

'Exiled' to an alien land, Musharraf dies forgotten, forlorn

ISLAMABAD/DUBAI, FEBRUARY 5

Pakistan's former military ruler General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War in 1999, died on Sunday in Dubai after battling an incurable disease.

Musharraf died a forgotten man in far off Dubai where he spent the last years of his life to escape legal proceedings in Pakistan where he had even been sentenced to death for treason.

Musharraf, 79, who lived in self-imposed exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in Pakistan, died after a prolonged illness at the American Hospital in Dubai.

He was suffering from amyloidosis, a rare disease caused by a build-up of an abnormal protein called amyloid in organs and tissues throughout the body, according to his family.

In a statement issued immediately after Musharraf's death, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the Pakistan military, said that Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Sahir Shamshad and all the services chiefs express their heartfelt condolences.

Musharraf's family has filed an appli-



cation in the Pakistani consulate in Dubai to shift the former military leader's body to Pakistan.

A special jet will fly to Dubai from Nur Khan airbase in Rawalpindi to bring Musharraf's mortal remains back to Pakistan.

Born in a middle-class family of Urdu-speaking parents in Delhi in 1943, Musharraf migrated to Pakistan with his family after the Partition in 1947. His ancestral house, Nehar Wali Haveli, is

still standing in Daryaganj area in Old Delhi.

During his stint as the head of the Pakistan government, Musharraf allied with America in the war against terror after the 9/11 attacks on the US and cracked down on Islamist groups and banned dozens of radical outfits, a move that angered radicals. He even escaped assassination attempts in later years.

When in 1999, India and Pakistan were coming closer, with the then Prime

Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visiting Lahore in a bus, Musharraf planned an insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir through Kargil heights, which is now known as Kargil War, which Pakistan lost.

Nawaz Sharif's younger brother and current Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif extended condolences and sympathy to Musharraf's family.

"Praying for the forgiveness of the deceased and patience of the family," he said in a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

The four-star general was ruling Pakistan as a "chief executive" when the 9/11 attacks on the US took place and he swiftly aligned with Washington during its military intervention in neighbouring Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

In more than seven years in office, he oversaw a stint of economic growth while dodging at least three assassination attempts. Musharraf won a five-year term as president in a 2002 referendum, but reneged on promises to quit as army chief until late 2007.

In December 2019, a special court handed Musharraf a death sentence in the high treason case against him. However, a court later nullified the ruling.

The former military ruler left the coun-

try in March 2016 for Dubai to seek medical treatment.

Musharraf joined the Pakistan Army in 1964 and was a graduate of the Army Staff and Command College, Quetta.

Musharraf, the second of three brothers, spent his early years in Turkey, from 1949 to 1956, as his father Syed Musharraf-ud-din was posted in Ankara.

He joined the Pakistan Military Academy in 1961 and was commissioned into the Artillery Regiment in 1964.

He fought in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965 as a young officer, and also participated in the Indo-Pak War of 1971 as a Company Commander in the Commando Battalion.

Musharraf rose to the rank of General and was appointed as the Chief of Army Staff on October 7, 1998, by then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, whom he later deposed in a military coup.

He was given additional charge of the Chairman Joint Chiefs Staff Committee on April 9, 1999. Six months later, he toppled the Sharif government and became the head of the state designated as Chief Executive.

He married Sehba Musharraf in 1968 and has a son and a daughter. **PTI**

Architect of Kargil War who foxed his Prime Minister

ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 5

Pervez Musharraf, the former military dictator of Pakistan, leaves behind a contentious legacy as being the chief architect of the 1999 Kargil war, who later as the President of the country, realised that relations with India were paramount for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Musharraf, 79, who lived in self-imposed exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in Pakistan, died after a prolonged illness at the American Hospital in Dubai.

Musharraf, a four-star general of the Pakistan Army, seized power after a bloodless military coup in 1999. As the chief of the Pakistan Army, Musharraf

planned and executed the Kargil war during the summer of 1999 by sending Pakistani intruders into India.

However, it turned out to be a gargantuan military failure for him as India pushed back the Pakistanis and defeated them after the three-month-long war.

Musharraf was appointed Pakistan Army chief in October 1998, and in less than a year brought Pakistan and India to the verge of a nuclear showdown.

Musharraf has always defended the Kargil war, but his detractors branded it as 'misadventure'.

The Kargil had regional and international ramifications, as it took place months after then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif signed a historic peace accord with his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lahore.



Domestically, it divided the nation with Sharif alleging that he was kept in the dark about the conflict, deepening the mistrust between the civil government and the powerful military.

Internationally, it isolated Pakistan even further. Musharraf said it was in dealing with Kargil that Sharif exposed his mediocrity and set himself on a collision course with the Army and him.

After his misadventure in Kargil, Musharraf deposed the then Prime Minister Sharif in a bloodless coup in 1999 and ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008 in various positions -- first as the chief executive of Pakistan and later as the President.

In July 2001, as the Pakistan President, Musharraf embarked on a high-profile visit to India and held talks with the then Prime Minister Vajpayee to improve ties between the two nuclear-armed nations.

He resigned in 2008 after facing the threat of impeachment.

In November 2007, he declared a state of emergency, suspended Pakistan's constitution, replaced the chief judge and blacked out independent TV outlets.

PUNJAB

Punjab starts pithead sale of sand at regulated price

LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 5

In what Punjab government claimed to be “a historic initiative aimed at ensuring supply of cheap sand and gravel to the public”, the Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann today dedicated 16 public mines here to the masses thereby ensuring pithead price of sand at Rs 5.50 per cubic feet.

Interacting with the media after dedicating mining sites spread over seven districts to public here today, the Chief Minister claimed that the state government has fulfilled another poll guarantee made with the people. He said that the state government has eradicated the sand mafia, to ensure that people get cheap sand. Bhagwant Mann said that now the sand will be sold at just Rs.5.50 in each of these public mining sites thereby giving a major reprieve to the people.

The Chief Minister said that only manual excavation of sand will be permitted in these public mining sites and no mechanical excavation of sand will be allowed. He categorically said that no mining contractor will be allowed to operate in these public mining sites. Bhagwant Mann said that sand from public mining sites will only be sold for use in construction of non-commercial projects.

The Chief Minister said that sale of



sand will happen only till sunset and a government official will always be present to regulate the extraction of sand at each public mining site. He said that the state government has developed an app,

which will give complete information to people about public mining sites and will even facilitate online payments. Bhagwant Mann said that 16 mines have been dedicated to the people and by next month

50 more such mines will be operational across the state.

The Chief Minister said the app will be linked to Google maps and will guide the person to the nearest public mine. He

said that it will ensure supply of cheap sand to the people and check their exploitation by contractors and transporters. Bhagwant Mann said that it will boost the rural economy as a large number of youth and labour will be engaged in this exercise, leading to higher incomes.

The Chief Minister said that it will eliminate middlemen in the sale and purchase of sand and gravel, leading to empowerment of the common man. He said that it is now one of the lowest rates at which sand is available to any person across the country.

The Chief Minister said that operation of the mines will be completely a transparent process as CCTV cameras have been installed to keep 24 hours surveillance on it. He said that apart from this Police patrolling will be ensured on these public sites to keep a check over it. Bhagwant Mann said that these Mines will be operational from 6 am in the morning to 7 pm from April 1-September 30 and from 7 am to 5pm from October 1 to March 31.

On the occasion Cabinet Minister Gurmeet Singh Meet Hayer, MLAs Sarabjeet Kaur Manuake, Hardeep Singh Mundian and Jeewan Singh Sangowal, Secretary Mining Gurkirat Kirpal Singh, Director Mining DPS Kharbanda and others were also present. **PTI**

Kotkapura firing incident

SIT seeks information from public

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

With investigations into the Kotkapura Firing incident reaching the advanced stage, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by ADGP LK Yadav on Sunday said that if anyone having any additional, relevant information, which may have a bearing upon the case could share by personally meeting him at his office at Floor 6, Punjab Police Headquarters, Sector 9-C here from 11am to 4pm on February 10 or February 14, 2023. The Kotkapura Firing incident took place on October 14, 2015.

He said that people can also share information in this regard by sending a message on WhatsApp no 9875983237, or by emailing at ID

newsit2021kotkapuracase@gmail.com.

Even at this stage any input/information provided by any responsible individual might prove to be very helpful for the SIT in completing this legal process of investigation at the earliest, he added.

The ADGP also expressed gratitude to the people of Punjab for their kind cooperation with the SIT in the discharge of the sacred responsibility entrusted.

Pertinently, on the directions of Punjab and Haryana High Court Chandigarh, the State Government had constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) consisting of three Senior officers including ADGP LK Yadav, IG Rakesh Agrawal and SSP Moga Gulneet Singh Khurana to investigate the Kotkapura firing incident.

Tourist from Sikkim falls off auto after 2 men snatch her bag, died

AMRITSAR, FEBRUARY 5

A 29-year-old tourist, hailing from Sikkim, died after falling from an auto-rickshaw when two bike-borne men snatched her bag, police said on Sunday.

Ganga along with her fiancé was returning from the Attari border after watching the beating retreat ceremony on Friday evening.

The incident took place on the Amritsar-Attari road near Dodewind village, police said.

Two unidentified men on the motorcycle snatched the bag from Ganga when she along with her fiancé were in the auto-rickshaw. She fell from the moving vehicle and suffered head injuries, they said. The two men sped away after snatching the bag.

