

WORLD 5

IRANIAN WOMEN FURIOUS OVER
HEADSCARF DEATH

MONEY 6

INDIA ON TRACK TO ATTRACT
\$100 BN FDI THIS FISCAL: GOVT

SPORT 7

INDIA WHITEWASH ENGLAND
IN JHULAN'S LAST WALTZ

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Ankita murder fury engulfs U'khand

Protesters set resort on fire; BJP expels accused's father and former Min from party

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Public anger over the murder of 19-year-old Ankita Bhandari in Uttarakhand led local residents on Saturday to set part of the resort run by main accused Pulkit Arya, son of a BJP leader and former State Minister level position holder Vinod Arya, on fire after the Government earlier started demolishing it late on Friday.

Enraged over the development, residents also damaged the vehicle of BJP's Yamkeshwar MLA Renu Bisht when she reached All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh after Ankita's body, recovered from Chilla canal early on Saturday morning on the seventh day after she was reported missing, was brought there for post mortem.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami ordered a probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) while the BJP expelled the former



An illegally built resort of Ankita murder accused Pulkit Arya after it was partially demolished by authorities overnight, in Pauri Garhwal district on Saturday

PTI

State Minister Vinod Arya and Ankit Arya, brother of main accused Pulkit, from the party with immediate effect. On Dhami's instructions, Ankit was also removed from the post of nominated vice chairman of OBC commission.

The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel had started searching for Ankita's body on Friday after learning from the accused about the location where she was thrown into the canal. The personnel found her body early on Saturday morning. The body was taken to AIIMS

Rishikesh where a number of protesters had gathered demanding the death penalty for the perpetrators of the crime.

Bisht reached the institute only to be greeted by slogans by the irate crowd with one of the people also breaking the rear window of her SUV.

Meanwhile, Director General of Police Ashok Kumar in a telephonic talks with the father of the victim assured him of all possible action to ensure that the perpetrators receive the death sentence.

Continued on Page 2

C'garh varsity video leak: Soldier held for blackmailing accused girl student

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Police on Saturday arrested an Army personnel posted in Arunachal Pradesh in connection with the Chandigarh University case, in which it was alleged that a hostel inmate recorded several objectionable videos of girl students in the common wash-room, Director General of Police (DGP) Punjab Gaurav Yadav said on Saturday.

The police had earlier arrested a girl student and two men from Himachal Pradesh. Identified as Sanjeev Singh, he is suspected of blackmailing the accused girl student.

Yadav said based on forensic and digital evidence, the police team from SAS Nagar was dispatched to Arunachal Pradesh to arrest the accused.

He said the accused Army personnel was arrested from Sela Pass in Arunachal Pradesh with the support of Arunachal Pradesh Police, Assam Police and Army authorities in Arunachal Pradesh. The police have also obtained a 2-day transit remand of the accused from the Court of Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Bomdila to produce him before the Magistrate, he added.

During the ongoing probe by the Punjab Police, it is revealed that a serving Army soldier is likely to have been involved in acts chargeable under sections of the IPC and IT Act, an Army official said.

Continued on Page 2

CBI raids 59 spots in biggest crackdown on child porn in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In its biggest crackdown on child pornography, the CBI on Saturday carried out searches at 59 locations in 21 States and Union Territories in connection with two cases of circulation of online child sexual abuse material (OCSAM). The raids were part of the operation "Megha Chakra".

Dubbing "Megha Chakra" a painstaking and meticulous operation, the agency said it conducted nationwide searches at around 59 locations, including Faridabad and Fatehabad (Haryana); Dehradun (Uttarakhand); Kachh, Lunavada, Rajkot and Godhra (Gujarat); Maharajgan, Hathras and Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh); Bardhaman and Murshidabad (West Bengal); Mumbai, Pune, Nashik, Thane, Nanded, Solapur, Kolhapur and Nagpur (Maharashtra); Dhanbad and Ranchi (Jharkhand); Chittoor and Krishna (Andhra Pradesh); Bengaluru, Kodagu, Ram Nagar and Kolar (Karnataka); Raipur (Chhattisgarh), and New Delhi, the CBI said in a statement.

Likewise, the CBI also conducted the searches at Chelakkara and Mallapuram (Kerala); Dindigul (Madurai); Gurdaspur and Hosiarpur (Punjab); Chennai; Goa;



Hyderabad; Ajmer and Jaipur (Rajasthan); Cuddalore (Tamil Nadu); Guwahati, Dhimaji (Assam); Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh); Saran and Bhagalpur (Bihar); Agartala (Tripura); and Mandi (Himachal Pradesh) in two cases related to downloading/circulation of child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

The CBI has registered two cases under relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act based on information received from the Crime Against Children (CAC) unit of Interpol, Singapore, which had received the same from New Zealand police for sharing with the relevant country, the CBI said.

"It was alleged that a number of Indian citizens were involved in circulation/downloading/transmission of child sexual abuse material using cloud-based storage.

Continued on Page 2

L-G orders FIR against DJB staff for siphoning off ₹20 cr water bills

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Amid an ongoing tussle with the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) dispensation, Delhi Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Vinai Kumar Saxena on Saturday directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to file an FIR against officials of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), bank authorities and private entities for allegedly embezzling ₹20 crore in water bills.

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia is the head of the DJB. Sisodia is already facing the heat in the alleged old excise policy and ghost teachers' scams.

The LG has also asked the Chief Secretary to identify the DJB officials or officers who had been allegedly siphoning off funds, fix responsibility and submit an action taken report within 15 days.

Later in a Press conference on Saturday, DJB vice-chairman and AAP MLA Saurabh Bharadwaj welcomed the Lt Governor's move saying that Sisodia had also recommended this sort of investigation.

Sources at the Raj Niwas said that the matter had first come to light in 2019 with the allegation that ₹20 crore collected in water bills from consumers was not deposited in the bank account of the DJB.

Despite the allegations, the contract of the company involved in the collection of bills was extended.

Continued on Page 2

CAPSULE

INDIA SLAMS PAK FOR KASHMIR RANT AT UNGA

New Delhi: Taking exception to Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's comments on Kashmir in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), India on Saturday charged him with efforts to "obfuscate misdeeds in his own country and justify actions against India." New Delhi also blamed Islamabad for sponsoring cross-border terrorism.

INDIA 'STALLED' DURING UPA ERA: NR MURTHY

Ahmedabad: N R Narayana Murthy, co-founder of IT giant Infosys, has lamented that economic activities in India were "stalled" and decisions were not taken by the Manmohan Singh government in time in the Congress-led UPA era.

GUJ SEEKS TO REMIND CM MANN OF HIS DUTIES

Chandigarh/New Delhi: The tussle between Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and the State's AAP Government over the convening of the Assembly session escalated further on Saturday with the former seeking to remind Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann of his duties.

JHULAN BIDS ADIEU GIVEN GUARD OF HONOUR

London: Playing her last international match of an illustrious career, Indian women's team seamer Jhulan Goswami received a guard of honour when she walked out to bat against England in the third and final ODI here on Saturday. Jhulan will end her glorious, two-decade career as women's cricket's highest wicket-taker.

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India ‘stalled’ during UPA era, says Murthy

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

NR Narayana Murthy, co-founder of IT giant Infosys, has lamented that economic activities in India were “stalled” and decisions were not taken by the Manmohan Singh Government in time in the Congress-led UPA era.

During his interaction with young entrepreneurs and students at the Indian Institute of Management - Ahmedabad (IIMA) on Friday, Murthy expressed confidence that young minds can make India a worthy competitor of China, the world’s second largest economy.

“I used to be on the board of HSBC in London (between 2008 and 2012). In the first few years, when China was mentioned two to three times in the boardroom (during meetings), India’s name would be mentioned once,” said the well-known businessman in response to a question on where he sees India in the future.

“But unfortunately, I don’t know what happened (to India) afterwards. (Former PM) Manmohan Singh was an



extraordinary individual and I have tremendous respect for him. But, somehow, India stalled (during UPA-era). Decisions were not taken and everything was delayed,” said Murthy.

The IT czar said when he left HSBC (in 2012), India’s name hardly found a mention during meetings, while China’s name was taken nearly 30 times.

“So, I think it is your (young generation) responsibility to make people mention India’s name whenever they mention any other country’s name, particularly China. I think you people can do that,” said Murthy.

The former Infosys chairman said there was a time when most Westerners looked down upon India, but today,

there is a certain level of respect for the country, which has now become the world’s fifth largest economy.

According to him, the economic reforms of 1991, when Manmohan Singh was the finance minister, and the present Bharatiya Janata Party-led NDA government’s schemes like ‘Make In India’ and ‘Startup India’ have helped the country gain ground.

“When I was of your age, there was not much responsibility because not much was expected from neither me nor India. Today, there is an expectation that you will take the country forward. I think you people can make India a worthy competitor of China,” said Murthy.

The software industry veteran said China has left behind India by a huge margin in just 44 years.

“China is unbelievable. It (Chinese economy) is six times larger than India. In 44 years, between 1978 and 2022, China has left India behind so much. Six times is not a joke. If you make things happen, India will get similar respect to what China is getting today,” said Murthy.

2 labourers hurt after ultras open fire at them in Pulwama



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ SRINAGAR

Two non-local labourers from Bihar were injured after ‘unidentified’ terrorists opened fire on them in Ratnipora area of South Kashmir’s Pulwama district late Saturday evening.

According to police, the condition of the two injured labourers was stated to be stable.

Kashmir Zone police in a tweet said, “terrorists fired upon & injured two outside labourers at Kharpora Ratnipora in Pulwama on Saturday. They have been shifted to hospital where their condition is stated to be stable”.

The injured labourers have been identified as Shamsad S/O Islam Shiekh & Faizan Qasri S/O Fayaz Qadri, R/O Batya Zila Bihar.

Rahul resumes Bharat Jodo Yatra from Perambra after a day’s rest

PTI ■ THRISSUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday resumed the Bharat Jodo Yatra from Perambra near here after a day’s rest and he was joined by hundreds of party workers in the march.

The march resumed around 6.30 am. The morning leg of the march will conclude at Amballur junction after covering 12 km.

“After a day of rest, the 17th day of the Bharat Jodo Yatra began around 6:35 am today from Perambra Junction, Thrissur district.

The Yatris will walk 12 km this morning,” senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh tweeted.

On Friday, the day of rest, a medical camp was organised for the participants of the march and the Seva Dal team at Chalakudy.

This was the second rest day since the Yatra started on September 7.

The Congress’ Bharat Jodo Yatra will cover 3,570 km in 150 days. It started from Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu on September 7 and will conclude in Jammu and Kashmir.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the 17th day of party’s ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ in Thrissur, Kerala

Denied admission in PhD, claim achievers; Jamia rejects charges

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Several students have allegedly been denied admission in various PhD programmes at Jamia Millia Islamia citing the non-availability of supervisors despite their names being mentioned in the list of selected candidates.

However, the administration has claimed that no students have been denied admission and every name mentioned in the “final list” was allotted a seat.

The students have claimed that there are around 80 PhD candidates across programmes who have been “denied” seats despite having all the documents and clearing written as well as the interview rounds.

The problem has been reported in several departments, including the Department of Mathematics, Department of Mass Communication, Department of Geography, and Department of Psychology. The students said their names appeared in the list of the selected candidates for the PhD programmes which is still up on the website.

Guv, AAP in war of words over Punjab House session

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

The tussle between Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit and the State’s AAP Government over the convening of the Assembly session escalated further on Saturday with the former seeking to remind Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann of his duties.

Purohit dashed off a fresh letter to Mann, saying the Chief Minister’s legal advisors were not adequately briefing him.

The Governor also said it appears the Chief Minister was “too much angry” with him. As Punjab joins a growing

list of non-BJP ruled States where the Government and the Governor have witnessed a face-off, the ruling AAP sharpened its attack against Purohit, alleging he is acting at the behest of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

Aam Aadmi Party’s (AAP) chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj also asked Purohit to be mindful of his limits and not cross the “Lakshman rekha”.

States like Kerala, West Bengal, Telangana, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu have in the recent past witnessed a Governor versus State Government battle over a range of issues.

Maha to act against culprits after ‘Pak Zindabad’ slogan shouted at PFI stir

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

Taking a serious cognisance of a shocking incident in which “Pakistan Zindabad” slogan was allegedly raised at a protest organised by the Popular Front of India (PFI) in Pune, the Maharashtra Government on Friday said that stringent action would be taken against the culprits behind the incident.

Within hours after the a video clip showing a PFI activists raising a “Pakistan Zindabad” at protest organised in front of the Pune district collector’s office surfaced on social media, there was wide-

spread uproar in the political circles over the issue with both ruling and Opposition party leaders demanding stringent action against those shouting pro-Pakistan slogans in Pune.

On their part, both chief minister Ekanth Shinde and deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis, who holds the State Home portfolio, said that the state government would not spare those who indulged in shouting pro-Pakistan slogans in Pune.

The incident took place during a demonstration organised by the PFI in front of the district collector office to condemn the recent

nationwide raids on the outfit and the arrest of its activists.

During the Pune protest, the police registered an offense and detained 41 PFO activists. The PFI had organised the protest without taking any permission from the Pune district administration.

Soon after the protest in Pune, a video clip that went viral on the social media showed that “Pakistan Zindabad” were raised at least on two occasions when the PFI activists were being taken away into a police van during the course of the protests. Chief Minister Shinde said, “We will take stringent action.”

6 PFI members held in Meerut, Varanasi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Anti-Terrorists Squad (ATS) of the UP Police has arrested six members of the Popular Front of India (PFI) from Meerut and Varanasi on suspicion of their involvement in ‘dubious deals’ which were possibly linked to terror activities. The arrests were made on Friday night and Saturday morning. The arrests came two days after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) searched over 100 premises of PFI members spread across 11 States.

Prez presents NSS awards



President Droupadi Murmu in a group photograph with awardees at the presentation of the National Service Scheme (NSS) Awards for 2020-21 to universities, NSS units and NSS volunteers at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Saturday

New Delhi: The President of India, Droupadi Murmu, presented the National Service Scheme Awards for the year 2020-2021 at Rashtrapati Bhavan today.

Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur and Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports Nisith Pramanik attended the awards ceremony.

Secretary, Youth Affairs, Sanjay Kumar and Secretary, Sports, Sujata Chaturvedi and senior officers of the Ministry and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion. Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Department of Youth Affairs confers every year the National Service Scheme Award to recognise and reward outstanding contributions towards voluntary community service made by the

universities/ +2 council, Programme Officers/NSS units and NSS volunteers, with a view to further promote NSS in the country. At present, NSS has about 40 lakh volunteers on its rolls spread over the country. NSS is a Centrally Sector Scheme which was launched in the year 1969 with the primary objective of developing the personality and character of the student youth through voluntary community service. The ideological orientation of the NSS is inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. Very appropriately, the motto of NSS is “NOT ME, BUT YOU” Briefly, the NSS volunteers work on issues of social relevance, which keep evolving in response to the needs of the community, through regular camping activities.

‘We dream of digitising our most remote villages, landing on moon’

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India today envisions itself as a developed country by 2047, the 100th year of its Independence, and dreams of digitising its most remote villages and landing on the moon, perhaps even digitising it, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Saturday.

Speaking at a special ‘India@75’ Showcasing India-UN Partnership in Action’ event here, he said India’s

development rests on an expansive digital public infrastructure designed to promote that “no one is left behind”.

“In the 18th century, India accounted for about a quarter of the global GDP. By the middle of 20th, colonialism ensured that we were one of the poorest nations of the world. That was our state when we became a founding member of the United Nations,” Jaishankar

said.

The event was organised by the Government of India and United Nations to highlight India’s partnership with the UN, its South-South Cooperation, its development journey and achievements in the 75th year of its independence.

It was held on the margins of the high-level UN General Assembly session and attended by dignitaries from the UN including President of the 77th

session of UN General Assembly Csaba Korosi, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, Maldives Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid and UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner.

Jaishankar said in the 75th year of its independence, India stands “before you, proudly, as the fifth biggest economy of the world and is still rising as the strongest, most enthusiastic and definitely the most argumentative democracy.”

Jaishankar, Lavrov discuss bilateral cooperation, G-20

NEW YORK: External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday met his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov here for a “wide-ranging” conversation that included “bilateral cooperation, Ukraine, G-20 and UN reforms.”

“A wide-ranging

conversation with FM Sergey Lavrov at #UNGA 77. Discussed our bilateral cooperation. Exchanged views on Ukraine, G-20 and UN reforms,” Jaishankar tweeted. The meeting came just hours before Jaishankar’s address to the high-level UN General Assembly’s general debate. **PTI**

C’garh varsity video leak: Soldier held for blackmailing...

From Page 1

Immediately on receipt of information from the Police authorities, all possible assistance was extended to Punjab and Arunachal Pradesh Police to arrest the soldier and handover his custody for further investigations, he said.

Indian Army practices zero tolerance of such acts and will continue to provide all assistance for early conclusion of investigation, the official stressed.

Protests had rocked the university campus in Punjab’s

Mohali last week over allegations levelled by students that a hostel inmate recorded several objectionable videos of students in the common washroom.

Some students had even claimed that the videos were leaked. The university authorities, however, dismissed these allegations as “false and baseless”.

The SIT headed by SP Counter Intelligence Ludhiana Rupinder Kaur Bhatti, along with two members, including DSP Kharar-1 Rupinder Kaur and DSP AGTF Deepika Singh, has been conducting investigations in the case. “The guilty in this case will not be spared and justice will prevail,” said the DGP.

L-G orders FIR against DJB staff for...

From Page 1

“The DJB appointed its banker, Corporation Bank, to collect water bills on its behalf through an order in June 2012 for three years, and the same was renewed further in 2016, 2017 and even in 2019, after the fraud was detected,” they said.

The Lt Governor observed that an amount of Rs. 20 crore (including interest, penalty, etc.), though deposited by the consumers had not been transferred into the DJB’s bank account. Despite knowing all

this, the Board headed by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal further extended the contract of Corporation Bank and in turn that of M/s Freshpay IT Solutions Pvt Ltd, which was working as the bank’s collection agent, till 2020, sources said.

However, rather than making the erring vendors pay the swindled Rs 20 Cr and punishing them, the DJB not only extended their contract but increased their service fee from Rs 5 to Rs 6 per bill. Also in baffling contrivance, DJB

criminally relaxed the T+1 (Transaction +1) norm that made it mandatory for the vendor to deposit the cash collected from the people in the account of DJB bank account within 24 hrs of the collection which further helped the vendors swindle cash, they alleged.

The Lt-Governor found that bills collected from the people of Delhi in cash were deposited in the Federal Bank and from there it was transferred to the private account of one M/s Aurrum E-Payments Pvt Ltd, rather than getting deposited into the DJB’s bank account, they said.

