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Talks, not nuke war, way forward: India to Russia

Russia threatens nuclear response to 'dirty bomb' use by Ukraine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday cautioned Russia against the use of nuclear weapons after it expressed concern over the use of "dirty bomb" by Ukraine. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's caution came when his Russian counterpart Sergei Shoigu called him up and expressed the apprehension of Ukraine using the dirty bomb against Russia in the ongoing conflict which has escalated. Singh also called for resolving the issue through dialogue and diplomacy.

A "dirty bomb" is a radiological weapon that combines radioactive material with conventional explosives.

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and the United Kingdom (UK) Foreign Secretary James Cleverly too had on Tuesday discussed the issue after Russia claimed Ukraine was planning to use the "dirty bomb", and took the issue to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Shoigu had requested for the talks with Rajnath and both the Ministers discussed bilateral defence co-operation as well as the deteriorating sit-



uation in Ukraine. The Russian Defence Minister briefed his Indian counterpart on the evolving situation in Ukraine, including his concerns about possible provocations through use of "dirty bomb", Defence Ministry officials said.

Rajnath reiterated India's position on the need to pursue the path of dialogue and diplomacy for an early resolution of the conflict. He pointed out that the nuclear option should not be resorted to by any side as the prospect of the usage of nuclear or radiological weapons goes against the basic tenets of humanity. Both Ministers agreed to remain in touch.

Russia has claimed Ukraine is plotting to use "dirty bomb" against its forces, an allegation that was dismissed by Kyiv and

the West as misinformation and a pretext for intensifying the war. Shoigu had underlined the charge of the "dirty bomb" in his calls over the last week-end to his British, French, Turkish and US counterparts. He also called his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe on Wednesday.

Russia also hinted that it may be forced to use a tactical nuclear weapon against Ukraine if Kyiv drops a "dirty bomb". Responding to the Russian tactical nuclear threat, US President Joe Biden said any nuclear attack would be a "serious mistake". Russia would be making an incredibly serious mistake were it to use a tactical nuclear weapon, he said.

The US suspects Russia might itself use a "dirty bomb" in a "false flag" attack, possibly

Putin monitors drills by N-forces

Moscow: Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday monitored drills of the country's strategic nuclear forces involving multiple practice launches of ballistic and cruise missiles, in a show of force amid the heightened tensions with the West over the conflict in Ukraine. P8

Russia fires rockets at 40 Ukraine villages

Kyiv: Russia's military targeted more than 40 villages around Ukraine over the past day, Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday, killing at least two civilians and sustaining the terror that forces people into air raid shelters each night.

The attacks come as fears are growing that Russia, facing setbacks on the battlefield, might try to detonate a so-called "dirty bomb." P8

to justify the use of conventional nuclear weapons by Moscow. "I'm not guaranteeing that it's a false flag operation yet. We don't know," Biden added.

Meanwhile, the Indian embassy in Ukraine has asked Indian nationals to leave the country at the earliest in view of fresh wave of hostilities. It was the second advisory in the last one week.

Kharge forms panel to run show; Tharoor, Gehlot out

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday took charge as the Congress' first non-Gandhi president in 24 years, vowing to wrest power from the BJP both in the States and at the Centre and cited former chief Rahul Gandhi's slogan "daro mat" to energise workers. He, subsequently, formed a 47-member steering committee of the party that has some key omissions like his challenger in the presidential polls Shashi Tharoor besides Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who recently brought much "embarrassment" to the party with his last-minute backtracking from the party president's election.

The steering committee, headed by Kharge, will function in place of the the Congress Working Committee (CWC) whose members, AICC general secretaries and incharges tendered their resignation soon after the new boss took charge in the presence of his predecessor and longest serving Congress chief Sonia Gandhi.

Haryana stalwart and one of the G-23 members, Bhupinder Singh Hooda, also did not find a place in Kharge's steering committee. What surprised many was the inclusion of those like Ajay Kumar and Manish Chattrath.

Leaders belonging to the Gandhi camp like Hooda's archrival Kumari Selja, Bhakta Charan Das, Jitendra Singh



Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with former party presidents Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi and party's central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry during a ceremony for presentation of certificate of election to him, at AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Wednesday

and Devendra Yadav found a place in the committee.

The committee includes Sonia, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Rahul, and Priyanka Gandhi among others. This committee will function till a new CWC is formed after Kharge's election is ratified at the party plenary.

According to a communication from the AICC general secretary (Organisation), the committee members also include senior party leaders A

K Antony, Ambika Soni, Anand Sharma, KC Venugopal, Randeep Surjewala, and Digvijaya Singh.

Kharge said the Udaipur Declaration's proposals such as 50 per cent party posts to be given to those below 50 years of age, filling up organisational vacancies, setting up public insight department and election management department, establishing political affairs committee in States, will be implemented.

Handing over the reins of the party to Kharge, Sonia said "change is the rule of the world".

"Today, I will be freed of this responsibility and this weight will be off me and that is why it is natural that I am feeling relieved," she said.

Kharge, 80, who defeated Tharoor, takes over at a time when the grand old party is struggling to find relevance.

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Kejriwal for Gods on currency notes; it's Guj fear, mocks BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Claiming that the Indian Economy was not in a good shape, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to introduce currency notes with images of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi on one side and Mahatma Gandhi's picture on the other.

The BJP termed his demand a "gimmick" ahead of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh elections and claimed that Kejriwal and his party have a long history of abusing Hindu's Gods and Goddesses.

"This is a political gimmick of Kejriwal, who is trying to be a Hindu to divert attention from his party's 'anti-Hindu' mindset ahead of Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh polls. Those



Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal addressing press conference on Wednesday Ranjan Dimri | Pioneer

who objected to Ram Mandir have come with a new mask," BJP leaders said.

Addressing a press conference, the AAP supremo said, "Today, I am appealing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Centre that our currency notes have the image of Mahatma Gandhi on one side. It should remain as it is but on

the other side, there should be an image of Ganesha and Lakshmi."

"Despite making efforts, sometimes our efforts do not fructify if gods and goddesses are not blessing us. I appeal to PM (Modi) to have photos of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi on our currency (notes). If there is a photo of Lakshmi-Ganesha on our currency (notes), our country will prosper. I will write to (the) Prime Minister in a day or two on this," Kejriwal said.

Citing the example of Indonesia, Kejriwal said that "Indonesia is a Muslim country. There are 85 per cent Muslims and only 2 per cent Hindus but there is a picture of Shri Ganesh ji on the currency. If Indonesia can do it, we can do it too," he said.

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A roadside toy vendor waits for customers on a pavement in Hyderabad on Wednesday AP

TN to hand over probe into blast at temple to NIA

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) into the Coimbatore explosion case would be recommended to the Centre, the Tamil Nadu Government said here on Wednesday.

The State Government also announced raising a special police force to foil sabotage and bolster its intelligence wing.

In a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister MK Stalin at the Secretariat, the present status of investigation related to the explosion was taken up and it was decided to set up a special force to prevent similar incidents.

On October 23, about 75 kg explosives were seized in Coimbatore from the residence

of 29-year-old Jameesha Mubeen, who was killed after a gas cylinder exploded.

The explosion happened while he was moving past a temple in a car in the western textile city and he had tried to evade a police check post.

NIA officials held discussions in Coimbatore on Wednesday with State police.

Quoting Stalin's directives to officials in the meet here, the Government said it was decided to recommend to the Centre to entrust the case to the NIA.

The move is considering the possibilities of links transcending TN borders and the likelihood of international links emerging during the investigation of the explosion case, an official release here said.

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Pandits flee Kashmir as ultras target community

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Over one dozen Kashmiri pandit families who survived the three-decade long period of terrorism have decided to stay away from Kashmir for the time being to ensure their own safety.

Since Monday evening, around seventeen fear-stricken families hailing from Chowdhari Gund area of Shopian have reached Jammu leaving behind locked down homes.

Ashwini Kumar Bhat, elder brother of Puran Krishan Bhat, also reached Jammu along with his family as he too was feeling insecure after the targeted killing of his younger brother.

At present these families are camping with their close relatives and staring at an uncertain future ahead.

Detailed report on P2

Ex-cop's son beaten to death with bricks over parking row at eatery

PTI ■ GHAZIABAD

A 35-year-old man was battered to death with bricks by a group of unidentified assailants following an altercation over car parking near a roadside eatery here, police said on Wednesday.

The victim has been identified as Varun, son of a retired assistant sub-inspector of the Delhi Police and resident of Jawli village in the Teela Mor area. The place where the incident occurred is hardly 2 km from Delhi border.

According to police, the incident took place on Tuesday night when Varun, along with his two friends, had gone to the eatery for dinner and parked his car near another vehicle, the door of which could not open due to it. This led to an altercation, after which Varun was allegedly beaten up brutally with bricks by the assailants.

Severely injured Varun was rushed to GTB Hospital in



In this screenshot taken from a social media viral video, a man bludgeons another with a brick over a parking dispute in Ghaziabad on Tuesday PTI

Delhi where he died, ASP Gyanendra Singh said. Five teams of police have been formed to nab the killers.

An FIR has been lodged against unknown assailants under relevant sections of IPC, including section 302 (murder), at Teela Mor police station on a complaint of victim's father Kanwar Pal.

In the video of the incident

that went viral, the victim was seen lying on the road in a numb condition and the attackers hitting him with a brick.

Later, Ghaziabad SSP Muniraj G visited the spot and said that action will be initiated against such eateries which serve food to the people who park their cars along the road and then start drinking in their vehicles.

The deceased's father in his complaint said that Varun had gone to drop his wife Anjali at Mohan Nagar bus stand around 4.45 pm on Tuesday. Later, Varun, along with his two friends — Deepak and Sanjay — went to the dhaba (roadside eatery) for dinner, Pal said.

The father said around 9.15 pm, Varun's nephew Anirudh received a call from Deepak who hails from the same village that Varun has received severe injuries as unknown persons brutally beat him.

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Haryana Govt plans MSP on stubble to curb farm fire

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

As a measure to check air pollution, the Haryana Government is considering announcing a minimum support price (MSP) on stubble so that farmers sell their crop residue instead of burning it, Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said on Wednesday.

He said the number of stubble burning cases has come down substantially in Haryana. The State Government gives ₹1,000 per acre to farmers for not burning the crop residue, Khattar said, adding that it also helps them sell the crop residue to refineries and other industries.

Asserting that his Government is "very serious" about the issue of stubble burning, Khattar said, "We have succeeded in putting a check on stubble burning with cooperation from farmers."

Arif seeks action against Kerala FM, CM defies

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

For the first time in the history of Kerala, a Governor has withdrawn his "pleasure" over an important member of the council of Ministers in the State. Governor Arif Mohammed Khan in a letter to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said he is left with no option but to convey that Finance Minister KN Balagopal has ceased to enjoy his pleasure over some of the statements the Minister made to the media which was widely reported. However, the CM firmly turned down his demand.

The Governor said the statements of Balagopal were nothing short of violation of the path of office the Governor had administered on him. "A Minister who deliberately violates the oath and undermines



the unity and integrity of India cannot continue to enjoy my pleasure," said the Governor in his letter to the CM despatched on Tuesday and copies of which were released to the media on Wednesday.

What prompted the Governor to withdraw his pleasure over Balagopal, the self-styled economist and the blue eyed boy of Vijayan was the statement he gave to the media on October 19.

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CAPSULE

DENGUE PATIENTS SUFFER LIVER COMPLICATIONS

New Delhi: Amid a rise in dengue cases in Delhi, doctors in city hospitals said many dengue patients are developing complications such as liver dysfunction and capillary leak.

GUJARAT TRANSFERS 900 OFFICIALS AFTER EC RAP

New Delhi: The Gujarat administration has transferred over 900 officials ahead of Assembly polls after being pulled up by the EC, but 51 more, including six senior IPS officers are yet to be moved out.

BLUE FLAG TO 2 MORE INDIAN BEACHES: MIN

New Delhi: Two more Indian beaches — Minicoy, Thundi Beach and Kadmat Beach, both in Lakshadweep — have made it to the coveted list of World Blue Beaches.

BOAT CARRYING POLICE PARTY CAPSIZES IN BIHAR

Gopalganj: A constable died in Bihar on Wednesday when a boat carrying a police party, on the trail of liquor smugglers in the dry state, capsized in a river.

Pandits flee Kashmir after spate of targeted killings

Seventeen fear-stricken families shift to Jammu

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Over one dozen Kashmiri Pandit families, who survived the three-decade-long period of militancy, have decided to stay away from Kashmir for the time-being to ensure their own safety.

Since Monday evening, around seventeen fear-stricken families hailing from Chowdhari Gund area of Shopian have reached Jammu leaving behind locked down homes. Ashwini Kumar Bhat, elder brother of Puran Krishan Bhat also reached Jammu along with his family as he too was feeling insecure after the targeted killing of his younger brother.

At present these families are camping with their close relatives and staring at an uncertain future ahead. None



of these families have been registered in the office of Relief commissioner (Migrants) and not entitled to any relief.

The fresh wave of terror was triggered after the targeted killing of Puran Krishan Bhat outside his residence in Shopian on October 15.

Bhat was present in the valley to look after the apple orchards. After his killing two more migrant laborers from Kannauj district of Uttar

Pradesh were killed while they were sleeping inside their tin roof sheds.

On reaching Jammu, these families claimed they decided to step out of their native village as they were not feeling secure after a series of incidents of targeted killings of members belonging to the minority community.

AK Raina, a close relative of Puran Krishan Bhat in Jammu said, "so far more than

one dozen families have arrived from Kashmir valley to ensure their safety". Raina said these families left behind their homes, orchards and ran away as they were not feeling safe and secure in the area despite the presence of security camps in the close vicinity of their homes. On the other hand the ongoing protest by the PM package employees entered into 178 th day. The UT administration has not released their salaries creating a piquant situation for them.

The representatives of PM Package employees claimed it is unfortunate the kashmiri pandit migrant employees were suffering at this juncture and no one is paying heed to their genuine demands forcing them to demonstrate on the streets.

In the wake of targeted killings these PM package employees have been sticking to their single point demand of relocations to the safer areas outside the Kashmir valley as they claimed they donot want to become 'canon and fodder' for the terrorists who treat them as 'sitting ducks'.

Forces gun down LeT terrorist hailing from POK in Kupwara

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU

A Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorist hailing from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) was eliminated by the alert Indian troops while he, along with his accomplice, was attempting an infiltration bid along the Line of Control in Kupwara in the wee hours of Wednesday.

The slain terrorist has been identified as Mohammed Shakur (32) from Syedpura in POK. According to a Srinagar-based Defence spokesman, the operation was launched in the Tangdhar sector on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday.

The joint operation was launched based on specific information received from the police regarding the infiltration of a group of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists through the Sudpura forward post in the Karnah area of Kupwara district. The inputs were corroborated by other intelligence agencies, the spokesperson said in a statement.

"Alert troops on the anti-infiltration grid intercepted two terrorists trying to infiltrate



inside the Indian territory in the forward area close to the Line of Control (LoC).

"Around 1:45 am on 26 October (20)22, the infiltrating terrorists were fired upon, leading to the elimination of one terrorist. However, taking advantage of the darkness, the other terrorist managed to flee to PoJK side," he added.

In a search operation launched at the site this morn-

ing, one AK series rifle, two pistols and a large quantity of ammunition and war-like stores were recovered, according to the statement.

Timely action and close coordination between the Indian Army, the Jammu and Kashmir Police and other intelligence agencies led to foiling of the infiltration attempt and potential threat to peace in the hinterland, the spokesperson

said. "Continued engagements along the Line of Control are uncanny reminders of efforts by Pakistan to infuse terrorism in Kashmir and disrupt peace and harmony while putting on the facade of ceasefire understanding," he said.

"The youth in PoJK are being used as cannon fodder by Pakistan state policy from the last three decades with a fruitless aim to constantly disrupt progress towards collective peace," he said.

In a separate incident, an encounter broke out between terrorists and security forces in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday, police said.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation at Wanaseeran Taripora in Sheeri area of Baramulla district following information about presence of terrorists, a police official said.

He said the search operation turned into an encounter after the terrorists opened fire on the security forces who retaliated. No casualties have been reported in the encounter so far, the official added.

TMC to woo women voters for panchayat polls in Bengal

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Apparently aware that the party's TRP is falling with the State's menfolk — post exposure of the large-scale corruption in school level recruitment tests — Bengal's ruling Trinamool Congress is planning to target the women voters in the next year's panchayat elections. The scam-struck ruling outfit has decided to activate its women's wings to launch door-to-door campaigns showcasing the pro-women reforms unleashed by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Aware that the women voters played a big role in TMC's landslide victory in the 2021

Assembly elections the ruling outfit has planned to hold mahila panchayat conferences in districts. The 49 percent women voters had voted for Mamata Banerjee in big numbers particularly after her party launched the Laxmir Bhandar — ascheme that assured a stipend of ₹500 each one woman in everyhousehold — ahead of the Assembly elections.

Dwelling on the party's plans Bengal minister and TMC Mahila Congress State president Chandrima Bhattacharya said, "we will organise mahila panchayat conferences in every district and reach out to women inevery household," adding her

team would convey to the women voters about the women-centric schemes initiated by the Chief Minister.