Ganga was admitted to hospital where she succumbed to injuries on Saturday, police said. Police said Ganga hailed from Gangtok where she was into a small business. The body was handed over to Ganga's brother on Sunday, they said. **PTI**

Water Supply Dept to hold online 'Janta Darbar' today

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

Water Supply and Sanitation Minister Bram Shanker Jimpa informed that as per the instructions of Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, the first state-level online 'Janta Darbar' will be organized on February 6 from 11.30 am to 2 pm. If the residents of state's villages are facing any problem regarding the supply of clean water and sanitation or they want to file a complaint, they can register their complaints online, he added.

In the 'Janta Darbar', grievances would be heard by Water Supply and Sanitation Minister Bram Shanker Jimpa. All senior officers of the department and district officers would also be present with the minister. Water Supply and Sanitation Department has already shared the online link for filing complaints.

Citizens who want to lodge a complaint can connect online at the link <https://headdwss.my.webex.com/headdwss.my/j>.

php?MTID=mb93a5a19bb8a03372346 bce9780ac495. Apart from this, they can also be connected through WebExMeeting number: 2642 015 6498 (Password: 1234). Those who want to convey their grievances before the Minister should register their grievances in advance so that the complaint can be properly resolved by the Minister after analyzing it before the meeting.



Advance complaint can be lodged on toll free number-1800-180-2468 or email dwssnkhelppdesk@gmail.com or website dwss.punjab.gov.in/Citizen_Corner_Register

Online Complaint. (If there is any technical problem while filing the complaint then it can be sent to the given email)

It is pertinent to mention that the citizens will wait in their virtual waiting room during the 'Janta Darbar'. Citizens will come one by one on the basis of the priority of the registered complaints and after listening to the complaints, the minister will make every effort to solve them on the spot. Only after solving the first complaint, the next complaint will be heard.

HE SAID THAT PEOPLE CAN ALSO SHARE INFORMATION IN THIS REGARD BY SENDING A MESSAGE ON WHATSAPP NO 9875983237, OR BY EMAILING AT ID NEWSIT2021KOTKAPURACASE@GMAIL.COM.

PUNJAB

Capt Amarinder as Haryana Governor?

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

As it looks certain that former Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh is tipped to be appointed as a Governor, there are speculations that he may get the gubernatorial position in the neighbouring Haryana only, instead of much talked about Maharashtra.

Capt Amarinder's recent meeting with the Haryana Chief Minister at his Chandigarh residence has further added to such speculations. He has however, so far been maintaining that he has no knowledge about anything as nobody has

HARYANA, INSTEAD OF MAHARASHTRA SUITS MORE TO BOTH THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY AS WELL AS TO CAPT AMARINDER, WHO WILL ALWAYS PREFER TO BE CLOSER HOME IN PUNJAB

spoken to him about it and has left it to the Prime Minister only.

Haryana, instead of Maharashtra suits more to both the Bharatiya Janata Party as well as to Capt Amarinder, who will



always prefer to be closer home in Punjab than in a far off place like Mumbai in the deep west. He has always preferred to be in Punjab. The gubernatorial position in

Haryana can keep him closer to Punjab and technically in Punjab itself as Chandigarh is the capital of Punjab and Haryana Raj Bhawan is located here only.

Although so far he has not got very active after joining the BJP, by remaining in Chandigarh, he can be a guiding force for the party in planning and strategizing things ahead of the General Elections and later the assembly elections, which, though, are still four years away. He knows Punjab like the back of his palm. His presence in Raj Bhawan in Chandigarh will boost the morale of his supporters and cadres in Punjab. While Raj Bhawans are supposed to be politically neutral, but practically the Governors always help and

support the party they belong to.

In case he is appointed as the Haryana Governor, he can continue to wield the clout in Punjab. Not that he cannot wield it even now, as a former Chief Minister as also for his good relationship with most of the senior bureaucrats and police officers, but as a Governor he can always speak from a position of authority. That way it will be a win-win situation for both, him as well as his party. Earlier also, Haryana had a Governor from Punjab. Harcharan Singh Brar served as Governor of Haryana between 1977 and 1979. Brar later became the Chief Minister of Punjab in 1995 after the assassination of Beant Singh.



Punjab Police, BSF conduct state-wide search ops

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

In the wake of the recent rise in incidents of cross-border smuggling of arms and drugs via drones, the Punjab Police today conducted various checks across the state.

The Gurdaspur Police, along with personnel of the Border Security Force (BSF), conducted a joint search operation on Sunday in the border area of the district to keep an eye on the smuggling of narcotics and weapons from across the border.

In a similar operation, Fazilka Police

and BSF jointly conducted a special cordon and search operation in the border area in view of the movement of drones being used by anti-national elements for the smuggling of drugs and arms.

District Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar Police also conducted a check across

religious places to maintain the law-and-order situation.

An Anti-Sabotage Team of the Punjab Police carried out inspections of prominent and crowded places to prevent any untoward incident and to keep the safety and security of the citizens.

Comply with reservation policy in recruitment: Dr Baljit Kaur

EXPRESS INDIA NEWS NETWORK
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

Under the direction of Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities Minister Dr. Baljit Kaur, to follow the instructions issued by the Department of Social Justice on November 3, 2015 regarding reservation in outsource recruitment, a letter has been written to the Special Chief Secretary, Additional Chief Secretary, Financial Commissioner, Principal Secretary, Administrative Secretary, Divisional Commissioners, head of all Departments, all Deputy Commissioners, Additional Deputy Commissioners (Development) and all Sub Divisional Magistrates.



It has come to the notice of the minister that these instructions are not being followed by many departments and institutions under them.

She said that the government has seriously considered this issue and has decided that as per the instructions issued by the Department of Social Justice, Empowerment and Minorities dated November 3, 2015 reservation should be ensured in the recruitment done on out-sources basis. In view of the provisions of the Reservation Act-2006, implementation of reservation for Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes in recruitment through out-sources method should be ensured.

Dr. Baljit Kaur said that if any such complaint comes to her notice in future, action will be taken under Section 8 of the Punjab Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes (Reservation in Services) Act, 2006.

Cold weather conditions prevail in Punjab, Haryana

CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 5

Cold weather conditions prevailed at many places in Punjab and Haryana on Sunday.

In Punjab, Amritsar recorded a minimum temperature of 7.6 degrees Celsius and Ludhiana 9.7 degrees Celsius, according to a meteorological department report.

Bathinda and Faridkot recorded a low of 6.6 degrees Celsius, Pathankot 8.8 degrees Celsius, Gurdaspur 10 degrees

Celsius and Patiala 10.5 degrees Celsius.

In neighbouring Haryana, the minimum temperature settled at 9.2 degrees Celsius in Hisar and at 11.6 degrees Celsius in Ambala.

Narnaul, Rohtak, Bhiwani and Sirsa recorded a minimum temperature of 9.5 degrees Celsius, 9.8 degrees Celsius, 9 degrees Celsius and 6.4 degrees Celsius, respectively. Chandigarh, recorded a low of 11.3 degrees Celsius, four degrees above normal. PTI



Anti-encroachment drive**Admn assures poor, small shop-owners**

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 5

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has assured that residences or small shops on which livelihoods of families depend will not be harmed during the ongoing anti-encroachment drive in Jammu district.

Jammu Deputy Commissioner Avny Lavasa's statement comes a day after people resorted to stone-pelting during an anti-encroachment drive in Upper-Narwal Sunjuwan area of Jammu city. A policeman was injured in the incident.

"I want to assure the people that no residence or small commercial shops on which livelihood of families is dependent will be distributed during the anti-encroachment drive in Jammu", Lavasa said.

She further said the action was taken by the district administration after a prominent showroom built illegally



was issued a notice but failed to submit any justification in the stipulated time frame.

She said it is a pro-people drive and only against those who have encroached upon State land for vested interest by misusing their power.

"The action is taken for the benefit of people. The land retrieved will be used

I want to assure the people that no residence or small commercial shops on which livelihood of families is dependent will be distributed during the anti-encroachment drive in Jammu

AVNY LAVASA,
Jammu Deputy Commissioner

for public interest activities," she said.

The deputy commissioner said the law and order situation is under control and appealed to people to cooperate with the administration for their own benefit.

PTI

Omar, Mufti recall Musharraf's stand on resolving Kashmir issue

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 5



MEHBOOBA MUFTI AND OMAR ABDULLAH ON SUNDAY SAID FORMER PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF WAS THE ONLY PAKISTANI GENERAL WHO GENUINELY TRIED TO ADDRESS THE KASHMIR ISSUE

Former chief ministers of Jammu and Kashmir Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah on Sunday said former president Pervez Musharraf was the only Pakistani general who genuinely tried to address the Kashmir issue.

Abdullah also said Musharraf's solution for the Kashmir issue put the interests of the people of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state at the forefront.

Musharraf, 79, died in Dubai on Sunday after battling an incurable disease. He lived in self-imposed exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in Pakistan.

"Deepest condolences. Perhaps the only Pakistani General who genuinely tried to address the Kashmir issue. He wanted a solution according to wishes of people of J-K and acceptable to India and Pak. Though GOI has reversed all CBMs initiated by him and Vajpayee ji, the ceasefire remains," Mufti, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president, said in a tweet.

National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah said he would always remember Musharraf as the only Pakistani leader willing to meet and engage with mainstream Kashmiri leaders from India.

"Parvez Musharraf died, largely unlamented even in his own country. For all his faults & his troubling legacy, I will always remember him as the only

Pakistani leader willing to meet & engage with mainstream Kashmiri leaders from India, much to the horror of Hurriyat leaders," Abdullah wrote on Twitter.