The deposition of DJB’s cash in some private bank account of a third party was in

clear violation of the contract agreement between DJB and Corporation Bank. With ulterior motives of siphoning cash, the Corporation Bank had tacitly approved the arrangement and the DJB officials in connivance did not object to it, despite the fact that this move had put DJB funds at risk, sources informed.

“The default on the part of the bank in the deposition of cash collected from the Kiosks in the notice of DJB and bank officials right from the beginning; however, no attempt, whatsoever, was ever made to arrest the malpractice or fraud being committed by the private party with the tacit approval of the bank and DJB officials,” sources stated.

CBI raids 56 spots...

From Page 1

The said information received by Interpol from law enforcement authorities of New Zealand was analysed and developed by the CBI, and suspected persons were identified to locate and disrupt further distribution,” it said.

The crackdown was a

follow up of massive operation (Operation Carbon) carried out by the CBI last year against online child sexual abuse material.

During the searches, electronic devices, including mobiles, laptops belonging to more than 50 suspects have been recovered. Preliminary scrutiny of these electronic devices using cyber forensic tools has revealed the presence of huge quantity of child sexual abuse material in a number of electronic devices, it said.

The suspects are being questioned with regard to the

child sexual abuse material found in their electronic devices so as to identify the child victims and the abusers.

“Operation Chakra is one of the CBI-led global operations in recent times for rapid response to online child sexual exploitation cases with international linkages and organised cyber enabled financial crimes with victims, accused, suspects, conspirators located across international jurisdictions, requiring a globally coordinated law enforcement response. Operation Chakra seeks to

collate information from various law enforcement agencies within India, engage with relevant law enforcement agencies globally and coordinate closely through Interpol channels to combat online child sexual exploitation and such organized cyber criminal activities,” it said.

Coordination meetings were organised with Interpol and foreign law enforcement agencies for sharing critical information to dismantle such cybercrime networks. Investigation is continuing, it added.

BJP involved in ₹84 cr MCD waste scam: AAP

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP on Saturday accused the BJP for allegedly committing a scam of Rs 84 crore in Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) in the name of garbage collection and also demanded investigation in the matter.

In February 2020, BJP-ruled civic body had awarded a tender to a private company to collect garbage at the Bhalswa Landfill at the rate of Rs 3,250 per metric tonne.

As per the new rules the company was supposed to install Global Positioning System (GPS) in its trucks, which it refused, leading to cancellation of the tender. "Another company was awarded the tender at the rate of just Rs 400 per metric tonne. The previous company had already processed 3 lac tonnes of



garbage, implying there has been a scam of Rs 84 crores.

When the tender could have been awarded at Rs 400 per metric tonne, then why was it awarded at the rate of Rs 3,250 in the first instance? This scam couldn't have been possible without the collusion of the BJP and its leaders. The Aam Aadmi Party demands a thorough investigation into the matter," AAP MLA Durgesh Pathak said at a press conference on Saturday. "The AAP

has learnt through various documentary proofs that there has been a scam of around 84 crores under the grab of collecting waste in the BJP ruled-MCD. This same work that was given for 3250 rupees in February 2020 and is now given for 400 rupees, how is it possible? This level of corruption wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of the BJP and its leaders.

The Aam Aadmi Party demands a probe in matter. BJP leaders should be questioned and an FIR should be registered against them. It should be brought to light as to how they pulled off a scam of 84 crore rupees," Pathak concluded.

As a result, that company's tender was cancelled. The company had processed 3 lakh metric tonnes of waste off the mountain by that point," Pathak said. "However, the same tender was given to another company but only for 400 rupees per metric tonne.

This means that there has been a scam of Rs 84 crore. The same work that was given for 3250 rupees in February 2020 and is now given for 400 rupees, how is it possible? This level of corruption wouldn't have been possible without the involvement of the BJP and its leaders.

The Aam Aadmi Party demands a probe in matter. BJP leaders should be questioned and an FIR should be registered against them. It should be brought to light as to how they pulled off a scam of 84 crore rupees," Pathak concluded.

AAP's charges baseless, says MCD

Tender process was transparent and open: MCD

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) on Saturday termed the AAP's allegations as a futile attempt to malign the Corporation's image.

Terming the allegations as a futile attempt to malign the Corporation image, the MCD in a statement said that it has come to the notice of corporation that a false claim is doing rounds that MCD has suffered a scam or loss of Rs.

84 crore on account of allotting tender right to a company to lift RDF from Bhalswa landfill site at the rate of Rs. 3250 per metric tonne in February, 2020.

"The allegation arises from the fact that in a recent tender called for lifting of RDF from the landfill sites, the right to lift the RDF has been allotted at the rate of Rs. 400 per metric tonne in August, 2022. This difference in the rates is the basis of allegation of loss or scam," it said.

"The MCD rejects such allegation in entirety. The Corporation would like to place the facts straight. The civic body has been continually getting rate of transporta-

tion for disposal of waste from its landfill sites reduced. Further, the tender process have been transparent and open," it said.

"Lifting of waste from landfill site is something which cannot be postponed or withheld at any cost.

The lowest bidder was awarded the transportation right at Rs. 3250 per MT in February, 2020. This contract subsisted only during the three months of Covid related lockdown.

At the first opportunity with relaxation in lockdown in May, 2020, the Corporation got a fresh tender done and allotted the transportation right at lesser rate of Rs.

1807.74 per MT. This is not all. The Corporation kept looking for further reduction in transportation cost and allotted it a reduced cost of Rs.1746 per MT in December, 2021," it read.

"The Corporation has now allotted transportation subsidy at rate of ₹300/- per MT (if total lifting is less than 5000 MT in a month), Rs 400/- per MT (if total lifting is between 5000 – 7500 MT in a month), Rs 450/- per MT (if total lifting is between 7500 – 10000 MT in a month) and Rs 500/- per MT (if total lifting is more than 10000 MT in a month) in August, 2022," MCD further said in a statement.

BJP lauds L-G's order to probe DJB water bills theft

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP on Saturday applauded the move of Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena to order an investigation by registering an FIR into the alleged scam of Rs 20 crore against Delhi Jal Board (DJB) officials, bank authorities and private firm.

The BJP also said that the Delhi government, immersed in the throes of corruption, is sitting silent even after eight years on the fraud and embezzlement of funds.

The Leader of Opposition of Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri appreciated the Lt Governor move saying that this AAP government led by Arvind Kejriwal has been indulged in making money to spread its wing across India. The DJB scam has again exposed the Kejriwal government's tall claim to be 'kattar honest government'.

"It clearly indicates that they had collusion with the bank officials. The DJB and bank officials were aware from the beginning about non-deposit of money. It is, therefore, necessary to investigate why the Board headed by the CM maintained this softness to the bank even after such a huge



irregularities. Clearly, without the consent of Kejriwal, such a scam could not have happened. Therefore, all these allegations should also be investigated," said Bidhuri adding that interestingly, his deputy Manish Sisodia is the minister of DJB. On the other hand, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta held a press conference saying DJB had entered into an agreement with Corporation Bank (now Union Bank of India) in the year 2012 on collection of bills from customers under which people can deposit their water bills in the bank. The deal was handed over by the bank to another company Fresh Pay on the same day.

Gupta said the bank also sought a bank guarantee of Rs 1.25 crore from Fresh Pay Company, which was not in the original agreement.



Surprisingly, this Fresh Pay company also gave the responsibility of collecting money to another company Arum E-Payment. Thus the original agreement has been sublet to the third company.

"In June 2020, the Jal Board told the bank that the amount received from the customers was not deposited in its account. In this way Rs 20 crore of Jal Board was embezzled, but the Aam Aadmi Party government and Chief Minister Kejriwal did not take any action on it," Gupta said.

Gupta further said that this fraud case in the year 2019 is unique in itself. Jal board not only extended the contract but also increased the amount paid to the fraudsters by relaxing their conditions of service instead of recovering money or punishing them.

Traffic snarls in Delhi as rain continues unabated for 3rd day



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Traffic snarls were reported from different parts of the national Capital on Saturday as rain continued to lash the city for the third consecutive day. The city received 15 mm of rainfall from 8.30 AM on Friday to 8.30 AM Saturday, at the Delhi base station, Safdarjung Observatory, according to data shared by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

According to the IMD, Palam, Lodhi Road, Ridge, Ayanagar, Pusa, Jafarpur, Mungheshpur, Najafgarh, SPS Mayur Vihar, and Sports Complex recorded 40mm, 10.6mm, 28.2mm, 33.1mm, 15mm, 2.5mm, 35mm, 23mm, 7.5mm, and 20.5mm rainfall from 8.30 AM on Friday to 8.30 AM Saturday.

As incessant rain continued for the third consecutive day, the Delhi Traffic Police has advised commuters to plan their journey accordingly. It tweeted, "As per IMD report light to moderate intensity rain would occur over Delhi and adjoining areas. Commuters are advised to plan their journey accordingly." "Traffic is heavy on Road No 51 in the carriageway from Majlis Park towards Azadpur due to pothole. Kindly avoid the stretch," it said in another tweet. Traffic is heavy on Rohtak Road in the carriageway from Mundka towards Nangloi due to waterlogging at Rajdhani Park Metro Station. Kindly avoid the stretch, it tweeted.

Traffic is affected on Dhasa and Bahadur Garh Stand, Najafgarh due to waterlogging and Potholes at Phirni Road. Kindly avoid the stretch, the traffic police said. Some commuters posted on social media that the traffic was heavy in Azadpur area of northwest Delhi. Another user said there was traffic congestion in Najafgarh area. The Timarpur and Wazirabad road has also been affected by the traffic.

One of the users said that the traffic was heavy in Libaspur underpass towards Samaypur Badli. There were reports of tree falling on Arvind Marg near Adhchini red light and near Mahipalpur towards Chhattarpur. The minimum temperature of the city settled at one notch above the normal for this time of year which is 22.6 degree Celsius.

The relative humidity in the weather due to heavy rainfall at 8:30 am recorded 100 per cent and 100 per cent at 5:30.

near Abai Marg Chanakyapuri, Aurobindo marg near Adhchini red light and Rohtak Road near Rajdhani park metro station," traffic police said. The trees were uprooted at outer ring road near QU block Pitampura, Mehrauli Gurugram road near Y-point Chhattarpur CDR chowk, Abdul Gaffar Khan Marg near Kaveri Apartment Masoodpur, Aurobindo marg near Adhchini red light and Mahipalpur Chhattarpur Marg in front of Fortis Hospital.

Meanwhile, the waterlogging, uprooting of trees and potholes caused massive traffic jams in various parts of Delhi leaving commuters stranded in long queues of cars at major roads. "I am a commuter from Dhaula Kuan to Rajouri but while returning from Dhaula Kuan today, my car got damaged due to a pothole near Delhi Cantonment metro station. My car's front bumper got detached and now I have to bear expense to get it repaired," said Anil, a cab driver.

Safety advisory to avoid travel on rain-ravaged roads

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Due to continuous rainfall, many roads in the national Capital have been affected by waterlogging, uprooting of trees, and potholes, prompting Delhi Traffic Police to issue an advisory, asking commuters to plan their journey accordingly and avoid the damaged stretches for their convenience. "Traffic Alert: Due to incessant #DelhiRains in the last 24 hours, many roads have been affected by water logging, uprooting of trees and potholes. Commuters advised to plan their journey accordingly and avoid these stretches for their convenience," traffic police tweeted while sharing details of the damaged and waterlogged roads across the city.

As per traffic police, there are potholes on SPM to Vandematram Marg u-turn, Ashram to Kilor, Najafgarh-Kapashera road, Delhi Cantonment metro station, Mayapuri to Dhaula Kuan, on loop from Azadpur to Shalimar Bagh, Patel Chowk's roundabout, Sansad Marg in front of Niti Ayog and Talkatora Road near RML roundabout. "Water logging was there on the following roads-- Firni road near Dhasa bus stand Najafgarh, Abai road



Jamia: UGC grant released, no issue of 'financial crunch'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) on Saturday rejected reports regarding the university facing a "financial crunch", saying the University Grants Commission has recently released a substantial grant to it. The varsity issued a statement after Jamia Teachers Association President Majid Jamil told the media that the university is facing a financial crisis. In the statement, Jamia's Public Relations Office stated that it is factually incorrect and the university does not take any responsibility for Jamil's personal comments.

The report also mentions Jamia Millia Islamia Vice Chancellor Najma Akhtar's remarks, confirming the crisis that the university is facing.

The varsity has clarified that the vice chancellor has not made any such remarks in the recent past. "The Vice Chancellor herself has announced publicly at the Teachers Day function on 5th September 2022 based on the UGC letters dated 1st September 2022 that the UGC has released a substantial grant for the university to meet all the funds required for pending medical bills, reimbursement of tuition fee, post-retirement benefits, etc.

And will very soon release more grants to meet other requirements of the university," the statement read. "Accordingly now the additional grant and salary grant have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Education/UGC letters dated 22 September 2022," the statement read.

Prof. Majid Jamil has spoken to the media without confirming the same with the university administration, the varsity said.

Kejriwal: Plan ready to combat dengue

New Delhi: Amid a spurt in dengue cases in the national Capital, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said a plan has been devised to combat the vector-borne disease. In the coming days, several steps will be taken and school students will be involved in a big way in the efforts to check the spread of dengue, he said.

The Chief Minister said this after holding a meeting with senior officials of the health department, the Municipal Corporation of Delhi and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and other departments.

Delhi has registered a huge spurt in dengue cases in the last couple of weeks, raising the tally of the vector-borne disease to nearly 400 till September 17 this year. Over 100 people were diagnosed with the infection in the period from September 9-17.

According to a civic body report released on Monday, 152 dengue cases have been reported in this month alone till September 17.

After the meeting, Kejriwal tweeted in Hindi, "The rainy season spell has lasted longer this time. Dengue threat can increase. Today, sitting with officials of the health department, MCD, NDMC and other departments, a plan has been devised. In coming days, several steps will be taken. School students will be involved in a big way."

The city had recorded 295 dengue cases till September 9. Out of 396 total cases recorded till September 17 this year, 75 were reported in August. No death due to the disease has been reported so far this year. Cases of vector-borne diseases are usually reported between July and November, sometimes stretching till mid-December.

Punjab Guv infringes State's democratic structure: AAP

NEW DELHI: After the Punjab Assembly session was cancelled, the AAP on Saturday accused Punjab Governor, Banwari Lal Purohit, of infringing upon the State's democratic structure. The party said that the Governor overstepped upon the sanctity of the institution by asking for the 'list of business' of the next session that had been called.

Addressing a press conference in the national Capital, the AAP spokesperson, Saurabh Bhardwaj said that in the last 75 years, there has not been a single such Governor who has infringed upon the institution of the Vidhan Sabha and asked for the List of Business to be

placed before him. "I am shocked that despite the presence of senior advisors and officials of the Governor's Secretariat, the Governor of Punjab is overstepping all boundaries. In the case of Delhi too, we have seen the Lt Governor overstep and infringe upon chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's work. Every time this has happened in the last 7 years, the BJP has defended its nominee saying Delhi is not a full state," said Bharadwaj. "The Delhi Lt Governor acting upon the behest of the BJP and its Central Government has placed obstacles in every task taken up by CM Shri Arvind Kejriwal.

DCW: Urgent steps must be taken to ensure LGBTQI rights in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) has taken suo-moto cognizance of issues faced by LGBTQI community in the Capital. The Commission through its transgender cell regularly hold interactions with LGBTQI community and assists them in resolving the problems being faced by them.

However, the community continues to face several issues in the Capital, read a statement issued by DCW. The Commission has also issued a notice to the Social Welfare Department, Delhi

Government seeking details of steps taken by them to ensure welfare of the LGBTQI community in the city. The department has been asked to inform whether the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020 have been notified in Delhi.

In case the same has not been done, the department has been asked to furnish the reasons for the delay, stated the statement issued by DCW.

Further, the department has been asked by DCW to inform whether the Transgender Welfare Board has been set up, it said. The commission has also set up an

enquiry into the issuance of transgender certificates in Delhi. The commission has issued notices to all district magistrates of the capital seeking details of applications received in the districts seeking issuance of certificates. The commission has also sought data regarding the number of applications in the district where an appeal was made before t.

"The LGBTQI community continues to face a lot of issues in the country. They even face issues in the Capital. Urgent steps must be taken by the government to ensure their rights and welfare," said DCW chief

Cong calls Delhi education model a 'model of fraud'

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday alleged the education model being promoted by the Arvind Kejriwal Government in Delhi is a "model of fraud" and, if applied in other states, the entire education system will be "ruined".

Congress spokesperson Sandeep Dikshit said it is important to expose the "so-called education model" of the Aam Aadmi Party, so that the education system running in other states does not get ruined by their "bluff". "This is not a model of education, but a model of fraud, a model of modeling," the former MP

alleged. Citing statistics, Dikshit also claimed if Kejriwal's "so-called education model" is adopted in other states, the entire education system will be ruined. Dikshit said when the Congress government was formed in Delhi in 1998, 64 per cent of the children of class 12 used to pass in government schools.

In 2013-14, when the Congress went out of power, 89 per cent of the children passed, he said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters here. "Now 96 percent of children are passing. Which means that in the 15 years of Sheila Dikshit's government, there was a 25 per cent hike in those passing.



Mayfield Garden, Sushant Lok, Parts of Sector-30, Sector-42, Sector-34 and Narsingpur. As per the rainfall data shared by the district administration, the Gurugram tehsil on Saturday

till 8.00 am received 54 mm rainfall, Kadipur 46 mm, Harsaru 46 mm, Wazirabad 40 mm, Badshahpur 40 mm, Sohna 111 mm, Manesar 77 mm, Pataudi 152 mm and

Farrukhnagar 98 mm of rain. The traffic police Gurugram also issued an advisory for commuters to avoid any traffic snarl on the Delhi-Jaipur expressway.

PFI incite youth to join ISIS, LeT: NIA

Agency: Group conspired to establish Islamic rule in India by committing terrorist activities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has alleged that the radical outfit Popular Front of India (PFI) encouraged vulnerable youths to join terrorist organisations, including Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT), Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) or Daesh and Al-Qaida, and also conspired to establish Islamic rule in India by committing a terrorist act.

The NIA has also claimed that the documents seized during the nation-wide searches conducted at offices of PFI and its leaders contain highly incriminating materials targeting prominent leaders of a particular community. In a remand petition submitted before the NIA special court in Kochi on Thursday seeking custody of 10 persons in connection with a case registered



by the agency's Kochi office, the agency alleged that the radical Islamist outfit conspired to establish Islamic rule in India by committing terrorist act as a part of violent jihad. It said the PFI spreads "dis-affection against India by wrongful inter-

pretation of government policies to the particular section of people" to create hatred against the state and its machineries.

"During the investigation, based on materials collected, it has been disclosed that the accused named in the FIR were actively involved in the organised crimes and unlawful activities repeatedly, to terrorise other religious sections of the society, besides creating fear in the mind of general public based on the larger conspiracy hatched among themselves and others," the report said.

