headwinds in recent weeks, including his crash out of the Mexican Grand Prix and a narrowing of the gap between him and Lewis Hamilton in the fight for the runner-up position in the drivers' championship. The Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos also added frustration for the Mexican, who will start Sunday's race in ninth position after a poor qualifying session amid rain on Friday. But a

third-place finish in Saturday's sun lit sprint race gave him a boost of six points against Hamilton's two, plus hope that it could all be different on Sunday. Perez is second in the F1 standings and trying to block Hamilton, who cut the deficit from 39 points to 20 with three races remaining. Saturday's sprint race could push the Mercedes driver to take more risks in a race where most of the fans will be pushing for him. Perez agreed he is more confi-

dent about his car for the race in Brazil. "In Mexico, we were strong. But here it has been a good, solid day. It is a good place," Perez said. "Tomorrow, I have to try to improve what everyone has. Anything is possible." The Mexican had to fight back to reclaim the third position from which he started. He was overtaken by both Mercedes drivers early in the sprint race, with raucous Brazilian fans cheering for both George Russell and Hamilton. Perez's high speed in straight lines made the difference so he could leave both behind later. Formula One champion Max Verstappen of Red Bull, who will start the race in pole position, won at Interlagos his fourth sprint race in the season and will add another eight points to his tally. McLaren's Lando Norris finished second, more than four seconds behind the Dutchman in the 24-lap contest.

Indian men's junior hockey team to work on weak areas at national camp ahead of WC

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian hockey colts will return to the national camp in Bengaluru to improve upon the weak areas they identified during their bronze medal-winning performance at the Sultan of Johor Cup in Malaysia and come back stronger in the World Cup next month. India had topped their group to make it to the semifinals but lost to Germany in their final-four game before defeating arch-rivals Pakistan in the third-place playoff to settle for a bronze medal in Johor Bahru. The World Cup will be played in Kuala Lumpur from December 5. Team coach CR Kumar said while he wouldn't call it a great outing in Johor Bahru, but key areas of improvement in the team have been identified. "I wouldn't call it satisfying because there are some things

we could have done better," Kumar said. India faced several top teams such as Germany, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Pakistan in the tournament. "We will use the weeks leading up to the junior World Cup to improve and sharpen the areas we identified during this performance in Johor Bahru. "This tournament also provided us with insight into the performances of other teams that will compete in the World Cup and we will plan our strategies accordingly," he added. The World Cup will feature 16 teams, divided into four groups. India have been placed in Pool C, along with Spain, Korea, and Canada. Argentina, Australia, Chile, and hosts Malaysia are in Pool A, while Germany, France, South Africa, and Egypt are in Pool B, and the Netherlands, Belgium, Pakistan, and New Zealand are in Pool D.

Ramesh, Prajakta emerge winners in Hyderabad Half Marathon

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's B Ramesh Chandra and Prajakta Godbole of Maharashtra won the men's and women's titles in the Hyderabad Half Marathon here on Sunday. On a pleasant morning, with cool breeze for comfort, Ramesh cracked the 21.1 kms in one hour 13 minutes and 10 seconds

to be crowned champion. Satish Kumar (1:15:50) and Piyush Masane (1:16:56) tailed him to the finish line to take the other two positions on the podium in the category. Among women, 28-year-old Prajakta underlined her reputation as one of India's top distance runners by covering the half marathon distance in an impressive one hour 23 minutes and 45

seconds. Preenu Yadav (1:24:46) and Tejaswini Umbkane (1:25:11) grabbed the second and third places behind her. Cricketing icon and brand ambassador of Aegae Federal Life Insurance, Sachin Tendulkar flagged off over 8,000 runners at the crack of dawn, making the Hyderabad Half Marathon one of the biggest running events in

southern India. Later, Tendulkar and India's chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand felicitated the winners. "I congratulate the winners of this edition of the Hyderabad Half Marathon. I am pleased to see such an impressive turnout and congratulate not just the winners, but everyone who participated across all the cate-

gories with the determination to Run Ageless, Run Fearless," Tendulkar said. The 10K run was a straight fight between Chetan Kumar (0:34:21) and Bharat Singh (0:35:13) for the most part, before Chetan surged into the lead to take the crown. Nikhil Erigila (0:35:24) came in a commendable third. Among women, Sheelu Yadav

(0:41:34) was the clear winner, taking the title with a margin of seven minutes. Muskan (0:48:29) and Yankey Dupka (0:50:04) finished second and third respectively. **RESULTS Half Marathon Men:** 1. B Ramesh Chandra (1:13:10); 2. Satish Kumar (1:15:50); 3. Piyush Masane (1:16:56).