Musharraf's solution for the Kashmir issue put the interests of the people of J-K at the forefront while being realistic that the framework must ensure that neither India nor Pakistan "lost face", he added. "It didn't happen & we are where we are today. May Allah grant him place in Jannat," Abdullah further said.

Musharraf seized power in 1999 in a coup and served as Pakistani president from 2001-2008.

Former Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri had claimed in his book 'Neither A Hawk Nor A Dove' that India and Pakistan were close to finding a solution to the vexed Kashmir issue during the 2001 Agra Summit between the then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Musharraf. PTI

**Night temp above normal in Kashmir, fresh wet spell likely**

SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 5

Night temperatures across Kashmir settled above normal, officials said on Sunday, while some places in the Valley braced for a fresh wet spell.

Half of the weather stations in Kashmir recorded sub-zero night temperatures, they said.

The departure from normal varied from 0.3 to 4.9 degrees, they said.

Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 1.8 degrees Celsius -- 2.2 notches above normal.

Qazigund, the gateway town to the Valley, registered a low of minus 0.4 degrees Celsius -- a notch above normal.

The mercury settled at a low of zero degrees Celsius -- two notches above normal -- in Kokernag town in south Kashmir. North Kashmir's Kupwara recorded a minimum temperature of 2.9 degrees Celsius, which was 4.9 degrees above normal.

Pahalgam recorded a minimum temperature of minus 5.4 degrees Celsius, while Gulmarg registered a low of minus 6.4 degrees Celsius.

The meteorological office has forecast

mainly dry weather across Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, but said there is a possibility of light rain and snow at scattered places on Monday.

Another wet spell is likely from February 9 to 11 as there is a possibility of light to moderate snowfall and rain at many places in the union territory.

'Chilla-i-Kalan', the 40-day harshest weather period when the chances of snowfall are the maximum in the Valley, began on December 21 and ended on January 30. It is followed by with a 20-day-long 'Chillai Khurd' and a 10-day-long 'Chillai Bachha'. PTI

Several landlords booked for not providing tenant details

JAMMU, FEBRUARY 5

Eight cases have been registered against land owners, including hoteliers, for not providing details of tenants to police in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district, an official said.

The verification process was initiated after several instances of anti-national elements staying in residential areas in the guise of tenants and domestic helps came to the fore in Jammu.

Four cases each were registered at the

Katra and the Reasi police stations under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code, the official said on Saturday.

He said all landlords and hotel owners had been directed to submit details of their tenants and domestic helps to the police stations concerned.

Police have verified the identities of 326 tenants staying in different areas of the district so far, the official added.

Police are conducting random verification of various localities, the official said. PTI

HIMACHAL

Environmentalists concerned over depleting Shimla snow cover

SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 5

Harsh winters with heavy snowfalls beginning in December itself, covering Shimla in a white mantle of snow till March-end or even early April have become a thing of the past now.

The Himachal Pradesh capital, which used to be draped in white and attract tourists from all over, now mostly presents a brownish look with dry grass covering the hills.

There is growing concern among environmentalists and locals over the rising temperatures and depleting snow cover that the snow line is moving upwards and the "Queen of Hills" gradually losing her winter charm. Its effect now is more visible than ever in the hill city's dwindling winter tourist inflow and drying water sources.

According to climate experts, the snow line is receding and Shimla's adjoining tourist towns Kufri and Narkanda, popular skiing destinations, too are experiencing scanty snow-



fall. The state capital's tourism industry is taking a hit due to the falling numbers and there is a dire need to find more tourist spots and activities in and around the city, Tourism Industry Stakeholders Association president M K Seth said.

Tourism contributes about 7.5 per cent of the hill state's GDP.

Snow also plays a vital role in replenishing the city's perennial sources of water such as springs, streams and rivulets. Scanty snowfall means the water source-

dry up and the towns face scarcity.

In 2018, the problem of water shortage had risen to such alarming levels that water supply had to be restricted to every fifth or sixth day, severely denting the inflow of tourists during the peak summer season.

As per meteorological department data, the snowfall from November to March in Shimla in 1989-90 was 556.7 cm while the figure stood at just 105.2 cm in the corresponding period of 2008-09. **PTI**

State BJP lauds Modi as 'world leader'

HAMIRPUR/UNA (HP), FEBRUARY 5

The BJP state working committee in Una on Sunday approved a party resolution in which it hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi as 'world leader' and said that the ancient Indian precept of 'One Earth, One Family' is nearing its realisation under his leadership.

The resolution said: "This proposal

is coming up in the State Working Committee of Himachal Pradesh at a time when India is presiding over the G-20 summit. India is proud to be the host country."

It said that by presiding over the G-20 meeting in India, India will work to promote the concept of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'.

The resolution, moved by former state president Dr Rajeev Bindal and approved

by all, said, "Today we have the means to produce enough, to meet the basic needs of all people in the world."

The State Working Committee congratulated Jagat Prakash Nadda on the extension of his term as National President of the BJP, and said that it was a matter of pride that the national president of the world's biggest political party is from Himachal Pradesh. **PTI**

India ahead of America's Silicon Valley in IT field: Anurag Thakur

HAMIRPUR/SHIMLA, FEBRUARY 5

India is ahead of America's Silicon Valley in the field of IT, exemplified among other things by the fact the Covid vaccination certificate here is available digitally while the rest of the countries still have it on paper, Union minister Anurag Thakur has said.

The country today is moving towards becoming a digital economy with "chai-wala to fadiwala (roadside vendors)" all doing their businesses with the help of Internet, he said.

Digital transactions worth Rs 12.62 lakh crore have been recorded in the country since the BJP came to power in 2014, he said during a meeting of party functionaries at Una last night, according to a release issued on Sunday.

Thakur said nine years ago when the Congress government was in power at the Center, inflation was 12 percent and "corruption" was rampant. Today when countries like the United States are struggling with an inflation rate of 8.3 percent, and India's inflation rate is 5.7 percent, he said.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country's economy would grow at 7 percent, he said, adding the Foreign Direct Investment has grown two times as compared to the previous Congress government.

The number of startups in the country is 90,000, he said.

He said the central government administered 220 crore coronavirus vaccines free of cost to the people of the country during the difficult times of Covid, gave free food grains to 80 crore poor people



for 28 months by spending Rs 4 lakh crore.

"In India the Covid vaccine certificate is available digitally on phone while the rest of the countries still have it on paper and India is ahead of America's Silicon Valley in the field of Information Technology (IT)," he said.

On Budget announcements, he said the capital expenditure allocation has been increased to Rs 10 lakh crore in the Budget which will create a massive amount of jobs. Also, a provision of Rs 20 lakh crore Kisan Credit Card has been made which will greatly benefit the farmers".

Stating that 400 days are left for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in the country, he asked the party functionaries to work unitedly and effectively to retain power.

The BJP would once again form a strong government at the centre and win all the four parliament seats in Himachal, he added. **PTI**

Shiva Project will be game changer for farmers: Horticulture Minister

HAMIRPUR, FEBRUARY 5

The Shiva horticulture project will prove to be a game changer for people in the lower areas of Himachal Pradesh, Horticulture and Tribal Development Minister Jagat Singh Negi said on Sunday.

The minister said the Himachal Pradesh Sub-Tropical Horticulture, Irrigation and Value Addition project (HP SHIVA) has been started to strengthen the farmers and horticulturists.

This project is not only opening new doors of horticulture for the low-lying

areas of the state but can also prove to be an important source of self-employment for the educated unemployed youth, he added.

The project aims at harnessing the horticulture potential of the sub-tropical region spread across 28 blocks of seven districts.

Inspecting the farm of Narendra Singh, who was awarded the National Level Best Mushroom Grower Award in Plog, the minister said that the state government will make every possible effort to provide self-employment to the youth.

He said there are better employment opportunities for the youth in mushroom

production. Due to the nutritional quality and medicinal importance of mushrooms, their demand is continuously increasing.

The state government is giving subsidies for the establishment of mushroom production units and composting units for growing mushrooms, he added.

He also inspected a Floriculture Cluster in Jukhala.

Negi said the aim of the state government is to develop Himachal Pradesh as a flowering state in the coming times by promoting flower cultivation and providing employment opportunities to the people. **PTI**

Woman dead, 5 hurt in head-on collision in HP's Una

HAMIRPUR/UNA (HP), FEBRUARY 5

A woman was killed and five others were injured when the car they were travelling in collided head-on with another car in Dangoli village of Una district on Sunday.

The victim, Vishno Devi, was on her way to Deotsidh in Hamirpur district a pilgrimage site from Mukerian in Punjab with her family, police said.

All injured have been admitted to Regional Hospital, Una.

According to police, the family was going to Baba Balak Nath temple. When they reached the Una-Bangana main road, a car coming from Barsar collided with it. Both cars' fronts were completely damaged in the collision. **PTI**



EDITORIAL

The Express India NEWS

Musharraf: Man of contradictions and U-turns

The deceased Pakistan dictator, General Pervez Musharraf was a perfect example of the tragic hero of a Shakespearean tragedy, specifically like Macbeth. Although he did not die Macbeth's death, he died as a tragic hero, may be a villain, forgotten and forlorn after being exiled to an alien land, of course for his own doings. Like Macbeth betrayed his king Duncan, Musharraf betrayed his Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, although he did spare his life.