In near simultaneous raids across the country, a multi-agency operation spearheaded by the NIA on September 22 led to the arrest of 106 activists of the Popular Front of India in 11 States for allegedly supporting terror activities in the country. "The seized documents also contain highly

incriminating materials related to targeting prominent leaders of a particular community. The Hit List seized clearly shows that the PFI, which is working through its leaders, members and associates have gone far ahead in creating atrocities among the community," the report said.

With an intention to disrupt public tranquility and propagating alternative justice delivery system, "the PFI encouraged youths to join terrorist organisation" including Lashkar-e-Taiba, Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and Al-Qaida and "also conspired to establish Islamic rule in India by committing terrorist act" as a part of violent jihad, it said. "The case involves key players of the society and they are highly influential even to the effect of stalling the community and its progress by a mere call.

The common man stands threatened by the stand taken by the accused and their henchmen," the report added. The agency said the devices confiscated from the accused and from the offices of the PFI needed to be analysed at Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) in Thiruvananthapuram. The probe agency had produced 10 accused before the court and sought their custody to "unearth larger conspiracy hatched by the accused/cadres and office bearers/leaders of PFI".

The agency said the Ministry of Home Affairs had on September 16 directed it to probe the matter following which a case was registered on September 19 under various sections of the IPC and the UAPA. The NIA court had remanded the accused to judicial custody.

Nitish, Lalu to meet Sonia today, may push for pre-poll alliance

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, along with RJD patriarch Lalu Prasad and Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav, will call on Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Sunday.

The meeting assumes importance in the backdrop of discussions on Opposition unity. Both Nitish and the RJD are pushing for a pre-poll alliance ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha election rather than a loosely tied-together front.

The Bihar leaders will be in the national Capital to attend a rally to mark the birth anniversary of former deputy Prime Minister and Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) founder Devi Lal in Fatehabad, Haryana, organised by INLD leader O.P. Chautala. A senior JDU leader said a formula is being worked upon similar to 2004 for a pre-poll alliance where alliances can be forged at the State level



amongst parties comfortable in sharing space like the one that exists in Bihar.

Such an alliance can be explored in five major States — Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Maharashtra, which together send 222 members to the Lok Sabha.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury asserted that Opposition unity at the national level is a chimera that no one should chase. "I have said it repeatedly, that alliances have to be formed at the State level keeping in mind the unique political factors of each State," he said.

In 2004 too informal alliances existed prior to the

election among the several of the constituent parties of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) at State level. The Congress for example was in alliance with Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) in Jharkhand, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) in Maharashtra, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in Tamil Nadu and the RJD and the LJP in Bihar. The rally organised by Chautala will be attended by several Opposition leaders including NCP patriarch Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena leader and former Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, DMK leader Kanimozhi and National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah.

Yechury too will be present at the rally. Chautala has also sent invitations to West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and Telugu Desam Party chief (TDP) Chandrababu Naidu, for attending public meeting.

MEA warns Indians against fake job rackets in Thailand, Myanmar



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Saturday asked all Indian nationals aspiring for jobs in foreign countries to be wary of dubious foreign companies and urged them to verify the credentials of foreign employers and antecedents of recruiting agents in view of many Indians lured to Myanmar as part of a scam.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said instances of "fake job rackets" offering lucrative jobs in Thailand by dubious IT firms have come to the notice of Indian missions in Bangkok and Myanmar.

"Instances of fake job rackets offering lucrative jobs to entice Indian youths for the posts of 'digital sales and marketing executives' in Thailand by dubious IT firms involved in call centre scam and cryptocurrency fraud have come to our notice recently by our missions in Bangkok and Myanmar," the MEA said.

"The target groups are IT skilled youth who are duped in the name of lucrative data entry jobs in Thailand through social media advertisements as well as by Dubai and India-based agents," it said in an advisory.

The MEA said the victims are reportedly taken across the border illegally, mostly into Myanmar, and held captive to work under harsh conditions. It advised Indian nationals not to get "entrapped" in such fake job offers being floated through social media platforms or other sources.

"Before travelling on tourist/visit visa for employment purposes, Indian nationals are advised to check/verify credentials of foreign employers through concerned Missions abroad, and antecedents of recruiting agents as well as any company before taking up any job offer," it said. The Indian embassy in Myanmar recently rescued over 30 Indians out of 60 who were trapped in that country's Myawaddy area after falling prey to an international racket promising jobs in Thailand.

Myawaddy area in south-eastern Myanmar's Kayin state bordering Thailand is not fully under the control of the Myanmar government and certain ethnic armed groups hold sway over it.

QUAD leaders vow free, open Indo-Pacific region

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/NEW YORK

With China asserting itself in the Indo-Pacific region, the Quad combine has said it is against any unilateral actions to change the status there or increase tensions and called for rules-based international order.

This caution was sounded by the foreign ministers of the Quad grouping, comprising India, Australia, US and Japan. The Ministers met late Friday on the sidelines of the ongoing 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

The Quad grouping meet was held to deepen Quad multilateral cooperation in support of advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is inclusive



and resilient, according to the joint readout of the meeting held here on Friday.

The meeting was attended by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his counterparts Penny Wong of Australia, Hayashi Yoshimasa of Japan and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

"The Quad's vision is for a

region where the rules-based international order is upheld, and where the principles of freedom, rule of law, democratic values, peaceful settlement of disputes, sovereignty, and territorial integrity are respected," the joint readout released by the US State Department said. "We strongly oppose any unilateral actions that seek to

change the status quo or increase tensions in the region," the four foreign ministers said.

They reaffirmed their conviction that international law, peace, and security in the maritime domain underpins the development and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific," according to the readout.

"We also reaffirmed our unwavering support for ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) unity and centrality, ASEAN-led regional architecture, and practical implementation of ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," it said.

China claims nearly all of the disputed South China Sea, though Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam all claim parts of it. Beijing has built artificial islands and military installa-

tions in the South China Sea. China also has territorial disputes with Japan in the East China Sea. China and India are also involved in a protracted military standoff in eastern Ladakh. India has been consistently maintaining that peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control were key for the overall development of the bilateral ties.

In the meeting, they also underscored the Quad's unwavering support for the UN Charter, including its three pillars, and their steadfast commitment to strengthening and reforming the UN and international system.

"The Quad affirmed its support for a UN that solves the consequential challenges of our time and safeguards our shared and interconnected resources. This includes the full

implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals," the four ministers said.

The leaders said they are committed to advancing a comprehensive UN reform agenda, including through the expansion of permanent and non-permanent seats of the UN Security Council so that the Council reflects the current global realities and incorporates more geographically diverse perspectives.

The foreign ministers said they look forward to the counter-terrorism tabletop exercise being hosted by Australia later in 2022. They intend to meet in person for the next Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi in early 2023.

'Army capable to give befitting reply to enemy'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army is capable of giving a befitting reply to any adversary and when it engages with China, it does so on an equal footing, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said here on Saturday.

Asserting this point at an event to release a five-volume book on Deendayal Upadhyay in presence of Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar, he said, when China conducted first nuclear test in 1964, Deendayal Upadhyay was the first one who spoke in favour of India



conducting its nuclear test, the minister said. When India carried out its first nuclear tests in 1998 in Rajasthan under the leadership of then prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the idea was not to use the weapon against any country but to maintain a deterrent, he said.

"Because of that deterrence, the Indian Army today has full confidence of self-defence. Today in 2022, when India's army engages with China, it does so on an equal footing. If any power looks towards India with evil intention, Indian soldiers have the capability to give a befitting reply," he said.

Rajnath said country's goal is not only to make items for its needs, but also to export defence items to other countries. "I can say we are moving fast towards fulfilling dreams of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay," he said.



Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation Amit Shah during inauguration of five Border Outposts of 'Sashastra Seema Bal', in Fatehpur, Bihar, on Saturday

BJP panel indicts TMC for violence during Nabanna Chalo Abhiyan, submits report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The five-member delegation formed by BJP national president JP Nadda to probe the violence during 'Nabanna Chalo Abhiyan' on September 13 submitted its report to him at his residence on Sunday indicting the TMC leaders and the Government for allegedly allowing 'unprovoked violence' against the BJP workers and recommending a central probe into the incidents.

The delegation, which visited the state and met the BJP leaders and workers, injured in the incidents, took stock of the situation after the BJP's protest march in Kolkata that led to clashes with the police.

The report said the state police at the instance of the TMC made unprovoked brutal attacks and made arrests of peaceful BJP protestors who came under heavy stone pelting. The panel has recommended a central probe into the violence against the BJP workers.

Nadda had formed a party panel to investigate the violence that happened during the 'Nabanna Chalo' rally. The members of the delegation were asked to probe the situation on the ground level and investigate what led to the violence against the BJP workers. The fact finding committee consisted of former Uttar Pradesh Director General of Police, Briljal, MPs Colonel Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore



and Samir Oraon, Aparajita Sarangi and Sunil Jakhar. Among others, they visited injured BJP councillor Meena Devi Purohit. Central BJP leaders Sunil Bansal, Mangal Pandey and Asha Lakra also visited the affected party cadre in Kolkata. "The BJP workers were tortured by the police on the day of Nabanna Abhijana. Many were injured and are still suffering due to police atrocities," said Bansal.

According to Meena Devi Purohit, she had to get seven stitches in her head as she was attacked from behind by male policemen wielding lathis. "These were goondas in police uniforms." Earlier there were 34 years of left-rule violence and now there is TMC's violence, she said.

After meeting Meena Devi Purohit at her residence, one of the BJP panel member Sunil Jakhar said the force used by the police during the protest was a mere show of arrogance by the TMC.

"These atrocities show the barbarism of the TMC. Abhishek Banerjee said that he would have shot the party workers. This is sheer arro-

gance. The people of Bengal are observing this arrogance and the corrupt activities of TMC," Jakhar said. Former union minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore also criticised Abhishek Banerjee's comment and said the TMC leader's remark should be condemned by everyone.

TMC General Secretary and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee had earlier made controversial remarks saying that if he were in the police's shoes, he would have shot BJP workers during the 'Nabanna Chalo' protest march.

"Meena Devi is a senior lady. Look what they have done. Mamata said police used restraint? Does Abhishek Banerjee's comments show restraint? It is absolutely condemnable" said Rathore. Several police personnel as well as BJP leaders and workers sustained injuries as the party's "protest rally against corruption" in West Bengal turned violent on September 13. Visuals from Kolkata streets showed violent mobs pelting the police with stones and bricks as well as attacking them with lathis and setting fire to the Kolkata Police's cars also showing injured BJP leaders.

Leader of the Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suvendu Adhikari, the party's Hooghly MP Locket Chatterjee and senior leader Rahul Sinha and several other leaders were detained by the police.

Mumbai's former Police Commissioner arrested in NSE phone tapping case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has arrested former Mumbai Police Commissioner Sanjay Pandey in relation to the National Stock Exchange (NSE) phone tapping case. He was earlier arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and was presently in judicial custody.

The CBI has secured from a Mumbai court four-day custody of Pandey in connection with the alleged illegal phone tapping of NSE employees by his information technology firm. The CBI approached a special CBI court seeking his custody in connection with the tapping case.

The CBI will subject Pandey to custodial interrogation during his four-day custody. In addition to Pandey and former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of National Stock Exchange (NSE) Chitra Ramkrishna, the CBI has also named another former NSE CEO and MD Ravi Narain in the case.

It is alleged iSec Securities Pvt. Ltd. one of the firms that conducted a security audit of NSE, had illegally tapped phones of NSE employees during 2009-17, the CBI has alleged in its FIR. The company was incorporated by Pandey in March 2001 and he quit as its director in May 2006. His son and mother took over



charge of the company after Pandey's exit. On July 19, the ED Pandey in connection with a money laundering case linked to the alleged illegal phone tapping of NSE employees. The retired 1986-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer was arrested after two consecutive days of questioning in connection with the money laundering case.

Pandey is facing two connected FIRs by the ED and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) of illegal interception of phones of NSE employees by iSec Services Private Ltd, a company founded by him, and violation of Securities and Exchange Board of India guidelines in conducting NSE's system audit.

In its FIR, the CBI had alleged that Ravi Narain and Ramkrishna, both former chief executives of the NSE, had roped in company founded Pandey to snoop on the stock market employees by illegally intercepting their phone calls.

India hits back at Pak PM for comments on Kashmir in UNGA

Sehbaz Sharif's remarks over Kashmir issue false, says India, reprimands Islamabad of indulging in cross-border terrorism

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking exception to Pakistan Prime Minister Sehbaz Sharif's comments on Kashmir in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), India on Saturday charged him with efforts to "obfuscate misdeeds in his own country and justify actions against India."

New Delhi also blamed Islamabad for sponsoring cross-border terrorism.

Giving this terse message while exercising its right to reply to Sharif's statements at the UNGA, First Secretary of Indian mission in UN Mijito Vinito the United Nations, termed Shehbaz Sharif's claims over the Kashmir issue false and accused Islamabad of indulging in "cross-border terrorism".

"It is regrettable that the Prime Minister of Pakistan has chosen the platform of this assembly to make false accusations against India. He has done so to obfuscate misdeeds in his own country and to justify actions against India," Vinito said. In an apparent ref-



erence to terrorist Dawood Ibrahim, he said the country that claims to seek peace with its neighbours, would never shelter conspirators of 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts. Vinito said such a country would not make unjustified and untenable territorial claims against its neighbours.

A polity that claims it seeks peace with its neighbours would never sponsor cross border terrorism. Nor would it shelter planners of the horrific Mumbai terrorist attack, disclosing their existence only under pressure from the international community," he said.

Shehbaz Sharif, in his address brought up the Kashmir issue and said India's "illegal and unilateral" actions on August 5, 2019, to change the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, further undermined the prospects of peace and inflamed regional tension.

He also said Islamabad

wants peace with all its neighbours, including India, but it is possible only after a "just and lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute." Sharif claimed that India's "illegal and unilateral" actions to change the special status of Jammu and Kashmir has inflamed regional tensions.

"I think it's high time that India understood this message loud and clear that both countries are armed to the teeth. War is not an option. It is not an option. Only peaceful dialogue can resolve these issues," he added.

Referring to the recent incidents of forced abduction and marriages of girls from Hindu, Sikh and Christian families in Pakistan, Vinito said it is ironic that the country which has committed "grave violation of minority rights" is speaking about minorities on a global platform. "The desire for peace, security and progress in the Indian subcontinent is real. It is also widely shared.

US steps up diplomatic efforts with China on Taiwan, Russia

AP ■ NEW YORK

The Biden administration on Friday ramped up its diplomatic efforts to press China to end provocative actions against Taiwan and warned it about any active support for Russia in its war against Ukraine.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken made both cases in a meeting with his Chinese counterpart on Friday in a meeting on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly in New York, according to US officials. The session was one of the few that Blinken kept on his schedule after the death of his father on Thursday.

The officials wouldn't describe the Chinese response, but said Foreign Minister Wang Yi was receptive to the messages and that the two men discussed the need "to maintain open lines of communication and responsibly manage the US-China relationship, especially during times of tension."

The talks between Blinken

and Wang come amid a period of intense tensions on both issues and ahead of an expected meeting in November between Presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. Biden's recent comments about Taiwan and China's tacit support for the war in Ukraine are just two of the latest irritants in relations between Washington and Beijing.

State Department spokesman Ned Price said Blinken had affirmed to Wang the administration's commitment to "maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait" despite Biden's assertion earlier this week that the U.S. would send troops to defend Taiwan in the event of a Chinese invasion.

China regards the self-governed island of Taiwan as its sovereign territory, has not ruled out force to reunify it with the mainland and has in recent months stepped up military activity in the area. That activity is at least partially in response to high-level U.S. Congressional visits to Taipei, including by



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and stepped-up American arms sales.

Blinken "stressed that preserving peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait is critical to regional and global security and prosperity," Price said in a statement. It added that the

U.S. Remains committed to its "one-China policy" which does not support Taiwanese independence.

On Russia, U.S. Officials said Blinken underscored the damage that would be done to the Sino-U.S. Relationship should Beijing take a more

active role in supporting the war in Ukraine. U.S. Officials have said they are cautiously optimistic about recent comments from Chinese leaders about their concerns over the war and its consequences, and Blinken wanted to drive the point home.

Blinken "highlighted the implications if the PRC were to provide support to Moscow's invasion of a sovereign state," Price said in the statement. "PRC" refers to China's formal name, the People's Republic of China.

The US-China relationship has become increasingly fraught in recent years over multiple issues, including the persecution of Muslims and ethnic minorities in China's western Xinjiang region, clampdowns on dissent in Tibet and Hong Kong, aggressive Chinese actions in the South China Sea and against Taiwan, and the handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Nonetheless, Price said the US continues to be "open to cooperating with the PRC where our interests intersect.

Russia shells Ukrainian cities Amid Kremlin-staged votes

AP ■ KYIV

Russian forces launched new strikes on Ukrainian cities as Kremlin-orchestrated votes took place in occupied regions of Ukraine to create a pretext for their annexation by Moscow.

Ukraine's presidential office said the latest Russian shelling killed at least three people and wounded 19.

Oleksandr Starukh, the Ukrainian governor of Zaporizhzhia, one of the regions where Moscow-installed officials organised referendums on joining Russia, said a Russian missile hit an apartment building in the city of Zaporizhzhia, killing one person and injuring seven others.

In the five-day voting in the eastern Luhansk and Donetsk regions and Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south that began on Friday, election officials accompanied by police officers carried ballots to homes and set up mobile polling stations, citing safety reasons.

The votes are set to wrap up Tuesday, when balloting will be held at polling stations.

Ukraine and its Western allies dismissed the referendums as a sham with no legal force.

They alleged it was an illegitimate attempt by Moscow to slice away a large part of Ukraine, stretching from the Russian border to the Crimean Peninsula.

A similar referendum took



place in Crimea in 2014 before Moscow annexed it, a move that most of the world considered illegal.

"Half of the population fled the Donetsk region because of Russian terror and constant shelling, voting against Russia with their feet, and the second half has been cheated and scared," Donetsk Gov. Pavlo Kyrylenko said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukrainians in occupied regions to undermine the referendums and to share information about the people conducting "this farce".

He also called on people to try to avoid the partial troop mobilisation Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on Wednesday or to sabotage and desert the Russian military if they ended up in the ranks.

"If you get into the Russian army, sabotage any activity of the enemy, hinder any Russian operations, provide us with

any important information about the occupiers — their bases, headquarters, warehouses with ammunition," Zelenskyy said.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said the voting "looked more like an opinion survey under the gun barrels", adding that the Moscow-backed local authorities were sending sending armed escorts to accompany election officials and to note the names of individuals who voted against joining Russia.

In the Ukrainian capital, about 100 people from the Russia-occupied city of Mariupol, which is part of the Donetsk region, gathered to protest the referendum, covering themselves in Ukrainian flags and carrying posters "Mariupol is Ukraine".