"The women of Bengal know about the women-centric schemes launched by Chief Mamata Minister Banerjee ... bringing world wide accolades for the State ... we Kanyashree, Rupashree, Laxmir Bhandar, Swastha Saathi and many other schemes that have strengthened the women socially ... today they do not have to look up to others for assistance," the minister said adding the party planned to start special campaigns from November 1.

"We will reach every household in the 31 organisational districts ... we will talk to every woman," another TMC leader said adding how the women had voted for the TMC in overwhelming numbers in the 2021 elections.

PNS ■ KOLKATA

There are chances that Home Minister Amit Shah and Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will engage each other in a one-to-one dialogue on the sidelines of eastern zonal security council meeting.

The meeting is scheduled to take place on November 5 and is likely to be attended apart from the Bengal Chief Minister, her counterparts from Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand and Sikkim. Shah is the ex-officio Chairman of the zonal council.

The meeting will take place at Bengal State secretariat Nabanna in Kolkata.

Whether Shah would attend any political programme for the BJP was still not clear as there was no such announcement from the saffron party's

State office.

A possible Banerjee-Shah parley would be eagerly awaited by the State media circle particularly in the light of some scathing attack launched by the Bengal Chief Minister who had recently said that Shah and not Prime Minister Narendra Modi was responsible for the alleged excesses perpetrated by the ED and CBI in the State that resulted in the arrest of senior TMC politicians including ministers, MLAs and district presidents like Partha Chatterjee, Manik Bhattacharya and Anubrata Mondal.

This would be the first time after the recent spate of arrests made by the central agencies that the Chief Minister and the Home Minister would meet face to face.

NBDSA fines news channel for 'communal' tinge in hijab debate

New Delhi: The News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority of India (NBDSA) has imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on News18 India for making a communal issue out of a debate on the Hijab row and linking persons supporting the practice with Al-Qaeda. "NBDSA strongly deprecated the tendency of the broadcaster to associate those panellists who were in favour of wearing Hijab by the students with Zawahiri and labelling them as 'Zawahiri gang member' 'Zawahiri's ambassador', 'Zawahiri is your God, you are his fan'," read the order given by NBDSA chairperson Justice A K Sikri (retd).

Kharge forms...

From Page 1

Acknowledging the challenges ahead, Kharge said elections will be held in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat as well as in other States and Congress workers would have to give it their all to defeat the BJP, which he accused of weakening democracy established by the Congress. "We will have to strongly perform in these states and we will need everyone's strength and energy to succeed in them together," Kharge said at the change of guard function at the AICC headquarters.

Soon after the function, Sonia Gandhi escorted Kharge to the office of the Congress president she had occupied for long years. Rahul Gandhi and a host of senior Congress leaders, including Gehlot and Chhattisgarh's Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, as well as those from the G23 grouping that had questioned the drift in the party were also present.

Darul Uloom dubbed illegal, stages protest

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Darul Uloom Deoband, the Islamic seminary at Saharanpur, has lodged a protest with the State Government for being termed as illegal by the Minority Welfare department after the survey.

The clerics of Darul Uloom Deoband have come out in

Minor raped in Kannauj; men film bleeding girl but don't help her

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A disturbing video has been doing rounds on social media in which a 12-year-old girl drenched in blood can be seen pleading for help; however, people standing around her are busy filming her on mobile phones.

The minor was allegedly

raped and then dumped behind the Dak Bangla guest house in Kannauj. She suffered multiple injuries, including on her head. In the video, the girl can be seen trying to seek help, but her appeals go unanswered as a group of men with their mobile phones in their hands were busy capturing her from different angles.

Maya slams BJP for madrasa survey, attacks on Dalits, tribals

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati has again attacked the Yogi Adityanath government over the survey of unrecognised madrasas in Uttar Pradesh. She also attacked the BJP Government over the attacks on Dalits and Adivasis in Madhya Pradesh.

She said that non-government aided madrasas were engaged in imparting education to the poor, and asked why was the government interfering in it? Not only this, the BSP supremo also attacked the Congress along with the Bharatiya Janata Party.

Mayawati on Wednesday targeted the Yogi Government in a series of tweets.

Arif...

From Page 1

Referring to the ongoing tussle between the Governor and the State Government over the appointment and dismissal of vice-chancellors in the State universities, Balagopal has said, "Some people who are accustomed to the practices in places like Uttar Pradesh might not be able to understand the democratic nature in which universities function in Kerala." Balagopal also said vice chancellors in universities including Banaras Hindu University required protection by armed security personnel.

Ex-cop's...

From Page 1

Getting the information, Pal's younger son, along with a neighbour, reached the dhaba where they found Varun lying in a pool of blood. They immediately rushed him to GTB hospital where the doctors declared him brought dead, police said.

Pal also alleged that when the scuffle took place his son's two friends were with him and they too had dinner. Instead of taking Varun to the hospital or informing the police, the two fled away from there, the father said in the complaint.

Kejriwal for Gods on currency notes...

From Page 1

Asserting that he was not requesting to exchange all the notes in circulation, Kejriwal said his suggestion was to include the images of Ganesha and Lakshmi on the notes that are printed every month "This way, a significant amount of these notes will be in circulation in some time," he added.

Hate Kejriwal but not deities: AAP to BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Wednesday backed Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's statement that people will get divine blessings for financial gains if images of Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesha are printed on currency notes in India.

Requesting the BJP to support Kejriwal's proposal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, AAP MLA Atishi said, "You can continue to hate Arvind Kejriwal if you want to, but don't hate Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Ganesha at least. Don't hate their blessings. Don't hate this country's prosperity at least. I want to request the BJP with folded hands not to oppose this proposal just because they hate the AAP and Kejriwal."

Earlier, Kejriwal said that the present currency notes needn't stop but the new ones being printed every month can have the images of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Laxmi, and slowly it can come in circulation.

Lamenting the fact that



the India economy was not in a good shape, he said the country was passing through a delicate situation with the rupee depreciating against the US Dollar on a daily basis.

"We all want India to be rich and every family here to be prosperous. We have to open schools and hospitals on a large scale," he added.

Citing the example of Indonesia, Kejriwal said, "Indonesia is a Muslim country. There are 85 per cent Muslims and only 2 per cent Hindus but there is a picture of Ganesh ji on the currency. If Indonesia can do it, we can do it too," he said.

When asked about how the idea came to him, Kejriwal said he felt that currency notes should have the images of the

two deities while performing Diwali puja on Monday. "We want India to become a developed and prosperous country. We have to build schools, hospitals in large numbers and develop infrastructure for electricity and roads to make this possible. All of us make efforts but they only bear fruits when God showers blessing on us," he said.

Hitting out at the BJP, Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said, "Just because Arvind Kejriwal has requested for this, the BJP is uncomfortable with the proposal. Why is the BJP opposing it? The BJP and the Prime Minister should make their stand clear on this matter," he said.

Criticising the BJP, AAP MLA Saurabh Bharadwaj said the real face of the saffron party was out in the open. "BJP leaders have a problem with Maa Lakshmi and Shri Ganesh's image on Indian currency notes. Kejriwal has presented a positive suggestion for the economy of the country like a progressive Opposition leader," he said.

Political drama to divert attention from Govt's flaws, says BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Lambasting Arvind Kejriwal's demand to put photos of Lord Ganesha and Goddess Lakshmi on currency notes, the BJP accused him of making a 'U-turn' after insulting Ram Mandir. The BJP's IT cell chief Amit Malviya, the party's national spokespersons Sambit Patra, MP Manoj Tiwari, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta and Leader of Opposition Ramvir Singh Bidhuri lashed out at Kejriwal.

The BJP leaders said that Kejriwal and his party have a long history of abusing Hindu deities. "He is doing political drama to divert people's attention from the flaws of his Government and the anti-Hindu mindset of the AAP. What Kejriwal has said in his press conference is another extension of his U-turn politics. His hypocrisy is on show," Sambit Patra told reporters.

Manoj Tiwari said that Kejriwal, who has so far protected his party leaders who "insulted Hindu gods and goddesses is now trying to save his face in view of the elections."



"Without even a letter from you, we developed the Mahkal corridor and started Ram temple construction that you opposed quoting your grandmother," he said. He demanded that Kejriwal expels Gautam and Italia from the AAP to prove he has respect for Santan Dharma.



Terming Kejriwal's statement a political drama ahead of the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh Assembly polls, Bidhuri said that he is trying to divert attention as his firecrackers ban during Diwali has been flopped. "The internet is full of his anti-Hindu remarks," he said.

Kejriwal is B team of BJP, RSS, says Cong

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday lambasted Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal over his demand of printing images of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Laxmi on currency notes.

Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit said, "He is B team of BJP & RSS. He doesn't have any understanding. It is his vote politics. If he goes to Pakistan, he can also say that I am Pakistani, so vote for me."

Meanwhile, State Congress

president, Anil Kumar termed the move as "low-level politics" saying that Kejriwal was bringing in Hindu deities in his political gambit to violate the secular credentials of the country.

Kumar said that he had assumed the Constitutional post of CM of Delhi by swearing in on the secular principles enshrined in the Constitution, and he has lost all moral and ethical rights to remain as the CM and should resign forthwith.

Kejriwal's suggestion raises storm on Twitter

SAURABH GUPTA ■ NEW DELHI

A controversy erupted on social media platform Twitter over Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's demand for images of Hindu deities being printed on new currency notes.

Many Twitter users trolled him and dubbed the CM's demand as just a political gimmick before the forthcoming Gujarat elections. Some also accused Kejriwal of hypocrisy, saying he just banned crackers before Diwali and is now suggesting photos of Lakshmi and Ganesha be put on currency notes, while several others questioned why the AAP leader "who was talking about schools and hospitals earlier" made such a remark.

Some Muslim Twitter users called him a 'Chhota Recharge' of the RSS while others pointed out that India is a secular country and hence images of Hindu deities should not be put up on currency notes. One Twitter user even wondered what would have happened if AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi would have suggested printing 'La Ilaha Illallah' (there is no God but

Allah) on currency notes.

Former AAP leader Ashutosh mocked Kejriwal and tweeted, "Wow ... what a great economic mantra given by @ArvindKejriwal ... great suggestion for @RishiSunak to uplift Britain's economy. @narendramodi should immediately sack all economic advisors .. Follow his advice. India Will prosper."

Filmmaker Ashok Pandit tweeted, "I condemn the statement issued by Delhi CM @ArvindKejriwal where he has said that Ganeshji's & Laxmi ji's pic should be there on Indian currency. By this, he is creating a divide between different religions..."

A Twitter user pointed out that Kejriwal has mentioned about the currency of Muslim-majority Indonesia.

Kamlesh Uniyal took it to Twitter to comment, "From Insulting & Mocking Swastika to asking for Ganesh & Lakshmi printed on Indian Currency ... It took Delhi election to Gujarat election for chameleon #ArvindKejriwal to go for such drastic change. But people are not fool. He will still lose the Gujarat election."

'BJP conspiring to shut down Dilli ki Yogshala'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday accused the BJP of "conspiring" to shut the AAP Government's 'Dilli ki Yogshala' programme which offers free yoga classes to Delhiites by pressurising officials. He said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has given his nod to continue the programme and has sent the file to L-G Saxena for approval. Sisodia has sought an explanation from the Secretary of the Directorate of Training

and Technical Education for allegedly trying to "discontinue" the programme that was announced by the AAP on December 13 for providing yoga instructors free to Delhiites. Currently, 590 yoga classes are being run daily with more than 17,000 participants.

"The BJP is hellbent on depriving Delhi residents of free yoga from November 1 by putting pressure on officers to discontinue 'Dilli Ki Yogshala,'" Sisodia said at a press conference.



253 challaned, ₹32L fine slapped for flouting dust norms, says Rai

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Authorities in Delhi have issued 253 challans and imposed a cumulative fine of ₹32.4 lakh on user agencies that did not comply with dust control norms. Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai informed on Wednesday after a high level review meeting on pollution. Rai said Government officials have so far inspected 6,868 construction sites under the anti-dust campaign from October 6. "A total of 253 notices/challans have been issued and a fine of

₹32.4 lakh imposed on violators," he said.

User agencies of construction and demolition projects larger than 500 sq mt must register on the construction and demolition portal launched in a bid to control dust pollution. "However, 586 teams have been formed under the anti dust campaign, including 33 teams of DPCC. Teams instructed to constantly inspect sites and maintain vigil. It is necessary to follow all 14 anti dust norms on construction sites, otherwise action will be taken upon violators," he said.



L-G, AAP spar over Chhath Puja

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) VK Saxena on Wednesday approved designated ghats for Chhath Puja on the Yamuna River and directed the Delhi Government to ensure basic amenities, including clean ghats, security and water for devotees.

He also cautioned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal against "misleading" and "premature" publicity. Kejriwal had recently announced that this year the Government has set up 1,100 ghats along the river. The tweet had allegedly caused confusion, with many people assuming that the puja could be

performed anywhere along the Yamuna.

Sources at Raj Niwas said that the L-G has approved the file on Chhath Puja sent to him by the Chief Minister but also took note of Kejriwal's tweet on October 21. The L-G wrote in the file, "The publicity on the issue was done even before the matter was placed for my consideration and before I could formulate an independent opinion on the subject."

Criticizing the L-G's move, the AAP objected to the language used by Saxena for the Chief Minister of Delhi and said that he has no business to publicly reprimand the Chief Minister daily. "L-G is lowering

the dignity of the chair he occupies by publicly abusing Hon'ble CM daily. Hon'ble CM is an elected representative who has been elected for the third consecutive time with historic margins. The L-G is hungry for cheap publicity and wants to see his name in newspapers daily," the AAP said.

In the note, the L-G said, "The tweet gave the impression that the Chhath festival will be celebrated on all Yamuna Ghats which is misleading and may cause confusion in the public as the NGT has allowed puja only at designated sites. This is seriously problematic as it violates the basic principles of the scheme of governance.

Kejriwal should resign for very poor air: BJP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leaders on Wednesday demanded Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's resignation over his alleged failure to control pollution in Delhi and claimed the city's air quality improved after Diwali. BJP MP and former Delhi unit chief Manoj Tiwari said the city's air quality index (AQI) levels were worse before Diwali.

The AQI had improved after the festival, showing that Diwali is not to be blamed for pollution in Delhi, he said. "Before Diwali, the AQI was 330 and after Diwali this

morning (Wednesday) it is 306. (This is) the benefits of bursting green crackers. So those who were blaming Diwali should now worry that if the pollution gets worse from now on then don't blame it on Diwali," Tiwari said in a tweet in Hindi on Wednesday. The BJP's West Delhi MP Parvesh Sahib Singh, on the other hand, demanded Kejriwal's resignation for his failure to control pollution.

"Arvind ji, if you paid news is over on pollution, then also say something on it. Why are you telling so many lies everyday?," Singh tweeted.

Jasmine Shah's request for more time to respond to complaint rejected

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Government's Planning Department has rejected DDCD Vice-Chairman Jasmine Shah's request seeking an additional 10 days to respond to a complaint of "misuse of public office" against him. Sources said that Shah was given time till October 28 to submit his reply.

The Planning Department had issued a show cause notice to Shah on October 17 on allegations of "misuse of public office" against him based on a complaint by BJP leader and West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma.

"Initially, Shah was given a week's time to submit his reply. He had sought 10 more days (to reply to the notice) after he failed to do so within the stipulated time but he has been asked to submit his reply by October 28," sources said.

In his complaint dated September 13, Verma had alleged that "while working as Vice Chairperson, DDCD, Jasmine Shah has acted as official spokesperson of the Aam Aadmi Party for political gains, which is in violation of established procedures..."

An inquiry in the matter was carried out by the Planning Department, which is the administrative department in-charge of the DDCD.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PREVENT DENGUE, CHIKUNGUNYA & MALARIA

Due to recent rains, water may have accumulated in containers laying in open areas like Rooftops, Courtyards, Gardens, Open Workshops, Police Malkhanas, Construction Sites, DTC Depots, etc. These may lead to breeding of mosquitoes causing Dengue, Malaria and Chikungunya. Therefore, all concerned are requested clear these spaces of water to prevent mosquitoes breeding. Please take following measures also:

Empty & scrub dry the coolers

Cover the water tank properly & close other water containers tightly with lids

Change the water of Money Plant, Fengsui plant, bird's pot, etc. weekly

Don't allow accumulation of water in and around your houses and offices

Don't keep the tin, tyres, broken utensils, kabad, etc. in the open

Don't throw coconut shells, plastic cups, plates and other plastic waste in open

DON'T ALLOW MOSQUITO BREEDING AT CONSTRUCTION SITES.

Detection of mosquito breeding will lead to action as per provisions under relevant sections of DMC Act and FIR under section 269 of IPC.