Musharraf was a man of contradictions and U-turns. Whether in Kashmir or Afghanistan, he took no time to take a reverse position, quite contrary to his original position. He first supported the Taliban and then aligned with the Americans in their war against terror that destroyed and devastated Pakistan. Similarly, he was the Chief Architect of Kargil War and yet almost facilitated a solution to the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan.

Musharraf is infamous as the villain of peace. When India and Pakistan, under their respective Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif tried to build up a cordial relationship, Musharraf planned Kargil intrusion that brought the two nuclear countries to the brink of war. Pakistan was forced to retreat after massive Indian retaliations. It was considered a great defeat for Musharraf's designs. And when he staged a coup and deposed Sharif, he started building peace bridges with India, suggesting an "out of box" solution on the Kashmir issue. Although his Agra summit meeting with Prime Minister Vajpayee failed, he again followed it up during the tenure of Dr Manmohan Singh. Nothing materialized though.

One of his toughest moments was in the aftermath of 9/11 attacks when America was attacked by Al Qaeda bombers. The Al Qaeda terrorists were believed to be hiding inside Afghanistan. America declared a war on Al Qaeda. Naturally it had to hit the targets inside Afghanistan. Pakistan was the only country from where America could attack the Al Qaeda hideouts. Musharraf aligned with the Americans. This was the biggest "U-turn moment" for Musharraf. He had been an ardent supporter of the Taliban while they were ruling Afghanistan. Musharraf put aside everything and aligned with the Americans. Later he claimed in his autobiography that he had to align with the US as it had threatened to bomb and destroy Pakistan and take it back to the stone age.

When the tide turned against Musharraf, he was subjected to the trials of law and in the process he was even sentenced to death. This caused a lot of resentment among the powerful military in Pakistan and the sentence was revoked later. Musharraf died a forgotten and forlorn man in an alien land. His family had to seek permission to bring his body back to Pakistan for burial.

That was the story of the man, once so powerful. But that way he was still luckier than other dictators like Saddam Hussein, Col Gaddafi or General Zia Ul Haq, another Pakistani military dictator. He at least died a "natural" death.

Musharraf, brought India Pakistan to brink of war, later tried to solve Kashmir peacefully

Pakistan's former military dictator General Pervez Musharraf, the architect of the Kargil War, toppled the democratically-elected government in a bloodless military coup in 1999 and ruled the country for nine years during which he survived numerous assassination bids. After becoming the ruler, he tried though unsuccessfully to reach out a solution on Kashmir with India diplomatically.

Born in a middle-class family of Urdu-speaking Mohajir parents in Delhi in 1943, Musharraf migrated to Pakistan with his family after the Partition in 1947. Pakistan's last military dictator died on Sunday as a forgotten man in politics after spending his final years in self-exile in the UAE to avoid criminal charges against him in his country.

During his stint as the head of the Pakistan government, Musharraf allied with America in the war against terror after the 9/11 attacks on the US and cracked down on Islamist groups and banned dozens of radical outfits, a move that angered radicals. He even escaped assassination attempts in later years.

Musharraf, who was appointed the Chief of Army Staff by the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in 1998, engineered the Kargil War that took place months after Sharif signed a historic peace accord with his Indian counterpart Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Lahore.

After his misadventure in Kargil, Musharraf deposed Sharif in a bloodless coup and ruled Pakistan from 1999 to 2008 in various positions – first as the chief executive of Pakistan and later as the President. In 2010, he formed his own party, the All Pakistan Muslim League and declared himself the party president. He voiced his opinion of actively taking part in Pakistan's politics sometime in the future.

He returned to Pakistan in March 2013 to contest polls after living in self-exile for about five years but was hauled to court in different cases - including the 2007 assassination of former premier Benazir Bhutto, treason under article 6 of Pakistan Constitution and murder of Bugti tribe chief Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti.

In 2006, on the orders of Gen Musharraf, the Pakistan Army killed the former junior interior minister and Governor of Balochistan Bugti and over two dozen of his tribesmen, leading to widespread unrest in the area and a surge in the Baloch nationalist sentiment in the province. In 2019, Musharraf was sentenced to death in absentia by a special court which found him guilty of high treason, for imposing a state of emergency on November 3, 2007, by keeping the country's constitution in abeyance.

The judgement angered the country's powerful Army, which has ruled over Pakistan for most of the period since its existence. It was the first time a former top military official had faced such a sentence for treason in Pakistan. The death sentence was later annulled by the Lahore High Court.

Musharraf, who was living in Dubai since March 2016, was also declared a fugitive in the Benazir Bhutto murder case and Red Mosque cleric killing



case. During his tenure, Pakistan saw some structural reforms - ranging from the economic and social sectors to administrative and political restructuring.

Musharraf visited India for the failed Agra summit in 2001 and made two more visits in 2005 as President to watch an India-Pakistan One-day Cricket match and in 2009 to attend a media event after shedding power.

He was given additional charge of the Chairman Joint Chiefs Staff Committee on April 9, 1999. Six months later, he toppled the Sharif government and became the head of the state designated as Chief Executive.

Pakistan, under President Pervez Musharraf, and India came close to reaching a four-point framework to resolve the Kashmir issue following backchannel talks around 2004-07 but it could not be firmed up due to certain political developments, former Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri suggested around eight years back.

Musharraf, the Delhi-born military ruler who seized power in a bloodless coup in 1999. In his book 'Neither A Hawk Nor A Dove' which was published in 2015, Kasuri recounted various stages of negotiations and steps taken by both sides which he claimed were aimed at an "out-of-the-box" solution to the vexed problem between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

"I had heard the phrase 'out-of-the-box solution' to Kashmir from JN Dixit, India's National Security Advisor under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in September 2004," Kasuri, who was the Pakistan foreign minister under Musharraf's presidency, wrote. The former Pakistan foreign minister also referred to Musharraf's book 'In the Line of Fire' where he also wrote about the need for an 'out of the box' solution to the Kashmir issue. "Obviously, the ground realities must have changed drastically

for the leaders of Pakistan and India to reach the conclusion that there is indeed a need for an out-of-the-box solution," Kasuri wrote.

The Pakistan foreign minister from 2002 to 2007 also described in the book how this solution materialised in a more concrete form through the back-channel negotiations over almost three years. "We now come to the contours of a possible settlement of the intractable Jammu and Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India which has been the cause of constant friction between the two countries over the last six decades," he claimed.

Musharraf's four-point agenda, Kasuri said, were (a) initiating a dialogue, (b) accepting the centrality of Kashmir, (c) eliminating whatever is not acceptable to Pakistan, India, and the Kashmiris, and (d) arriving at a solution acceptable to all the three stakeholders. "In his memoir, Musharraf also mentioned about the "opportunity of a thaw" after the earthquake in Gujarat in early 2001.

Musharraf said he spoke to the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on phone and offered condolences. "That broke the ice and led to an invitation for a meeting to visit India," Musharraf wrote. In an address at an event in Delhi in 2015, Kasuri reiterated that India and Pakistan were about to reach a "framework" on Kashmir during UPA-I rule and both sides had even decided not to proclaim "victory" post the announcement.

In July 2001, Musharraf paid a high-profile visit to India and held summit talks with Vajpayee in Agra with an aim to improve the frosty ties between the two nuclear-powered neighbours. There were reports then that both sides had come close to some kind of a joint agreement at the Agra summit. An informal breakfast meeting with a group of Indian journalists ahead of his talks with Vajpayee had not apparently gone down well with the Indian side.

NATION

India has 94.5 cr voters; 6 fold jump since 1951

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

India has witnessed a nearly six-fold increase in the total number of voters since 1951 to over 94.50 crore this year, but almost one-third of them stayed away from exercising their franchise in the last Lok Sabha polls.

This has prompted the Election Commission to walk the extra mile to bring them to the polling booths.

In 1951, when the voter lists for the first general elections were prepared, India had 17.32 crore registered electors and 45.67 per cent had turned up to exercise their franchise in the newly-born Republic.

The number of registered electors witnessed a gradual increase over the years, and so did their participation in the subsequent elections.

In the 1957 general elections, the number of registered electors was 19.37 crore and 47.74 per cent cast their ballots to send their representatives to the Lok Sabha.

Amid talks of taking the voter turnout to 75 per cent, the Election Commission has flagged the issue of the 30 crore voters who did not turn up at the polling booths in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

People from urban areas, youth and migrants are part of the category of these 30 crore missing voters.



The EC has pointed to urban apathy in the recently-held assembly polls on Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat.

For migrants who have their names in electoral lists in their home state and cannot afford to go there to cast their votes due to various reasons, the poll panel has proposed remote voting technology. But it needs political consensus, followed by change in legislative framework to roll out remote electronic voting machines.

As it prepares to hold several assembly polls this year and Lok Sabha elections early next year, the poll panel aims to push voter turnout through innovative communication strategies. Peoples' participation in the election process breached the 50 per cent for the first time in 1962 general elections when 55.42 per cent of the 21.64 crore voters exercised their franchise.

By 2009, the total number of registered voters had zoomed to 71.70 crore

but the turnout to the polling booths was only 58.21 per cent, a marginal increase in percentage terms over 1962.

The 2014 general elections saw the turnout of voters jump to 66.44 per cent of the 83.40 crore registered voters.

The 2019 general elections had 91.20 crore registered voters and had seen 67.40 per cent turning up at the polling booths to cast their votes.

The total number of voters on January 1 this year stands at 94,50,25,694. **PTI**

There are no big or small cases for court, every matter is important: CJI Chandrachud

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Maintaining that the Supreme Court has made a constant endeavour to ensure access to justice for everyone, Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud on Saturday said there are no big or small cases for the court and that every matter is important.