"They ruined the city, killed thousands of people, and now they are doing some kind of profanation over there," said Vladyslav Kildishov who helped organise the rally.



QUAD nations to assist each other in taking action against malicious cyber activities

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In a stern warning to state-sponsored malicious cyber activities, the grouping of India, Australia, Japan and the United States — collectively called Quad — has said they would assist each other in ensuring the security and resilience of regional cyber-infrastructure.

A joint statement issued after foreign ministers Penny Wong of Australia, S Jaishankar of India, Hayashi Yoshimasa of Japan and US Secretary of State Tony Blinken met on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York called on states to take reason-

able steps to address ransomware operations emanating from within their territory.

"We exercise responsibility to assist each other in the face of malicious cyber activity, including from ransomware, against critical infrastructure," it said.

The joint statement described this as a call to action.

The foreign ministers said that the Quad countries are committed to an open, secure, stable, accessible, and peaceful cyberspace and support regional initiatives to enhance the capacity of countries to implement the UN Framework for Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace.

L.69 group of nations commit to instilling 'new life' in efforts towards achieving UNSC reform

PTI ■ NEW YORK

The L.69 group of countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific have committed to instilling 'new life' in their efforts towards achieving reform of the UN Security Council.

The grouping also underlined that lack of progress in the process has serious implications not only for the continued relevance of global governance institutions but also for world peace and security.

A high-level meeting of members of the L.69 group and other invited like-minded countries on 'Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Achieving Comprehensive Reform of the UN Security Council' was held here Friday on the margins of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting was chaired by Prime Minister of St. Vincent and Grenadines Ralph Gonsalves and co-hosted by



India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

In a joint statement, the group reaffirmed that adapting the United Nations to the contemporary world realities necessarily requires "urgent and comprehensive" reform of the Security Council, the principal organ for international peace and security.

The L69 group reiterated that an expansion of the security council in both permanent and non-permanent categories, as well as reform in its working methods, is "indispensable" in making it more representative, legitimate and effective.

"We commit to instilling a new life in our efforts during the 77th session of the General

Assembly and urgently call on all members states of the United Nations to join hands to achieve a comprehensive reform of the Security Council," the group said in a statement adding they affirm their commitment to making concrete progress on UNSC, including through a reenergized intergovernmental process.

"We further recognise that lack of progress in security council reform has serious implications, not only for the continued relevance of global governance institutions but also for global peace and security and delivering on the purposes, principles and promises of the United Nations Charter," the statement said.

Iranian women furious over headscarf death

AP ■ NEW YORK

The tears come quickly to Masih Alinejad when she talks about the messages she's received in recent days from women in Iran protesting against their government after a young woman died in police custody over a violation of the country's strict religious dress code.

They talk about the risks, possibly fatal ones, in facing off against government forces that have a long history of cracking down on dissent. They share stories of saying goodbye to their parents, possibly for the last time. They send videos of confrontations with police, of women removing their state-mandated head coverings and cutting their hair.

At least 11 people have been killed since protests began earlier this month after the funeral of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who died in custody after



being detained by Iran's morality police.

"I feel the anger of people right now through their text messages," Alinejad told The Associated Press in New York City, where the 46-year-old opposition activist and writer in exile has lived since fleeing Iran following the 2009 election.

"They have been ignored for years and years," she said. "That is why they are angry. Iranian women are furious now."

Amini's death spurred this latest explosion of outrage. She had been detained September 13 for allegedly wearing her hijab too loosely in violation of strictures demanding women in public wear the Islamic headscarves. She died three days later in police custody; authorities said she had a heart attack but hadn't been harmed. Her family has disputed that, leading to the public outcry.

Protests started after her

September 17 funeral, and have taken place in more than a dozen cities. According to a tally by The Associated Press based on statements from state-run and semi-official media, at least 11 people have been killed, while a state TV anchor said the number is even higher.

The Iranian government has pushed back, clashing with demonstrators and clamping down on internet access.

Alinejad shares the outrage of the protesters; for more than a decade she has been an outspoken critic of the theocracy that rules the country and its control over women through the required wearing of the hijab and other measures. In 2014, she started My Stealthy Freedom, an online effort encouraging Iranian women to show images of themselves without hijabs.

"Let me make it clear that Iranian women who are facing guns and bullets right now in the streets, they're not protesting

against compulsory hijab like just a small piece of cloth. Not at all," she said.

"They are protesting against one of the most visible symbols of oppression. They are protesting against the whole regime."

Alinejad, who grew up following the rules on religious coverings in the small Iranian town where she was born, began pushing back against being forced to don certain garments when she was a teenager.

But even she, who now displays her full head of curly hair as a matter of course, didn't find it easy to overcome a lifetime of conditioning.

"It was not easy to put it away, like overnight," she said. "It took three years for me, even outside Iran, to take off my hijab."

She said the first time she went out without a religious covering, in Lebanon, she saw a police officer and had a panic attack. "I thought the police are going to arrest me."

US terminates designation of Af as major non-NATO ally

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

US President Joe Biden has terminated the designation of Afghanistan as a major non-NATO ally, more than a year after the Taliban captured power in Kabul.

In 2012, the United States named Afghanistan a major non-NATO (MNNA) ally, which cleared the way for the two countries to maintain a defence and economic relationship. The designation gave several facilities and concessions to Afghanistan in terms of defence and security-related assistance and equipment.

"By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 517 of the



Foreign Assistance Act of 1961,...I hereby terminate the designation of Afghanistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally of the United States for the purposes of the Act and the Arms Export Control Act," Biden said in a presidential memorandum to the Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

The change in Afghanistan's status follows Biden's withdrawal of US troops from the

country last year, ending nearly 20 years of war.

Afghanistan swiftly fell back into the hands of the Taliban, which have repeatedly made assurances to the international community that they will protect the rights of women and girls, while simultaneously stripping away many of their freedoms and protections.

The MNNA status was first created in 1987. With Afghanistan's status rescinded, the US will have 18 major non-NATO allies, according to the State Department.

They are Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Qatar, South Korea, Thailand and Tunisia.

Abortion a matter of freedom for Biden, Democrats

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The way President Joe Biden sees it, the overturning of Roe vs. Wade was not just about whether a woman has a right to obtain an abortion.

"It's about freedom," Biden said at a private fundraiser in New York this past week.

Vice President Kamala Harris takes an even bolder approach when she talks about abortion.

"Extremist, so-called leaders trumpet the rhetoric of freedom while they take away freedoms," she told voters in Illinois this month.

That deliberate echo of "freedom" from Biden, Harris and other top White House officials shows how Democrats — eager to keep abortion front of mind heading into the November elections — at the



highest ranks are increasingly co-opting traditionally conservative rhetoric in a blunt appeal to a broad swath of the electorate.

White House aides think the message is a particularly potent one, especially when combined with repeated reminders about the GOP's proposals on abortion, which often do not include exceptions for rape or the mother's health that are popular with voters.

In Lebanon, boat tragedy kills 89 but others plan to migrate

AP ■ NAHR EL-BARED (LEBANON)

Thousands of Palestinians held prayers on a small soccer field in a refugee camp in northern Lebanon on Saturday, to mourn one of the scores of migrants who died after their boat sank off Syria's coast this week, even as others vowed to undertake the same perilous voyage.

Abdul-Al Abdul-Al, 24, kissed his father goodbye Tuesday before boarding a crowded boat leaving from a nearby town seeking a better life in Europe. It was his 14th attempt to flee the crisis-hit Mediterranean country, this time ending with the return of his dead body. He was to be buried in the camp where he was born, his father, Omar, told The Associated Press during the funeral procession.



The head of al-Basel Hospital in Syria's coastal city of Tartus said Saturday that the death toll has reached 89, adding that of the 20 others who were receiving treatment at the medical center, six were discharged.

The Lebanese army announced Saturday that troops have detained the man who allegedly organised the deadly trip.

The incident was the dead-

liest so far as a surging number of Lebanese, Syrians, and Palestinians have been trying to flee Lebanon by sea to Europe in search of jobs and stability. In Lebanon, tens of thousands have lost their jobs while the national currency has dropped more than 90% in value, eradicating the purchasing power of thousands of families and pulling three-quarters of the population into poverty.

‘India on track to attract \$100 bn FDI this fiscal’



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India is on track to attract USD 100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) in the current fiscal on account of economic reforms and ease of doing business, the government said on Saturday.

In 2021-22, the country received the 'highest ever' foreign inflows of USD 83.6 billion.

"This FDI has come from 101 countries, and invested across 31 union territories and states and 57 sectors in the country. On the back of economic reforms and Ease of

Doing Business in recent years, India is on track to attract USD 100 billion FDI in the current FY (financial year," the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement.

It said that to attract foreign investments, the government has put in place a liberal and transparent policy wherein most sectors are open to FDI under the automatic route.

The reform measures include liberalization of guidelines and regulations, in order to reduce unnecessary compliance burden, bring down cost and enhance the ease of doing

business in India, it added.

FDI equity inflows in India dipped by 6 per cent to USD 16.6 billion during April-June period of the current fiscal.

It also said that to address the import of low-quality and hazardous toys and to enhance domestic manufacturing of toys, several strategic interventions have been taken by the government.

The import of toys in 2021-22 have reduced by 70 per cent to USD 110 million (Rs 877.8 crore). On the other hand, exports rose by 61 per cent to USD 326 million.



REITs can raise short-term debt at lower cost as Sebi allows issue of commercial papers: Industry

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Capital markets regulator Sebi's decision to allow Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT) to issue commercial papers will help in raising short-term debt at a lower interest cost, according to real estate industry experts. REIT, a popular instrument globally, was introduced in India a few years ago to attract investment in the real estate sector by monetising rent-yielding assets. It helps unlock the massive value of real estate assets and enable retail participation.

At present, there are three listed REITs — Embassy Office Parks REIT, Mindspace Business Parks REIT and Brookfield India Real Estate Trust — on Indian stock exchanges, but all these are of leased office assets.

On Thursday, Sebi allowed

emerging investment vehicles, REIT, and Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT), to issue commercial papers, subject to certain conditions.

Commercial Paper or CP in market parlance refers to a short-term debt instrument issued by companies to garner funds generally for a time period up to one year.

Welcoming the decision, Vinod Rohira, CEO, Mindspace Business Parks REIT, said: "Sebi's move to allow REITs to issue commercial papers provides an additional avenue of financing through short-term debt instrument at comparatively lower costs and shorter timelines."

This would aid in bringing down the cost of capital for 'AAA' rated REITs, he said.

Vikaash Khdloya, CEO, Embassy REIT, said the global

REITs have long used commercial paper as a short-term financing option.

This will further reduce the cost of capital for REIT and deepen the available capital pools which already include banks, FPIs and insurers, he said.

"The introduction of commercial paper in India further validates the creditworthiness of REITs as they continue to transform commercial real estate sector in the country," Khdloya said.

Piyush Gupta, Managing Director, Capital Markets and Investment Services, Colliers India, said, the capital raising options for REITs have been opening up.

The Sebi's decision will provide an avenue to raise short-term debt at a lower cost and in a shorter turnaround time, he

said. Sebi's move came after Reserve Bank Commercial Paper Directions last month indicated that InvIT and REIT having net worth of at least Rs 100 crore are eligible to issue commercial papers.

REITs and InvITs need to abide by the guidelines prescribed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for issuances of commercial papers and follow the conditions of listing norms prescribed by Sebi.

The issuance of listed CPs should be within the overall debt limit permitted under the REITs and InvITs rules.

While a REIT comprises a portfolio of commercial real assets, a major portion of which is already leased out, InvITs comprise a portfolio of infrastructure assets such as highways and power transmission assets.

No decision taken on oil refinery plant location in Maha, says Puri

PTI ■ CHANDRAPUR

Petroleum Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday said the Centre has not taken any decision to set up an oil refinery project in any specific area in Maharashtra.

Speaking to reporters in Chandrapur, he said the state government will have to discuss the project's location with the Central government.

He alleged the erstwhile government (in Maharashtra) had allocated land for the project but later refused under the pretext of changing the location, which derailed the project.

"Following this, the state (Maharashtra) and the country faced huge economic losses in the last two-and-a-half years," Puri alleged.

Puri was apparently referring to the Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemical project, proposed to be built at Nanar village in Ratnagiri district in coastal Konkan, but it was scrapped before the 2019 polls at the insistence of Shiv Sena, the then alliance partner of BJP.

Establishing a 60-million metric tonne per annum oil refinery will be the biggest plant in the world, Puri said.

Amazon India customer base from tier 2, 3 cities jumps 2-fold during festive season sale

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce firm Amazon India on Saturday said it has recorded a two-fold jump in its customer base from tier 2 and 3 cities during the first 36 hours of its festive season sale.

Tier 2 and 3 cities accounted for 75 per cent of the total customer base of the e-commerce major during its 'Great Indian Festival' sale, an Amazon India spokesperson told PTI.

"75 per cent of the customers came from tier 2 and tier 3 cities. We saw 2 times more customers from Tier 2 and 3 cities compared to last year," the spokesperson said. The festive season sale of the company started from September 23 and will end before Diwali next month. The company gave 24 hours early access to Prime members.

Amazon claims to have recorded sale of 10 lakh unique products offered by small and

medium business and startups from its platform during the first 36 hours of its festive season sale.

The company said its Prime member sign ups grew 1.9 times than last year and 68 per cent of the total new sign ups were from tier 2 and 3 cities. Amazon charges a fee from Prime users for special services but sign-ups comprises both paid and non-paid users. "It is encouraging to witness small and medium businesses, startups, artisans, women entrepreneurs offer a wide selection of products to our customer across India," said Manish Tiwary, Vice President & Country Manager, India Consumer Business, Amazon.

According to Amazon, customers showed preference for television brands like Samsung, OnePlus, Mi, LG and Sony.

The company's Amazon Business segment recorded 50 per cent growth in customers during the present sale.



"Amazon Business saw around 50 per cent growth in customers, over 100 per cent jump in orders and more than 200 per cent jump in sales over last year along with a 2 times growth in customers placing bulk orders for their business or corporate gifting needs. The number of sellers getting at least one business order grew by 23 per cent over last year," the statement said.

Amazon India has expanded its same-day delivery service to more than 50 major cities and towns in India for Prime members. "Same-Day Delivery within hours is now available in 2.5 times more pin codes compared to last year, growing from 14 cities to 50 cities and towns this year, including Surat, Mysuru, Mangalore, Bhopal, Nashik, Nellore, Anantapur, Warangal, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Patna among others," the company said.



Meesho records 80% jump in sale with 88 L orders on day 1 of festive season sale

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Softbank-backed e-commerce firm Meesho on Saturday said it registered around 80 per cent jump in the business with close to 87.6 lakh orders on Friday, the first day of its five-day festive season sale.

Tier 2, 3 and 4 cities accounted for around 85 per cent of orders on day one, the company said in a statement.

"Meesho clocked a record around 87.6 lakh orders on the first day of its flagship festive sale event — the Meesho Mega Blockbuster Sale. This is the highest number of orders recorded by the company in a single day — up about 80 per cent from day one of previous year's sale," the statement said.

The company said that it has received orders from deep corners of the country such as Jamnagar, Alappuzha, Chhindwara, Davengere, Hassan, Gopalganj, Guwahati, Siwan, Thanjavur and Ambikapur.

"With a wide assortment of around 6.5 crore active product

listings at lowest prices, the sale exemplifies Meesho's mission towards democratising e-commerce for everyone," it said.

Fashion, beauty & personal care, home & kitchen, and electronic accessories were the top-selling categories on day one, while consumers bought everything from sarees to analog watches, jewellery sets, mobile cases and covers, bluetooth headphones, choppers and peelers in record volumes to fulfil their festive shopping aspirations, the company said.

"With around 85 per cent of orders and approximately 75 per cent of sellers coming from Tier 2 and beyond cities, we are humbled to have created a far-reaching impact in the deepest corners of the country.

"We will continue to fuel the discoverability of hyperlocal businesses and products, empower MSMEs and further boost accessibility and affordability for our heterogeneous base of consumers," Meesho CXO for Business Utkrishta Kumar said.

Byju's clears \$ 230 mn dues to Blackstone for Aakash acquisition

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Etech firm Byju's has cleared USD 230 million payment that was due to private equity investment firm Blackstone for acquiring a majority stake in test

preparatory firm Aakash Educational Services, according to sources privy to the development.

Byju's had acquired Aakash in April for around USD 950 million.

"Byju's paid USD 230 million to Blackstone for acquiring a stake in Aakash," the source told PTI.

While it cleared payments that were due to the founder of Aakash in July, the payment of Blackstone was deferred based on a mutual agreement.

Founders of Aakash and Blackstone continue to hold a minority stake in the firm.

Acquisition of Aakash has been positive for Byju's business.

Payment to Blackstone and non-closure of USD 800 million funding round due to non-payment of committed investment from Sumeru Ventures



and Oxshott have been two main issues that raised questions on Byju's business performance.

Byju's co-founder and CEO Byju Ravendran at the time of announcing the result had said that the contractual commit-

ment of the two investment firms is still there, but the fund has not come and these entities have not made any investment in the last six months.

Byju's booked a loss of Rs 4,588 crore for the fiscal year

ended March 31, 2021, 19 times more than the preceding fiscal.

The losses in the 2020-21 fiscal widened from Rs 231.69 crore in 2019-20. Revenues during FY21 dropped to Rs 2,428 crore from Rs 2,511 crore in FY20.

But in the following fiscal, ending March 31, 2022, the company said revenue soared four-fold to Rs 10,000 crore but it did not reveal profit or loss numbers for that year.

Byju's said the losses widened in FY21 mainly on account of deferment of some revenue and losses incurred from WhiteHat Jr.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that Mr. Harinder Bhalia, Mr. Manu Bhalia, Mrs. Neelu Kapur are joint owners / mutates of Residential Flat Bearing No. 3402, on 4th Floor, (area measuring 1260 sq. ft.), in tower No. 03, (ATS Greens-II), at Plot No. A-38, Sector-50, Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The said property (U.P.) the said property by virtue of Mutation letter dated 20.10.2021, issued by Noida Authority, after demise of late Mr. Harinder Bhalia, who was owner of the said property, vide a transfer deed dated 18.03.2013. All persons are hereby informed that above mentioned owners/Mutates want to sell the said property to Mr. Saurabh Samra/this nominee, who is taking loan for purchase the said property from ICICI Bank Ltd., if anybody has any objection/s upon the ownership of Mr. Harinder Bhalia, Mr. Manu Bhalia, Mrs. Neelu Kapur in respect of the said property to Sale Mortgage, and any kind of objection kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 07 days of the present.