Women: 1. Prajakta Godbole (1:23:45); 2. Preenu Yadav (1:24:46); 3. Tejaswini Umbkane (1:25:11). **10K Men:** 1. Chetan Kumar (0:34:21); 2. Bharat Singh (0:35:13); 3. Nikhil Erigila (0:35:24) **Women:** 1. Sheelu Yadav (0:41:34); 2. Muskan (0:48:29); 3. Yankey Dupka (0:50:04).



On 35th birthday, Kohli achieves 'dream' parity with Sachin

KOLKATA, NOV 5 (PTI)

Virat Kohli gave his fans a perfect birthday treat when he finally struck his highly-anticipated 49th ODI century in an unbeaten innings of supreme patience and perseverance to power India to above-par 326/5 against South Africa in the World Cup here on Sunday.

A frenzied response, South Africa's resurgence and the Kohli's missing maestro Sachin Tendulkar's record-equaling 49th ODI ton twice in three innings made an ideal setting to the match on Kohli's 35th birthday.

The Indian run-machine, who got out for 95 and 88 against New Zealand and Sri Lanka, did not disappoint the ecstatic Eden full house giving a perfect icing on the cake to score the historic century on a difficult Eden track.

The monkey was finally off his back in the 49th over when Kohli gently pushed Kagiso Rabada for a single and followed it up with his usual quiet celebration nowadays. It came off 119 balls with 10 fours, that summed up how Kohli toiled hard for the milestone.

For Kohli, who remained unbeaten on 101 facing 121 deliveries, it came in 277 innings, while Tendulkar brought up his 49th ODI century in 452 innings. The relief was well evident as he took his helmet off, kissed his bat, and saluted the crowd giving a standing ovation with their smartphone flash guns lighting up the atmosphere.

The century seemed assured this time when Kohli crunched Rabada through covers in the previous overs to race to 97.

Barring Keshav Maharaj who bowled his full quota at a stretch, no other bowler could create an impact on an different looking Eden wicket that became slower as the game progressed and aided spin.

There was more setback for the Proteas as pacer Lungi Ngidi limped off and was unable to complete his over. Marco Jansen also looked wayward and leaked eight in extras.

Unlike any other day, the dry Eden pitch on a hazy overcast evening offered vicious turn and South Africa were quick to bring on their ace spinner Maharaj right after the



powerplay. India's turbo-charged start by Rohit was already halted by Kagiso Rabada's wicket-aided first over,

and Maharaj produced a classical left-arm spin to remove the in-form Gill (23; 24b). That ball dipped so much that it

enticed Gill to come forward and but then it turned away sharply to clip the top of stumps, leaving the Indian opener in utter disbelief.

Well-aware of Kohli's weakness against Maharaj, the South African skipper had the left-arm spinner go non-stop at one end.

But Kohli navigated the phase well in an intriguing battle against Maharaj. Shreyas played a tortoise-like innings looked to be the weak link, but Kohli guarded him well in an exceptional Test-match like alliance.

The Birthday Boy also survived a review for caught behind on 37 when he pushed defensively at a snorter from Maharaj, as the Proteas appealed for a caught-behind.

The replays showed no spike on UltraEdge, in the only opportunity for Maharaj. Who made the most of the conditions, but only to be restrained with figures of 10-0-30-1 under sheer brilliance of Kohli who scored 16 off 29 balls against him.

That South Africa's second spinner Tabraiz Shamsi could not make full use of the conditions unlike his Chepauk show, helped the Indian duo.