Speaking at the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of the Supreme Court, he said every day, the Supreme Court has hundreds of cases on its docket and the judges and the staff of the Registry put up tremendous hard work to ensure their speedy disposal.

CJI Chandrachud said the top court disposed of 12,471 cases in the last three months.

"For the court, there are no big or small cases — every matter is important. Because it is in the seemingly small and routine matters involving grievances of citizens that issues of constitutional and jurisprudential importance emerge. In attending to such grievances, the court performs a plain constitutional duty, obligation and function," he said.

Between March 23, 2020, and October 30, 2022, the apex court heard 3.37 lakh cases through video conferencing, he said. "We updated our video conferencing infrastructure at meta scale. We are continuing to use technological infrastructure for a hybrid mode of hearing that allows parties from any part of the country to join the court proceedings," CJI Chandrachud said. **PTI**

Passenger held with dollars worth Rs 50 lakhs

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

A Bangkok-bound Indian passenger was apprehended by ACISF personnel at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying foreign currency worth about Rs 50 lakh by concealing them in clothes kept in his baggage, officials said on Sunday.

The man was intercepted by security personnel at terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport during security checks around 10:30 am on Saturday. The personnel on duty noticed suspicious images of the currency notes on the X-ray scanner and hence decided to probe further, they said. The passenger was supposed to take an Indigo Airlines flight to Bangkok, a senior officer said.

A cache of Euro 51,800 and USD 5,000, valued at about Rs 50 lakh, was recovered from a bunch of clothes kept in his baggage, he said.

The passenger was handed over to Customs authorities for further investigation as he could not furnish a valid reason for carrying such a huge amount of cash, the officer said. **PTI**

For first woman IAF fighter pilot Avani, sky is the limit, literally

BY MANASH PRATIM BHUYAN
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Weeks after scripting history by becoming the first woman fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to take part in an aerial wargame abroad, Squadron Leader Avani Chaturvedi says flying combat aircraft is exciting and the sky is the limit for young people wanting to pursue a career in the force.

Chaturvedi, a Su-30MKI pilot, was part of the IAF contingent that participated in a 16-day mega air combat exercise with the Japan Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) at the Japanese airbase of Hyakuri from January 12 to 26.

"It is always a good experience to participate in flying exercises, especially with a foreign air force. This is more so because this was the first time that I was involved in an international exercise. It was a huge opportunity for me and a wonderful learning experience," Chaturvedi told PTI.

The exercise, "Veer Guardian-2023", was the first such wargame between the IAF and the JASDF with a focus on air-combat manoeuvring, interception and air-defence missions.

"I would like to convey to all the young, aspiring girls and boys that the sky is the limit for you. The IAF is a wonderful career option and flying fighter aircraft is really exciting," Chaturvedi said.

"I would like to tell all IAF aspirants that you should set your eyes on the goal and go for it with dogged determination," she said when asked how arduous was the path for her to become a fighter pilot.

A B.Tech in computer science, Squadron Leader Chaturvedi was among the first three women fighter pilots commissioned into the IAF in June 2016. The other two were Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh.

"This exercise has given us a great opportunity to learn from each other. The endeavour is to understand each other's working philosophies, planning pro-

cesses or any good practice in general. It is a mutual learning exercise," Chaturvedi said. According to officials, women fighter pilots in the IAF had participated in air exercises within the country, but this was for the first time that one of them was part of a military drill abroad.

In February 2018, Chaturvedi, who hails from Madhya Pradesh, became the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo when she flew a MiG-21 bison. She undertook the sortie from the IAF's Jamnagar base.

Chaturvedi, Kanth and Singh were commissioned into the IAF in 2016, less than a year after the government decided to open the fighter stream for women on an experimental basis.

The IAF currently has around 20 women fighter pilots.

Last year, the defence ministry said it had decided to convert the experimental scheme for the induction of women fighter pilots in the IAF into a permanent one.

In 2020, the Navy announced deploy-

ing its first batch of women pilots on the Dornier maritime aircraft.

In December, Navy Chief Admiral R Hari Kumar said the Indian Navy is looking at opening all its branches for women from 2023.

In a significant move, the Army in 2019 began the process of inducting women into the military police.

The role of the military police includes policing cantonments and army establishments, preventing breach of rules and regulations by soldiers, maintaining movement of soldiers as well as logistics during peace and war and extending aid to civil police whenever required.

Last month, Army Chief Gen Manoj Pande said the Army has decided to commission women officers into the artillery regiments and a proposal on it has been sent to the government.

In the "Veer Guardian" exercise in Japan, India had deployed the Su-30MKI aircraft, one IL-78 flight refuelling aircraft and two C-17 Globemaster strategic airlift transport aircraft. **PTI**

NATION

Opposition mounts pressure on govt over Adani issue

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Opposition parties on Sunday stepped up their attack on the Modi government over the Adani issue, with the Congress alleging that its "silence smacks of collusion".

Congress General Secretary (Communications) Jairam Ramesh said his party will pose three questions a day to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the issue and "your government cannot hide from saying 'HAHK' (Hum Adani Ke Hain Kaun)".

What action has been taken, if ever, to investigate the serious allegations made over the years against the Adani Group and is there any hope of a fair and impartial investigation in the matter under the prime minister, he said in a statement and asked the prime minister to break his "silence" over the issue.

Telangana Chief Minister and BRS leader K Chandrasekhar Rao endorsed the demand of opposition parties for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) into the Adani "scam", while BSP chief Mayawati said India's image is at stake but the government is taking the issue "very lightly".

Adani group stocks have taken a beat-



ing on the bourses after US-based activist short-seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations including fraudulent transactions and share price manipulation against the Gautam Adani-led group which has dismissed the allegations as lies.

The Congress has announced nationwide district-level protests outside all LIC and SBI offices on Monday.

Ramesh said that amid the allegations against the Adani Group, the Modi gov-

ernment has maintained a "loud silence which smacks of collusion".

He alleged Vinod Adani, the brother of Gautam Adani, was named in the Panama Papers and the Pandora Papers as someone "who operates offshore entities in the Bahamas and the British Virgin Islands".

"What does the fact that a business entity you are well acquainted with faces serious allegations tell us about the quality and sincerity of your investigations?" the Congress general secretary said.

"How is it possible that one of India's largest business groups, one that has been allowed to build monopolies in airports and seaports, could have escaped serious scrutiny for so long despite persistent allegations?" Ramesh said.

Other business groups have been harassed and raided for much less, he alleged.

"Was the Adani Group essential to a dispensation that has profited from 'anti-corruption' rhetoric all of these years,"

Ramesh said.

Parliament was adjourned for the second consecutive day on Friday without transacting any business after the Opposition raised slogans demanding a discussion and a JPC probe into the issue.

On Sunday, Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Derek O'Brien said his party wants debate not disruption in Parliament and is raring to take on the government.

He said that if any party disrupts the House it is in cahoots with the BJP.

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Singh Thakur has said the government has nothing to hide on the Adani issue and accused the Opposition of evading discussion in Parliament.

Telangana Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao alleged the Centre has pressured Life Insurance Corporation to make a false statement over its exposure in the Adani Group.

The Indian banking system is involved in this problem and the whole country is worried, he said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that regulators Sebi and RBI should always be on their toes to keep the equity market stable and indicated that the Adani stock rout following the Hindenburg report was a company-specific issue. **PTI**

48 crore Aadhaar-PAN cards linked so far

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

About 48 crore individual Permanent Account Numbers (PANs), out of the total 61 crore issued till now, have been linked with Aadhaar till date and those who do not link it by the declared deadline of March 31 will not get benefits while undertaking various business and tax-related activities, CBDT Chairperson Nitin Gupta said.

The government has made the linkage of the two databases mandatory and declared that those individual PANs that are not attached to the Aadhaar by the end of this financial year (March 31, 2023) will be rendered inoperative.

A fee of Rs 1,000 will be payable for those who want to link their PAN and Aadhaar between now and March 31.

"There are about 61 crore individual PANs issued till now and out of this, around 48 crore have been seeded with Aadhaar. The difference is around 13 crore now, including the exempt category, and we hope the rest will also be linked by the end date," Gupta told PTI in a post-Budget interview.

We have undertaken a number of public campaigns and have extended the deadline many times urging taxpayers to



link the two...those category of taxpayers who are required to do so but do not link them, will stand to lose tax benefits as their PANs will not be valid after March, he said.

The CBDT chief said the Budget announcement of making PAN a "common identifier" will be "beneficial" for the business sector.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her Budget speech made on February 1, had said that PAN will now be a common identifier for business establishments for digital systems of government agencies.

A circular issued by the CBDT on March 30 said once a PAN becomes inoperative, an individual shall be liable to all the consequences under the Act (I-T Act) and will have to suffer a number of implications like: The person shall not be able to file return using the inoperative PAN; pending returns will not be pro-

cessed; pending refunds cannot be issued to inoperative PANs; pending proceedings as in the case of defective returns cannot be completed once the PAN is inoperative and tax will be required to be deducted at a higher rate.

"In addition to the above, the tax payer might face difficulty at various other fora like banks and other financial portals, as PAN is one of the important KYC (know your customer) criterion for all kinds of financial transaction," the circular said.

Few categories of taxpayers are, however, exempted from undertaking this linkage.

The 'exempt category', according to notification issued by the Union finance ministry in May 2017, are those individuals residing in the states/UTs of Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Meghalaya; a non-resident as per the Income-tax Act, 1961; of the age of eighty years or more at any time during the previous year and a person not a citizen of India.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes frames policy for the I-T department.