Public Health Department
MUNICIPAL CORPORATION OF DELHI

Swachh Innovative Technology Challenge

Bring Solution for Cleaner and Greener Generation

INVITING ENTRIES FROM

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- EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
- CITIZENS GROUP
- INDIVIDUAL

CATEGORIES

- SOCIAL INCLUSION
- ZERO DUMP (3R)
- PLASTIC MANAGEMENT
- DIGITAL ENABLEMENT
- TRANSPARENCY

PRIZE MONEY

2nd Prize
31 THOUSAND

1st Prize
51 THOUSAND

3rd Prize
21 THOUSAND

Last date of participation:
05th November, 2022

Scan QR Code to Participate

RO No. : 47/DP/IMCD/2022-23

Focus on digital terror tech in UN's anti-terror meet in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to international peace and growing use of technology and digitisation for terrorist purposes has become an issue of increasing concern.

These issues will be the main agenda of a three-day meet hosted by India under the aegis of the United Nations. The Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) will hold a special meeting in Mumbai and New Delhi on October 28-30.

United Kingdom (UK) Foreign Secretary James Cleverly is among the Foreign Ministers scheduled to take part in the high-profile event.

Highlighting some of the main features of the upcoming meet, Indian envoy to UN Ruchira Kamboj said here UN Security Council (UNSC) counter-terrorism meet will focus on dealing with use of internet, new payment mechanism and drones by terrorists.

Giving details of the event, Kamboj said over the past two decades, member states have made tangible progress in

countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism. Yet, terrorist threat persists and despite our best efforts has evolved, she added.

While the first day's meeting will take place in Mumbai on October 28, the second day's deliberations will take place in New Delhi the next day.

The UNSC has given focus to this issue in a number of counter-terrorism related resolutions, most recently its resolution 2617 (2021), which specifically refers to "emerging technologies".

The Special Meeting will focus specifically on three significant areas in which emerging technologies are experiencing rapid development, growing use by Member States (including for security and counter-terrorism purposes), and an increasing threat of abuse for terrorism purposes: (i) use of the Internet and social media; (ii) terrorism financing; and (iii) unmanned aerial systems (UAS).

The objectives of the Special Meeting are to provide an overview of the ways in which Member States are deploying new technological developments to prevent and



counter terrorist narratives and acts and to bring terrorists to justice, consistent with their human rights obligations.

Secondly, to update Member States on recent developments and the latest evidence-based research regarding the threats posed by terrorist use of new and emerging technologies, they said. Thirdly, the meet will identify continuing challenges and fourthly to share existing good practices in legislative, policy, and regulatory responses, industry activities, public-private partnerships, and compliance with international human rights law.

The Special Meeting will also provide an opportunity to

review on the work of the Committee, CTED, and their operational partners on countering the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes.

It will also facilitate the review of steps taken to institute appropriate legal, policy, and operational measures besides efforts to develop and utilize public-private partnerships.

The discussions will also focus on ways in which States and other relevant actors can strengthen their engagement and cooperation in countering the use of new and emerging technologies by terrorists and their financiers.

Annual Home Ministers' meet to begin today at Surajkund

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to attend meeting on October 28 through video conferencing

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Annual Home Ministers' meet - Chintan Shivir - will be held on October 27 and 28 at Surajkund in Haryana. Union Home Minister Amit Shah will preside over the meet which will discuss internal security, criminal justice system, cybercrime management, increase in usage of IT in criminal justice system, women's safety, coastal security and other security related issues. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will attend the meeting on October 28 through video conference.

The "Chintan Shivir", whose objective is to prepare an action plan for the implementation of "Vision 2047" and "Panch Pran", announced in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech, an official statement said.

Development of an ecosystem for cybercrime management, modernisation of police forces, increase in usage of information technology in the

criminal justice system, land border management and coastal security and other internal security issues will be discussed at the event, the statement said.

The role of 'Nari Shakti' is important to achieve the goal of 'Developed India by 2047' and special emphasis will be given to the safety of women and creating a safe environment for them. The aim of the conference is also to facilitate national policy making and better planning and coordination in these mentioned areas. Various topics will be discussed in the six sessions in the 'Chintan Shivir'.

On the first day, issues such as home guards, civil defence, fire protection and enemy property will be discussed. The next day matters such as cyber security, drug trafficking, women's safety and border management will be discussed, the statement said. 'Chintan' is planned on issues of drug trafficking including the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, Committee of Narco



Coordination Center (NCORD, NIDAAN or the National Integrated Database on Arrested Narco-offenders and Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan.

Protection of borders and development of border areas will be discussed under the themes of land border management and coastal security. Enhancing conviction rate by technology-based investigation using Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) and Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) and IT modules - NAFIS, ITSSO, and NDSO and CrimMAC - will also be deliberated upon.

Initiatives like Safe City

Project, 112-Single Emergency Response System, anti-human trafficking units in districts, women's help desks in police stations and biometric identity cards for fishermen will also be discussed.

The purpose of the sessions is to encourage and ensure the participation of state governments on these issues. Home Ministers of all states and Lieutenant Governors and administrators of Union Territories have been invited to the "Chintan Shivir". State home secretaries, director generals of police and director generals of central armed police forces and central police organisations will also participate in the programme.

Normalisation of ties between India and China in global interest: Jaishankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As troops from both the sides have disengaged from the last stand-off site in Ladakh, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said normalisation of ties between India and China is in the interest of everyone, including the world at large.

Stressing this point in a meeting with outgoing Chinese ambassador to New Delhi Sun Weidong here, he also said peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential.

Incidentally, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping will be present at the G-20

summit in Bali, Indonesia in mid-November. However, there is no official word on the likelihood of a bilateral meeting between the two leaders on the sidelines of the summit. They were present at the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) summit in mid-September in Uzbekistan.

After meeting Sun, Jaishankar said in a Twitter message "The normalization of India-China relations is in the interest of both countries, of Asia and the world at large."

"Emphasised that the development of India-China relations is guided by the 3 Mutuals. Peace and tranquility in the border areas is essential," he said.

The outgoing ambassador in his farewell speech called for a non-interference policy and said both sides should deepen mutual understanding to avoid 'miscalculation and misunderstanding'.

Indicating that resolution and dialogue should be used for pending issues, Sun said it was 'only natural' for China and India to have some differences. He, however, did not mention about the tension at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh for the last two years.

"The key is how to handle the differences. We should be aware that the common interests of the two countries are greater than the differences.

Meanwhile, the two sides should strive to manage and resolve differences, and look for a proper solution through dialogue and consultation, instead of defining China-India relations by differences," he said.

Jaishankar has in the past referred to the "three mutuals", or mutual respect, mutual sensitivity and mutual interest, in the context of India-China relations in several of his speeches. He has also maintained that the overall bilateral relationship cannot be normalised till there is peace and tranquility on the LAC.

In his farewell remarks on Tuesday, the Chinese envoy sought to imply that differences

between New Delhi and Beijing were due to the "Western theory of geopolitics", which he said will only lead to "competition and confrontation" and a zero-sum game.

"We should seek common ground while reserving differences and properly handle the differences. China and India are important neighbors to each other. It is only natural for China and India having some differences," Sun said.

India and China need to respect each other's political systems and uphold the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, the outgoing envoy said in his remarks posted on the Chinese embassy website on Tuesday.



"China and India are important neighbours...it is only natural for China and

India to have some differences. The key is how to handle the differences. We should be

aware that the common interests of the two countries are greater than differences."

SC declines plea to transfer UP Govt's appeal against Min Mishra's acquittal in murder case

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has declined a plea filed by Union Minister Ajay Mishra seeking transfer of the Uttar Pradesh Government's appeal against his acquittal in an over 20-year-old murder case.

A bench of Chief Justice U U Lalit and Bela M Trivedi was told that the transfer was sought on grounds that the senior counsel, who has to argue the matter at Lucknow, was ordinarily based at Allahabad and because of his old age it would not be possible for him to go all the way to Lucknow for arguments.

"We do not go into all these issues as in our view, a request to the high court to hear the appeal for disposal on November 10, 2022, the date given by the high court and agreed upon by both the senior counsel would serve the ends of justice," the bench said.

"In case the senior counsel



is unable to come down to Lucknow, a request for allowing the said counsel to make submissions through video conferencing may be considered by the high court," the bench said.

The case pertains to the murder of 24-year-old Prabhat Gupta which took place in Lakhimpur Kheri in 2000.

Ajay Mishra, Union Minister of State for Home, had faced trial for the murder of Gupta and was acquitted in 2004, after which the state filed the appeal.

A court of additional ses-



sions judge in Lakhimpur Kheri had acquitted Mishra and others in 2004 for want of adequate evidence.

Aggrieved by the acquittals, the State Government had preferred an appeal while the deceased's family had filed a separate revision petition challenging the judgment.

Mishra had moved the top court against the administrative order passed by the Chief Justice of the High Court of Judicature at Allahabad rejecting the prayer to transfer government appeal from Lucknow to Allahabad.

BJP complains to EC on violation of poll code in Odisha, Telangana

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A BJP delegation led by Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Wednesday met top Election Commission officials here to complain about the alleged violation of electoral laws and model code of conduct (MCC) by the State Governments in Odisha and Telangana.

Bypolls to Dhamnagar Assembly seat in Odisha and Munugode Assembly seat in Telangana are scheduled to be held on November 3.

Pradhan, along with the BJP's media co-in-charge Sanjay Mayukh, party spokesperson Sambit Patra and Om Pathak, met poll panel officials and submitted separate memoranda against the BJD government and TRS government, citing instances of violation of the model code of conduct.

Talking to reporters, Pradhan said the BJP leaders



decided to meet poll panel officials in the national Capital after the issues raised by the party were not addressed at the local and state level.

Citing pictures of a local official holding a bundle of cash, Patra alleged that "a lady official in Dhamnagar was seen

openly distributing money for the BJD amongst women of self-help group. The video has been viral in local media and social media."

He said the party shared copies of the video with the poll panel officials here, adding that this is a gross violation of electoral laws and the model code of conduct. Similarly, the BJP said, "the ruling TRS has also been continuously violating electoral laws for bypolls in Munugode assembly segment in Telangana."

Director of Kolkata firm held in chit fund scam case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested a director of a Kolkata-based private company in an on-going investigation of a case related to chit fund scam.

The agency arrested named accused in the case Sanjoy Kumar Singh, Director of Tulips Infonet (India) Pvt Ltd, officials said.

It was alleged that the accused came into close contact with Soumyarup Bhowmik, then Chairman of another Ponzi company



Burdwan Sunmarg Welfare Organisation in 2011.

It was further alleged that Singh in conspiracy with Bhowmik had illegally transferred Rs 4.19 crore from the Trust account and misappropriated the same.

Ministry's nod paves way for GM mustard commercial cultivation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee under the Union Environment Ministry has recommended the environmental release of genetically modified mustard which, according to experts, paves the way for its commercial cultivation.

The move comes amid opposition from green groups which say commercial cultivation of GM mustard could have an adverse impact on human health and food security.

According to minutes of the October 18 meeting, the GEAC, the country's regulator for genetically modified organisms, recommended the "environmental release of mustard hybrid DMH-11 for its seed production and testing as per existing ICAR guidelines and other extant rules/regulations before commercial release".



"Further, to generate scientific evidences in Indian agro-climatic situation and also as a precautionary mechanism, the field demonstration studies with respect to the effect of GE mustard on honey bees and other pollinators, as recommended in the 136th GEAC meeting, shall also be conducted post-environmental release, simultaneously by the applicant, within two years under the supervision of ICAR," it read.

The transgenic mustard hybrid DMH-11 has been developed by the Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants (CGMCP) at Delhi University.

The government has so far approved (in 2002) only one GM crop, Bt cotton, for commercial cultivation.

Those supporting commercial cultivation of GM crops say its benefits include greater food security due to increased yields, reduced costs for food production, reduced need for pesticides and resistance to pests and disease.

Kavitha Kuruganti, the founder of the Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, said: "The claim that GM mustard will increase yield is not supported by the data submitted by the crop developers to the regulator."

Asked if the recommendation for "environmental release" means a go-ahead of commercial cultivation, she said: "It has been approved for commercial release. They (the GEAC) are saying any test needed can be conducted after the environmental release."

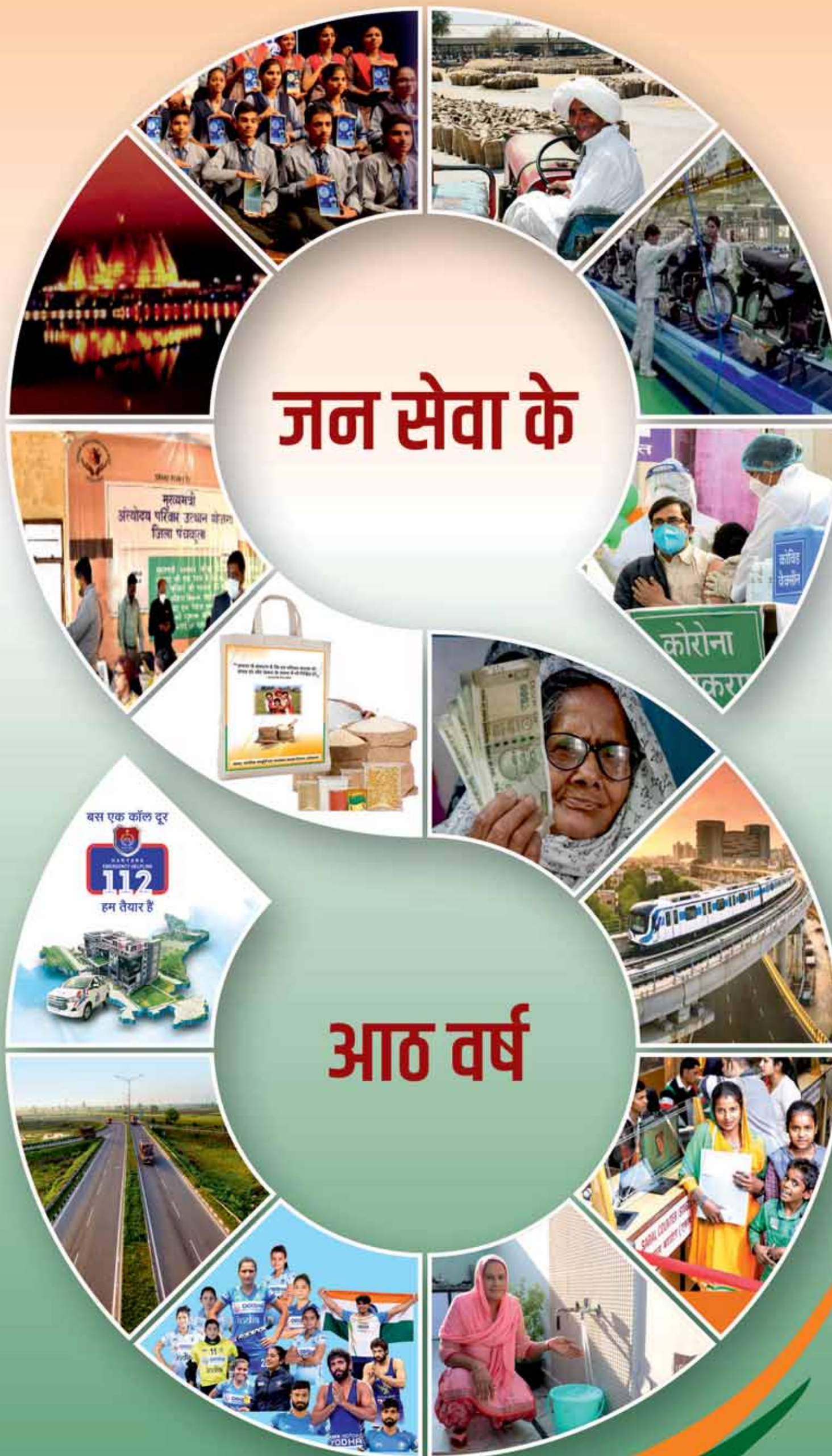
Kuruganti, who is a member of the Coalition for GM-free India, said Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav had earlier voiced his views against GM crops. "It is the regulator which has given a green signal. The minister should not approve it," she said.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Coalition for a GM-Free India said: "This compromises biosafety in serious and objectionable ways, and we ask the government not to move forward in allowing this dangerous herbicide tolerant food crop in India."

The coalition had recently written to Yadav that "GM mustard uses the pretext of creating hybrid technology in a plant like mustard but in effect is a herbicide tolerant crop. The entire biosafety assessment of GM mustard so far has not taken this fact into account".



जन सेवा के



आठ वर्ष

FIRST COLUMN

POVERTY MAKING KIDS DROP OUT OF SCHOOLS

Children in Nanded in Maharashtra are leaving schools



BHAGYASHRI BOYWAD

The Nanded district in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra is one of the most parched areas of the state. With agriculture being the main means of livelihood, and many people being daily wage labourers, unavailability of water has forced most workers to migrate to big cities. They work in brick kilns and move with their families to break sugarcane. Some work in factories in Mumbai and Pune. Women find employment as domestic help, and some men work together as aids and salespeople in clothing stores. The people working in these shops are mostly Dalits who live in nearby areas, usually in ghettos.

The migrated families face newer challenges here. The everyday struggle to make ends meet impacts the lives of children in different ways. The 15-year-old Seema and her family moved to Vithnal Nagar in Nanded city from Daregaon. Due to poverty, her parents could not afford good educational facilities. She was subjected to fun by her peers, while being scared of subjects like Mathematics and English. The constant humiliation forced her to leave the school.