While Kohli and Iyer played with respect against Maharaj, they were happy to take charge against Shamsi. Kohli brought up his fifty off 67 balls

-- his sixth in eight innings in the World Cup -- in Maharaj's last over, while

Opting to bat, skipper Rohit Sharma gave India a blistering start before South Africa arrested the run flow with one wicket each by Rabada and Maharaj.

At a venue where he has the ODI world record score of 264, Rohit smashed a 24-ball 40 before Bavuma's terrific catch at mid-off halted his innings.

Rohit smashed Rabada powerfully through covers, but the South Africa skipper held firmly to the ball in front of his eyes.

The Indian skipper quickly got off the blocks after surviving on duck off a Lungi Ngidi delivery that hit him high on the thigh pad.

But since then it was a one-way traffic for Rohit who took Ngidi and Marco Jansen to cleaners. Lanky leftarm pacer Jansen, who was South Africa's main bowler in the powerplay, bowled a lot of freebies and was wayward.

With Rohit taking charge on him, his figures read 4-0-43-0 -- the first time Jansen went wicketless in the powerplay that yielded 91 runs for India.



Frustration grows and adds but belief not shaken: Buttler

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Captain Jos Buttler said England's dismal World Cup campaign and his own batting failure has been frustrating but insisted that it hasn't shaken his belief in either himself or the team.

"England's World Cup defence officially ended after they went down by 33 runs to arch rivals Australia on Saturday. It was their sixth defeat in the seven games they have played in the tournament so far.

"I wouldn't say the belief shaken, more just the frustration grows and adds. Like I said, these are top quality players," Buttler said after the defeat to Australia.

"Despite the abundance of talent and experience, the England players have cut a sorry figure. One of the most destructive players in the game, Buttler's form has deserted him at the World Cup.

"The belief in my game is as high as it's ever been really, which means why there's so much frustration. Coming into the tournament I felt in fantastic form, as good a form as I've been in. So, to be sat here having had the tournament I've had is incredibly frustrating, but it doesn't shake your belief.

"If I stop believing in myself, I've got to make sure I'm the last one that does that. You guys will give up on me a lot earlier than I'll give up on myself," he added.

"The wicketkeeper-batter was insistent that the burden of cap-

taincy has nothing to do with his batting failure.

"No I wouldn't say the captaincy. It's something I've enjoyed that responsibility in T20 cricket and ODI cricket before this tournament. I felt like it's brought out a lot of really good things in my batting. So, it's been frustrating."

"The inability to score runs has been perplexing for Buttler himself given that he is familiar with the conditions in India.

"I can't quite put a finger on why I'm not playing to the level I expected myself. I've played a lot of cricket in India and played a lot of IPL cricket here so it's not as if I don't know the conditions or the grounds yes you know and as I say as a captain you want to lead from the front.

"So, of all the things that have happened on this trip, I'd say my own form has been my biggest frustration, because you want to lead from the front as a captain."

"With the top seven sides at the World Cup and hosts Pakistan set to qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy, England, who are the bottom of the table, are at the risk of missing out on the tournament. They need to win their remaining two games against Pakistan and Netherlands for a shot at qualifying.

"Yeah, absolutely by exactly that. You know, the Champions Trophy is a tournament we want to be involved in and if we're going to be involved in it, we need to win some games of cricket," Buttler added.

Uncertainty looms over Lanka, Bangla clash due to air pollution

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The notorious air pollution in the national capital has shrouded the World Cup clash between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh in doubt and it remains to be seen if the health of the players takes precedence over the contest, here on Monday.

"A thick layer of toxic haze has enveloped the national capital once again, forcing the two teams to cancel their training at least once as Air Quality Index (AQI) remains in the severe category.

"While Sri Lanka decided to stay indoors on Saturday, Bangladesh braved hazardous conditions to train last evening, wearing masks at the Feroz Shah Kotla. The 'Tigers' had cancelled their opening training session on Friday due to poor quality air.

"The AQI is above 400-mark on a scale of 500 since Thursday and according to the Air Quality Early Warning System, it is likely to remain 'severe' till Tuesday.

"On Sunday morning, the AQI stood at 457 according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

"The International Cricket Council (ICC) has made it clear that a call on future of the match will be taken only on game day when the match officials assess the air quality on Monday.