While Aadhaar is issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to a resident of India, PAN is a 10-digit alphanumeric number allotted by the IT Department to a person, firm or entity. **PTI**

FIR against Kamblī for assaulting wife

MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 5

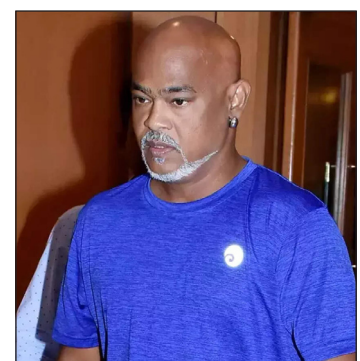
Mumbai Police have registered an FIR against former Indian cricketer Vinod Kamblī for allegedly assaulting and abusing his wife in an inebriated state at his home in suburban Bandra, officials said on Sunday.

Two police personnel went to Kamblī's flat on Sunday and served a notice to him, asking him to appear before them to record his statement, they said. No arrest has been made so far in connection with the alleged incident which took place on Friday, an official from Bandra police station said.

Kamblī's wife Andrea in her police complaint alleged that he threw the handle of a cooking pan at her due to which she suffered a head injury, he said.

The incident took place between 1 pm and 1.30 pm on Friday when Kamblī reached his flat allegedly under the influence of alcohol and started abusing his wife, he said.

Their 12 year-old son, who was present at that time, intervened in the fight, but Kamblī went into the kitchen, brought the handle of a broken frying



pan and allegedly threw it on his wife due to which she got injured, the official said quoting the complaint.

Kamblī's wife later went to the Bhabha Hospital for a medical examination.

Based on her complaint, the Bandra police on Friday registered the FIR against Kamblī under Indian Penal Code Sections 324 (voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons) and 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace), the official said.

In February last year, Kamblī was arrested for ramming his car into the gate of his residential society in Bandra. He was later released on bail. **PTI**

WORLD

Tensions escalate after US downs Chinese surveillance balloon

WASHINGTON/BEIJING, FEBRUARY 5

The US military has downed the suspected Chinese spy balloon over the Atlantic Ocean and launched a mission to recover all the equipment from its debris, drawing a strong reaction from China which on Sunday warned of repercussions over America's use of force against its civilian unmanned airship.

At the direction of President Joe Biden, the US military at 2.39 pm EST on Friday shot down the Chinese surveillance balloon in the Atlantic Ocean, some six miles (9.65 kms) away from the US shores in South Carolina, with no damage to the life and properties of Americans, a senior defence official told reporters in Washington.

Fighter aircraft from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia inspired a single missile into the balloon, causing it to crash into the ocean within the US territorial airspace, said the official, adding that as of now there are no indications that any people including US military personnel, civilian aircraft or maritime vessels were harmed in any way.

"I told them to shoot it down," Biden told reporters in Hagerstown, Maryland.

On Wednesday, when I was briefed on the balloon, I ordered the Pentagon to shoot it down as soon as possible. They decided -- without doing damage to anyone on the ground -- the best time to do that was as it got over water, outside within the 12-mile limit," Biden said.

Responding to the downing of the balloon, China expressed strong dissatisfaction and opposition towards the US use of force to attack China's civilian unmanned airship, state-run Xinhua news agency cited a statement from the Chinese



Foreign Ministry as saying on Sunday.

"The US insisting on the use of force is an obvious overreaction and a serious violation of international practice. China will resolutely uphold the relevant company's legitimate rights and interests, at the same time, reserving the right to take further actions in response," said the Foreign Ministry statement in Beijing.

The Chinese side has, after verification, repeatedly informed the US side of the civilian nature of the airship and conveyed that its entry into the United States due to force majeure was totally unexpected, the statement said, noting the Chinese side has clearly asked the US side to properly handle the matter in a calm, professional and restrained manner.

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said that at the direction of President Biden, fighter aircraft assigned to US Northern Command successfully brought down the high-altitude surveillance balloon launched by and belonging to the People's Republic of China (PRC) over the water off the coast of South Carolina in US airspace.

"The balloon, which was being used by the PRC in an attempt to survey strategic sites in the continental United States,

was brought down above US territorial waters," Austin said.

China has claimed that the balloon was merely a weather research "airship" that had been blown off course.

This action of downing the balloon of the size of three buses was taken in coordination, and with the full support, of the Canadian government.

Defence officials told US media the debris landed in 14m of water - shallower than they had expected - near Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

The military is now trying to recover debris which is spread over seven miles (11 km).

The Pentagon official told reporters that they took immediate steps to protect against the balloon's collection of sensitive information mitigating its intelligence value to China.

By shooting down the balloon, it addressed the surveillance threat posed to military installations and further neutralise any intelligence value it could have produced, preventing it from returning to China.

"In addition, shooting the balloon down could enable the US to recover sensitive PRC equipment. While we took

all necessary steps to protect against the PRC surveillance balloon collection of sensitive information of the surveillance balloons overflight of US territory, which was of intelligence value to us," the official said without divulging much of the information.

President Biden had been under pressure to shoot the balloon down since defence officials first announced they were tracking it on Thursday.

The Chinese authorities have denied it is a spying aircraft, and instead said it was a weather ship blown astray. China has a fleet of these types of surveillance balloons, according to another senior defence official, including the one that was spotted flying over Venezuela and Colombia this week.

"These balloons are all part of a (People's Republic of China) fleet of balloons developed to conduct surveillance operations, which have also violated the sovereignty of other countries. These kinds of activities are often undertaken at the direction of the People's Liberation Army or PLA," ABC news quoted the officials as saying.

"Over the past several years, Chinese balloons have previously been spotted over countries across five continents, including in East Asia, South Asia and Europe." The incident added new tension to the US-China relationship. The Pentagon called it an "unacceptable violation" of US sovereignty.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Beijing it was "an irresponsible act", He also postponed his trip to China on February 5-6. But China sought to play down the cancellation of his visit, saying in a statement on Saturday that neither side had formally announced a plan for a trip.

PTI



RSP withdraws support to Prachanda govt in Nepal

KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 5

The Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP) on Sunday decided to withdraw from Nepal's ruling coalition after Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" refused to reinstate the party's flamboyant chairman Rabi Lamichhane as the home minister after he recently re-acquired his citizenship.

The decision was taken after a joint meeting of RSP's central members and lawmakers.

Lamichhane, 48, was elected from Chitwan-2 constituency during the elections held in November last year.

He subsequently lost the status of a lawmaker following a verdict by Nepal's Supreme Court on January 27, which stated that the citizenship certificate he produced to contest the parliamentary election was invalid, according to the Kathmandu Post newspaper.

Subsequently, he also lost his ministerial portfolio and the presidency of the party because one needs to be a Nepali citizen to hold those positions, it said.

On January 29, he re-acquired his citizenship, following which he met Prachanda and demanded that he be restored to his former Cabinet position, the report said.

But the Nepal Prime Minister was in no mood to relent, it added.

Lamichhane was appointed Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister on December 26 last year.

PTI

Part of a road in Canada to be renamed 'Komagata Maru Way'

TORONTO, FEBRUARY 5

A portion of a road in Abbotsford in Canada's British Columbia province will be renamed Komagata Maru Way in memory of the 376 Indians who sailed to Canada from India in 1914, but were denied entry in the dominion due to the prevalent racist policies. The Abbotsford City Council voted unanimously last week to rename a portion of South Fraser Way to Komagata Maru Way, local newspaper, the Surrey-Now Leader reported. The Komagata Maru incident involved the

Japanese steamship "Komagata Maru" carrying 376 Indian passengers - 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims and 12 Hindus - set sail from Hong Kong on April 4, 1914 to the coast of British Columbia.

These passengers were in search of a new home and economic security. Upon the ship's arrival, the hopeful immigrants were denied entry and forced to return to Budge Budge in Kolkata. When they reached Kolkata, the Indian Imperial Police attempted to arrest them, following which a riot ensued and the subsequent police firing led to the deaths of 22 people.

PTI

Sunak joins UK-India NSA meeting

LONDON, FEBRUARY 5

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in a "special gesture" briefly joined a meeting here between India's National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his UK counterpart Tim Barrow and assured his government's full support to deepen bilateral strategic partnership in sectors like trade and defence.

Doval and Barrow met at the UK Cabinet Office, a department responsible for supporting the prime minister.

"A special gesture by PM @rishisunak to join for a while India-UK NSA dialogue between Sir Tim Barrow & Mr



Doval at @cabinetofficeuk," the Indian High Commission tweeted on Saturday.

"Deeply value PM's assurance of his Govts full support to deepen strategic partnership in trade, defence, S&T. Look forward to the visit of Sir Tim to India

soon," it added. Doval's trip to London follows his visit to the US where he met America's National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on Tuesday.

Islamabad, Feb 5 (PTI) Pakistan's former dictator General Pervez Musharraf who died in Dubai on Sunday due to prolonged illness, earned the ignominy of being the first military ruler to receive capital punishment in the country's history for subverting the Constitution in 2007. Musharraf, 79, who was suffering from amyloidosis, a rare disease caused by a build-up of an abnormal protein called amyloid in organs and tissues throughout the body, shifted to Dubai in 2016.

PTI

ENTERTAINMENT/HEALTH



Kit Harington, Rose Leslie expecting second child

LOS ANGELES, FEBRUARY 5

"Game of Thrones" stars Kit Harington and Rose Leslie are set to welcome their second child.