Kumar & Associates (Advocates & Consultants)
200, Unit No. 23, Shivaji Marg, Wazirpur, New Delhi-15
Ph: 011-4112227-28, kumar.associates.advocates@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified that Title Deed No. 2688 Dated on 22.05.1981, Regd. with Sub Registrar Sub Division-III, New Delhi of Property situated at G-13, South Ext. Part-II, New Delhi owned by Sh. R.K. Arora S/o Sh. M.L. Arora has been lost by Punjab National Bank, Manav Chowk Branch, Ambala City on dated 09.08.2022.

Branch Manager, Punjab National Bank, Manav Chowk, Ambala City

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large Mr. Mahesh Pal S/o Mr. Mool Chand who is purchasing the FLAT NO.001, FRONT RHS (WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS), AREA MEASURING 475 SQ. FEET, OUT OF KHASRA NO. 104MI, AT SIGNATURE APARTMENT-B, IN THE VILLAGE OF KHORA COLONY, PARGANA LONI TEHSIL & DISTT GHAZIABAD, (U.P) from Mrs. Suman Yadav W/o Mr. Sukhveer Singh & Mr. Pradeep Yadav S/o late Mr. Sukhveer Singh who had owners through revenue record, and same to be financed & mortgaged by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, on Second Floor, Opp. SBI, Sector-2, Noida, UP - 201301 Contact # 0120-4269379

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform to the public at large Mr. Vikram Solanki who is purchasing the FLAT NO. 204, (FRONT RHS) ON FIRST FLOOR, WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS AREA MEASURING 66.66 SQ. YARDS (i.e. 600 Sq. Ft.), OUT OF KHASRA NO. 104MI, AT SIGNATURE APARTMENT IN THE VILLAGE OF KHORA COLONY GHAZIABAD, (U.P) from Mrs. Suman Yadav W/o Mr. Sukhveer Singh & Mr. Pradeep Yadav S/o late Mr. Sukhveer Singh who had owners through revenue record, and same to be financed & mortgaged by Vastu Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. If any Person having any type of claim/right/title/interest over the said property, may inform in writing, at the address mentioned below, about his objections, within 07 days from today, failing which it shall be presumed that the said property is free from all type of Encumbrances, lien, disputes etc.

Lucem Legal LLP
B-93B, on Second Floor, Opp. SBI, Sector-2, Noida, UP - 201301 Contact # 0120-4269379

UJVN Limited
HO "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
Telephones: 0135-2763808 Fax- 0135- 2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvnl.com

दिनांक : 24 / 09 / 2022

Tender Notice

Office of the Executive Engineer (Generation) Chibro Power House, Chibro, invites sealed tenders from interested parties. Brief summary of tender is given below:

Tender No.16/EE(G)/CPH/2022-23 for "Annual maintenance of the Coolers & Pumps including replacement of main pipe line of 4*69 MVA Generator Transformers at Chibro Power house"

Estimated cost: ₹ 12.51,376/- GST Extra.

Date of availability of tender on website: 26-09-2022 from 11:00 Hrs. Last date for submission of tender: 17-10-2022 up to 16:00 Hrs.

For fuller & further details, kindly visit our website. The tender documents can be downloaded from the Nigam's website www.ujvnl.com

EE(G), Chibro

"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

‘Kalin nagari’ all set to host 4-day international carpet fair from October 15-18

PTI ■ BHADOHI (UP)

Carpet traders of Uttar Pradesh's Bhadohi district, popularly known as "kalin nagri" for its exquisite weaving skills, are gearing up for a four-day international carpet fair to be held from October 15-18.

Weavers, exporters and all other stakeholders, anxiously waiting for a revival of the industry after Covid pandemic, are expecting to book a handful of overseas shipment orders during the fair to be held in this town for the first time.

Organised by the Carpet Export Promotion Council under the Union textile ministry, the biannual fair was earlier held either at New Delhi or Varanasi.

The fair is scheduled to be held at Bhadohi, less than 50 kilometres from Varanasi, from October 15-18, officials said.



in organising carpet fairs for a long time, said, "The fair was first organised in Delhi 35 years ago. It has come a long way since then and is now being organised at Bhadohi. The medium and small traders of the district will benefit most from the trade fair."

General Manager of the All India Carpet Manufacturers' Union Aslam Mahboob said that the state government has taken several steps to facilitate the carpet fair in Bhadohi, which is well-connected with the Varanasi airport.

"Foreign importers will be able to reach the fair spot in 30 minutes after landing at Varanasi airport," Mahboob said.

District Magistrate Anil Kumar said preparations for the fair are in full swing and all aspects of the event are being looked into.

BPCL signs pact with Brazil's Petrobras to diversify crude oil sourcing

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) on Saturday said it has signed an agreement with Brazilian national oil company Petrobras for sourcing crude oil from the Latin American nation as part of plans to diversify its sourcing needs.

BPCL imports a large volume of crude oil which is turned into fuel such as petrol and diesel at its three oil refineries at Mumbai, Bina in Madhya Pradesh and Kochi in Kerala.

The firm, which gets majority of its supplies from west Asian nations such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia, is looking to diversify its sources of supply in an attempt to cut down reliance on any particular region.

Company chairman and managing director Arun Kumar Singh and Petrobras CEO Caio Paes de Andrade signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in Brazil. BPCL said in a statement.

Logiy Spaces, AA Holdings to invest \$ 37 mn to build logistic park in Karnataka

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Industrial and logistic park developer Logiy Spaces has tied up with AA Holdings to build a new project at Narasapura, Karnataka with an investment of USD 37 million (around Rs 300 crore).

In a statement, AA Holdings, which has recently been formed by Abhijit Verma, said it has formed a joint venture with Logiy Spaces to invest USD 37 million for the development of 1 million square feet of industrial and logistics park.

The project is scheduled for completion by September 2023.

"In our endeavour to enable local landlords and aggregators to become successful micro entrepreneurs and fulfil the need for quality commercial spaces in the country, we floated AA Holdings to provide them the right guidance and mentorship," said Verma, the MD and CEO of AA Holdings.



"We will be developing 1 million square feet of industrial and logistics park in the suburbs of Karnataka at an investment outlay of USD 37 million. This project will be executed in a joint venture with Logiy Spaces," he added.

Narasapura is one of the biggest industrial regions in Karnataka, under the district jurisdiction of Kolar and is well connected to notable cities and highways of Kolar, Malur, Hoskote, Bangalore, Chennai, Chittoor and NH 4 among others.

INDIA WHITEWASH ENGLAND IN JHULAN'S LAST WALTZ

Record first ever clean sweep on England soil

PTI ■ LONDON

A fairy-tale ending befitting her glorious career marked Jhulan Goswami's last waltz as India Women beat England by 16 runs in the third and final ODI to record their first clean sweep in this country.

That the feat was achieved at the Mecca of Cricket — Lord's — made it doubly satisfying.

Sent into bat, India were all out for a paltry 169, and at that point it looked like the tourists may have fallen many runs short of making the match a memorable one for their legendary seamer, who is calling it quits after two decades of incredible service to the game.

However, the Indians managed to eke out a win as Charlotte Dean (47) was adjudged run out in controversial fashion, for backing up. Dean, who nearly pulled off a stunning win for the hosts after they were reeling at 65 for seven and then 103 for eight, was out of her ground and Deepti Sharma simply held the ball to remove the bails, leaving the English flabbergasted.



Recently, ICC while modifying the playing conditions had moved this kind of dismissal from 'unfair play' to 'run out'. The changes would come into effect from October 1. On expected lines, the day revolved around the 39-year-old warhorse Jhulan Goswami, who is leaving the scene as women's cricket's highest wicket-taker, having started her journey way back in 2002.

Harmanpreet Kaur, who let Jhulan call the toss in a touching gesture, was

unable to hold back her tears, even as the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) planned to name a stand at the Eden gardens after the 'Chakdaha Express'.

She finished with excellent figures of 2/30 in her full quota of 10 overs, including three maiden overs.

The competitive Indian has seen the game evolve during her long journey that was marked with some unforgettable moments and few unpleasant days.

While she was not expected to be at

her peak in her final series, Jhulan did enough on her own to go out on a high, having bowled tidily in her last three international matches.

She was lucky to have got her first wicket of the day with a short one, her second scalp came when the pacer bowled Kate Cross with her ball number 10,001 in ODIs, again something which no other player has achieved.

England captain Amy Jones's decision to field first seemed to have paid dividends as India kept losing wickets at regular intervals to be bundled out in 45.4 overs. India were in deep trouble at 29 for four pretty early into their innings, but them came the revival.

All-rounder Deepti Sharma top-scored for the visitors with an unbeaten 68 off 106 balls, while opener Smriti Mandhana was the second highest scorer, making exactly 50 runs in 79 deliveries. Barring these two, and Pooja Vastrakar (22), to some extent, none of the Indian batters could make any substantial contribution in the final game of the series, which the tourists had pocketed with wins in the first two matches.

Among England bowlers, medium pacer Kate Cross returned with excellent figures of 4/26, while there were two wickets apiece for Freya Kemp and Sophie Ecclestone.

Harshal, Chahal's form in focus ahead of series decider against Australia

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India will be hoping their key bowlers, Harshal Patel and Yuzvendra Chahal, are back to their best when the hosts take on Australia in the series-deciding third T20 International here on Sunday.

India were able to plug the gaps in Nagpur to level the three-match series with a comprehensive win in the eight-over-a-side contest. But they will need their bowlers, especially Harshal and Chahal, to overcome their struggles ahead of the T20 World Cup.

India had got off to an electric start in the last game with Axar Patel bowling a fiery two-over spell that included a couple of wickets but they are struggling at the back end of the innings.

While Jasprit Bumrah is sure to carry the responsibility, senior seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's poor show at the death overs is a real concern. He struggled in the Asia Cup and in the opener against Australia.

He was dropped for the second T20, perhaps, because skipper Rohit Sharma felt he needed only four bowlers for the eight overs but Bhuvneshwar's form is worrisome.

Death overs specialist Harshal, who is returning from an injury, also hasn't inspired confidence and perhaps needs a couple of matches more to find his rhythm.

The right-arm medium pacer, who relies on his variations to be effective, has conceded 81 runs in his six overs at an economy rate of 13.50 and is the most expensive bowler in the series. He has struggled to get his lengths right, remaining



wicketless.

India rely on their spinners in the middle overs and while Axar has been a big positive, Chahal has faltered. He went for a lot of runs in the Asia Cup and the trend has continued against Australia.

India will, however, breathe a sigh of relief as Bumrah was his vintage best, showing no signs of rust after returning from his back injury.

In the batting department, the famed top order comprising Rohit, KL Rahul and Virat Kohli needs to be more consistent. The trio has not fired in unison for a while.

Suryakumar Yadav has also been patchy in the past few games with Hardik Pandya churning out match-winning performances.

Another chink in the Indian batters' armour is leg spin. The have continued to struggle against leggies and Adam Zampa has utilised this weakness well.

Dinesh Karthik, who played his role of a finisher to perfection in the previous game, is likely to get more game time. Skipper Rohit would also

like to give Axar, who is a like-to-like replacement for the injured Ravindra Jadeja, a go with the bat to see how the all-rounder performs in crunch situations. Additionally, he is the only left-hander in the side apart from Rishabh Pant.

The Australians, on the other hand, would also be concerned with their bowling.

After outplaying India in the first game, the Australians were at the receiving end in the second match, eventually losing by a massive six wickets. While Aaron Finch and Matthew Wade managed to put runs on the board, their bowling department failed miserably once again.

In the absence of the injured Nathan Ellis, pacers Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Daniel Sams leaked over 11 runs an over. All-rounder Cameron Green has also been expensive.

Wade has been brilliant with the willow but with a World Cup to defend in their backyard, the Australian team management would like the big-hitting Glenn Maxwell, who has scored just a run in two games, to pick up form.

She would spit fire even while bowling at me in nets: Mithali



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Jhulan Goswami's commitment to the game was such that she would 'spit fire' even while bowling in the nets, and at the receiving end of it often was her longtime teammate and captain, Mithali Raj.

India's finest ever batter Mithali, who called time on a glorious career in July, on Saturday welcomed her contemporary and fast-bowling great Jhulan into the former cricketers' club.

Having shared the dressing room for close to two decades, Mithali and Jhulan saw the massive growth of women's cricket in India, shared many memorable wins and also some heartbreaking losses.

Speaking to PTI on Jhulan's immense impact, longevity and relentless hard-work over the years, Mithali began by talking about the 'Chakdaha Express' early days when she came into the Indian team as a 19-year-old.

"We are of the same age, so we have that comfort level and communication. It was always very easy to reach out to her and speak to her. Someone who

was always high on energy on the ground, may be because she is a fast bowler," said Mithali.

The 39-year-old became the leading wicket-taker in ODIs through sheer dedication. Though swing was not her biggest weapon, accuracy and use of the seam got her a bagful of wickets.

The competitive spirit in Jhulan was very much evident even in the nets, recalled Mithali. "In the nets, I would often ask her 'why are you spitting fire, you are my teammate only na'. Then she would say 'to get out is the toughest'. She always had the competitive streak including domestic cricket where we played against each other often. I enjoyed that rivalry as well."

A fast bowler is expected to have a tough exterior but Jhulan was also gentle at heart. Mithali recollected a game in domestic cricket that revealed Jhulan's softer side.

"We were playing in the semifinals (Railways versus Bengal). I did not carry my helmet during that domestic season. Jhulan was aiming right at my head and I did leave a lot of her bouncers.

CAB planning to name stand at Eden Gardens after Jhulan Goswami

PTI ■ KOLKATA

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) is planning to name a stand at the Eden Gardens after legendary India seamer Jhulan Goswami, in recognition of her excellent services to the game.

Hailing from West Bengal's Chakdaha town in Nadia district, the 39-year-old Jhulan brought the curtains down on her glorious, two-decade career with the third and final ODI against England at Lord's on Saturday.

"We are planning to name a stand after Jhulan Goswami at Eden Gardens. She is a special cricketer and deserves to be with the legends. We will approach the army for the necessary permission. We are also planning a special felicitation for her on the annual day," CAB President Avishek Dalmiya said. "At CAB we give equal importance to women's cricket and hence we see so many talented cricketers. They are of course inspired by Jhulan's achievements. Though she has retired from international cricket we would love her to play in the woman's IPL," he added.

Women's cricket's highest wicket-taker, Jhulan, fondly known as 'Chakdaha Express', bids adieu to international cricket with over 350 wickets, a feat no bowler has achieved so far.



I don't practice too much but like to be specific: Karthik

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Specific practice and not 'too much of it' helps Dinesh Karthik come up with the big hits in extreme pressure situations.

One such case was on Friday night when he smashed a six and four to seal the game for India after nine runs were needed off the last six balls.

Asked about his process, the designated finisher in the team said creating scenarios in the nets helps him perform in the middle.

"Over a period of time, I've been practising for this, I've been doing it for RCB now and I'm happy doing it here. So it's a consistent routine for a period of time."

"I do a lot of scenario practices and also Rahul (Dravid) bhai and Vikram (Rathour) bhai has been accommodating of how I want to practice, what are the kinds of shots I want to practice."

"I have been very specific with it. I don't practice too much but I like to keep it as specific as possible," said Karthik after India levelled the series

against Australia.

In the first game, Karthik came to bat after Axar Patel while on Friday he was sent ahead of the left-arm spinner.

"I think it's something that we are trying, there are times when there could be a couple of overs where an Axar Patel could target a spinner and take them on."

"So that is the kind of logic at that stage and having a left hander and leg spinner bowling is a good matchup. So we try and use that option sometimes."

"So that's one of the reasons why we try and do it depending on how the game is unravelling at that point of time," said the 37-year-old.

Karthik played ahead of Rishabh Pant in the opener but a truncated game allowed the management to accommodate both in the playing eleven for the second T20.

"Today we required four bowlers to finish off the 8 overs as each bowled two but we actually had five options. So when you have five options, that's the luxury of having a world class all rounder in Hardik Pandya," said Karthik.

David is versatile and adds to Australia's batting options: Finch

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Big-hitting Tim David is a "versatile and flexible" player and his presence only adds to the options that Australia possess going into the T20 World cup, feels skipper Aaron Finch.

The Singapore-born batter, known from his explosive knocks, made his debut for Australia in the first T20.

"What Tim brings to the table obviously is some great form in competitions around the world. In various batting positions I know in the PSL, he batted at 4 and had a great tournament, other tournaments, he batted five and six," Finch said.

"So we see him as a really versatile and flexible player and obviously his power speaks for itself."

"We've all seen how destructive he can be once he gets in and in terms of the order I think it just depends on the game situation, maybe, some matchups in the opposition as well."

Talking about David's batting position, he said: "Ideally, it'd be right towards the back



end because the top order has done a great job.

"But I think if you look down our World Cup squad, we've got some power there with Maxwell, Stoinis, David, Wade and Smith. We've got a lot of options there which is really good."

Australia suffered a six-wicket loss to India in the second T20 which was reduced to 8 overs a side due to wet outfield.

"It's important that you're always looking at ways to improve and obviously we were with Maxwell at three, Tim David at four. So we're trying to be a bit more aggressive up

front and yeah, we haven't played too many shortened games," Finch said.

"Especially leading into a World Cup, we've to put some thought into it over some time. Josh Inglis came out at the last minute, and Sean Abbott took his spot. That was just to give us an extra bowling option, not knowing how the wicket would play."

"So there's just a little bit of execution with bat and ball I think at times that probably just swung the momentum of the game. And obviously, the way the Rohit played was pretty special. And also Axar the way that he bowled, he was outstanding."

Bangladesh, Ireland qualify for 2023 Women's T20 World Cup

PTI ■ DUBAI

Bangladesh and Ireland have qualified for the 2023 Women's T20 World Cup in South Africa after winning their respective semi-finals at the qualifying event in Abu Dhabi.

Bangladesh completed a 11-run win over Thailand and Ireland beat Zimbabwe by four runs in matches played at the Zayed Cricket Stadium on Friday to book their berths, joining Australia, England, India, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the West Indies, who have already made it to the 10-team tournament.

Bangladesh captain Nigar Sultana Joty said: "We came here to qualify for the T20 World Cup, and we did it! We have been playing together for so many years, this is our time to show the world how good we are, how much we have improved as a side."

Ireland captain Laura Delany said: "It (qualification) is massively important for the



growth of the game in Ireland. We feel fortunate that Cricket Ireland have introduced full-time contracts and I think we are starting to see the benefit of that.

"It is a lot of relief that we won. They run us till the last ball, it was a very competitive game. We are thrilled to be there. We have tried to veer off from focusing on the World Cup. We weren't successful last time so wanted to do things differently. We are proud to have got over the line today."

Papua New Guinea (PNG), Scotland, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the United States of America (USA) were the other teams to compete in the eight-team tournament.

Duleep Trophy Final: West Zone have one hand on trophy

PTI ■ COIMBATORE

West Zone closed in on a memorable come-from-behind victory as they took out the South Zone top and middle-order after setting them an improbable victory target of 529 in the Duleep Trophy final here on Saturday.