"Article 2.8 of ICC's playing conditions, says 'If at any time the umpires together agree that the



conditions of ground, weather or light, or any other circumstances are dangerous or unreasonable, they shall immediately suspend play, or not allow play to start or to recommence."

"The decision as to whether conditions are so bad as to warrant such action is one for the umpires alone to make, following consultation with the ICC Match Referee."

"Both the teams are no strangers to such a situation with the Sri Lankan players resorting to masks during a Test series back in 2017 and Bangladesh cricketers doing the same in a T20 in 2019.

"A number of Sri Lankan players had faced respiratory issues back then, while some even vomited in the dressing room due to the hazardous conditions. "Bangladesh are already out of

reckoning, while Sri Lanka's semifinal hopes are hanging by a thread, depending more on mathematics and luck than performance.

"Ranked ninth out of 10 teams, Bangladesh are playing for pride, while Sri Lanka are little better placed at seventh in the standings and will look to hold on to the position to qualify for the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

"Sri Lanka have an overwhelming 42-9 record against Bangladesh in 53 ODIs but the Tigers had defeated the Islanders in the warm-up game ahead of the World Cup and will take inspiration from that win.

"Sri Lanka are coming into the match after facing a nightmare against Indian pacers, who bundled them out for 55 during a 302-run thrashing and Kusal

Mendis and his men will have to pick themselves up quickly against an equally hurt Tigers. "While injuries have been an issue, Lankan players have also faltered against high-quality opponents and Bangladesh will have to produce a superlative performance to exploit their weakness.

"Sadeera Samarawickrama has been the find of the tournament for the Lankans, who have been served well by Pathum Nissanka and skipper Kusal Mendis in their batting from time to time though they lacked consistency. "In bowling too, Lankan pacers have blown hot and cold, while lack of key spinners have hurt the team.

"For Bangladesh, it has been a forgettable outing as they have managed just one win against Afghanistan in the tournament.

Most satisfying ODI I have played: Zampa

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

A match-winning spell, a stellar fielding display and a vital contribution with the bat against arch-rivals England made for the "most satisfying" ODI for Australia spinner Adam Zampa.

"The leg-spinner smashed 29 off 19 balls, featuring four hits to the boundary, and then returned with miserly figures of 3/21.

"To add to that, Zampa took a stunning running catch to send David Willey back to the pavilion and complete a perfect day.

"It's probably the most satisfying ODI I've ever played to be honest," Zampa, who was adjudged player of the match, said after Australia's 33-run win over England on Saturday.

"Batting innings, really satisfying. Starky (Starc) and I spoke about trying to take it deep, with still staying fairly positive, because we stuffed it off against New Zealand.

"But nice to contribute with the bat, it felt good and then the catch, I mean, I am not known as the best fielder in the world but satisfying to work on stuff and things come off like that so it's a good feeling."

"His victims with the ball included Ben Stokes and Moeen Ali, who were threatening to take the match away from Australia, and skipper Jos Buttler.

"I'd say tonight is as satisfying as it feels after an ODI in terms of my 10 overs. Bowling mainly to lefties, Malan, Stokes, Ali, they're quality players.



And to sit back, knowing that I went for 20 runs off 10 overs, my length control was as good as it's been, it was a really satisfying one tonight," Zampa said.

"A vital cog in Australia's scheme of things in white ball cricket, the 31-year-old is yet to make his Test debut.

"No, not that difficult (accepting he was not chosen for the tour of India earlier this year). I was hopeful. I'd love to play Test cricket. I'd love to have that opportunity. I've said that plenty of times. But I'm pretty realistic about how it looks and what works in the subcontinent.

"There aren't a lot of leg spinners playing Test cricket at the moment either. I was hopeful, obviously would have loved to have still played that in that test series but as soon as I found out I wasn't playing and kind of saw how the games are going in that series I started concentrating on the World Cup.

"We've got this one and obviously the T20 World Cup coming up next year as well so there was plenty to look forward to," he added.

Virat a legend of game, says Dravid as Kohli turns 35

PTI ■ KOLKATA

India cricket team head coach Rahul Dravid described Virat Kohli, who is celebrating his 35th birthday on Sunday, as a legend of the game and that his performance had set the benchmark for his generation of players.