The main reasons for school dropouts are lack of educational facilities, schools' lack of connection with the backward class students in syllabus and teaching methodology, low family literacy, and lack of implementation of the Right to Education policy. It is clearly visible in NFHS 2021 that 79 per cent of children drop out of school between the age group of 15–17 years.



In government schools, the pedagogy of teaching is delicate. The teachers could not give proper attention to the students and the biggest reason behind it is the poor student-teacher ratio. Based on the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE Plus), 2018-19 Maharashtra, there are 4928 government schools that are violating the ideal PTR (pupil teacher ratio), which is 16.30 per cent, and 3177 government schools have only one teacher.

Poverty is an essential factor behind child labour. Most of the children from marginalized communities are child labourers. The plight of Dalit and Adivasi children is linked to caste-based discrimination and their social and economic exclusion. A resident of Balaji Nagar, 15-year-old Komal, started working in shops as a helper after moving from Hingoli district. A single mother raised Komal and her two siblings. Her mother is impoverished. "My mother could not afford basic things. I realized if I needed to sustain the family, I had to work," shared Komal. The lack of legal support and the scarcity of losing a job make shopkeepers powerful at this moment, and they use their power on vulnerable workers, mostly women and girls.

In families belonging to low socio-economic backgrounds, children face emotional, financial, physical, and mental abuse in their homes. The 17-year-old Rajani from underdeveloped region of Khobragade Nagar shared how her father's abusive behaviour pushed her to become a child labourer. An alcoholic and unemployed, her father shouts, assaults them physically and creates scenes in the public domain. Her mother who works as a domestic worker has the whole onus of meeting the family needs on her. Despite working every day for over 12 hours, she could hardly make their ends meet.

Seeing her mother struggle, Rajani started working. Not only does she help her mother in the household chores but takes care of her siblings' education too. Children involved in labour –selling flowers on the road, cleaning car windows, working as domestic helps, besides working at construction sites, chaat shops, and hotels — are compelled due to the pressing need to earn and feed themselves.

(The article is written as a part of the WNCB Awards for Untold Stories on child labour. Share your feedback on connect@charkha.org: Charkha Features)

Income is not the right gage of poverty

But Global Multi-dimensional Poverty Index factors in pro-poor steps in poverty mapping to asses poverty

The 2022 Global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) has estimated that 415 million people exited poverty between 2005 and 2021 in India. The reduction in MPI value in India was sharp, with 140 million coming out of poverty between 2015 and 2021. India's incidence of poverty has been cut by half. The MPI indeed takes into account several factors to measure the incidence of poverty in contrast to the single income criteria adopted by other multilateral agencies.

The World Bank in its 'Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report 2022' has claimed that India accounted for 80 per cent of the 70 million people globally who fell below the poverty line of \$2.1 per day income in 2020. The two reports by the global multilateral agencies adopt different yardsticks to measure poverty and arrive at sharply contrasting conclusions about India. Indeed, it has been stated that about 70 per cent of the data used in arriving at the MPI index were taken before the Covid-19 pandemic struck.

But still the single yardstick to measure merits questioning by the global economists, for it imposes a dollar value to the poor. On the other hand, the dollar has sharply appreciated against all global currencies in recent months without having any significant impact on the conditions of the poor or the low-income people in India. Deprivations as captured in the MPI index could be justified to capture the incidence of poverty more realistically. Poverty by all accounts cannot be measured by the inability of a person to earn \$2.1 per day or any other amount.

The MPI, launched in 2010 by the Oxford Poverty and Human development Initiative at the University of Oxford and the Human development report office of the United Nations Development Programme, seeks to track the Sustainable development Goal 1, ending poverty in all forms globally. Deprivations in cooking fuel and housing are the most common measures of poverty according to the MPI, while deprivation in nutrition has a larger weight. Nutrition is given weightage almost at par with cooking fuel and housing.

The relative reduction in poverty shows that India is on a fast lane to remove poverty. The relative reduction in poverty from 2015-2016 to 2019-21 was quick-paced -- 11.9 per cent annually. This is much better than 8.1 per cent seen during 2005-06 to 2015-16. This is well-captured in the MPI value, which came down from 0.283 in 2005-06 to 0.122 in 2015-16, and sharply declining to 0.069 in 2019-21.

India has made a major progress to curbing the nutritional deprivations, which stood at a level of 38.2 in 2005-06 and began declining thereafter to come to 35.4 in 2011-12, while gaining full steam in 2015-16 when it came to 21.2



THE RELATIVE REDUCTION IN POVERTY SHOWS THAT INDIA IS ON A FAST LANE TO REMOVE POVERTY. THE RELATIVE REDUCTION IN POVERTY FROM 2015-2016 TO 2019-21 WAS QUICK-PACED— 11.9 PER CENT ANNUALLY

(The author is Director, Public Policy Research Centre)



and thereafter it was a rocket speed in 2019-21 when it came to 1. India's efforts to almost eliminate nutritional deprivation are unprecedented. This data is not captured by the World Bank or the agencies which bring out the Global Hunger Index. The deprivations in nutrition are accorded a weightage of 1/6 in the MPI against 1/8 for other indicators, which show the significance of the issue, which is at the core of the poverty discourse. But this is totally ignored by other agencies, which are solely focused on the dollar-denominated income criteria.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojna (PMGKAY) was launched by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Central government in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Modi government took upon the responsibility that the people in the county should not face hardship when strict lockdown was imposed. The scheme offers free foodgrains to 80 crore people in the country. The Central government rejected the contentions of a number of economists who raised eyebrows at the cost of the scheme – Rs 80,000 crores for six months. The Modi government remained steadfast in its resolve that there can be no impediment in addressing the nutritional requirements of the people, particularly the vulnerable sections of the society.

Thus, the impact of PMGKAY is somehow partially reflected in the MPI, but fails to impress the likes of the World Bank. Free foodgrains for the whole month

account for a substantial expense of the poor, and that is being completely protected by the government. Even while PMGKAY was an emergency scheme to respond to an extraordinary situation, the Central government has since 2014 made the National Food Security Scheme fully functional and operational under which wheat is given at Rs 2 a kg and rice is given at Rs 3 a kg, with the Centre running one of the largest foodgrain procurement operation from the farmers in the world, while maintaining a buffer stock of wheat at over 20 million tonnes.

Similarly, child mortality had a measure of 22.5 in the MPI in 2005-06, which came to 15.5 in 2011-12, while accelerating to slide down to 2.2 in 2015-16 and 0.6 in 2019-21. This again reflects the outcome of a host of efforts by the Modi government for the wellbeing of the people carried out through universal vaccination, nutrition scheme for the mother and infant, Ayushman Yojna, which has made an extraordinary impact in the healthcare of the people, and a major expansion of the public healthcare with the opening of new AIIMS in several states.

The economists note that the poor in the past spent a major portion of their income on healthcare expenses, which has now been almost eliminated. While MPI captures the impact made by the Modi government in improving the wellbeing of the poor and the low-income people with vast improvements in the health ser-

vices, the agencies such as World Bank remains fixated with the income criteria to measure poverty.

Similar outcome has been seen in tackling deprivations on criteria such as 'Years of School', 'Attendance in School', 'Cooking fuel', 'Sanitation', 'Drinking water', 'Housing', 'Electricity' and 'Assets', which form the MPI. It must be noted that the Modi government has brought a tectonic shift in sanitation in the country, which is now at the centre stage of the action plan of the Centre, States, and the local bodies, which again has helped in cutting down on the incidence of poverty, as less people are now falling ill, and thus they don't have to spend their money on medicine, which in fact with another scheme – Jan Aushadhi – is available to the people at a highly discounted rate.

Besides, the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna has brought a remarkable change in the rural and urban housing for those who were without roof earlier, while 'Har Ghar Jal' has shown phenomenal success in the country in the last few years. The deprivation on cooking fuel has been taken care of by the Ujjwala Scheme, which again has been a showpiece achievement of the Modi government. In this backdrop, when the government has the wellbeing of the poor at the centre stage of its action plan, the attempt of the global agencies to remain fixated with income-based criteria to measure poverty is indeed outdated.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE INDIAN TEAM HAS BIG NAMES AND THIS IS BECAUSE THEY ARE CONSISTENT. COMPARED TO INDIANS, PAKISTANI PLAYERS ARE NOT BIG. —FORMER INDIAN CRICKETER ATUL WASSAN



HE IS OVER HYPING HIS PLAYERS. THE PAKISTAN PLAYERS, WHO ARE NO. 1, 2 IN THE ICC RANKINGS, HAVE BEEN IGNORED BY HIM. —FORMER PAKISTAN CRICKETER SHAHID AFRIDI




Amid shrinking dollar trade, rupee must expand

Dollar hegemony needs serious fact-checks by countries which should promote other currencies

Failed experiment

With UK Prime Minister Liz Truss, who quit office in 44 days, has shaken the once-mighty kingdom and the globalised market, which breathes a sigh of relief, hoping credibility to return as London still controls major world trading of bullion to metals. No less a shock it was for India as it has been talking to Truss since she was foreign and trade minister for free trade agreement (FTA) hoping to export more and earn hard currency.

A super 13.3 per cent inflation and uncertain British economy was a bit too much for Truss to manage through populism of tax cuts and other sops. Perhaps more than that Truss does



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The author is a policy analyst)

not know how to manage her own MPs, after she defeated Rishi Sunak. She had purged all Sunak friends from the government. The fissure and her fast-shifting stance played the worst. Neither populism worked in an economy having galloping inflation nor was she able to remain firm on her decisions.

The fifth biggest economy India is in a shock whether it has surpassed the UK or something left to be done. Rarely before a premier of six weeks has shaken not only its economy but also major world currencies. One wonders whether her persona was so weak or the Russian President Vladimir Putin and US President Joe Biden

tangle in NATO supported Ukraine war took its toll. The European crisis is not easy as the EU does neither know whether to jump into the war or face an unprecedented energy crisis. The Biden-Putin duo's animosity triggered sanctions to ensure that the continent instead of renewable energy goes back to coal and other fossil fuels.

The plunging currencies amid 8.2 per cent inflation are the other shocks. The sterling pound is crashing against a continuously rising dollar. So is the Euro. Have they become lackeys of the US? The US despite its economy not in the pink of health faces an uncertain market and the NATO countries stare at an unknown future.

True, the US dollar holds the sway but countries like India are taking baby steps to look beyond. Amid rising purchases of Russian crude oil, a Russian bank opened an account in India's Yes Bank in September. Saudi Arabia and India discussed rupee-rial trade. The State Bank of India advised Indian exporters to avoid trade in dollars with countries like Bangladesh.

The International Monetary Fund says despite the dominance the dollar is losing share in global foreign exchange reserves from about 72 per cent in 2000 to about 60 per cent in 2022. Major currencies gaining share are Euro, pound and Chinese renminbi. Recently, India's chief economic advi-

sor V Anantha Nageswaran said that while weaponization of currencies or forex was the current trigger for countries to explore alternate arrangements, internationalising the rupee was a "logical evolution".

In a limited way rupee is accepted in Vietnam, Indonesia, Paraguay, Chile, Costa Rica and Hungary. Indian rupee is considered equivalent to 305 Vietnamese dong and 192.11 to Indonesian Rupiah. India is majorly using rubles to buy crude oil from Russia. It offers discounts, bears the transportation and insurance costs. Oil purchases from Russia almost trebled from \$5.3 billion in 2021-22 to \$14.5 billion in just five months. The Russian share

of total imports by India rose from 2.5 per cent to 11.4 per cent, according to the Commerce Ministry. Till 2019, 50 per cent of Indian payments to Russia was in dollars. From 2021, with the S-400 air defence deal, 53.4 per cent of Indian transactions are in rubles and 38.3 per cent in dollars.

The Britain remaining the politically most unstable with low growth if not corrected sooner may lose even Indian interest for having the FTA. Indian perception is that the UK still has command over the world economy. If that is lost the FTA would add little for India. Still except for the juggled up total figures, the UK economy is stronger than many economies.

Similarly, India still has about 86 per cent of the foreign trade in dollars – 86.6 per cent of exports and 86.3 per cent of imports. In other currencies it has trade in Euro, exports 7.4 per cent and imports 8.8 per cent; other currencies (yen, renminbi, Canadian dollar, Swiss franc and Australian dollar) 3.8 per cent exports and 3.3 per cent imports; British Pound 2.4 per cent exports and 0.5 per cent imports; and Japanese yen 0.1 per cent exports and 1.1 per cent imports.

The currency management and rupee trade in larger areas being planned is likely to be a panacea for a long-term solution to the forex crisis and ensure a better future for the country.

Russia fires rockets at Ukraine, renews ‘dirty bomb’ claims

AP ■ KYIV

Russia targeted more than 40 villages around Ukraine over the past day, Ukrainian officials said on Wednesday, killing at least two people and sustaining the terror that forces people into air raid shelters each night.

Russian forces launched five rockets, 30 air strikes and more than 100 multiple-launch rocket system attacks on Ukrainian targets, the Ukrainian armed forces general staff said.

The attacks come as fears are growing that Russia, facing setbacks on the battlefield, could try to detonate a device that uses explosives to scatter radioactive waste in an effort to sow terror.

Russia's defence minister called his counterparts from India and China to convey Moscow's concern about a purported Ukrainian plan to use such a so-called "dirty bomb", repeating an allegation that Ukraine and the West have strongly refuted.

Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu voiced Moscow's concern about "possible Ukrainian provocations involving a dirty bomb" in the calls with his Indian counterpart, Rajnath Singh, and China's Wei Fenghe, according to the Russian Defence Ministry.

The conversations followed Shoigu's calls with British,



French, Turkish and US counterparts on Sunday in which he made the same claim. Britain, France, and the United States rejected that claim as "transparently false".

Despite the Western dismissal of the Russian claims, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov insisted that "we have the information that there is an

ongoing preparation in Ukraine for such a terror attack".

"We will continue to energetically inform the global community about what we know to persuade it to take action to prevent such irresponsible action by the regime in Kyiv," Peskov told reporters.

A Ukrainian official reported on Wednesday that a Russian

strike hit a gas station in the city of Dnipro, killing two people, including a pregnant woman. The governor of the Dnipropetrovsk region, Valentyn Reznichenko, said four people wounded were hospitalised.

Mykolaiv, a southern port city near the war's front line, is among the places where residents have lined up to receive

rations of bread and canned food as increases in food prices and losses of income add to the wartime burdens of low-income households in Ukraine.

Several buildings and neighbourhoods were struck in Mykolaiv on Tuesday, though it was still unclear if there were any casualties, according to local authorities.

Missiles continued early on Wednesday morning.

The sole food distribution point in Mykolaiv allows each person to receive free bread once every three days. Many must walk long distances to collect the essential food items for their family.

"Bread and canned food is all I eat. It's almost winter already, and it's terrifying," Anna Bilousova, 70, said.

For 74-year-old Olena Motuzko, getting the food is an ordeal because she has a disabled husband she must leave alone for hours at a time.

Others are trying to survive by going underground at night.

A 73-year-old woman spends her days in her home, cooking and washing, and every evening around 6 pm heads underground to a small makeshift sleeping area in a basement with several members of her family. She has been doing that every night since the war began in late February.

Kremlin: Putin monitors drills of nuclear forces

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday monitored drills of the country's strategic nuclear forces involving multiple practice launches of ballistic and cruise missiles in a show of force amid the heightened tensions with the West over the conflict in Ukraine.

Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu reported to Putin that the exercise was intended to simulate a "massive nuclear strike" by Russia in retaliation for a nuclear attack on Russia.

The maneuvers followed Putin's warning about his readiness to use "all means available" to fend off attacks on Russia's territory in a clear reference to the country's nuclear arsenals.

Wednesday's drills involved the test-firing of a Yars land-based intercontinental ballistic missile from the northern Plesetsk launch site and the launch of a Sineva ICBM by a Russian nuclear submarine in the Barents Sea.

As part of the exercise, Tu-95 strategic bombers also launched cruise missiles at practice targets.

The Kremlin said in a statement that all tasks set for the exercise were fulfilled and all the missiles that were test-fired reached their designated targets.

Such maneuvers involving



land, sea and air components of the Russian nuclear triad have taken place on an annual basis to train the country's nuclear forces and demonstrate their readiness.

The Biden administration said on Tuesday that Russia gave notice it intended to stage routine drills of its nuclear capabilities. The Pentagon and US State Department said Russia had complied with the terms of the last US-Russia arms control agreement in notifying Washington of the upcoming tests.

The Russian nuclear exercise comes amid Moscow's

warnings of a purported Ukrainian plot to detonate a radioactive device commonly known as a "dirty bomb" in a false flag attack to blame Russia.

Putin himself repeated the dirty bomb claim on Wednesday. Shoigu, the Russian defence ministry, also called his Chinese and Indian counterparts on Wednesday to discuss it. Ukraine and its Western allies strongly reject the allegation.

The Ukrainian government has said it suspects Russia is planning its own false flag operation.

Russia's chaotic draft leaves some out in cold, without gear

AP ■ KYIV

The mobilised reservists that Russian President Vladimir Putin visited last week at a firing range southeast of Moscow looked picture-perfect.