Reeling at 156 for six at stumps on the fourth and penultimate day, South Zone were staring at a heavy defeat as they trailed by 375 runs.

West Zone put up a mammoth 585 for four in their second innings after conceding a 57-run first-innings lead to their opponents.

Prolific run-scorer Sarfaraz Khan recorded a fine, unbeaten century (127 off 178 balls) to continue West's charge after overnight double centurion Yashavi Jaiswal was dismissed for 265 at the SNR College Cricket Ground.

At the end of third day's



play, West Zone were 376 for three and Jaiswal was batting on 209 off 244 balls. Jaiswal began the day from where he had left last evening, adding seven more boundaries to the 23 he had hit by the end of third day's play.

Jaiswal eventually fell to off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham, having faced 330 deliveries during his monumental knock and added 164 runs with Sarfaraz for the fourth wicket.

There was no respite, however, for the South bowlers as Sarfaraz went about his task with consummate ease to swell his team's overall lead and put them in a commanding position.

In all, Sarfaraz found the fence 11 times and cleared it twice, while also stitching together an unbroken partnership of 103 runs with Het Patel (51 not out) to compound South Zone's misery.

The declaration from West

skipper Ajinkya Rahane came after Sarfaraz completed his century on Duleep Trophy debut. Patel, coming off an excellent 98 in the first innings, scored his runs quickly, facing just 61 balls while hitting seven fours and a six.

Batting for five sessions, West left their opponents flattened, and the South Zone team did not quite recover from that. This was evident from their second innings batting as, with the exception of Rohan Kunnammall (93 off 100 balls), all batters failed to live up to the challenge.

Even as his colleagues left one after another, Kunnammall was able to bat fluently for the runs he scored with his team in an extremely difficult situation.

All of South Zone's experienced batters failed and fell to the pace duo of Atit Sheth and Jaydev Unadkat, who bowled very well and grabbed two wickets apiece.

PCB appoints foreign coaches for two domestic first class teams

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has appointed two foreign coaches for two of its domestic teams for the upcoming premier first class tournament and the national 50-over competition.

Nottinghamshire's Paul Franks and Leicestershire's Paul Nixon will be the head coaches of the Central Punjab and Sindh sides in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and national 50-over competition this season.

Franks, who has worked as assistant coach under Peter Moores at Nottinghamshire county, has replaced Pakistan's Abdul Razzaq as head of the Punjab side while Nixon, a former head coach with Leicestershire and England player, will be at the helm of affairs for the Sindh team.

PCB Chairman Ramiz Raja has made his intentions clear to have more foreign influence in domestic and junior cricket. Apparently, it is his brainchild to have foreign coaches and trainers working with the six

domestic first class teams.

Also, this could be the first time that any foreign coach has been appointed to work with domestic teams in a full season.

In the inaugural Pakistan Junior League which begins next month, the PCB has appointed South Africa's Gordon Parsons, New Zealand's Nicholas Webb, England's Julian Fountain, Julian Wood, and Toby Radford to work with the six teams under the Board's pathways development programme.

A reliable source in the PCB said all the foreign coaches working in domestic and junior teams are being paid through sponsors working with the Board.

The local coaches working with domestic teams are also getting a good amount of money as they are paid monthly salaries of between five to six lakh rupees along with other benefits.

The Board has encouraged former Test, international and first class players to work as coaches.

FIERCE LIKE FIRESTORM YET SOFT LIKE MARSHMALLOW: FEDERER AND NADAL

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Holding hands and crying together, while sitting next to each other, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, the two biggest sporting icons, unknowingly, produced yet another unforgettable moment that will be recorded for posterity.

There was not a single eye that wasn't moist at the O2 Arena in London, the place where Federer bid a tearful adieu to the game during the Laver Cup.

It was an unforgettable and emotional moment.

The players who appeared to be made of steel and were driven by an indomitable spirit, were melting. There was no inhibition, no shame. Such was the occasion.

Tears trickled down his cheeks, and the sobs were loud as Federer began thanking his companions, his fans and family after playing his last game.

It was simply overwhelming, it was human. The two, without an iota of doubt, are the most fiercest of players to have stepped on the tennis courts. The ones who redefined the game and showed how much a human body can be pushed or can achieve.

And yet they showed, inside those steely bodies they possessed child-like pure hearts that knew more than just the exhilaration of victory, and the agony and torment that accompanies defeat.

They showed that despite being fierce rivals inside the sporting arena, off it you could be respectful to your competitors. That they are more than just incredibly skilful artists.

It is this adorable and inspiring human element that catapults Federer and Nadal to a different pedestal in today's world, when hurling insult in the garb of aggression has become fashionable.



The humility of these two legends is like a balm for the soul.

While what they did with racquets in their hand will always be priceless teaching lessons for budding players, their public conduct and the way they carried themselves, is equally invaluable and worth emulation.

Indian cricketer icon Virat Kohli, too, gushed over their statesmanship.

"Who thought rivals can feel like this towards each other. That's the beauty of sport. This is the most beautiful sporting picture ever for me," Kohli tweeted with a picture of the two.

"When your companions cry for you, you know why you've been able to do with your god given talent. Nothing but respect for these 2."

While tournaments are public events, where people can choose to hide their real selves and rather create an image, Federer's genuineness and humility has been testified by his tennis colleagues.

Recently a player revealed how inside the locker rooms, Federer won't speak without "please" and "thank you".

It's not that they did not have moments where they faltered, but maintaining decorum, grace and humbleness for over two decades, is simply amazing.

He possesses the toughest of shots, found impossible-looking angles with ridiculous ease, and yet arrogance was miles miles away from him.

He would pull off a magical shot but won't yell after executing that. Wearing a sweet smile, he would simply go back to the baseline and get ready for his next shot.

In a brutal sport that the game of tennis has evolved into, a persona like Federer, who not just won 20 Grand Slams but also the hearts of his rivals and a legion of fans, will be missed sorely.

National Games TT: Harmeet, Sutirtha clinch men's, women's singles



PTI ■ SURAT

Gujarat's Harmeet Desai and West Bengal's Sutirtha Mukherjee clinched the men's and women's table tennis singles titles with dominating wins in the National Games here on Saturday.

Local hero Harmeet thrashed Haryana's Soumyajit Ghosh 4-0, while Sutirtha proved too good for national champion Sreeja Akula, with the Olympian winning 4-1 in the women's final.

Sutirtha ended the National Games with three gold medals — women's singles, doubles and team — while Harmeet and another Gujarat paddler Manush Shah won two each.

Gujarat men had won the team gold, with Harmeet and Manush playing stellar roles in front of home crowd. Manush also clinched the mixed doubles title, partnering wife Krittika Sinha Roy.

West Bengal emerged as the overall champions in table tennis, bagging four gold, one silver and three bronze. Gujarat finished second with three gold and three silver. Maharashtra was third with one silver and four bronze medals.

The final day well and truly belonged to Harmeet and Sutirtha as they vanquished top seeds G Sathiyam and Manika Batra in their respective semifinals before dominating the gold medal matches.

Harmeet, who had won the silver medal in Kerala seven years ago, wasn't going to let go of another chance of standing atop the podium and began the match with an aggressive mindset. He kept Ghosh on the defensive by finding angles from both forehand and backhand shots to win 11-8, 11-4, 11-7, 11-8.

Sutirtha was equally clinical in quelling the attacking instinct of 2022 Commonwealth Games

mixed doubles champion Sreeja, who had thrashed the likes of Ayhika Mukherjee and Diya Chitale on her way to the final.

Sreeja also ended up on the losing side in the mixed doubles final as she and partner FR Snehit were beaten in straight sets by Shah and Krittika.

Earlier Sutirtha had teamed up with Ayhika to defeat Karnataka's Yashaswini Ghorpade and Kushi V in straight sets in the women's doubles final.

West Bengal's Jeet Chandra and Ronit Bhanja clinched the men's doubles gold, beating statemates Arjun Ghosh and Anirban Ghosh in straight sets.

Earlier in the day, Harmeet and Sutirtha came up with inspired performances to upset top seeds G Sathiyam and Manika Batra in the men's and women's singles semifinals.

Harmeet defeated Sathiyam 4-2 while Sutirtha got the better of Manika by an identical margin.



Injured Sindhu to miss National Games, will be present at opening ceremony

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Two-time Olympic medallist P V Sindhu will not participate in the National Games as she has not recovered fully from an ankle injury, but the ace shutter will be present at the opening ceremony.

Sindhu, who is on the path to recovery after sustaining an ankle injury during the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, is going to be in Gujarat for the opening ceremony on September 29 along with other sports stars.

Badminton action begins in Surat on October 2.

"It is unfortunate that I will not be competing in the Games due to my injury. Had I been fit, I would have definitely represented my state (Telangana)," Sindhu said.

"The National Games is a great opportunity for all the

athletes and everyone I have spoken to is excited about it. I am sure the badminton matches will be very exciting."

Winner of silver medal in the 2016 Rio Games and bronze in Tokyo Olympics, Sindhu is the flag-bearer of Indian badminton.

"It is important that I take care of myself and focus on the challenges ahead in 2023 (Asian Games) and 2024 (Paris Olympics)," she explained.

Sindhu's father PV Ramana, himself a volleyball international, said it was unfortunate that she could not compete in the National Games.

"She was very keen to compete. Unfortunately, she cannot do so as her next review with the doctors and MRI will be in the first week of October," he said.

The injury on her left ankle has been described as a stress

fracture. The treatment protocol revolves around affording the ankle rest.

"I will be part of her rehab programme. Having been a volleyball player, I know what it is to make heavy landings. I will pass on my experience to Sindhu once she resumes training," said Ramana.

Sindhu had got injured in Birmingham.

"She did not talk about the injury and used conservative treatment to continue playing in the Commonwealth Games. It included icing, strapping the area on the advice of her coach, physios and doctors," said Ramana.

Sindhu could not compete in the World Championship recently as she was resting. As per her latest consultation with orthopaedic experts in Hyderabad, she has been advised to take further rest.

Dominant India held to 1-1 draw by Singapore

PTI ■ HO CHI MINH CITY

India dished out a dominating performance but failed to notch up a win, playing out a 1-1 draw against lower-ranked Singapore in their FIFA international friendly match in the Hung Thinh Tournament here on Saturday.

Ikhsan Fandi put Singapore ahead in the 37th minute when his free-kick from about 25 yards out took a deflection off the Indian wall and beat a diving goalie Gurpreet Singh Sandhu who could lay a hand on the ball but failed to stop it from entering the net.

Singapore's joy lasted just six minutes as Ashique Kuruniyan equalised in the 43rd minute off an assist from captain Sunil Chhetri.

Jeakson Singh made an interception in the Singapore half, passed the ball to Chhetri, who put Kuruniyan through on goal. Kuruniyan calmly slotted the ball home with a left-footed grounder which beat Singapore goalie and captain Hassan Sunny.

India are currently ranked 104th while Singapore are at 159th. The last time the two sides met each other in 2012, Singapore had won 2-0.

Singapore had lost 0-4 to hosts Vietnam in their first match.

As expected senior player Sandesh Jhingan and his defensive partner Chinglensana



Singh didn't feature in the match as they reached here only on Friday. They did not accompany the team which flew out of India on Tuesday night due to travel document related issues.

Singapore were the more attacking side in the early stages of the match and they had a good chance in the 15th minute. Ikshan Fandi was played through behind the Indian defence, but his first touch off the high ball was too heavy and defender Anwar Ali cleared it for a corner and averted the danger.

India settled down nicely, and Liston Colaco was on target in the 19th minute, when he fired in a long range shot, only to see Singapore goalie Sunny

make a fine save.

Gurpreet made a fine save in the 25th minute as Fandi leaped high and headed a cross towards India goal.

Two minutes later, Kuruniyan was on to the Singapore goal but he could not make the final touch from near the post, even as Chhetri was waiting.

The second half saw India dominating the match with more attacks.

Kuruniyan's powerful left-footer in the 49th minute was somehow saved by the Singaporean goalie while Chetri's shot from just outside the box, two minutes later, missed the target by a whisker.

India play hosts Vietnam in their last match of the friendly tournament on Tuesday.



Superb finish ensures cut for Tvesa and Vani at Irish Open

PTI ■ DROMOLAND

Faced with the prospect of missing the cut with four holes to go, India's Tvesa Malik (69) and Vani Kapoor (70) moved into a different gear to safely get into the weekend at the KPMG Women's Irish Open.

At 2-under each for 36 holes, both, Tvesa (73-69) and Vani (72-70), getting ready for the Hero Women's Indian Open next month, were T-42.

The cut fell at one-under-par with 63 players making it through to the weekend.

Playing together, Tvesa was 1-over and Vani was 2-over with just four holes to go and the cut looked likely at 1-under. Coming off a disappointing bogey each on the 14th, Tvesa and Vani birdied the 15th.

Then on Par-5 16th, Tvesa birdied yet again but Vani went one better by landing an eagle. Then as Tvesa parred the Par-3 17th, Vani picked another birdie.

On the closing par-5 18th, Tvesa picked a birdie and Vani parred and both were well inside the cutline, which duly fell at 1-under.

However, Diksha Dagar (72-75) and Amandeep Drall (74-80) had a disappointing week as they missed the cut.

Sweden's Moa Folke fired an exceptional round of 10-under 62 and led by two strokes at the halfway stage.

It was a sensational day for the 27-year-old Swede who started with a birdie on the first and then added another on the third. Then came three more in a row from sixth through to the eighth to make the turn in 5-under 30.

A dropped shot on the 11th was overcome as Folke rolled in four birdies consecutively on holes 13 through 16 before finishing with an eagle on 18.

Three players sit in a tie for second place with Denmark's Smilla Tarning Soenderby, Spain's Carmen Alonso and Czechia's Klara Spilkova all on 10-under-par.

Two players share fifth place after 36 holes with Dutch golfer Anne Van Dam and Finland's Ursula Wikstrom on nine-under-par having shot rounds of 68 and 66, respectively.

Julius Baer Cup: Erigaisi to meet Carlsen in final



PTI ■ NEW YORK

Young Indian Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi got the better of Liem Quang Le (Vietnam) to set up a final clash with world no.1 Magnus Carlsen in the Julius Baer Generation Cup online rapid chess tournament.

While the 19-year old Erigaisi had to fight hard to subdue the challenge of his Vietnamese rival, Carlsen won 3-1.

In the Erigaisi-Liem Le match, the first game ended in a draw before the Indian won the second to go ahead. A draw followed in the third before the Vietnam player drew level with a 32-move victory.

However, in the tie-breaker, it was Erigaisi all the way as he won two straight games to book a spot in the final, to be played

Carlsen was made to work hard for his passage into the final by the Keymer. The German teenager fought to stay in the match as both games 1 and 2 ended in draw before the World No.1 broke through to win the next two.

The USD 150,000 event's two-day final begins late on Saturday with the first match being a best of four games encounter. The second match will take place on Sunday when the winner will be crowned.

Earlier, Carlsen had topped the preliminary standings with 34 points followed by Erigaisi and Indian R Praggnanandhaa in fourth place.

The event features 16 players spanning three generations and is being held on a round-robin-cum-knockout format.

Pakistan hockey players get arrears, PHF releases 15 million rupees

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has finally cleared the dues of its players, distributing around 15 million rupees to 30 athletes, who had not been paid for the last five months. A player confirmed receiving the payment and said it was tough for all of them to survive without any daily allowances or fees from the PHF for the last six months as many of them had lost their jobs with their departmental hockey teams. "The arrears were their daily allowances and other fees from a national training camp and the Asia Cup and Commonwealth Games this year," the official said. The payments come on the eve of the national training camp being set up in Karachi for the Azlan Shah Cup in Malaysia in early November.

"At least now the players can focus on their skills and training instead of worrying about financial issues," PHF secretary Haider Hussain said.



Indian team for FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup leaves for Spain to play friendly matches

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian team for the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, to be held in the country from October 11, has left for Spain to play international friendly matches next week.

The All India Football Federation (AIFF), however, did not mention the teams the Indians will play against.

"These friendlies have been planned as part of the team's preparation for the upcoming FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, which is scheduled to take place in India from October 11," the AIFF said in a release. "The details of the upcoming matches will be confirmed soon."

The Young Tigresses have been camping in Bhubaneswar. The 23-member squad, along with the support staff, travelled left for Spain on Friday night.

The Squad:
Goalkeepers: Melody Chanu Keisham, Monalisha Devi Moirangthem, Anjali Munda

Defenders: Astam Oraon, Gladys Zonunsangi, Kajal, Naketa, Purnima Kumari, Varshika, Shilky Devi Hemam, Nikita Jude

Midfielders: Babina Devi Lisham, Nitu Linda, Shailja, Shubhangi Singh

Forwards: Anita Kumari, Lynda Kom Serto, Neha, Rejiya Devi Laishram, Shelia Devi Loktongbam, Kajol Hubert Dsouza, Lavanya Upadhyay, Sudha Ankita Turkey.

Junior men's trap team wins gold in Shotgun World Championship

PTI ■ OSIJEK (CROATIA)

India won a sensational gold in the junior men's trap team event at the ISSF Shotgun World Championship, beating Italy 6-4 in the final here on Saturday.

This was also India's first medal of the Championship. USA won the bronze.

It was no mean feat for the trio of Shapath Bharadwaj, Shardul Vihan and Arya Vansh Tyagi as the Italians are long established powerhouses in the shotgun discipline.

Even more so as the Indians were trailing the Italian team of Edoardo Antonioli, Emanuele Iezzi and Gianmarco Barletta 0-4 before staging a remarkable comeback.

Earlier in the day, Shapath, Shardul and Arya Vansh had shot a combined 205 in the qualification stage, where each member shot three rounds of 25 targets each, to finish second behind the Italians who shot 206, thereby making it to the gold medal match.

Nothing came easy for the Indians on the day as they tied



with team USA on the same score and then beat them 2-0 in a shoot-off to ensure a medal for themselves.

In the final, all the three Indians missed a target each in the first 15-shot shoot-off. The winner of each shoot-off is awarded two points and the first to six wins.

The Italians missed two and took the first two points. Luck kept eluding the Indians till the second shoot-off, where they missed two out of 15, only to find the Italians missing just one to take the round and go 4-0 up.

The Indians came back to

win the third 13-12 to make the score 4-2. Arya Vansh shot a second consecutive perfect five to lead India's fightback.