The couple tied the knot in 2018 and welcomed their first child, a boy in 2021.

Harington, who will reprise his "Game of Thrones" character Jon Snow in a sequel series, made the revelation on the NBC talk show "The Tonight Show".

When host Jimmy Fallon asked him about their two-year-old son, the actor said, "He's about to get the shock of his life, which is that he's about to get a brother or sister." Harington, 36, then confirmed that Leslie, 35, is pregnant. The "Eternals" star later talked about the differences in his mindset between expecting the first baby and now preparing for the second. "With the first baby, you're like walking on clouds and dancing through fields of daisies for nine months — well, the man is, anyway. But this time, the reality check comes much shorter. You get practical real quick," he added.

Harington and Leslie met in 2012 on the set of "Game of Thrones", the HBO megahit series, in which they played on-screen lovers Jon Snow and Ygritte. **PTI**

No 'Legally Blonde 3' without Jennifer Coolidge

LOS ANGELES, FEBRUARY 5

Hollywood star Reese Witherspoon has confirmed that the third part in her beloved "Legally Blonde" film series will feature Jennifer Coolidge.

Witherspoon will be returning as attorney Elle Woods for the much-anticipated movie. Coolidge essayed the role of Woods' best friend Paulette Bonafonte in the previous films.

"There is no 'Legally Blonde 3' without Jennifer Coolidge," Witherspoon told Entertainment Tonight.

Coolidge recently won a Golden Globe for performance in HBO's "The White Lotus" and Witherspoon is thrilled about her success.

"I'm beyond myself about Jennifer Coolidge. She deserves every one of those flowers she is receiving right now.

"And she's just one of those people who is so naturally gifted and funny and that you can just tell people love her, 'cause she gets up there and everybody's like, 'I love her,' but she's just done a lot of good work in our business for so long, that it's really nice to see her getting this incredible moment," the actor-producer added.

Coolidge had previously said that she was yet to be approached to reprise her role in "Legally Blonde 3".

The project was officially announced by MGM Studios in 2020. Mindy Kaling and Dan Goor are attached to write the movie. **PTI**



Mindy finds Jaipur mind blowing

JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 5

Hollywood actor-writer Mindy Kaling says she is in awe of India's Pink City Jaipur, its culture, food and people.

Kaling, best known for playing Kelly Kapoor in the NBC sitcom "The Office" and creating the Netflix show "Never Have I Ever", was on a brief trip to Jaipur, Rajasthan.

The 43-year-old actor shared photographs from her visit on her Instagram page and captioned the post: "The Pink City".

During her stay, the Indian-origin artist visited the famous City Palace and enjoyed the traditional Rajasthani delights, including dal baati choorma and makki ki roti.

It is currently unclear if Kaling was in the city on a personal tour or professional visit. She was accompanied by writer Dan Goor, who is co-writing her upcoming romantic-comedy with Priyanka Chopra Jonas.

Revolving around a big fat Indian wedding, the film will see Kaling in the role of an Indian-American, while Chopra will play her first cousin, who was born and raised in India. **PTI**

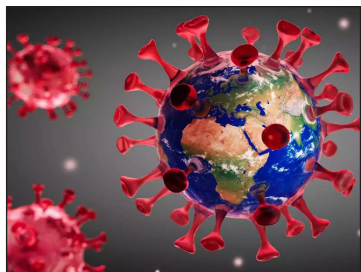
Why COVID kills more men than women?

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Scientists have found new evidence that may explain why men are more susceptible to severe infections of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, with increased death rates.

The research, published in the International Journal of Molecular Sciences, indicates males fare worse than females with the COVID-19 disease because the virus more readily attacks females' fat tissue, in lieu of lung tissue.

"Our data suggested that in female mice adipose tissue may act as a sink/reservoir for SARS-CoV-2 and thus spares the lungs from a greater viral load, preventing pulmonary damage due to infiltrated immune cells and activated



pro-inflammatory cytokines," said Jyothi Nagajyothi, from the Hackensack Meridian Center for Discovery and Innovation (CDI), US. The researchers evaluated the effect of SARS-CoV-2 infection on the function of adipose (fat) tissue and the impact of disease on fat loss in a COVID-19 model. **PTI**

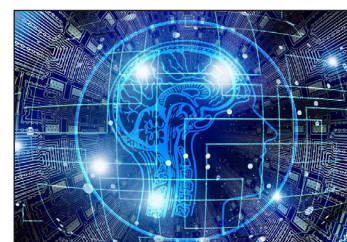
AI identifies oncogenes, could help in personalized cancer treatment

LONDON, FEB 5

Researchers have leveraged artificial intelligence (AI) technology to identify genes critical to a cancer cell's survival, and could help deliver personalised cancer patient treatments, according to a new study.

They analysed different types of cancer cells to understand different gene dependencies for identifying the genes, the study said.

Researchers at the University of Sussex, UK, have done this by developing a prediction algorithm that works out which genes are essential in the cell, by analysing the genetic changes in the tumour. This can be used to identify actionable targets that in time could



guide oncologists to personalise cancer patient treatments, the study said.

"Our vision is to take advantage of the decreasing cost of DNA sequencing and to harness the power of AI to understand cancer cell differences and what they mean for the individual patient's treatment.

Through our research, we were able

to identify cell-specific gene dependencies using only the DNA sequence and RNA levels in that cell, which are easily and cheaply obtainable from tumour biopsy samples," said Dr Frances Pearl, Senior Lecturer in Bioinformatics at the University of Sussex.

"This is an incredibly exciting step in our research which means that we can now work to improve the technology so that it can be offered to oncologists and help in the treatment pathways for their patients," said Pearl.

Cancer treatments are primarily prescribed on the basis of the location and type of cancer.

Genetic differences in tumours can make standard cancer treatments ineffective. **PTI**

BUSINESS

SEBI, RBI must be alert about market stability: Sitharaman

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that regulators Sebi and RBI should always be on their toes to keep the equity market stable and indicated that the Adani stock rout following a Hindenburg report was a company specific issue.

She said banks and insurance companies are "not overexposed" to any one company and assured that Indian markets are very well managed by its regulators.

"Yes, there have been occasional blips in the market, maybe small or big, but they do address issues like that. And I strongly believe that our regulators are seized of this matter," Sitharaman said in an interview to Times Now.

Adani Group stocks are witnessing a meltdown on the bourses after the US-based short-seller Hindenburg Research made a litany of allegations in a report, including fraudulent transactions and share price manipulation at the Gautam Adani-led group.

The Adani group has dismissed the charges as lies, saying it complies with all laws and disclosure requirements.

Hindenburg released the report on January 24 -- the day on which Adani Enterprises' Rs 20,000-crore follow-on share sale opened for anchor investors, while the allegations have been rejected



by the conglomerate.

Though the follow on public offer (FPO) was over-subscribed, the Adani group decided to scrap the FPO.

"I don't want to have any view on it except that the regulators should act, act in time, and act to keep the market stable, act to keep India's regulatory functions at its best, whether it is the Reserve Bank, or SEBI. Sitting in the Finance Ministry, my view would be that the regulators should be always on their toes. And that is where I would comment on what's got to be done," Sitharaman said.

The Minister was replying to a question on whether the Adani group stock rout was just a market activity, or this has happened for just one stock.

The stock price of Adani Enterprises fell by over 70 per cent from its peak of

Rs 4,190 in December, last year.

Since January 24, the BSE Sensex has slumped by over 1,000 points largely driven by sell off in Adani group stocks. Asked if the Adani issue is just a company problem, Sitharaman said: "I would think so".

The Minister said she did not see any impact of the Adani issue on the fund flow into India. "... The last few days India has received more than (USD) eight billion. Our forex reserves have gone up by (USD) eight billion in the last few days". Sitharaman said banks and insurance companies, which have exposure to Adani group, are themselves speaking, and covering every aspect of what is worrying people, and disclosing their exposure. "They are not overexposed to any one company. You are hearing it from the horse's mouth," Sitharaman said. Amid concerns over banks' exposure to the crisis-ridden Adani Group, the Reserve Bank had on February 3, issued a statement saying that India's banking sector is resilient and stable, and the central bank maintains constant vigil on the lenders.

Similarly, stock market regulator Sebi on Saturday said it is committed to ensuring the stock market's integrity and all necessary surveillance measures are in place to address any excessive volatility in individual shares. **PTI**



Windfall tax on crude oil, diesel export, ATF hiked

NEW DELHI, FEB 5

The government has hiked windfall profit tax levied on domestically-produced crude oil as well as on the export of diesel and ATF, in line with firming international oil prices, according to an official order.

The levy on crude oil produced by companies such as Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has been increased to Rs 5,050 per tonne from Rs 1,900 per tonne, the order dated February 3, said.

Crude oil pumped out of the ground and from below the seabed is refined and converted into fuels like petrol, diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF).

The government has also hiked the tax on export of diesel to Rs 7.5 per

litre from Rs 5, and the same on overseas shipments of ATF to Rs 6 a litre from Rs 3.5 a litre. The new tax rates came into effect from February 4. The levy on both domestic crude oil and fuel exports is now off the lows it had hit last month. Tax rates were cut at the last fortnightly review on January 17, following softening in global oil prices. International oil prices have since then firmed up, necessitating the hike of a windfall tax.