Kremlin video of the young men headed for the war in Ukraine showed them in mint-condition uniforms, equipped with all the gear needed for combat: helmets, bulletproof vests and sleeping bags. When Putin asked if they had any problems, they shook their heads.

That stands in stark contrast with the complaints circulating widely on Russian news outlets and social media of equipment shortages, poor living conditions and scant training for the new recruits.

Since Putin announced the mobilisation on September 21, independent media, human rights activists and those called up have painted a bleak picture of a haphazard, chaotic and ethnically biased effort to round up as many men as possible and push them quickly to the front lines, regardless of skill, training and equipment.

Videos on Russian social networks showed conscripted men complaining of cramped, filthy accommodations, toilets overflowing with trash and a lack of food and medicine. Some showed men displaying rusty weapons.

In one video, a group of draftees milled in a field, claiming they had been left there with no food or shelter. Other clips depicted men forced to sleep on bare benches or tightly packed on the floor. "We didn't seek you out; you called us. Here, look at this! How long can this go on?" an exasperated voice says in a video.

Putin's decree on the partial mobilisation didn't outline the criteria for draftees or say how many would be called up.

Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has said it will affect only about 300,000 reservists with relevant combat or service experience.

Conscription protests have been harshly put down, and tens of thousands of men fled Russia to neighbouring countries to avoid being pressed into service.

In the week after the decree, a young man opened fire on a recruitment officer in the Siberian city of Ust-Ilimsk, seriously wounding him.

On October 15, a shootout at a training camp in the southern Belgorod region killed 11 people and wounded 15 others. Enlistment offices and other administrative buildings also have been set on fire.

It's now clear that in a country where almost all men under 65 are registered as part of the reserve, the mobilisation process wasn't carried out carefully.

There has been a flood of reports of call-up summonses being served to those with no military experience. Police rounded up men in the streets of Moscow and other cities, or raided hostels to apprehend guests of fighting age.



Enlistment offices often skipped required health checks.

The hasty call-up will hardly achieve anything other than "slowing down the

advances" of Ukrainian troops in the 8-month-old war, military analyst Pavel Luzin said in an interview.

Moscow is simply "prolonging the agony" in Ukraine,

said Luzin, a visiting scholar at The Fletcher School at Tufts University.

Activists also say ethnic minorities in some regions were drafted in disproportionate numbers. Videos circulated of protests in the Muslim majority region of Dagestan, with relatives complaining that the area was providing more recruits than elsewhere. Vladimir Budaev of the Free Buryatia Foundation told AP that Indigenous people in Russia's Far North and along the Mongolian border were "rounded up in their villages" in the drive.

In remote regions of Sakha and Buryatia, enlistment officers scoured the taiga for potential draftees, and "handed out summonses to anyone they met," he said.

According to Yekaterina Morland, an ethnic Buryat volunteer at the Asians of Russia Foundation, Buryatia has seen mobilisation rates up to six times higher than Russia's European regions.

In the first two weeks of the call-up, authorities in some regions reported sending home hundreds of men who were drafted despite not meeting the criteria. "The task of a military enlistment office is to recruit — recruit whoever they can grab," says Elena Popova, the coordinator of the Movement of Conscientious Objectors.

Putin himself publicly acknowledged "mistakes" in the process and demanded its improvement.

But even when the summonses went to those who had served in the army, it didn't necessarily mean that they had battlefield skills. Some former conscripts often don't get proper military training when they serve and instead are engaged in menial labour.

A woman who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because she feared reprisals said her 31-year-old husband did his mandatory service six years ago and had "no training at a firing range, or any combat

drills in the field," said authorities tried to draft him anyway.

In fact, he had only held a weapon once, when they were taught how to strip down and reassemble an automatic rifle, she said. Mostly, she added, "they were sweeping (the compound), cleaning the snow."

Relatives of conscripts reported having to spend their own money on gear and basic necessities. Online groups were formed to raise funds for equipment.

One campaign was run by Kremlin-backed lawmaker and state TV host Yevgeny Popov, who said reservists in the Taman artillery division got shoes and clothes, but had "an acute shortage of drones, walkie-talkies, smartphones with maps (for gunners), binoculars, headlamps (and) power banks," he said.

Russian media reported multiple deaths of reservists in Ukraine, with their relatives telling news outlets that they had received very little training.

Biden: Would be serious mistake if Russia uses nuke against Ukraine

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has warned Russia against using nuclear weapons in Ukraine, saying it would be an "incredibly serious mistake".

The Biden administration had earlier said Russia had given notice that it intended to stage routine drills of its nuclear capabilities while Ukraine's nuclear energy operator claimed its neighbour was performing some secret work at Europe's largest nuclear power plant. "Let me just say: Russia would be making an incredibly serious mistake if it uses a tactical nuclear weapon," Biden told reporters at the White House on Tuesday.



He was responding to a question on whether Russia was preparing to deploy a "dirty bomb" or a nuclear weapon. "I'm not guaranteeing you that it's a false-flag operation yet; I don't know. But it would be a serious, serious mistake," Biden stressed.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said the President was clear about what he said. "He said it again today. It would be a major mistake for Russia to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine, leading to severe consequences.

As for the potential use of a dirty bomb, look, Russia is pushing transparently false allegations," she claimed. "You heard me say that. You heard my colleague over at

Progressives retract Ukraine letter to Biden after uproar

AP ■ WASHINGTON

A group of progressive Democrats in Congress has said it had retracted a letter to the White House urging President Joe Biden to engage in direct diplomatic talks with Russia after it triggered an uproar among Democrats and raised questions about the strength of the party's support for Ukraine.

In a statement on Tuesday, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, the chair of the Progressive Caucus, said the caucus was withdrawing the letter it sent less than 24 hours prior. It was signed by 30 members of the party's liberal flank.

"The letter was drafted several months ago, but unfortunately was released by staff without vetting," the

Washington Democrat wrote in a statement. As chair of the caucus, Jayapal said she took responsibility for this.

The unusual retraction capped a tense 24-hour period for Democrats. Many reacted angrily to the appearance of flagging support for the president's Ukraine strategy, coming just weeks before a midterm election where their majorities in Congress are at risk.

The back-and-forth spotlighted the fragile nature of Biden's relationship with the progressive wing of his party, raising stark questions about their ability to work together not only on Ukraine funding — which seems secure, for now — but on more pressing issues that are top priorities for liberals.

The letter had called for



Biden to pair the unprecedented economic and military support for Ukraine with a "proactive diplomatic push, redoubling efforts to seek a realistic framework for a cease fire."

"The alternative to diplomacy is protracted war, with both its attendant certainties

and catastrophic and unknowable risks," the letter read. Jayapal said the letter was unfairly conflated with recent comments from Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., who warned that Republicans will not write a "blank check" for Ukraine if they win back the House majority in November.

"The proximity of these statements created the unfortunate appearance that Democrats, who have strongly and unanimously supported and voted for every package of military, strategic, and economic assistance to the Ukrainian people, are somehow aligned with Republicans who seek to pull the plug on American support" for Ukraine, Jayapal said.

Yet Jayapal did not disavow the substance of the letter or the push for Biden to engage in diplomacy. Members of the caucus have been calling for a diplomatic solution since Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces invaded Ukraine on February 24.

The text of the letter had been circulating since at least June, but only a handful of lawmakers signed on at the time, according to two Democrats familiar with the matter who were granted anonymity to discuss internal party deliberations. Some Democrats who signed the letter months ago said they no longer support it.

"I signed this letter on June 30, but a lot has changed since then," Democratic Rep. Sara Jacobs of New York said on

Twitter. "I wouldn't sign it today."

"We have to continue supporting Ukraine economically and militarily to give them the leverage they need to end this war," she said.

Despite the retraction and messy behind-the-scenes process, some Democratic lawmakers said they still backed the sentiments behind the letter, arguing that it is the prerogative of Congress to debate the issue as it continues to approve billions of dollars in aid to Ukraine.

"I have voted for arms to Ukraine and will continue to support providing arms to Ukraine to stand up against Putin's brutal aggression," Rep. Ro Khanna, D-Calif., said in an interview on Tuesday.

Russian Embassy accuses Norway of promoting 'spy mania'

AP ■ COPENHAGEN (DENMARK)

The Russian Embassy in Norway's capital denied knowing anything about a man suspected of spying in the northern European country and alleged on Wednesday that authorities there have used drone and ship sightings, as well as Russians with cameras, to fuel "spy mania".

A 37-year-old Brazilian citizen who worked at a university in the Arctic city of Tromsø was detained on Monday. The Norwegian Police Security Service alleged the man used a false name and identity while actually working



for one of Russia's intelligence services.

The Russian Embassy said it "does not know who and what this is about."

"Everything Russian, whether public agencies, private companies or individuals, is suspicious and has a smell of

espionage," the diplomatic mission said in an email.

"The fact that different issues come up as if on a conveyor belt is no doubt no accident. All this is politically motivated."

The Norwegian security service identified the detained man as a "Brazilian researcher" at the Arctic University of Norway in Tromsø. A university administrator described him as a guest lecturer. A court on Tuesday ordered him detained for four weeks.

In recent weeks, authorities in NATO member Norway, a major oil and gas producer, have reported several drone

sightings near offshore installations in the North Sea.

Several Russian citizens also were briefly detained for either flying drones or allegedly taking photos of objects covered by a photography ban.

The Norwegian government also has monitored Russian research ships and restricted Russian fishing vessels to three Arctic ports, where all Russian boats are subject to checks. Norway's Arctic border with Russia is 198 kilometers (123 miles) long.

"Recently, spy mania has been actively promoted in Norway," the Russian Embassy said.

Kremlin: Any talks about Griner swap must be confidential

AP ■ MOSCOW

The Kremlin on Wednesday kept the door open for talks on a possible swap involving jailed US basketball star Brittney Griner but reiterated that any such discussions must be kept strictly confidential.

A Russian court on Tuesday rejected Griner's appeal against her nine-year prison sentence for drug possession. The eight-time all-star center with the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury and a two-time Olympic gold medalist was convicted August 4 after police said they found vape canisters containing cannabis oil in her luggage at Moscow's

Sheremetyevo Airport.

Asked if Griner could be freed as part of a prisoners swap with Washington, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in a conference call with reporters that "we always say that any contacts about possible exchanges can only be conducted in silence under a tight lid on any information."

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

At the time, Griner was returning to play for a Russian team during the WNBA's off-season.

Sunak to hold first Cabinet meeting with his new team

PTI ■ LONDON

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Wednesday will hold the first Cabinet meeting with his new team, a day after he became Britain's first Indian-origin premier.

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

In another move aimed at continuity, James Cleverly will stay in his post as Foreign Secretary despite not being a Sunak loyalist.

Braverman, whose scathing resignation letter precipitated Liz Truss' exit from Downing Street last week, is a fellow Bexiteer like Sunak.

On his first full day as Prime Minister, Sunak will meet his new cabinet on Wednesday before facing opposition leader Keir Starmer in PMQs at mid-day, the BBC reported.

Sunak has pledged to govern with "integrity" and has tried to unite the Conservatives by including people from different wings of the party in his top team.

But the Opposition Labour Party has criticised the decision



to reappoint Braverman, popular on the Tory right, as a home secretary just six days after she resigned over data breaches, the report said.

Sunak's first Cabinet meeting will be amid criticism over his reappointment of Braverman as home secretary. Foreign Secretary James Cleverly — who's kept his job under new Prime Minister Sunak — has defended the prime minister's decision to reappoint Braverman to the role of home secretary.

Braverman was forced to resign from the job — in the dying days of Truss's premiership — just last week over two data breaches.

"She said she made a mistake and apologised for that," Cleverly told the BBC.

He adds that Braverman has promised a crackdown on crime and to secure borders while in the Home Office.

Asked whether Braverman is back in the post as the result of a deal that helped Sunak gain power, Cleverly says Sunak was "way, way, way ahead" during the latest Conservative leadership contest, adding: "I doubt that he needed any particular individuals' endorsement."

Labour's shadow education secretary Bridget Phillipson says Braverman is back in her job as the result of a "grubby deal" which helped Sunak "get over the line and become prime minister".

Speaking to the Today programme on BBC Radio 4, Phillipson argues that this calls

into question Sunak's pledge to run a government of integrity. She adds that the discussion "should be about the future of our country, not the future of the Conservative Party".

However, Phillipson gives a cautious welcome to the installation of Gillian Keegan as education secretary. Keegan left school at 16 and served an apprenticeship.

Phillipson says that news is "wonderful" — but goes on to highlight a "massive drop-off in apprenticeship starts" and a "failure to prioritise skills" by Conservative-run governments.

Also, it will be a busy first full day in the office for Sunak, who faces his first Prime Minister's Questions.

PMQs is a high-profile weekly event in UK politics, happening every Wednesday at noon when the House of Commons is sitting.

For around half an hour, the prime minister is called to the despatch box in the Commons chamber to answer questions from MPs on any subject.

The leader of the opposition gets to ask six questions — normally the rowdiest part of the spectacle.

The 42-year-old investment banker-turned-politician is the youngest British prime minister in 210 years. He is also Britain's first Hindu Prime Minister.

US vows full military defence of allies against North Korea

AP ■ TOKYO

The United States will make full use of its military capabilities, "including nuclear, conventional and missile defense," to defend its allies Japan and South Korea, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman said Tuesday as she warned North Korea against escalating its provocations.

Sherman said North Korea's repeated firings of ballistic missiles and artillery in recent weeks were provocative military actions. North Korea has described them as practice runs for the use of tactical nuclear weapons.

"This is deeply irresponsible, dangerous, and destabilizing," Sherman said in talks in Tokyo with South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyundong. The two officials met ahead of a three-way meeting with their Japanese counterpart on Wednesday.

It would be the second in-person meeting of the three officials since conservative South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol took office in May, signaling an improvement in difficult ties between Japan and South Korea.

A year ago, Japanese and South Korean vice ministers declined to participate in a joint news conference after three-way talks in Washington, leaving Sherman to make a solo media appearance.

Sherman said North Korea



needs to understand that the U.S. Commitment to the security of South Korea and Japan is "iron-clad."

"And we will use the full range of U.S. Defense capabilities to defend our allies, including nuclear, conventional and missile defense capabilities," she said.

Cho, during his talks with Sherman, raised concern that a new North Korean nuclear weapons policy adopted in September increases the possibility of its arbitrary use of nuclear weapons. "This is creating serious tension on the Korean Peninsula," Cho said.

Sherman met earlier Tuesday with Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori and reaffirmed the further strengthening of the Japan-U.S. Alliance and other shared goals, including the complete denuclearization of North Korea and

their joint response to China's increasingly assertive actions in the region.

Japanese Defense Minister Yasukazu Hamada recently said North Korea is believed to have achieved a miniaturization of nuclear warheads while significantly advancing its missile capabilities by diversifying its launch technologies, making interceptions more difficult.

Japanese officials have also warned of a possible nuclear test by North Korea in the near future.

The Japanese and South Korean officials met together later Tuesday and discussed ways to improve their countries' ties, which were badly strained over disagreements stemming from Japanese wartime actions, including abuse of Korean forced labourers and coercing girls and young women to work in brothels for Japanese soldiers.



Strong quake injures dozens, shuts Philippine airport

AP ■ MANILA

A strong earthquake rocked a large swathe of the northern Philippines, injuring at least 26 people and forcing the closure of an international airport and the evacuation of patients in a hospital, officials said Wednesday.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said Tuesday night's magnitude 6.4 quake, which was set off by movement in a local fault, was centred 9 km (5 miles) north-west of Lagayan town in Abra province at a depth of 11 km (7 miles).

The US Tsunami Warning System said no warning or advisory was issued.

The quake was felt across a wide area of the main northern Luzon region, including in some parts of metropolitan Manila, more than 400 km (248 miles) south of Abra.

At least 26 people were injured in Ilocos Norte, the home province of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, where the international airport in the capital city of Laoag was ordered to close temporarily Wednesday due to damage from the quake, police and civil aviation officials said.

In Batac city also in Ilocos Norte, patients were moved out of the province's largest hospital after parts of the ceiling in the intensive care unit fell as the building swayed. Medical consultation services were temporarily suspended as engineers assessed damage to the building, officials said.

Marcos Jr, who was in Manila, said authorities were inspecting roads and buildings, and welfare officials were providing help to affected residents in northern provinces. "Everyone is advised to keep out of tall structures," the president said in a tweet.

In the town of La Paz in Abra, a century-old Christian church was damaged, with parts of its belfry collapsing and some walls cracked, littering the church's grassy yard with debris, officials said.

At least two towns in Cagayan province temporarily lost electricity due to damaged power lines. A number of bridges and roads in outlying provinces were damaged.

Iran protesters rally to mark 40 days since Amini's death

AP ■ DUBAI

Hundreds of protesters poured into the streets of a northwestern Iranian city on Wednesday to mark the watershed 40 days since the death in custody of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, whose tragedy sparked Iran's biggest anti-government movement in over a decade.