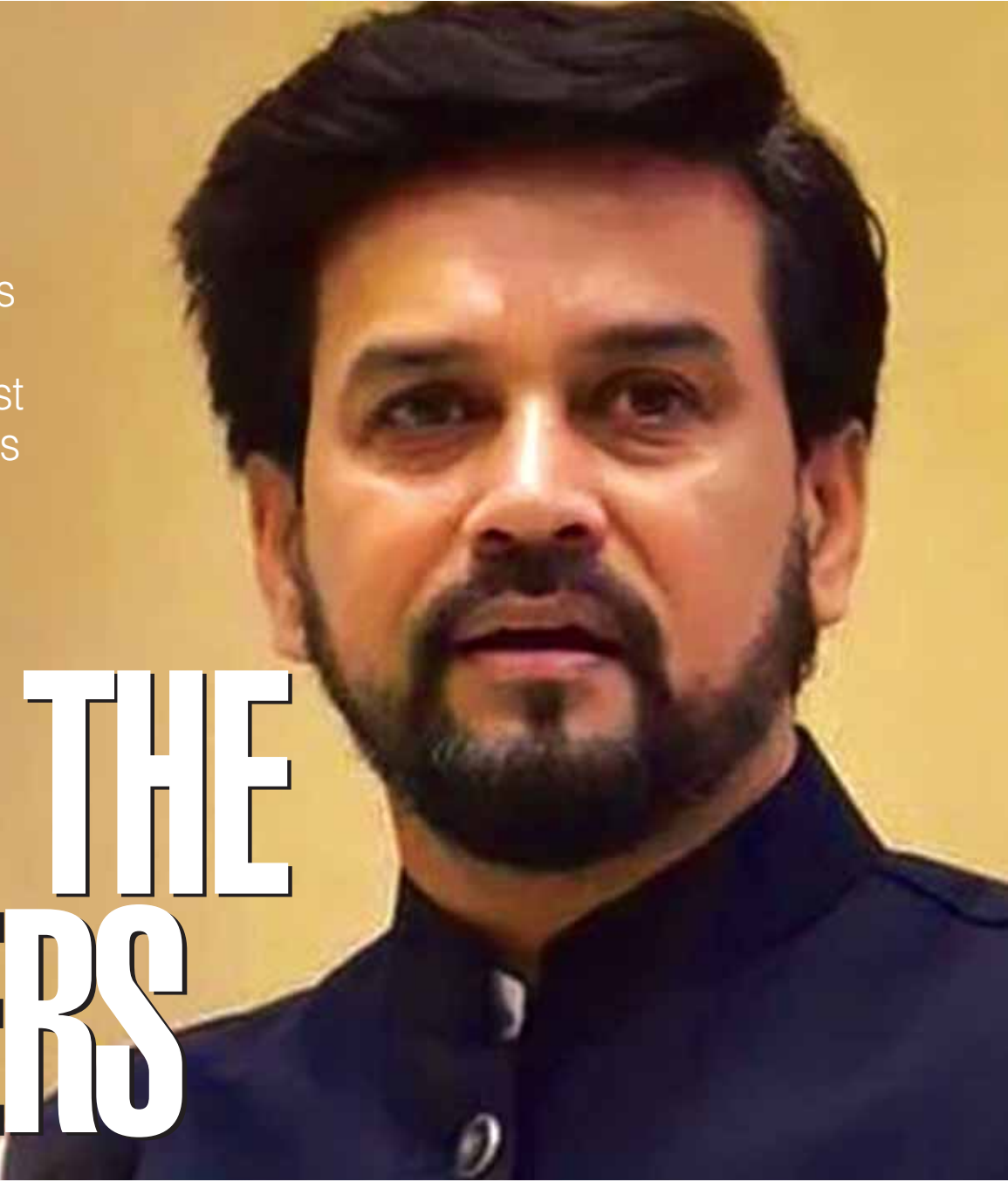
For the Italians, it was Edoardo Antonioli who was doing the star turn with three perfect fives, and he eventually did not miss in the final to finish with five perfect fives. It got even better for the Indians as they shot a perfect 15 in the fourth shoot-out and Emanuele Iezzi missed the 13th target to help India draw level at 4-4.

Gianmarco Barletta then missed his first target in the fifth shoot-out and India went ahead 6-5, forcing the Italians into a time out. That did not help, as Iezzi missed the first shot after it and the Indians marched along for a 9-7 lead. They had not missed 24 straight targets. India made that 26 before Vihan missed the 27th but they were still ahead 11-9. The Italians finished strong, getting all three of their last birds but the Indians were equal to it, closing out 14-12 with Arya Vansh shooting four straight fives and an overall 24 out of 25 targets.

“Life is tough; and if you have the ability to laugh at it, you have the ability to enjoy it.”
—Salma Hayek



Notwithstanding, the red flag raised by Minister Anurag Thakur and judges of the Supreme Court, TV debates continue to focus on polarizing topics. In many cases, the language and expression of the guests and anchors are both inflammatory and offensive. The media has played little heed to such counsel for sobriety in the past as well. In its blind pursuit of TRP sometimes it becomes a real source of threat to peace and harmony of the country, writes NAVIN UPADHYAY



TIME TO TAME THE RABBLE ROUSERS

The cat is out of the bag. Or it was always out in the open but everyone pretended to look the other way, till its low growl turned into a high-pitched roar and its threat menacing and imminent. No offenses to the canines, though; we are referring to the big cats of the TV screens.

Two back-to-back whistleblowing—first by Union Information and Broadcasting minister Anurag Thakur, and second by the Supreme Court of India—underline the threat posed by the TV anchors, to both the mainstream media itself and the peace and harmony of the country.

Notwithstanding, the red flag raised by the Thakur and judges of the Supreme Court, the TV debates continue to focus on polarizing topics. In many cases, the language and expression of the guests and anchors are both inflammatory and offensive. The media has played little heed to such counsel for sobriety in the past as well. In its blind pursuit of TRP sometimes it becomes a real source of threat to peace and harmony of the country.

Not for nothing, speaking at the 7th Annual Gathering and 20th Meeting of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD), Thakur focused his speech on the threat posed by such dangerous debates.

Speaking on the occasion Thakur has said that the biggest threat to mainstream media is not from new age digital platforms but from the mainstream media channel itself.

The minister said inviting guests who are polarizing, who spread false narratives and who shout at the top of their lungs damages the credibility of a channel. “Your decisions regarding the guest, the tone, and visuals - define your credibility in the eyes of the audience. The view may stop for a minute to watch your show, but will never trust your anchor, your channel or brand as a trusted and transparent source of news”, he added.

Turning to the audience, the Minister asked “Are you going to watch as the younger audience switches and sweeps through the shrill on TV news or are you going to bring back the Neutrality in NEWS and Discussion in DEBATES to stay ahead of the game?”

A day later, on September 21, the Supreme court expressed serious concern at the hate speeches in the media and hinted that it might put in some regulations/guidelines to check the menace.

Upset that the Government has done nothing to curb the propagation of hate speeches in the media, the Court asked the Government of India "why it is standing as a mute witness when all this is happening".

A bench of Justices KM Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy was hearing a batch of writ petitions seeking the Court's intervention to regulate hate speech.

"What are the provisions of law which relates to Hate Speech in India?", Justice Joseph asked when the hearing started.

This is the crux of the matter. Hate speech is not defined under any law, though there are

- specific provisions to check them.
- In its report submitted to then I@B minister Ravishanker Prasad in March 2017, the Law Commission of India underlined the following legislation to deal with hate speech.
- (i) *the Indian Penal Code, 1860* (hereinafter IPC)
- Section 124A IPC penalises seditious
 - Section 153A IPC penalises 'promotion of enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony'.
 - Section 153B IPC penalises 'imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration.
 - Section 295A IPC penalises 'deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs'.
 - Section 298 IPC penalises 'uttering, words, etc., with deliberate intent to wound the religious feelings of any person.
 - Section 505(1) and (2) IPC penalises publication or circulation of any statement, rumour or report causing public mischief and enmity, hatred or ill-will between classes.
- (ii) *the Representation of The People Act, 1951*
- Section 8 disqualifies a person from contesting an election if he is convicted of indulging in acts amounting to the illegitimate use of freedom of speech and expression.
 - Section 123(3A) and section 125 prohibit the promotion of enmity on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, or language in connection with an election as a corrupt electoral practice and prohibits it.
- (iii) *the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955*
- Section 7 penalises incitement to, and encouragement of untouchability through words, either spoken or written or by signs or by visible representations or otherwise
- (iv) *the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988*
- Section 3(g) prohibits religious institution or its manager to allow the use of any premises belonging to, or under the control of, the institution for promoting or attempting to promote disharmony, feelings of enmity, hatred, ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- (v) *the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995*
- Sections 5 and 6 of the Act prohibit transmission or re-transmission of a programme through cable network in contravention to the prescribed programme code or advertisement code. These codes have been defined in rules 6 and 7 respectively of the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994.
- (vi) *the Cinematograph Act, 1952*



COMMENTING ON THE ROLE OF THE ANCHORS IN PROPAGATING HATE SPEECH, JUSTICE JOSEPH SAID - "THE ROLE OF THE ANCHOR IS VERY IMPORTANT. HATE SPEECH EITHER TAKES PLACE ON MAINSTREAM TELEVISION OR IT TAKES PLACE IN SOCIAL MEDIA. SOCIAL MEDIA IS LARGELY UNREGULATED. ...AS FAR AS MAINSTREAM TELEVISION CHANNEL IS CONCERNED, WE STILL HOLD SWAY, THERE THE ROLE OF THE ANCHOR IS VERY CRITICAL BECAUSE THE MOMENT YOU SEE SOMEBODY GOING INTO HATE SPEECH, IT'S THE DUTY OF THE ANCHOR TO IMMEDIATELY SEE THAT HE DOESN'T ALLOW THAT PERSON TO SAY ANYTHING FURTHER. UNFORTUNATELY, MANY TIMES SOMEBODY WANTS TO SAY SOMETHING HE IS MUTED, A PERSON IS NOT GIVEN PROPER TIME, HE IS NOT EVEN TREATED COURTEOUSLY"



- Sections 4, 5B, and 7 empower the Board of Film Certification to prohibit and regulate the screening of a film.
- (vii) *the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973*
- Section 95 empowers the State Government, to forfeit publications that are punishable under sections 124A, 153A, 153B, 292, 293 or 295A IPC.
 - Section 107 empowers the Executive Magistrate to prevent a person from committing a breach of the peace or disturbing the public tranquility or to do any wrongful act that may probably cause breach of the peace or disturb the public and tranquility.
 - Section 144 empowers the District Magistrate, a Sub-divisional Magistrate or any other Executive Magistrate specially empowered by the State Government on this behalf to issue an order in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger. The above offences are cognizable and thus have serious repercussions on the liberties of citizens and empower a police officer to arrest without orders from a magistrate and a warrant as in section 155 CrPC.
- The commission suggested amendment to the Indian Penal Code, 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 by adding new provisions on '**Prohibiting incitement to hatred**' following section 153B IPC and '**Causing fear, alarm, or provocation of violence in certain cases**' following section 505 IPC, and accordingly amending the First Schedule of the CrPC.
- The commission in its report said that hate speech has always been a live debate in India and the issue has been raised time and again before the legislature, the court as well as the public. In Pravasi Bhalai Sangathan v. Union of India¹¹, the Supreme Court dealt with a case where the petitioners prayed that the State should take peremptory action against makers of hate speech, the Commission said, and added, the Court did not go beyond the purview of existing laws to penalise hate speech as that would amount to 'judicial overreach.
- "The Court observed that the implementation of existing laws would solve the problem of hate speech to a great extent. The matter was referred to the Law Commission to examine if it 'deems proper to define hate speech and make recommendations to the Parliament to strengthen the Election Commission to curb the menace of "hate speeches" irrespective of, whenever made', the commission said.
- Justice Joseph suggested that the government should come forward to put in place an institution to check hate speech. The court also asked the Government to clarify whether it proposes to act on recommendations of the Law Commission of India regarding amendments to deal with hate crimes.
- The Centre told the court that only 14 states have given their response to the Law commission's recommendation. The Sc

directed the remaining states to immediately file their replies and asked Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde to collate the responses of the States.

Commenting on the role of the anchors in propagating hate speech, Justice Joseph said - "The role of the anchor is very important. Hate speech either takes place on mainstream television or it takes place in social media. Social Media is largely unregulated....As far as mainstream television channel is concerned, we still hold sway, there the role of the anchor is very critical because the moment you see somebody going into hate speech, it's the duty of the anchor to immediately see that he doesn't allow that person to say anything further. Unfortunately, many times somebody wants to say something he is muted, a person is not given proper time, he is not even treated courteously".

Justice Joseph went on to add: Freedom of expression of the press, we don't have it separately unlike the US....there should be free debate no doubt about it but, you should also know where to draw the line because there is a huge influence, particularly with the visual media....they produce a very serious effect on your brain. Freedom is for the listener. The freedom of speech is actually for the benefit of the listener. How would the listener ever make up his mind after listening to a debate where it is just a babble of voice, you cannot even make out what is happening."

When Senior Advocate Sanjay Hegde stated that, "the industry is unregulated and there are no sanctions" one of the petitioners Ashwini Upadhyay countered, "Until hate speech is defined this will go on."

Asserting that hate speech poisons the very fabric, and can't be permitted, Justice Joseph said, "Political parties will come and go but the nation will endure the institution including press it is the important part, without an independent press no country can go forward, it is important that we have true freedom, there", Justice Joseph said.

"Stressing the need for a regulatory mechanism, Justice Joseph continued: "The problem is we don't have a regulatory mechanism for TV. I believe that all channels were fined heavily in England. We don't have that system here. Law means sanction, sanctions must be effected...the problem is that they are not being dealt with firmly. If sanctions are effected this will go... Any anchor will have his views, any anchor will not diverge from the view the channel is taking, they will all be intertwined, you can't divulge from it, but what is wrong is when you have people of different views you are calling them and you are not allowing them to express those views....in doing that you are bringing hate and your TRP is going up and you are driven by that and nobody is going to look into it and take care of it then it is very sad".

(The writer is Executive Editor, The Pioneer)

DECODE 'THOSE' GENES

In a healthy person, BRCA1 (BRest CAncer gene 1) and BRCA2 (BRest CAncer gene 2) are genes that produce proteins that help repair damaged cells. But when these genes carry mutations, they are responsible for higher risk of breast, ovarian and uterine cancers. At least, five to ten per cent of all cancer cases are estimated to be hereditary. Oncologists tell THE HEALTH PIONEER how the new tool, Genetic Testing, can be used in high-risk hereditary patients, to help them opt for risk reduction surgeries as a preventive measure, screening and, regular follow-up.

DR SVS DEO

Head of Surgical Oncology at AIIMS, Delhi and National Cancer Institute, Jhajjar, Haryana



LACK OF AWARENESS ABOUT THESE CANCERS AMONG PUBLIC, LIMITED AVAILABILITY OF GENETIC COUNSELLING AND TESTING SERVICES, THESE SERVICES ARE MAJOR ROADBLOCKS

nessed over the last 20 years. As many as 1.5 lakh new breast cancer cases are diagnosed in India every year.

Lack of awareness about these cancers among doctors and the general public, limited availability of genetic counselling and testing services, and reluctance to avail these services are major roadblocks to preventive health care in cancer treatment.

Genetic counselling before genetic testing for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer is important to determine whether you and your family are likely to have a mutation that is worth getting tested. Usually, genetic testing is recommended if you have:

- A strong family health history of breast and ovarian cancer.
- A moderate family health history of breast and ovarian cancer, and are of Ashkenazi Jewish or Eastern European

ancestry.

- A personal history of breast cancer and meet certain criteria (related to age of diagnosis, type of cancer, presence of certain other cancers or cancer in both breasts, ancestry, and family health history)
- A personal history of ovarian or fallopian tube cancer, or primary peritoneal cancer
- A known BRCA1, BRCA2, or other inherited mutation in your family

DR SUSHMA BHATNAGAR

Chief IRCH and National Cancer Institute (NCI) AIIMS, Jhajjar, Haryana



As this is a relatively new and fast emerging field in oncology, the draft guidelines will also have various modules focussing on increasing awareness among doctors, patients and the public.

FACT FILE

- The genetic factor can raise the breast cancer risk from 4 per cent to 80 per cent and ovarian cancer risk from 1 per cent to 40 per cent.
- On an average, 20% ovarian cancers, 4 to 5% breast cancers and 3 to 5% uterine cancers can be prevented through genetic testing.
- On an average, four in 100 women in a given population get breast cancer, while one in 100 gets ovarian and uterine cancers.

DR NEERJA BHATLA

Professor & Head, Obst & Gynaec & WHO CCR, AIIMS, Delhi. Head, Gynae Oncology NCI, Jhajjar, AIIMS



Genetic testing aids by revealing the risk of types of cancers for a woman carrying the mutation. If a breast cancer patient is found carrying a cancer-causing gene, she can be advised to have regular check-ups for timely detection of potential cancers. They have options of having risk-reduction surgeries in which we remove

the normal organ of the patient after the genetic tests reveal the organ is at high risk of malignancy. These tools may also help the patients learn how to manage their risks with personalized cancer screening, and identify preventive steps that they can take to reduce the cancer risk. For those expecting a baby, can look for oncofertility.

DR VAISHALI SHARMA

Senior Gynaecologist, Laparoscopic Surgeon and Infertility Specialist



the family, we do a PGD (Pre-implantation Genetic Diagnosis) test in the embryo before transferring it inside the woman's womb. In cases

GENETIC TESTS IS MOSTLY HELPFUL IN CASES OF COUPLES WITH RECURRENT MISCARRIAGES, FAMILY HISTORY OF GENETIC DISEASES, OR WOMAN IS ABOVE 40 YEARS.

where there is a higher risk of genetic diseases due to the woman's age or history of previous pregnancies with genetic disease like Down's Syndrome, we do PGS (Preimplantation Genetic Screening) test.

DR RANJIT MANCHANDA

Consultant Gynaecological Oncologist at Barts Health NHS Trust, and Clinical Senior Lecturer at Queen Mary University of London



Technology to undertake gene testing on a large scale is now available and needs to be used more for cancer prevention. Identification of women harboring genetic mutations that cause cancer, not only allows their optimum treatment with newly available drugs, but also helps identify unaffected at-risk relatives who can then access screening and preventive strategies.

Ovarian cancer (OC), breast cancer (BC), endometrial cancer (EC) and colorectal cancer (CRC) account for approximately 50% of cancers in women.

There are several effective preventive therapy options like risk-reducing surgery (mastectomy, risk-reducing salpingo-oophorectomy (RRSO) or hysterectomy), chemoprevention (e.g. aspirin or selective estrogen receptor modulators) and screening for women at high risk of breast cancer or CRC to reduce these CSG carrier-associated cancer risks.

In fact, changing the paradigm to population testing can address the limitations in the current clinical genetic testing model for CSGs across healthcare systems. It also provides a forward-looking strategy to maximise precision prevention.

Precision prevention encompasses a prevention strategy that incorporates individual variation in genetic, epigenetic and non-genetic (environmental, hormonal, reproductive and lifestyle) factors.

Genetic tests are available for cancers like:

Breast cancer/Ovarian cancer/Colon cancer/Thyroid cancer/Prostate cancer/ Pancreatic cancer/ Melanoma/ Sarcoma/ Kidney cancer/ Stomach cancer

PROS AND CONS OF GENETIC TESTING

PROS

- A sense of relief from uncertainty.
- In-depth knowledge about one's cancer risk.
- Awareness to help make informed medical and lifestyle decisions.
- Opportunity to help educate other family members about potential risk.