"Former India skipper Kohli

has scripted countless records in the sport across formats and continues to do so, including in the ongoing World Cup.

"Speaking to ICC, Dravid said, "Virat's a legend of the game, especially (in) this format of the game. I think all formats of the game, but particularly this one (50-over), I think his performance and the way he fin-

ishes games. The standard of his performance over the years has probably set a benchmark for his generation of cricketers."

"Veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin reckoned that Kohli has played a huge role in changing the DNA of the thought process in Indian cricket. "He has changed the DNA of



thinking around Indian cricket. How one batsman needs to perceive and prepare for the game."

"Young opener Shubman Gill lauded Kohli's hunger and passion and said, "His hunger and passion for the game are unparalleled. I have not seen anyone as hungry as Virat Kohli."

"Kohli's feats include scoring the most runs in international cricket among contemporary players and is just next to Sachin Tendulkar's all-time record.

"In this World Cup, he has scored the most runs for India -- 442 in seven innings at an average of 88.40, including a century and four half-centuries.

Our cricket fearless, that is why we have higher percentage of wins of late: Naib

MUMBAI, NOV 5 (PTI)

The turmoil and hardships back home have taught the Afghanistan players to play "totally fearless" cricket, feels Gulbadin Naib, and it is reflected in the manner in which they are punching above their weight in the ongoing World Cup.

Afghanistan have eight points from seven matches with four wins and three losses -- similar to New Zealand and Pakistan who have played eight games each so far. Eyeing a

semifinals berth, the Afghans are behind on the Net Run Rate (-0.330) but they have one extra game in hand.

"From where we belong (or come from), it has been our nature - given you know the history - that we play with an open heart - because we know that we have nothing to lose," Naib said.

"The better we will do (in terms of performances) and the more we hold on to it, the aggression comes in naturally, the energy flows in and we also enjoy (that flow).

"The way we are playing our cricket we are enjoying it and we are not afraid. We are not bothered about what will happen or what will not, we do not have that habit.

"You look at our team, be it the seniors or young players like (Rahmanullah) Gurbaz - the way he plays - it is totally fearless. This is why we have a higher percentage of wins of late," he added.

Afghanistan have benefitted immensely with the presence of former India all-rounder Ajay Jadeja during their World Cup



campaign. Placed sixth on the points table, they take on Australia in their next game here on Tuesday.

Naib, who is among the reserve players having captained Afghanistan to a silver medal in the Asian Games in Hangzhou, China, said Jadeja's inputs have been "unbelievable" when it comes to guiding the Afghan players.

"The results also have a lot to do with the role he has played in the backroom for us. He guides the players and he shares his experience like any big player. Ajay bhai has played for India, he knows and can also anticipate what can happen at any stage in the game," Naib told PTI exclu-

sively on the sidelines of Afghanistan's training session here on Sunday. "While we have the entire game on our mind, he breaks it down to 10-minute plays (watching it) closely.

"He knows what will happen here (at the Wankhede Stadium) given the ocean (Arabian Sea) is close by (to the stadium), what will happen (in terms of conditions) during the day or the night or whether the ball will swing or not, break or not, we get a lot of ideas," Naib said.

"Ajay sir, if I am not speaking much, the way he has been guid-

ing our players has been unbelievable and we are enjoying his company," he added.

Naib said to have watched a player like Jadeja playing alongside the legends of the game like Sachin Tendulkar and Sourav Ganguly on TV and have him in the dressing room is a benefit for the Afghanistan players.

"Whenever we sit down, he only speaks about cricket. He invariably gets cricket into any discussion that we would be having.

"His presence is a big thing for us, his players were watching him

on TV till recently playing with legends like Sachin Tendulkar and (Sourav) Ganguly and today he is associated with us and that has made a huge impact on our team and our cricket," he said.

Naib also heaped praise on Afghanistan's head coach, former England player Jonathan Trott for fostering greater self-confidence among players. "Jonathan Trott has brought in more confidence into the side and the players. If you get over-aggressive in your approach you may not get much results," he said.