Deaths are commemorated in Shiite Islam — as in many other traditions — again 40 days later, typically with an outpouring of grief. In Amini's Kurdish hometown of Saez, the birthplace of the nationwide unrest now roiling Iran, crowds snaked through the local cemetery and thronged her grave.

"Death to the dictator!" protesters cried, according to video footage that corresponds with known features of the city and Aichi Cemetery. Women ripped off their headscarves, or hijabs, and waved them above their heads.

"Freedom! Freedom! Freedom!" they chanted. Other

videos showed a massive procession making its way along a highway and through a dusty field toward Amini's grave. There were reports of road closures in the area.

Kurdistan governor Esmail Zarei Koosha insisted that traffic was flowing as normal. "The situation in the province is completely stable," he said.

State-run media announced that schools and universities in Iran's northwestern region would close, purportedly to curb "the spread of influenza".

In downtown Tehran, shops were shuttered and legions of riot police on motorbikes were out in force. A large group of men and women marched through the streets, stopping traffic and shouting "Death to the dictator!" as cars honked their support.

Police unleashed anti-riot bullets at protesters in the streets and sprayed pellets upward at journalists filming from windows and rooftops. Anti-gov-



ernment chants also echoed from the University of Tehran campus.

Amini, detained for alleged-

ly violating the country's strict dress code for women, remains the potent symbol of protests that have posed one of the most

serious challenges to the Islamic Republic.

With the slogan #WomanLifeFreedom, the

demonstrations first focused on women's rights and the state-mandated hijab, or headscarf for women. But they quickly evolved into calls to oust the Shiite clerics that have ruled Iran since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The protests have also galvanized university students, labour unions, prisoners and ethnic minorities like the Kurds along Iran's border with Iraq.

Since the protests erupted, security forces have fired live ammunition and tear gas to disperse demonstrations, killing over 200 people, according to rights groups.

Untold numbers have been arrested, with estimates in the thousands. Iranian judicial officials announced this week they would bring over 600 people to trial over their role in the protests, including 315 in Tehran, 201 in the neighbouring Alborz province and 105 in the southwestern province of Khuzestan.

Tehran prosecutor Ali Salehi

told the state-run IRNA news agency that four protesters were charged with "war against God," which is punishable by death in Iran.

Iranian officials have blamed the protests on foreign interference, without offering evidence.

Last week, Iran imposed sanctions on over a dozen European officials, companies and institutions, including foreign-based Farsi channels that have extensively covered the protests, accusing them of "supporting terrorism".

The sanctions involve an entry and visa ban for the staffers in addition to the confiscation of their assets in Iran.

Deutsche Welle, the German public broadcaster whose Farsi team was blacklisted, condemned the move on Wednesday as "unacceptable".

"I expect politicians in Germany and Europe to increase the pressure on the regime," said DW Director General Peter Limbourg.

Arab voters key to breaking deadlock in Israeli election

AP ■ UMM AL FAHIM (ISRAEL)

The voices of Israel's Palestinian citizens are often drowned out or delegitimised in the country's noisy politics. Yet in the upcoming parliament election, they could hold the key to breaking an entrenched political deadlock.

Israelis vote Tuesday for the fifth time in under four years. The country remains divided over former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's fitness to serve while on trial for corruption. Polls show those numbers have barely budged.

What could tip the scales is the vote of one-fifth of Israelis who are of Palestinian descent, with family ties in adjacent territories Israel captured in 1967.

Turnout among these voters will be key: High numbers could swing the election in favor of Netanyahu's opponents, while a drop could pave the way for Netanyahu's return.

"I can hardly remember a single election campaign that all depended on the vote of Arab citizens," said Arik Rutenberg, who studies Arab voting patterns at the Israel Democracy Institute, a think tank.

Most polls predict a historically low turnout among Arab voters, even though the outgoing coalition government included an Arab party, a first in Israel's history.



ed much excitement among voters disillusioned by rampant crime, the rising cost of living and a loss of hope for change from within a slow-moving political system.

This could be a boon for Netanyahu, who in his lengthy political career has both played on ethnic tensions to drum up support for his nationalist Likud party and sought support from the same Arab voters he derided to bolster his party's chances.

Arab parties might win as few as eight seats in the 120-member parliament, down from a high of 15 in 2020, polls have suggested. If the polls are correct, Netanyahu could be in charge of a hard-line government that includes extremists who call Arab lawmakers "terrorists" and want to deport them.

Sensing the urgency, Arab lawmakers are making a last-minute effort to rally their supporters. Signs around Arab areas implore residents to vote.

"People have lost hope," said Sami Abu Shehadeh, head of the nationalist Balad party. "We tell them that voting for Balad now, it's not another vote." Instead, he said, it "can change the whole political map".

In the arithmetic that transforms ballots into parliamentary seats, lower Arab turnout could hobble the current coalition's chances to return to power, or else grant the Netanyahu camp more seats.

"The only thing that is ambiguous in this whole story is the Arabs, and therefore they are the only thing that this time can decide the elections, for better or worse," said Mohammad Magadli, a political analyst with the Arabic language Nas Radio and Israeli Channel 12 TV.

If a coalition doesn't coalesce, Israel could head toward a sixth vote.

Since the political crisis began in 2019, Netanyahu has struggled to form a viable government. Israel's fragmented politics require coalition building to govern and former allies have refused to sit under him as long as he is battling corruption charges. Arab parties have historically been shunned by or refused to join Israeli governments. But that tradition was shattered last year when a small Arab Islamist party joined the coalition formed by Prime Minister Yair Lapid, sending Netanyahu packing after 12 years in office.

UN envoy: Myanmar crisis deepens, taking 'catastrophic toll'

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

The UN special envoy for Myanmar warned Tuesday that the political, human rights and humanitarian crisis in the military-ruled Southeast Asian nation is deepening and taking "a catastrophic toll on the people."

Noleen Heyzer told the U.N. General Assembly's human rights committee that more than 13.2 million people don't have enough to eat, 1.3 million are displaced and the military continues operations using disproportionate force including bombings, burnings of homes and buildings, and the killing of civilians.

Heyzer's briefing was her first at the U.N. In New York since she visited Myanmar in August and met the head of the military government, Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing.

She said the meeting "was part of broader efforts by the U.N. To urgently support a return to civilian rule." She stressed that "there is a new political reality in Myanmar: a people demanding change, no longer willing to accept military rule."

Heyzer said she made six requests during the meeting with the military's commander-in-chief, including to end aerial bombing and the burning of civilian infrastructure; deliver humanitarian aid without discriminating; release all children and political prisoners; institute a moratorium on executions;



ensure the well-being of and allow meetings with the country's imprisoned former leader Aung San Suu Kyi; and create conditions for the voluntary and safe return of over 1 million Rohingya refugees who fled to Bangladesh to escape military crackdowns.

Myanmar for five decades had languished under strict military rule that led to international isolation and sanctions. As the generals loosened their grip, culminating in Suu Kyi's rise to leadership in 2015 elections, the international community responded by lifting most sanctions and pouring investment into the country.

That ended with the military's Feb. 1, 2021 coup following November 2020 elections in which Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party won overwhelmingly and the military contested as fraudulent.

Serbia toughens visa rules as migration prompts EU pressure



AP ■ BELGRADE

Serbia is seeing a sudden tourism boom from countries whose citizens never had its sightseeing and shopping opportunities on their radar. That's largely due to the Balkan country's generous entry rules, which made it a key stop for migrants seeking to reach Europe without risking a perilous sea crossing.

A recent flight from Turkey to Belgrade — one of half a dozen scheduled daily — was packed with people from African and Asian nations who don't need a visa to enter the European country.

But this is changing as Serbia faces pressure from the European Union, which it wants to join, to introduce visas for countries that have become a source of migration toward the 27-nation bloc.

EU officials say thousands of travellers who entered Serbia and other Western Balkan nations as tourists in recent months ended up seeking asylum in EU member countries.

The bloc is worried because the Balkans region already was seeing a rise in people from the Middle East, Asia and Africa heading through on their way to Europe's prosperous heartland where they hope to find a better life.



EU, US set up task force to resolve electric vehicle feud

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The U.S. and the European Union have set up a task force tasked with resolving a dispute over electric vehicle batteries that the EU says would discriminate against manufacturers in the 27-nation bloc and break World Trade Organization rules.

Under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) passed by U.S. Congress in August, electric car buyers are eligible for a tax credit of up to \$7,500 as long as the vehicle runs on a battery built in North America with minerals mined or recycled on the continent. The EU believes that the measure is a potential trans-Atlantic trade barrier discriminating against foreign producers. The EU announced on Wednesday that Bjoern Seibert, the head of cabinet to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen met in Berlin with U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor Mike Pyle to launch the task force.

A first meeting will take place next week.

"The Task Force will address specific concerns raised by the EU related to the IRA," the Commission said. "Both sides agreed on the importance of

close coordination to support sustainable and resilient supply chains across the Atlantic, including to build the clean energy economy."

U.S. Democratic Party members of Congress included the credit in the climate and health care policy law as a way of incentivizing domestic battery and electric vehicle production. But manufacturers in Europe and South Korea, which sell millions of vehicles in the U.S., have threatened to lodge legal complaints with the World Trade Organization.

The European Commission said last month that parts of the law can help fight climate change by accelerating the transition away from fossil fuels. But the EU's executive branch also expressed concerns about the potential discriminatory nature of the electric vehicle tax credit provision.

Adrienne Watson, a spokesperson for the White House's National Security Council, welcomed the launch of the task force "to continue promoting deeper understanding of the law's meaningful progress on lowering costs for families, our shared climate goals, and opportunities and concerns for EU producers.

Scale up investments in clean energy, infra: FM to AIIB

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday asked Beijing-based multilateral lending agency AIIB to scale up investments in priority areas like clean energy and infrastructure sector with a special focus on education and health.

Addressing the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said India has embarked on the path of a self-reliant economy and therefore has been successful in mitigating the negative effects of the pandemic.

As regards AIIB, she said, it needs to scale-up investments in key priority areas, including clean energy and energy efficiency, disaster resilient infrastructure, social infrastructure with a special focus on education and health, and digital infrastructure in order to ensure a meaningful impact is achieved and resources are not scattered in multiple areas.



As public resources alone are insufficient to meet the vast infrastructure needs of the members, she advised that the bank should not only play a catalytic role in mobilising diverse private sector resources but also explore mechanisms to augment its own resources, including through early action on the recommendations of G20's Expert Panel's Report on the multilateral development bank's Capital Adequacy Framework (CAF).

Referring to the Indian economy, she said the well-tar-

geted policy mix accompanied by major structural reforms and a sound external balance sheet have aided its growth despite exogenous threats.

The Indian economy has remained resilient and made remarkable progress through its digitalisation mission, utilising technology to facilitate social protection and boost financial inclusion, she said at the 7th annual meeting of AIIB.

The Finance Minister also highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is actively leading India's climate change

response efforts through various programmes, such as 'Lifestyle for Environment' (or LiFE), among others, the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

The Finance Minister also pointed out that beyond its financial support, AIIB should work towards expanding the scope of its mid-stream and upstream engagement activities, such as increased technical assistance to help clients translate strategies into investment plans. Sitharaman suggested that the bank should set up full-fledged country offices in member locations.

India is a founding member and the second-largest shareholder in AIIB. It has the largest project portfolio within AIIB. The theme of this year's annual meeting was "Sustainable Infrastructure Toward a Connected World".

Currently, India has a 7.65 per cent vote share in the AIIB while China holds a whopping 26.63 per cent stake in the organisation that was set up in 2016.

Boeing posts USD 3.3B loss on costs tied to defence programmes

AP ■ ARLINGTON (US)

Boeing reported a surprising USD 3.3 billion loss for the third quarter on Wednesday, as revenue fell short of expectations and it took huge losses for fixed-cost government programs including new Air Force One presidential jets.

The company blamed higher manufacturing and supply-chain costs for driving the losses in government programs.

CEO David Calhoun said Boeing remains in a "challenging environment" and has "more work ahead to drive stability".

The adjusted loss amounted to USD 6.18 per share on revenue of USD 15.96 billion. Analysts had expected the company to earn 13 cents per share and post revenue of USD 17.91 billion.

The shares fell by about 1 per cent in trading before the market opened.

Revenue in Boeing's normally consistent defence and space business tumbled by 20 per cent, and it suffered USD 2.8 billion in losses on a military refuelling tanker, Air Force One, a NASA program to build a spacecraft that can ferry astronauts to the International Space Station, and other programmes.

Boeing has previously posted big losses on those projects, including about USD 1 billion in charges related to building two new president jets, a deal it struck with then-



President Donald Trump.

Boeing's commercial-airplanes business has recently shown improvement as air travel rises and airlines seek new planes. On Wednesday, Alaska Airlines announced that it would exercise options to buy 52 more 737 Max jets.

The airline side of Boeing operations saw revenue soar by 40 per cent from a year earlier as it delivered more planes, but it still lost USD 643 million, only slightly less than a year ago.

Boeing was hampered by an inability to deliver any of its large 787 jets to airlines for most of a two-year period because of pro-

duction flaws, although it resumed deliveries in late August, providing an important source of cash to the company.

In a letter to employees, the CEO said Boeing is making strides "in our turnaround effort," and he highlighted that the company generated USD 2.9 billion in free cash flow during the quarter.

"That said, we remain in a challenging environment and have more work ahead to ensure we're consistently delivering on our commitments and reestablishing the strength of our company," Calhoun wrote. He said Boeing production facilities are "not pushing the system too fast."



FinMin extends ITR filing deadline for companies till Nov 7

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Wednesday extended the deadline for filing income tax returns for the assessment year 2022-23 by businesses till November 7.

The last date for filing ITR by companies who are required to get their accounts audited was October 31.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the apex decision-making body in matters of income and corporate tax, in a notification said since it had last month extended the deadline for filing audit reports, hence the ITR filing due date too is extended.

"CBDT... Extends the due date of furnishing of Return of Income under sub-section (1) of section 139 of the Act for the Assessment Year 2022-23, which is October 31, 2022... To November 7, 2022," the CBDT

notification said.

Domestic companies are required to file their income tax returns by October 31, 2022, for the Financial Year 2021-2022. The due date to file ITR will be November 30, 2022, for companies which are subject to transfer pricing norms.

AMRG & Associates Director (Corporate & International Tax) Om Rajpurohit said the extension would provide much-needed relief during the festival season vis-a-vis to prevent any future anomalies with tax provisions (w.R.T. Maintaining the statutory time gap of 30 days).

Last month, the CBDT extended the deadline for filing audit reports by 7 days till October 7.

"A comparable reprieve is eagerly anticipated for corporate entities, subject to the Transfer Pricing Regulation as well," Rajpurohit said.

Air India Express to lease 2 Boeing 737 planes from Vistara

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Budget airline Air India Express is looking to lease two Boeing 737 aircraft from full-service carrier Vistara to offer more flights during the winter schedule, according to a source.

Both Air India Express and Vistara are part of the Tata group, which also has Air India and AirAsia India under its wings.

The source close to the development said the two narrow-body planes are expected to be inducted into the Air India Express fleet on a short-term lease in November and December, respectively.

The move is part of consolidating as well as tapping the synergies in the group's airline business. Also, the leasing of the planes will help Air India Express to operate more flights during the winter schedule, which starts from October 30, the source said.

When contacted, a Vistara spokesperson said, "we cannot comment on speculations".

Air India Express spokesperson was not available for comments.

"Air India Express has not inducted any new planes in its fleet for a long time. Though the airline had plans to augment the fleet substantially as part of its long-term business roadmap, it



got grounded because of the dis-investment.

"Now post-privatisation, there are plans to consolidate and bring synergy in operations. Therefore, the airline has decided to lease planes from within the group carriers rather than going to external players," the source said.

Tata group took over Air India and Air India Express in January this year after emerging as the winning bidder in the dis-investment process that concluded last year.

Air India Express, which flies to 14 international destinations from 21 cities in the country, currently has 24 Boeing 737 planes in operation. One of its plane was involved in the fatal crash at Kozhikode airport in

Kerala in 2020.

Vistara, which is jointly owned by the Tata group and Singapore Airlines, has five Boeing 737 aircraft in its fleet of 53 planes.

These five planes are part of the nine B737 aircraft inducted by Vistara on a short-term lease. These planes were earlier operated by Jet Airways, which shuttered operations in April 2019.

Four such planes have already been phased out by Vistara.

As part of the consolidation exercise, Vistara is also inducting A320 fleet pilots on deputation from AirAsia India for its new A320 neo planes, which are being delivered to the airline from its aircraft order of July 2018.



Ethereum's dominance in crypto market up 20% after the 'Merge'

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

The dominance of Ethereum, the second largest cryptocurrency after Bitcoin, is up 20 per cent in the global crypto market following the 'Merge', a report showed on Wednesday.

The historic upgrade of Ethereum, known as the 'Merge', last month will create a more energy-efficient network based on the second largest cryptocurrency with a promise to save the environment.

According to niche news publisher BanklessTimes.com, the Ethereum merge created a lot of Buzz, with every crypto lover patiently awaiting its arrival.

The Merge has been a success, and Ethereum's dominance in the market is increasing, said the report.