CONS

- Testing may increase anxiety and stress for some individuals.
- Testing does not evaluate a person's risk for sporadic cancers.
- Results in some cases may turn out to be inconclusive or uncertain.

DR NEENA MALHOTRA

Head, IVF Unit AIIMS, Delhi



Genetic testing has significant importance of preserving childbearing function as these women are young and keen to have pregnancies. The cancer treatments lowers the childbearing potential but with advancements in the field of IVF, it is now possible to share their gametes prior to treatment and freeze them to be used once treatment is over.

DR RAJIV SARIN

Professor of Radiation Oncology & In-Charge Cancer Genetics Unit at Tata Memorial Hospital & Advanced Centre for Treatment Research & Education in Cancer (ACTREC), Mumbai Tata Memorial Hospital, Mumbai



Our country reports over 15 lakh cancer cases annually of which more than half are women. About 5% of all breast cancers, 20% of all ovarian cancers and 5% of all endometrial cancers are hereditary or genetic in nature. At the Tata Memorial Hospital, we now register 1,200 families with

hereditary cancer every year, and a third of these families have breast, ovarian or uterine cancers.

There are several good private labs in the country that provide high quality and reliable genetic testing, but the cost, ranging from ₹ 5,000 - ₹ 40,000 is unaffordable for many families. We at TMC has provided free testing under research funded by the Indian Council for Medical Research to a few thousand families so far. The country urgently needs many more counsellors, oncologists as well as geneticists with expertise in handling hereditary cancer in families.

The cost of genetic testing also must be reduced for it to become more accessible to people.

NEWSBRIEF

Microrobots treat deadly pneumonia in mice

Nanoengineers at the University of California San Diego have developed microscopic robots, called microrobots, that can swim around in the lungs, deliver medication and be used to clear up life-threatening cases of bacterial pneumonia.

In mice, the microrobots—made of algae cells whose surfaces are speckled with antibiotic-filled

nanoparticles—safely eliminated pneumonia-causing bacteria in the lungs and resulted in 100% survival. By contrast, untreated mice all died within three days after infection.

The results are published in Nature Materials.

The work is a joint effort between the labs of nanoengineering professors Joseph Wang and Liangfang Zhang.

SUGAR-COATED POUCHES IN BODY FLUIDS TO DETECT CANCER

Detection of the cancer microenvironment may soon become much easier with the help of a new molecular biosensor recently developed by a team of India scientists. Cancer cells secrete small pouches, namely extracellular vesicles (EV) covered with sugar molecules, Hyaluronan (HA), which has a direct link to tumour malignancy and is considered a potential biomarker for early diagnosis of colon cancer.

These EVs are abundant in body fluids (blood, faeces, etc.), and all types of cells secrete these EVs into the extracellular matrix. Cancer cells secrete at least two times more EVs into the body fluids than normal cells). Therefore, these EVs could be isolated non-invasively from a patient's body for early cancer diagnosis.

Dr. Tatini Rakshit laboratory, supported by Inspire faculty grant of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), at Shiv Nadar Institute of

Eminence, Delhi, in collaboration with S. N. Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences (SNBNCBS), Kolkata, Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, Kolkata and IIT Bhilai, Chhatisgarh has unravelled the contour lengths of HA on a single cancer cell-derived EV surface.

Their study showed that a single cancer cell-derived EV is coated with very short chain HA molecules (contour length less than 500 nanometers) using single molecule techniques and elucidated that these short-chain HA-coated EVs are significantly more elastic than the normal cell-derived EVs. This intrinsic elasticity of HA-coated EVs in cancer helps them to withstand multiple external forces during extracellular transportation, uptake, excretion by cells, adhesion to cell surfaces, etc.

The study has been published in Physical Chemistry Letters.

COVID-19 Pandemic: The Battles India Won

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India -- a country of 1.3 billion people --stood in unison to handle the pandemic.

The Prime Minister ensured that we not only tackled this pandemic, but also progressed firmly towards an inclusive, accessible and affordable healthcare system, becoming an example for other countries to follow, says Prof (Dr) BALRAM BHARGAVA

The COVID-19 virus continues to linger amidst us since the onset of the pandemic two and a half years back. During this period, India has worked proactively towards solving the complex problems we faced on daily basis.

Now that we can finally sit back and reflect on the learnings from the past challenges and losses imposed by the pandemic, as well as the collective gains made during this challenging time, we are reminded of the countless stories of immense courage, solidarity and enterprise in addressing such an unprecedented health emergency.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India -- a country of 1.3 billion people sharing several cultures, geographies and socio-economic backgrounds--stood in unison to tackle the pandemic. The Prime Minister ensured that we not only tackled this pandemic, but also progressed firmly towards an inclusive, accessible and affordable healthcare system. This has now become an example for other countries to follow.

The progress started with the collective efforts by India's researchers' and scientists' communities in streamlining the country's response towards an evidence-based approach to successfully tackle the pandemic.

They worked round the clock to study the virus, establish treatment protocols, create tools and technologies for managing cases and administering of vaccines, and build public awareness around COVID-19 appropriate behaviour. From the beginning of the pandemic, India defied all the odds to become one among the five

nations that successfully isolated the SARS-CoV-2 strain.

This was the first validation of our scientific vigour. Its' testing started during January 2022 with just 1 laboratory. Over months, this base has expanded to over 3,300 COVID-19 testing labs spread all across the country. In diagnostics, India swiftly became self-sufficient, as the brightest of India's scientific minds worked on indigenous solutions for devising affordable testing kits for antibody detection. This led to India's emergence as the world's cheapest provider of RT-PCR tests.

Our vaccination ecosystem has always been supported by a strong manufacturing and production capacity which made us one of the leading low-cost vaccine providers across the world.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we utilized the existing mechanisms to successfully develop effective indigenous vaccines. India's first indigenous vaccine 'Covaxin' was developed in a record period of 9 months. It was a testament to India's strategic focus on public-private partnerships which provided the best of products and benefits to people at home as well as abroad.

The next big challenge was vaccination of a large indigenous population, although this was tackled with relative ease: we have achieved the historic milestone of administering vaccines to over 90 per cent of Indian population.

To ensure that these vaccines were widely available, India developed a one-of-a-kind digital platform, Cowin, which ensured easy access to



At a time when other nations were galvanizing their local resources to address the COVID --19 healthcare emergency which was ballooning beyond their control, India came to their rescue by providing them with abundant and affordable life-saving vaccines, testing and treatment aids.

vaccines to people across the country. To make these life-saving vaccines accessible to remote and geographically challenging terrains in India, drones were used which made delivery of vaccines possible in a short time. Like this, there have been several other achievements that helped India ace the pandemic.

While we made progress in preventive healthcare by developing diagnostics and testing kit, we did not forget to share the fruits of our enterprise with other countries across the world.

At a time when other nations were galvanizing their local resources to address the precarious COVID--19 healthcare emergency which was ballooning beyond their control, India came to their rescue by providing them with abundant and affordable life-saving vaccines, testing and treatment aids, and even the safety masks. India also participated in global trials and provided evidence on multiple interventions utilized across the pandemic.

India's multifarious achievements towards addressing Covid-19 pandemic were acknowledged by global leaders who praised India for its 'Vaccine Maitry (Friendship)' initiative which provided over 2,544 lakh vaccine doses to over 100 countries around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic cemented our reputation as a country with compassion, commitment and capacity to provide effective solutions to the global challenges.

We must acknowledge the critical role played by the scientific and medical fraternities in India, as without their collective and dedicated

efforts, such a success would not have been possible. It is also important to appreciate the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who by his constant and holistic support to all the stakeholders in the pandemic situation, ensured things worked efficiently and round-the-clock, and that the morale stayed high even during the most challenging times.

Despite the vicarious nature of an unprecedented health emergency, the Indian Prime Minister took unprecedented measures to ensure people had access to preventive healthcare infrastructure as well as speedy and effective treatment facilities. Without his constant efforts, such a large number of people could not have been vaccinated in time, and many more lives would have been lost.

Every cloud has a silver lining. It is thus not surprising that something good came out of the Covid-19 global health emergency. During the pandemic, our nation -- led by an able Prime Minister and guided by its ancient philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' -- soared above the daunting challenges to serve people in India and across the world as one large family.

Thanks to our collective efforts to combat an unprecedented pandemic, we are now better prepared to overcome obstacles and function to the best of our capabilities under the guiding principles of hope, health and cooperation.

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Copyright falls prey to mighty Internet

Globalisation and post-glob-alisation have brought us ever closer to each other. This intricate journey was only made possible by a vast network of information and communication technologies (ICTs). As a result, we all have experienced a slew of modernisation, standardisation and deterritorialisation drives all around the world. At the heart of this colossal process lies a “superior and never seen before “brand new upheaval called “information revolution”. As this information is gone in the great internet machine, it has witnessed another global movement called the digital revolution. The information revolution accompanied by the digital revolution has pushed knowledge beyond the control of the sovereign nation-states.

Before moving into the problems and prospects of safeguarding the copyright laws, let us see what copyright is all about. Copyright is regarded as “author’s right”. In legal terms, it is meant to describe the set of rights that the creators or the owners have over their literary and artistic works. The very word “works” refer to books, music, paintings, sculptures, films, computer programmes, databases, advertisements, maps and technical drawings as specified by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). Regardless of the WIPO conventions and other relevant global covenants, the copyright law is territorial and national in scope. Therefore, wherever an author or a creator resides or his work is first published, the applicability of the copyright protection depends on the national laws of the country in which the particular author demands protection. The term of a copyright law depends on several factors such as whether the work has been published or if so, the date of its first publication. Once it is published, the copyright lasts for the life of the author and additional 70 years after his/her death. Under the US Copyright legislation, an anonymous work, a pseudonymous work or a work made for hire, the copyright is guaranteed for a period of 95 years from the year of its first publication or a period of 120 years



from the year of its creation, whichever expires first.

Precisely, there is nothing like international copyright law applicable to all the nations. Therefore, no single copyright law can protect an author’s work throughout the world with a single registration like the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) that allows patent filing in a multinational context. Nevertheless, nearly 180 nations have already ratified the historic Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works of 1886, administered by the WIPO. This convention sets a minimum standard for the protection of the rights of the creators of the copyrighted works across the nations. Besides, there have been serious efforts to bring copyright legislations under one single umbrella among the members of the European Union (EU). However, the biggest challenge to this harmonisation effort is emerging from a host of numerous national copyright laws currently existing in the EU nations. The Berne Convention, apart from calling for establishing minimum standards of protection, has two unique principles: “National Treatment” and “Automatic Protection”. The first principle of “National Treatment” underlines that works originating in one signatory nation are given the same protection in other signatory nations as each grant to works of its creators. The second principle of “Automatic Protection” refers to the idea that copyright inheres automatically in a qualifying work upon its fixation in a tangible medium and without any required prior formality.

Indeed, the origin of the global copyright governance system is very much linked to the invention of the printing machine by Johannes Gutenberg in Germany around 1440. By 1483, when printing machines reached England, various monarchs starting from the King Richard III to King Henry in 1553 shaped a new regime of copyright that later defined the international copyright governance. Then, the era from 1661 to 1911 witnessed the evolution of a detailed copyright law in Britain.

Now in India, we have a

defined copyright regime, and its roots lie in the long British colonial regime. The copyright legislation was first introduced in India in 1874 during the time of East India Company. This act was replaced by the Copyright Act of 1914 which was just a replica of the then existing Copyright Act of 1911 in Britain. When India became independent, we got our first Copyright Act in the year 1957 which came into practice in 1958. The new Act immediately replaced the colonial

finance regime brought by the WTO-TRIPS.

In spite of having a globally effective IPR regime, the information revolution and digital revolution have pushed knowledge maintenance to the brink of a serious danger. We receive information so very easily that we don’t even realise the worth of the creator or the owner. Information superhighway is widely perceived as a modern-day colonial tool both to subjugate and exploit the massive resources from the Global South by the rich and technologically advanced nations from the Global North.

With connectivity growing at an unimaginable speed, people are increasingly becoming restless. Once powerful nation-states seem to surrender to market forces. What Karl Marx, the legendary German socialist thinker, prophesised in the 19th century about the “withering away of the state” (capitalist) is now turning right at the very heart of the capitalist nations. Nonetheless the bitter truth is that today the mighty western liberal nation-state is facing challenges from several points, and they are all multinational forces. These counterforces are not only transnational corporations and the gigantic markets controlled by them but also from civil and human rights movements, global civil society and international non-governmental organisations and at times from international terrorist organisations consistently backed by very strong radical religious movements. It is all spearheaded by the availability of knowledge networks accompanied by advancements in communication and technology networks. Super knowledge owners like Google, Microsoft, Facebook and a host of other electronic platforms have made learning available to all. And it is both a boon and bane. The information superhighway is now dominated by a large network of MNCs mostly based in advanced nations like the US, Japan, the UK, Germany, France, Canada, etc. The global flow is in their hands. The poor and developing nations are at the mercy of these gigantic corporations controlled by the developed countries.

The world is now at a crossroads. Knowledge has exploded. The owners of knowledge are finding it too difficult to protect their creations. The intriguing part of the TRIPS and post-TRIPS global IP regime is that they all have failed to address the pitfalls of the huge information revolution. Today no single person or enterprise is the sole owner of knowledge or any other technical knowhow. It is fully diffused. It is there everywhere. Then how to safeguard it and how the creators will be benefitted from their long hard work? The solution to this problem is too complex.

The global and national copyright legislations are facing an uphill task today. Nowhere the knowledge is safe. And there is no place to hide. Of course, there are stringent punishments awarded to law breakers, but then there is no end to predators till date. Frankly, the wide network of the transnational forces has weakened the long hand of the copyright law that used to be there much before the advent of the mighty Internet. Today the global knowledge economy is beyond the reach of the nation-state. Therefore, the knowledge networks that are supposed to aid all and share the benefits of innovations do not accord equal power to all. It further leads to a great digital divide between the countries of the North and the South. And this is creating an uneven world of knowledge. There is a large gap between access to knowledge and exploiting the benefits of the same in both sides of the globe. Today the global knowledge economy has gone beyond the arms of the copyright laws. It has long been Microsoftified. Thus the owners of knowledge are solely in the hands of the big corporations of the advanced nations.

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MAKHAN SAIKIA

PERSPECTIVE

Tobacco ads: Celebrities shirk moral responsibility

Professional ethics entail a cluster of values and principles that guide the behaviour of the professionals concerning what is right and what is wrong based on loyalty, accountability, honesty, and respect for the law. Hence, the celebrities’ acts of promoting harmful practices like tobacco consumption certainly are incompatible with the professional moral principles that posit serving larger social interests

The “smoking zone” has been shifted from industrialised developed countries to developing countries. While eighty per cent of the 1.3 billion tobacco users belong to the third-world countries, India sees more than a million deaths due to tobacco consumption accounting for 9.5 per cent of all deaths. Going by a World Health Organization report of 2014, a scary health concern induced by tobacco consumption puts a heavy burden on India’s economy as around 53 per cent of the tobacco-related deaths are attributed to non-communicable diseases and 80 per cent of them include chronic respiratory diseases, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, and diabetes. Accordingly, it is no surprise that the Indian state has been struggling to reduce tobacco consumption by 30 per cent by 2025.

At this juncture, promoting tobacco consumption by cinema celebrities is indeed not only depressing but also immoral, unsocial if not completely illegal. In a country like India, the cinema celebrities are often followed and imitated by the people passionately. Such fan following is often capitalised on by the big business and corporate bodies to further their business interests. It is not uncommon to see the people imitating the dressing and other

styles of the cinema celebrities in their daily life. Such imitations reflect upon the tremendous effect the celebrities have on the fans. While these celebrities are well within their rights to endorse a brand, the promotion of tobacco consumption invites criticism on moral and social grounds, for society demands a minimum amount of moral and social responsibilities from the public figures.

Accordingly, the general actions of the cinema celebrities and their acts of promoting tobacco consumption warrant moral scrutiny. These actions of promoting something as bad as tobacco that has negative implications on human health and societal integrity can be evaluated on various moral parameters. First, the performance of the action in the realm of restricted individual liberty (harm principle) can be employed. According to utilitarian philosopher John Stuart Mill, two types of actions are performed by humans: Self-regarding action (SRA); and Other-regarding action (ORA). The SRA is the one that influences the agent himself or herself. Explaining further, Mill says, an action ceases to be an SRA when it directly impairs others. However, the ORA is the one that affects others and thus it entails moral criticism.



This distinction, fundamentally, serves as a base for the broader horizon of individual liberty as well as serves as a reason to delimit individual liberty by justifying the state/country’s interference in it. The state’s interference in individual liberty is conditioned by the “Harm Principle” which says, “The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not a sufficient warrant”. It entails

that the harmful ORA of an agent morally permits others, including the state, to intervene in individual liberty. Thus, the state has the right to interfere in an individual’s liberty when it is required for the well-being of others/society. However, drawing a sharp line between SRA and ORA is difficult which leads to the claim that they both overlap each other and the act of promoting tobacco consumption is a good example in this regard.

Although the cinema celebrities do have their liberties to select the

roles to enact, the platform and the message they want to deliver through the act cannot be left unevaluated. With a clear knowledge that tobacco causes irrecoverable diseases and immense suffering, the action of the cinema actors’ promotion of tobacco consumption certainly influences the common people in many ways, eventually harming their bodies. Thus, these other-regarding actions of the celebrities fail to satisfy the condition which prevents the state to interfere and it is immoral as well since it ceases to bring maximum good in maximum number. While the state is taking major steps in the form of enacting laws to prevent tobacco consumption, those laws should include taking stringent actions against those who foster harmful practices like tobacco consumption despite their social position.

The second moral issue concerning advertising tobacco centres on the action itself. It violates the moral universal humanity principle that says, “act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end.”

In other words, this principle entails that an agent should act in

such a way that action never uses humans as means for any end. On the contrary, the cinema celebrities are using, though indirectly, other humans for their vested interests of making fortune ignoring their moral responsibility and respect towards other fellow humans and the society. Accordingly, these celebrities fail to satisfy the humanity principle since they are using others in the form of exploiting the passionate emotions of the common humans and thereby these celebrities lap into the sphere of immorality.

Moreover, it is pertinent to reiterate that the noble professions tend to serve the well-being of fellow humans and society alike. Professional ethics entail a cluster of values and principles that guide the behaviour of the professionals concerning what is right and what is wrong based on loyalty, accountability, honesty, and respect for the law. Hence, the celebrities’ acts of promoting harmful practices like tobacco consumption certainly are incompatible with the professional moral principles since it entails responsibilities to serve larger social interests.

(The writer is ethical consultant, National Institute of Advanced Studies, Bengaluru)



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