India first imposed windfall profit taxes on July 1, joining a growing number of nations that tax super normal profits of energy companies. At that time, export duties of Rs 6 per litre (USD 12 per barrel) each were levied on petrol and ATF and Rs 13 a litre (USD 26 a barrel) on diesel. **PTI**

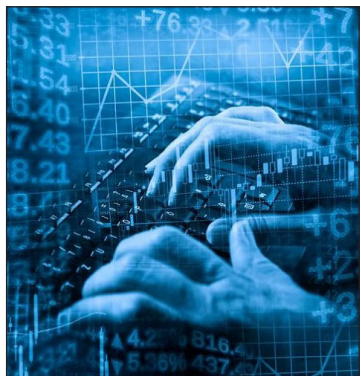
Govt blocks 232 gambling, money laundering apps

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

The government has blocked 232 apps operated by overseas entities, including Chinese for being involved in betting, gambling and unauthorised loan service, according to an official source.

Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has issued orders to block these apps following instructions from Ministry of Home Affairs.

"The order to block 138 apps that were involved in betting, gambling and money laundering were issued last evening. Separately, an order to block 94 apps engaged in unauthorised loan service has also been issued. These apps were being operated from offshore entities, including Chinese. They were posing a threat to the economic stability of the country," the



official, who did not wish to be named, told PTI. The official did not disclose the name of the apps that have been blocked. An official query sent to MeitY did not elicit any immediate response. **PTI PRS AN**

'India's focus should be reduce dependence on China'

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

NITI Aayog vice chairman Suman Bery on Sunday said that India's focus should not be on overall trade deficit with China, instead it should be on reducing New Delhi's dependence on Beijing for certain critical inputs.

According to Bery, the right response is to diversify to other sources of supply for critical inputs including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and supply chain for renewables.

China is the world's largest producer and exporter of APIs and many of the Indian companies depend on imports of the ingredients to produce various formulations.

"India's focus should not be on the trade deficit with China. It should be on our dependence on China for certain critical inputs," he told PTI.

He was asked what measures India should take to reduce its rising trade deficit with China.



He said it is unfortunate that in the last seven years, the larger powers, both the US and China have chosen to weaponise trade interdependence.

"It is unfortunate that China, which is a very competitive source of intermediate goods, is also a power with which we have some military difficulty that puts a different kind of complexion," he said.

Indian and Chinese troops clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Tawang sector of Arunachal

Pradesh on December 9 and the face-off resulted in "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides.

According to recent data released by the Chinese customs, the trade between India and China touched an all-time high of USD 135.98 billion in 2022, while New Delhi's trade deficit with Beijing crossed the USD 100 billion mark for the first time despite frosty bilateral relations.

To reduce the trade deficit with China, Bery suggested that India should formulate a sector-by-sector strategy.

Bery said Chinese enterprises are looking for markets and they want to hold on to the Indian market. "And to do that, they should be prevented from being monopolists, by the way," Bery emphasised. China's exports to India climbed to USD 118.5 billion, a year-on-year increase of 21.7 per cent.

During 2022, China's imports from India dwindled to USD 17.48 billion, a year-on-year decline of 37.9 per cent. **PTI**

SPORT

Nothing impossible for youngsters: Modi

JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 5

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said nothing is impossible for the youngsters of India and they are being encouraged to pursue a career in sports.

He was addressing participants of 'Jaipur Mahakhel' via videoconferencing.

The 'Jaipur Mahakhel' (mega sport) is being organised by Lok Sabha MP from Jaipur Rural and former Union minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.

The event, which focuses on Kabaddi this year, started on National Youth Day



on January 12. It has witnessed the participation of more than 6,400 youths and

sportspersons from more than 450 gram panchayats, municipalities and wards of all eight legislative assembly regions of Jaipur Rural constituency.

"Nothing is impossible for the young generation of young India. We are encouraging youngsters to pursue a career in sports. Initiatives like TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) are benefitting the youngsters in preparing for major sporting events," Modi said.

"Jaipur Mahakhel' is a celebration of sporting talent and such efforts increase curiosity for sports," he said, adding that Rajasthan is known for the enthusiasm and potential of its youth. PTI AG

India's chances in T20 WC will be largely dependent on top-order: Mithali

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Former skipper Mithali Raj feels India's chances of winning the Women's T20 World Cup will depend largely on the top order's form.

The legendary batter added that the Indian bowlers will have to show a marked improvement in testing conditions at the marquee event beginning on Friday in South Africa.

"India's chances will be largely dependent on the top order. Smriti Mandhana is playing well and is a match winner," Mithali wrote in her column for the ICC.

"Harmanpreet Kaur has looked in good form too but we have to beat Australia and England you need others batters to come to the party." The Indian team, which takes on Pakistan in their tournament opener on February 12 in Cape Town, have been playing in South Africa.

The Indian team, which recently finished runners up in a Tri series against hosts South Africa and West Indies, will be fielding a relatively inexperienced pace unit barring veteran Shikha Pandey.

"The bowling will be tested and that is where we need to see an improvement," Mithali added.

The 40-year-old hopes the U19 World Cup-winning duo of Shafali Verma and Richa Ghosh make use of the knowledge that they have gained while playing the age group tournament on these conditions.

"I hope Shafali Verma and Richa Ghosh also have a good run at the World Cup considering they have gained so much experience of the conditions in South Africa.

"I am excited about some of the young players coming through and there is definitely some talent in the Under-19s team which I had the chance to see play at the inaugural ICC Under-19s Women's



T20 World Cup."

Australia favourites to win Mithali opined defending champions Australia's excellent batting department make them favourites to win the event for an unprecedented sixth time.

"I think everyone would agree that Australia are the favourites, and deservedly so. I am expecting, tight, competitive matches. They are so difficult to beat because they bat deep and have an excellent batting line-up.

"There are not many teams who can rival them in terms of big hitters, and the fact they have numerous players who can play a similar role means that if one fails, others can step in.

However, Mithali feels India have a knack of producing their best against Australia.

"We saw recently that when they toured India although that was a very competitive series but when it came down to it, more often than not, it was Australia who came out on top.

"While Australia are definitely favourites, we have seen India and England play some of their best cricket in the knockout stages of tournaments so I would not write them off.

"India also have the knack of bringing their best against Australia." PTI

Atwal yet to complete third round at Pebble Beach Pro-Am

PEBBLE BEACH, FEB 5

India's Arjun Atwal was two-under through 10 holes when strong wind forced a suspension of play in the third round of the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, which will now have a Monday finish.

Atwal, who shot 73-75 at Pebble Beach and Spyglass, is two-over for 46 holes and still needs a few more birdies to make the cut, which will now be 65 and ties. Atwal, the only Indian to have won on the PGA Tour, birdied 10th and 16th after starting from the 10th. That two-under through 10 holes helped him move up from 130th to 101st. PTI

WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP



Now, it will be clash between India, Pak women cricket teams

CAPE TOWN, FEBRUARY 5

The Women's Premier League auction is just around the corner but India are firmly focussed on their T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan as they aim to emulate the U19 girls' title-winning feat, insisted skipper Harmanpreet Kaur.

The WPL action is slated to be held on February 13 in Mumbai, a day after India's T20 World Cup opener against Pakistan.

"Before that [the auction], we have a very important game and we are just going to focus on that," Harmanpreet said at the T20 World Cup captains' press conference.

"The World Cup is more important than anything else. Our focus is on the ICC trophy. These things will keep coming, and as a player, you know what's important for you and how you need to keep your focus. PTI

"We are all mature enough and know what is important for us," she added.

Led by Shafali Verma, the Indian team won the inaugural U19 T20 World Cup last month and the senior side wants to add another ICC title in India's trophy cabinet.

"After watching the U19 World Cup, we are motivated to do what they have done. They have motivated us to do well, they have done it and we have not done it yet," Harmanpreet said.

"It was a very special moment for all of us and after watching the U19s many of the girls back home will also want to play cricket and that's always our aim to motivate young girls who can come and play cricket." The flamboyant Indian skipper hoped that the WPL will play a similar role in contributing to the growth of Indian women's cricket like the Women's Big Bash and The Hundred have done in Australia and England. PTI

Border-Gavaskar trophy

Emphasis on slip fielding: Dravid

NAGPUR, FEBRUARY 5

The Indian team is focussing on fielding, especially slip catching, ahead of the opening Test against Australia beginning here on February 9, head coach Rahul Dravid said on Sunday.

The performance of India's slip fielders has been an area of concern in the past and Dravid said the team is trying to strengthen the slip cordon during its preparatory camp here ahead of the four-match Test series.

"Everyone looks in really good shape. It's nice to get the Test team together again. We had a lot of white-ball cricket over the last month or so," Dravid said in a video posted by the BCCI on twitter.

"Some of those boys, shifting from white-ball to red-ball, it's nice for them



to just have that extended period in the nets. The surfaces have been really good as well," he said.

India are conducting their training sessions at the VCA Stadium in Civil Lines with the first Test scheduled at the VCA Jamtha Stadium on Thursday.

"Fielding side of things as well, that has been really important as well. The close-in catching which we think is going to become a really important part of the series. PTI

Pacer Hazlewood to miss first test

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Recovering from an achilles injury, Australia pacer Josh Hazlewood is set to miss the opening Test against India in Nagpur and also remains a doubtful starter for the second game in Delhi. The 32-year-old had sustained the injury on his left leg after bowling in the rain-affected Sydney Test against South Africa last month. "Not sure about the first Test. It's still a few days away but it's sneaking up pretty quickly," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by 'Cricbuzz' before Australia's final session at the KSCA Stadium in the outskirts of Bangalore on Sunday. PTI