"Ethereum dominance is rising as we expected. The environmentally friendly approach it took identifies well with crypto users. Besides, more people are adopting Ethereum than Bitcoin due to the Merge. The pace is set, and Ethereum will continue to rise," said Jonathan Merry, CEO of Bankless-

Times.com.

Currently, the blockchain is preparing for the Shanghai upgrade. Ethereum anticipates going through the "Surge," "Verge," and "Purge" after the Shanghai upgrade.

Surge is the application of "sharding" technology. The technology will enhance Ethereum's maximum transaction processing pace from 15 to 20 transactions per second to over 100,000.

Next is the verge, which is the planned application of a mathematical proof called "Verkle trees." The App will allow nodes on the blockchain to function without downloading the entire chain's history. Lastly, the purge will remove all legacy data from the chain.

Combining these three improvements will create a better Ethereum blockchain. Some have said that Ethereum will one day take Bitcoin's place in market capitalisation, an event referred to as "the Flipping."

"The post-Merge era will be very critical for Ethereum. The coin is expected to hit new all-time highs as it takes over the crypto space," the report mentioned.

JK Bank to complete transfer of ₹960 cr NPAs to NARCL by October-end

PTI ■ SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Bank will put up for sale non-performing assets to the tune of Rs 960 crore, as part of its efforts to improve its balance sheet, sources in the bank said.

The bank is hoping that the process of sale of these non-performing assets to the National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) will be completed by the end of this month, the sources said. Of the six accounts, the JK Bank has an exposure of Rs 230 crore in the now-bankrupt Reliance Naval and Engineering Limited, Rs 188 crore in Jaypee Infratech, Rs 176 crore in Jaiprakash Associates Limited and Rs 126 crore in Coastal Energen Private Limited.

Jammu and Kashmir Bank's Rs 960 crore NPAs are part of the Rs 9,234 crore bad assets of the Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) lenders that the NARCL has offered to buy at Rs 3,570 crore in the first phase.

The proceeds from the sale of the NPAs, which the NARCL is doing on 15-85 basis over a period of five years, will aid Jammu and Kashmir bank's plans to raise capital for its foray into markets beyond the union territory of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. The bank has set a goal of raising Rs 2,000 crore capital by the end of the current fiscal to fuel its expansion plans.

Haryana's journey — Vyavastha Parivartan Se Sushasan: Khattar

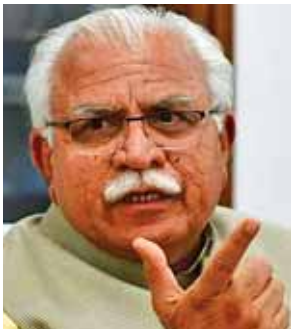
Under parliamentary democracy India opted for, a new Government is formed every five years.

However, in times of political instability, this change can and has happened even earlier. In such cases, it is only the face of the Government that changes, not the governance model.

Resultantly, despite the change of Government, the expected 'Vyavastha Parivartan Se Sushasan' (good governance) which means bringing changes in the life of the common man, remains a pipe dream.

But in Haryana we have ensured that this dream comes true. Today, when my Government completes eight years in office, I, as the first servant of Haryana, feel satisfied that our journey on the road to 'Vyavastha Parivartan' we had embarked upon in 2014, continues.

During the last eight years, my government has made radical changes in the age-old system while following the 'Vyavastha Parivartan Se Sushasan' mantra. Besides materialistic development, efforts have been made to ensure overall development of the people and the state.



changes and in changing the style of governance to shore up the image of Haryana.

Mocking at others is not our political culture, but the truth remains that vote bank-centric thinking and the work-style of previous governments had dented Haryana's image.

They used power not to serve the people but to service their own vested political interests which made development a causality in Haryana, a state that has a glorious background and enjoys the unique geographical distinction of surrounding Delhi on three sides. In 2014, the Centre also saw a drastic change.

After three decades, the NDA Government, under the leadership of Mr Narendra Bhai Modi, assumed office after the BJP got a clear majority in the Lok Sabha.

Inspired by the Prime

Minister's vision of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat', and guided by the thinking 'Haryana Ek-Haryanvi Ek', my government in Haryana started work to change the system and redefine governance.

Changing a system plagued by the status quoist mentality for decades, is never an easy task. And our journey too has not been easy either. Vested selfish elements hurt by any change in the system created hurdles in our path at every turn.

But undeterred and fired by the resolve to serve the people, we persisted with our efforts to make changes to place Haryana in high-growth trajectory.

With our faith firmly rooted in the conviction "Satyamev Jayate," my government set upon the journey of 'Vyavastha Parivartan Se Sushasan' in 2014.

And today, after eight years, the winds of change can be felt by any person who has an open mind, and harbours no prejudice.

Badly divided along the caste and regional lines until 2014, Haryana today has become an inspiration for other states. Some of the revolutionary changes made by my government are being adopted not only by sister states but also by the Central Government.

Foreign reinsurers can repatriate up to 20% of assigned capital: Irdai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Insurance sector regulator Irdai has allowed foreign reinsurance branches, including Lloyd's India, to repatriate up to 20 per cent of the excess assigned capital to attract more players and allow free movement of capital.

As part of the ease of doing business in India, various committees deliberated on the repatriation of excess assigned capital by Foreign Reinsurance Branches (FRB) and Lloyd's India.

As per Irdai norms, the registration of branch offices of foreign reinsurers other than Lloyd's have 'assigned capital' and net owned funds (NOFs) as the capital requirements for setting up business in India.

The applicant's NOF should not be less than the prescribed amount of Rs 500 crore at any time and should infuse a minimum assigned capital of Rs 100 crore into the branch office.

After careful examination of the recommendations of the working groups, it is noted that to ensure sufficient reinsurance capacity in India and to attract more reinsurance players for offering reinsurance at a competitive price, the free movement of assigned capital for foreign reinsurance branches is required.

"Accordingly, it is decided that FRBs and Lloyd's India are permitted to repatriate excess assigned capital with prior

approval of the Authority," the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) said in a circular on Wednesday.

However, the relaxation comes with certain riders such as a minimum assigned capital of Rs 100 crore or a higher sum specified by Irdai at the time of grant of certificate of registration; submission of a request justifying the reasons for repatriation and a certificate stating for-



eign reinsurers' net owned funds of Rs 5,000 crore or as prescribed under the Insurance Act.

Among others, they should have a solvency ratio after the repatriation of at least 50 basis points higher than the control level of solvency i.e. 200 per cent and a certificate from certifying actuary about sufficient reserves to meet reinsurance liabilities.

"Such withdrawal shall not exceed 20 per cent of assigned capital of such FRB/ Lloyd's

SRM AP students win ₹2 lakh cash prize

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Acing national-level innovation marathon: SRM AP students win 2 Lakh cash prize

Vishal and Akanksha, students of SRM University- AP, won the National level VOIS for Tech Innovation Marathon 2022, which began on October 14 in Pune. They received a cash prize of Rs.2 lakhs, along with certificates and mementoes.

Vodafone Idea Foundation and VOIS Connecting Dreams

Foundation jointly organised the Technology Marathon-2022 competition to bring out the latent technological creativity among engineering students.

Five hundred sixty teams from all over the country participated in the competition. Third-year Computer Science Engineering students Vishal Kumar Singh and Akanksha Patil participated in the competition on behalf of SRM University- AP. Both showed excellent

Zee-Sony merger: Groups agree to sell 3 Hindi channels to address anti-competition concerns

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Media groups Sony and Zee have voluntarily agreed to sell three Hindi channels — Big Magic, Zee Action and Zee Classic — to address possible anti-competition concerns arising out of their proposed mega-merger deal. They submitted their proposal to the Competition Commission of India (CCI), which cleared the deal, subject to certain modifications on October 4.

More than three weeks after giving its nod for the transaction,



the regulator on Wednesday made public its detailed 58-page order.

The two groups have agreed to divest Big Magic, which is a Hindi general entertainment channel, as well as Zee Action and Zee Classic, which are Hindi film channels, according to the order.

They voluntarily agreed to

the modification to the proposed deal after CCI's prima-facie opinion that the deal was likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition.

When contacted, a Zee Entertainment Enterprises Limited (ZEEL) spokesperson declined to comment. There was no immediate comment from Sony. The channels have to be divested within a stipulated time or the "first divestiture period". However, CCI has not disclosed the period in the version of the order that has been made public.

India face Dutch challenge

PTI ■ SYDNEY

On a high after a breathtaking performance against Pakistan, the Indian team is unlikely to face much challenge from minnows Netherlands in their T20 World Cup match, here on Thursday.

The formidable Indian batting line up is expected to bully the 'Orange' attack which is decent but not exactly menacing.

For India, the primary aim will be to guard against complacency as there would always be a chance of going off the boil after winning an emotionally exhausting high-intensity game.

The contest will be a chance for three of the top four batters -- skipper Rohit Sharma, inconsistent KL Rahul and dangerous Suryakumar Yadav -- to get some runs under their belt before the next big game against South Africa, the result of which will determine the group standings.

The Netherlands' attack comprises Fred Klaassen, Bad de Leede, Tim Pringle and former Proteas left-arm spinner Roelof van der Merwe, who is the only player in the rival line up to have played in IPL in the past.

The Netherlands bowling attack appeared decent in the League stage as well as in the Super 12 game against Bangladesh at Hobart, which is colder, windier and offers pitches that assist bowlers.

However it will be a different ball game on Thursday as they will have to contend with a high-quality batting line-up on an SCG track which will aid stroke-making.

New Zealand had scored 200 against Australia at the SCG in their first game and the Indian batters would also want to have a first go.

A favourable result in the spin of coin will give captain Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid a chance to bat first, put a total and defend it although it will be a different challenge against better sides.

But batting first will provide adequate time for someone like KL



Rahul to get back his rhythm and be ready for the Proteas test.

Bowling coach Paras Mhambrey confirmed on Wednesday that the Indian team will play the same eleven against the Netherlands that took the field against Pakistan on Sunday.

"We are not resting anyone. When you have got momentum in the tournament, you want individuals to be in form as well, so every game becomes important," Mhambrey said on the eve of the game..

The coach also insisted that all-rounder Hardik Pandya is fit and himself wants to play all games. Pandya had suffered cramps while batting against Pakistan towards the end of India's chase.

"He is alright, fit to play. We are not considering resting him. He himself wants to play all games. He is an important player, adding balance.

Yes, Virat finished the game but we

Hope Virat doesn't repeat Pakistan show against us: Edwards

PTI ■ SYDNEY

Netherlands captain Scott Edwards is hoping that Virat Kohli doesn't repeat his "surreal show against Pakistan" when India take on the minnows in a T20 World Cup game, here on Thursday.

Edwards, a Melbourne local who has migrated to The Netherlands, doesn't have any undue expectation from his side but would like his team-mates to play the best brand of cricket possible.

"What Virat (Kohli) did the other day was surreal. Hope he doesn't repeat it against us," Edwards said at the pre-match media conference on Wednesday.

"Not many people expect us to win, so not too much pressure on us," said the Dutch skipper, very matter of fact about playing a team filled with some of global cricket's biggest superstars.

For him, what's best they can do is what matters.

"Our brand of cricket means perform to best of our ability. Just bring our A game. If it's enough it's enough. If it's not it's not," Edwards added.

For a team like The Netherlands, it is like a dream to get a chance to play India as even a white-ball bilateral series isn't a commercially viable option for the BCCI.

needed an experienced player who knew what can happen if we take the game deep," Mhambrey said.

In a tournament like the World Cup, no team likes to tinker with the playing eleven and the Indian team management is also following the same theory.

Even though Virat Kohli's epic knock and Pandya's big-hearted performance won India the match, there could be a slight debate if this is still India's best T20 XI.

Not being able to accommodate an enforcer like Rishabh Pant in the playing eleven in order to make a place for Rahul, is a bit disappointing from every cricketing aspect.

Yuzvendra Chahal, India's most versatile white ball spinner wasn't played against Pakistan but at the training session he looked sharp as he beat all the top batters during India's final net session.

In case of pace bowlers, there will be no change in the composition unless there is some last-minute niggle to anyone.

The Netherlands is a decent side and some of their players were given central contracts after they started playing the ICC World ODI league.

There is Tom Cooper, former Australian U-19 and Australia A cricketer, who has also played BBL for Brisbane Heats and county cricket for Somerset.

There is a young opener of Indian origin Vikramjit Singh, who is considered to be promising in their cricketing circles.

Tim Pringle is also part of the squad. A slow left-arm spinner and a lower order batter, Tim's father Chris had in mid '90s played a lot of games for New Zealand as a seam bowler.

The Indian fans would remember Pringle being one of the bowlers, who was hammered by Sachin Tendulkar whenever the two teams clashed.

Bas de Leede, whose father Tim represented the Netherlands in the 1996 ODI World Cup, is also part of the squad.



Rohit Sharma's coach wants him to shed high-risk game

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rohit Sharma's coach Dinesh Lad is not impressed with the way the Indian captain has been getting out of late, saying he must resort to playing the anchor's role instead of a "high-risk" game.

Lad wants his ward to spend more time on the wicket.

The Indian skipper got out for four runs against Pakistan on Sunday and scored just 14 against Australia in a warm-up match in the ongoing T20 World Cup.

"Yes, he is playing a high-risk game for quite some time now, which he should not. I have no idea why he is doing that. I think he is making a mistake in playing an overly aggressive game," Lad told PTI in an interview on Wednesday.

"I feel he should spend more time on the crease and not throw his wicket away. I don't want him to take chances in the first six overs of the powerplay. He should play his normal and natural game.

"He should try to play 17-18 overs and score around 70-80 runs in every match he plays," Lad added.

The coach said that he would like to see a change in Rohit's approach in T20 cricket, especially in the ongoing showpiece.

"As his coach, I would like to see him as an anchor and not as a destroyer who plays high-risk games. If he stays on the wicket for some time, he will play long and useful innings.

"He plays too much in the air, maybe because sometimes it is needed in T20 cricket. But I would say he should go with controlled aggression. If he cuts down the risky shots, he will do well in every match."

Recalling his last conversation with Rohit, Lad said: "The last time I spoke to him was before he went to the World Cup. We did not talk much about the technique as he has played so much cricket for India.

"I advised him to stay on the crease and play sensibly. I always

want him to lead from the front and contribute maximum towards India's victory. But he is not getting the time as he is throwing his wickets away.

"Sometimes he gets out cheaply playing rash shots and he has to face criticism for that."

He expressed confidence that Rohit will come back strongly in the upcoming matches.

"I am sure Rohit will come back very strongly. I feel he must show some patience. He should spend more time on the crease. The wickets in Australia are ideally suited for his kind of game. He is a stroke player and the ball nicely comes into the bat.

"In T20 cricket, it's difficult to talk about technique much. He should start enjoying the game more and do well for the country both as a player and as a captain.

"I am very happy and feel proud that my ward Rohit Sharma is leading India in the T20 World Cup. Just like India won the World Cup on his debut World Cup in 2007 I would like to see him lift the World Cup on his debut as captain."

On Virat Kohli's spectacular match-winning innings against Pakistan, Lad said: "Virat Kohli played the best T20 innings I have ever seen. The best part was that he was always in control. He never played a false or wrong shot."

"In T20 cricket, there is a lot of improvisation, reverse sweeps, scoops, etc. But Virat did not play any such shot. He played proper cricketing shots. This had to be his best innings given the magnitude and the pressure situation India was in."

He also said that Rohit must try to adapt and play like Kohli did during his wondrous knock against a lethal Pakistan attack.

"I feel that Rohit will start playing like a match-winner again. We are about to see the best of Rohit once again, like the 2019 World Cup in England."

Ireland shock England by 5 runs via DLS method

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Ireland continued their giant-killing act in the T20 World Cup and pulled off yet another upset win, defeating England by five runs via the Duckworth-Lewis method to throw open group 1 of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

Having stormed into Super 12 by eliminating two-time champions West Indies, Ireland rode on a sparkling 47-ball 62 by skipper Andy Balbirnie and looked for a 180-plus total before England dragged them back to bowl them out for 157 in 19.2 overs.

Leg-spinner Liam Livingstone triggered the collapse before pacer Mark Wood seized the initiative as the duo returned with three wickets each to deny Ireland 15-20 runs extra.

Chasing the tricky target, the 2010 champions were 105/5 in 14.3 overs, five runs short of the DLS target of 110 as the play could not be started within the cutoff time due to rain and Ireland completed their second win over England in a World Cup.

Eleven years ago at the ODI World Cup in India, Kevin O'Brien had inspired a stunning win over England at the Chinnaswamy. Overall, this was Ireland's third win over England with two coming in the ODI format.

The Ireland win has now



opened the doors for Australia as five of the six teams in the group now have two points each.

Left-arm pacer Josh Little swung the new ball both ways and dismissed the two English openers Jos Buttler (0) and Alex Hales (7) in space of nine balls.

Fionn Hand then knocked over the dangerous Ben Stokes with a back of length delivery that sharply cut back in the last over of Power Play.

England lost half of their side

when Barry McCarthy induced a top edge of Dawid Malan inside 14 overs as they still needed 72 runs from 41 balls.

Ireland were let down by their fielding but overall they towered over their English rivals both in batting and bowling.

This was also Ireland's maiden win in the second stage of the T20 World Cup.

Earlier, Ireland skipper Balbirnie smashed a 47-ball 62, his first T20 World Cup half-century

and eighth overall, in an entertaining 82-run second wicket partnership with Lorcan Tucker (34 from 27 balls) to give them a flying start after England opted to bowl in over-cast conditions.

But Livingstone (3-0-17-3) dismissed Balbirnie and followed it up with George Dockrell's wicket in the next ball to trigger the collapse before Mark Wood (4-0-34-3) and Sam Curran (3-0-31-2) ran through Ireland's middle and lower order.

From being 92 for 1 in 10 overs, Ireland collapsed in 19.2 overs.

Smarting from the defeat against Sri Lanka in their Super 12 opener, Ireland got off to an attacking start with Balbirnie slamming a 40-ball half-century.

Tucker gave him fine support from the other end as they took on the English pace duo of Wood and Chris Woakes with some spectacular pull shots.

Ireland's 100 came up in just 68 balls before a freak run-out brought an end to Tucker's fine innings.

On an overcast afternoon, with their innings halted once by the passing showers, Ireland launched an attack on the English pacers with Paul Stirling taking the early initiative in his eight-ball 14 (1x4, 1x6).

Tucker then continued the momentum after Stirling's departure in the third over as he along with skipper Balbirnie raced Ireland to 59 for 1 in Power Play.

'Heartbroken' Pakistan still hurting from India loss: Iftikhar



AP ■ PERTH

Pakistan's Iftikhar Ahmed admitted on Wednesday his side were 'heartbroken' and still hurting from their agonising opening defeat to arch-rivals India at the T20 World Cup.

An epic 82 not out from Virat Kohli powered India to a stunning last-ball win on Sunday in front of a frenzied crowd of more than 90,000 at Melbourne Cricket Ground.

Pakistan have little room left for further error when they play Zimbabwe in Perth on Thursday, in a game they will be expected to win.

"The hurt remains after losing such a big match. We were heartbroken," said middle-order batsman Iftikhar, who hit 51 in Pakistan's 159-8, but it turned out to be just not quite enough.

Iftikhar said that morale was high despite the lingering heartache and praised skipper Babar Azam for his handling of the team in the aftermath of the India loss.

A video of Azam's pep talk to his broken side went viral.

"We have to learn from our mistakes. Don't fall, the tournament has just begun. We have lost as a team and

will win as a team," Azam said in the widely watched video footage.

"The way Babar and the management supported the players, it was good. Babar and coaches told us that 'it was not our last game, everybody put in the effort'," Iftikhar said on Wednesday.

"So our morale is high."

Pakistan will be strongly fancied to beat Zimbabwe -- who are ranked 11 in the world to Pakistan's three -- and belatedly get their World Cup going.

Pakistan need a victory for their confidence too.

"Zimbabwe is an international team and we have to play strong against them like any other team," said the 32-year-old Iftikhar.

"Important to play well and keep up the confidence. The players are hungry to perform."

Pakistan pace bowler Haris Rauf bowled well at the MCG until he was hit for two successive sixes by Kohli in a game-changing moment at the end of the 19th over. "The Australian pitches are fast and bouncy and we have prepared for that," said Iftikhar.

"Haris is our main strike bowler and we expect him to bowl better here and win it for Pakistan."

NZ-Afghanistan match abandoned owing to rain

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

The T20 World Cup match between New Zealand and Afghanistan was abandoned without a ball being bowled due to persistent rain here on Wednesday.

The Group 1 Super 12 match was scheduled to start at 1.30PM IST but rain forced the players to remain indoors.

Both teams shared a point each as rain refused to relent, forcing the umpires to call off the match. The covers were removed ahead of the scheduled inspection, but the rain again came down heavily at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. For both New Zealand and Afghanistan, Wednesday's game was their second outing in the Super 12 stage.

While New Zealand beat defending champions Australia by 89 runs in their opening match, Afghanistan lost by five wickets to England.

Kohli storms into top 10; Bhuvneshwar, Pandya too rise

PTI ■ DUBAI

Star India batter Virat Kohli stormed his way back into the top 10 T20I batting chart, climbing up five spots to ninth position in the latest rankings issued on Wednesday.

Kohli has been rewarded for his heroics against Pakistan in India's T20 World Cup opener against arch-rivals Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground last Sunday.

Kohli smashed an unbeaten 82 to guide India to a memorable last-ball victory, the knock catapulting the former India captain into the top 10 of T20I batters list.

The 33-year-old hit six fours and four sixes during his glorious innings.

India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar jumped two spots to the 10th spot in the bowlers' rankings, while Hardik Pandya rose three places to third in the all-rounders chart following his impressive start to the T20 World Cup.

Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Rizwan (849 rating points) continues to occupy the top spot, with New Zealand opener Devon Conway (831) rising three places to replace Suryakumar Yadav from the second position.

Conway hit a 58-ball unbeaten 92 to help New Zealand thrash defending champions Australia by 89 runs in their opener.

With 828 rating points in his kitty, Suryakumar dropped to the third spot but was ahead of Pakistan skipper Babar Azam (799) and South Africa's Aiden Markram (762).

New Zealand's Finn Allen also



moved up, courtesy his swashbuckling 16-ball 42-run knock against Australia, which helped him to rise to a whopping 17 places to the 13th position.

Among bowlers, Bhuvneshwar has been rewarded for his tidy figures of 1/22 from four overs against Pakistan.

Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan overtook Australia seamer Josh Hazlewood to re-claim the No.1 T20I bowler's position.

Rashid earned the top billing on the back of a fine performance against England, in which he scalped the wicket of young Harry Brook and finished with tidy figures of 1/17 from his four overs, albeit

in a five-wicket loss.

Sri Lanka spinner Wanindu Hasaranga dropped three places to sixth, while England seamer Sam Curran moved up eight spots to eighth position following his record-breaking five-wicket haul against Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh skipper Shakib Al Hasan remained the top ranked all-rounder, with Afghanistan counterpart Mohammad Nabi in second spot and just 14 rating points behind.

Pandya scaled to third on the list after picking up three valuable wickets against Pakistan and then combined well with Kohli to score 40 during India's thrilling chase.



OPENING-UP

Global firms eye China's opportunities, bolster presence

China is committed to its fundamental national policy of opening to the outside world and pursues a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up. It strives to create new opportunities for the world with its own development and to contribute its share to building an open global economy that delivers greater benefits to all peoples.

— Excerpt from the report delivered by Xi Jinping to the 20th CPC National Congress, Oct 16, 2022

Despite rising external uncertainties, multinational companies remain committed to China as they plan to expand their local footprint and investment, and are impressed by the nation's latest commitment to high-standard opening-up and high-quality economic development, global business leaders said.

In a report that Xi Jinping delivered at the opening session of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China on October 16, he stressed the need to promote high-standard opening-up and accelerate efforts to foster a new pattern of development.

Seeing big opportunities in areas such as carbon neutrality, advanced manufac-

turing and innovation-driven development, foreign companies increasingly value China's multiple roles as a vast market, a crucial part of global supply chains and a pioneering research and development hub, senior executives said in a series of interviews with China Daily.

Tao Lin, vice-president of US electric carmaker Tesla, said the report highlighted that further advancing opening-up is a key feature of the new era, and as a beneficiary of such efforts, the company is convinced that "it will create more value in this vigorous and dynamic land".

"Thanks to the Chinese government's decision to scrap limits on foreign ownership of electric vehicle companies, Tesla became the

first wholly foreign-owned vehicle manufacturer in the country," Tao said.

"Now, Tesla is even more deeply engaged in China's promising domestic market," Tao added.

Hou Yang, chairman and CEO of Microsoft Greater China, said that due to China's increased opening-up and its economic vitality, foreign companies have more opportunities to invest in the nation, and the Chinese market has become increasingly appealing.

"China's ever-improving economic foundations and technological innovation capabilities have enabled it to demonstrate its strong resilience and flexibility in the face of risks," Hou said, adding that the company will increase its local work-

force to over 10,000 next year by adding about 1,000 new jobs.

Such sentiment is in line with recent figures pointing to the strong momentum of foreign direct investment in China. FDI in the Chinese mainland, in terms of actual use, grew 16.4 percent year-on-year to 892.7 billion yuan (\$123.5 billion) in the first eight months of this year, according to the Chinese Ministry of Commerce.

Wu Dongming, CEO of DHL Express China, said that amid challenges and pressures, China's economic stability is the biggest contribution to the world economy and global supply chains.

"Looking forward, China's focus on sustainable development will greatly

benefit international trade," Wu said, adding that the company tested its first pilot hydrogen fuel cell truck in Shanghai last month, as part of the German logistics firm's broader push to experiment with the latest green technology and boost investment in the country.

China's high-quality development agenda and its growing innovation prowess are also boosting business leaders' confidence, as these promise big potential for future growth. It has moved up to 11th place in the 2022 Global Innovation Index from 34th a decade ago, and remains the only middle-income economy in the top 30, according to the latest ranking published by the World Intellectual Property Organization in late

September.

Wang Lei, global executive vice-president of British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, said he was encouraged by the report's emphasis that innovation will remain at the heart of China's modernization drive.

"China's innovation-driven development strategy will create more opportunities for us, as the country has become a very important part of our global innovation as well as our R&D network," Wang said.

Looking ahead, experts forecast that China's growth engines could be revving up as it heads into 2023, which will motivate more foreign businesses to increase their investment in the nation.

(China Daily)

NEWS

"That's why China's economy grows fast, even facing the pandemic"

Journalists from around the world closely followed the 20th CPC National Congress held from October 16-22 in Beijing to better understand the country's achievements, past and future challenges as well as efforts in epidemic control and anti-corruption.

Otieno Bryan, a reporter from the Kenyan newspaper The Star, said he carefully read the report that Xi Jinping delivered at the opening session of the congress to "deeply understand what makes people support the government and why people in the country love what the government does for them".

"I think the government has worked well in making its people happy. Happiness means productivity," he said. "That's why China's economy grows fast, even facing the pandemic."

Like many other journalists from abroad, Bryan recently made his first trip to China specifically to cover the event.

About 750 foreign journalists are attending the congress, accounting for roughly a third of all the media professionals reporting from the front lines at

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China has long been known as a trusted global partner that promotes collaboration worldwide, with a shared view of mutual prosperity and growth for all humankind.

—Bereket Sisay
Journalist and editor of
Ethiopian News Agency

relevant venues.

Ojeda Istvan, who writes for the Cuban weekly magazine Periodico 26, was excited after attending a news conference about China's anti-corruption work on October 17.

Istvan said it is important for his homeland to learn from how the CPC has cracked down on corruption.

"Fighting against corruption is among the most important issues for the Communist Party of Cuba," he said. "Cuba and China have a similar political system. We want to learn from China."

Brazilian reporter Sobreira Leonardo is focusing on China's economic progress and technological innovation for the news website Brasil 247.

Leonardo was busy writing a story after a news conference about the economy on October 17 and said he was especially impressed by the report Xi delivered at the opening session of the congress. He noted the report's emphasis on people's participation in the political process and the frequency of the word "security".

He said he had read some negative stories about China before visiting but discovered a totally different place upon arrival.

"I want to provide the audience with an objective view of what's actually going on here through my short trip," Leonardo said.

Supa Chai, a reporter with Thailand's Manager Media Group, said he is interested in China's epidemic control efforts. "We really hope Chinese tourists will come back to Thailand," he said, adding that China was the No. 1 source of inbound visitors to his country before the pandemic.

(China Daily)

IN-PICS



Congress under the spotlight

The 20th National Congress of CPC has drawn the attention of the whole world. About 2,500 journalists, including 750 foreign reporters attended the congress.

(Photo by Xinhua)

AGRICULTURE

FAO representative lauds China's role



Farmers harvest corn in Liangcui village of Yuncheng, Shanxi province.
(Photo by Gao Xinsheng)

For several decades, China has been dedicated to helping developing countries achieve their development goals and to promoting their agricultural growth and food security, a senior United Nations official said.

Carlos Watson, representative of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization in China, said that this year marks a very special year for the FAO — the 40th anniversary of the opening of its representation office in China.

"Since then, the country has made incredible achievements in development, with agricultural and rural development at the forefront," he said. "The FAO is extremely proud to have been able to accompany and support China in this journey. Looking forward, the FAO wishes to continue the journey with China in support of meeting Sustainable Development Goals and beyond."

In the past three decades, Chinese agricultural technician

Xie Jian has made over 30 visits to Southeast Asia and several to Africa to help reduce post-harvest rice losses and strengthen the rice value chain.

"Post-harvest food loss is a persistent problem in global food production," said Xie, a senior agricultural technician at COFCO Engineering and Technology Co. "China has many leading technologies that can reduce post-harvest rice loss and strengthen the rice value chain, and we want to share our tech-

nologies and best practices with the world."

According to a report by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, post-harvest losses can be as high as 20 percent for cereals, 30 percent for dairy and fish, and 40 percent for fruits and vegetables. Much of this loss happens because of a lack of technology, limited knowledge of the supply chain, limited access to markets, poor infrastructure and inadequate financing.

(China Daily)

MODERNIZATION

People's sense of security significantly improved in China

People's sense of security has been significantly improved over the past decade, and China has been recognized as one of the safest countries in the world, a senior public security official said on October 19.

China has one of the lowest homicide rates — 0.5 cases per 100,000 people — one of the lowest crime rates and it is among the nations with the fewest gun-related cases in the world, Xu Ganlu, vice-minister of the Chinese Ministry of Public Security, said.

Compared with 2012, the number of cases involving eight major crimes, including homicide and rape, decreased 64 percent in 2021, according to statistics.

Furthermore, the number of drug-related cases declined 56.8 percent; the number of robbery cases fell 96 percent; the number of theft cases decreased 62 percent; and the number of traffic accidents with more than three casualties at one accident dropped 59.3 percent, all during the same period.

"People's sense of security has been significantly improved. According to the surveys conducted by the National Bureau of Statistics, the sense of security reached 98.6 in 2021, up 11 percentage points from 2012," he said.

While creating a safe and stable social environment for economic development, public security organs nationwide have adhered to a people-centered development philosophy and have taken the initiative to reform public security management, household registration management, entry-exit management and other aspects closely related to public life.

The time for the approval and issuance of 60 administrative licenses has been greatly shortened, and various policies and measures have facilitated study, work and production for people and enterprises, he said.

In the past five years, these policies have saved people about 220 billion yuan (\$30.5 billion), according to Xu.

(China Daily)

PEOPLE

Yunnan teacher devotes life to girls' education

The year 1995 was the darkest time in Zhang Guimei's life, losing her beloved husband to cancer after spending all their savings trying to cure him. Before that, Zhang had lost her parents.

Feeling desperate, she applied to leave west Yunnan's Dali city, where she had worked with her husband as a teacher, and went to teach in remote mountainous Huaping county, Lijiang city, northwest Yunnan, a totally strange place for her.

"I wanted to find a place where nobody knew me or could remind me of any beautiful moment in my life. I was banishing myself," recalled Zhang, who was born in Heilongjiang province in 1957, and went to Yunnan province in 1974.

That decision changed not only her life, but also those of numerous children living in deep mountains. Although she was in darkness, she lit up the sky for others, and has been elected as a delegate to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China.

In 1997, she was diagnosed with uterine fibroids. Her colleagues and students donated money to help her, which moved her deeply and she wanted to repay them.

"I didn't make many contributions to the county, but brought such trouble. I felt guilty. I could only try my best to work as a teacher, and I hoped to do more for the county," said Zhang.

She noticed many girls dropped out of school, and after visiting their homes, she found poverty and outdated perceptions hindered parents in supporting their girls' education, and made them get married at a young age.

To change the situation, she made up her mind to establish a high school, which would offer free access for local girls. She tried to collect money, but failed and was regarded as a swindler by many people.

An opportunity for change came when she was elected as a delegate to the 17th CPC National Congress in 2007. After receiving an interview talking about her

wish, the local government helped Zhang realize her dream and in 2008 established the Lijiang Huaping High School for Girls, with Zhang as principal.

The first year welcomed 96 students, many of whom were poorly educated before entering the school.

"If girls from the mountainous area want to leave, we just offer a hand, to help them fly out to see a wider world," Zhang told China Global Television Network.

Since the school's establishment, more than 2,000 students have flown to the outside world and changed their lives, and the school has surged to be one of the best high schools in Lijiang.

Besides her work at the school, Zhang also serves as dean of the children's welfare home in Huaping, where she usually visits and cares for orphans.

Over the years, Zhang has reached almost every corner of Lijiang, and changed the destiny of many families. She is alone without any children, but she has become the mother of many orphans.

In the future, she said, she hopes to lead children from the mountains to the track of modernization. "This requires knowledge and teachers' capability, and we teachers have to improve ourselves while we teach students. But whatever it takes, we need to achieve it and not drag down our country's modernization."

(China Daily)

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For the last decade, our Party and government have tried hard to make every child able to attend school. Today we've achieved this goal. We teachers have to improve ourselves while we teach students. But whatever it takes, we need to achieve it and not drag down our country's modernization.

—Zhang Guimei