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PHARMA, TEXTILES, DRONE SECTORS

BHUBANESWAR, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹4



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TRUDEAU UNLEASHES KHALISTANIS ON INDIA

Canada PM breaches trust, blames India for terrorist's murder

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

A massive dispute has flared up between Canada and India. In a retaliatory move, New Delhi expelled a Canadian diplomat shortly after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asserted in Parliament that there were "credible allegations of a potential connection" between Indian Government agents and the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada in June. Canada also expelled a high-ranking Indian diplomat.

Taking exception to this, India on Tuesday asked a Canadian diplomat to leave the country within five days and rejected Trudeau's statement.

In a strongly worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) termed as "absurd" and "motivated" the Canadian Prime Minister's allegations late on Monday in the House of Commons that there were "potential" Indian links to the killing of the Khalistani separatist leader.

"That Canadian political figures have openly expressed sympathy for such elements remains a matter of deep concern. The space given in Canada to a range of illegal activities including murders, human trafficking and organised crime is not new... We reject any attempts to connect

the Government of India to such developments. We urge the Government of Canada to take prompt and effective legal action against all anti-India elements operating from their soil," the MEA said.

In a strong reaction to remarks by Trudeau and the Canadian Foreign Minister, the MEA said such "unsubstantiated" allegations seek to "shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

However, on Tuesday Trudeau said, "We are not looking to provoke or escalate the issue."

Canadian High Commissioner to India Cameron MacKay was summoned and informed about the decision to expel the senior official, with the MEA saying the move reflects New Delhi's growing concern at the "interference of Canadian diplomats in our internal matters and their involvement in anti-India activities."

The Congress backed the Government's action and said the country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount and its fight against terrorism has to be uncompromising. "The Indian National Congress has always believed that our



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers a statement in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. AP/PTI

country's fight against terrorism has to be uncompromising, especially when terrorism threatens India's sovereignty, unity and integrity," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X. "Our country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount at all times," he added.

Though the MEA did not divulge the name of the Canadian diplomat who has been asked to leave India within five days, people familiar with the matter said it is the Canadian intelligence agency's

station chief in New Delhi Olivier Sylvestre.

The Indian action to expel the Canadian diplomat came hours after Canada's Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly announced that a "top Indian diplomat" has been expelled from Canada in view of the alleged links to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian Khalistani leader. He was shot dead by two gunmen in Surrey in June.

Joly's office said the diplomat is Pavan Kumar Rai, the head of the Research and

unacceptable violation of our sovereignty... It is contrary to the fundamental rules by which free, open and democratic societies conduct themselves," he said. "As you would expect, we have been working closely and coordinating with our allies on this very serious matter."

He also said he had raised with Prime Minister Modi the issue during their meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi earlier this month. Trudeau urged the Indian government to "cooperate with Canada to get to the bottom of this matter."

The ties between India and Canada have come under strain in view of New Delhi's concerns over increasing activities of Khalistani elements in that country. Last week, the talks on a bilateral free trade agreement were frozen apparently in view of the deteriorating ties.

"The high commissioner of Canada to India was summoned today and informed about the decision of the Government of India to expel a senior Canadian diplomat based in India. The concerned diplomat has been asked to leave India within the next five days," the MEA said in a statement, adding, "We have seen and rejected the statement of the Canadian PM, as also the statement by their Foreign Minister."

Congress leader shot, Canada-based ultra claims responsibility

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a chilling incident that has sent shock waves through Moga district in Punjab, local Congress leader Baljinder Singh Balli (45) was shot at his residence in Dala village late on Monday. The assailants, believed to be two in number, arrived on a motorcycle, with one entering Balli's home while the other kept watch outside.

Hours after the gruesome incident, fugitive gangster and Canada-based Khalistani terrorist Arshdeep Singh Gill, notoriously known as Arsh Dala, claimed responsibility for Balli's murder through a Facebook post.

Dala, in his post written in Punjabi, attributed his actions to Balli's alleged involvement in crime and harassment of his mother. The post alluded to a longstanding vendetta fueled by personal and political grievances.

In disturbing CCTV footage capturing the incident,

a gunman can be seen forcefully entering the premises just as Balli, also known as 'number-dar' in the community, stood on his porch. Without hesitation, the assailant opened fire, striking Balli twice — once in the chest and once in the thigh. The injured leader was rushed to the hospital, but tragically, he succumbed to his injuries, according to the police.

Arsh Dala wrote: "I am responsible for the murder of Balli in Dala village because it was my own village's politics which had made me tread this path. This man (Balli) was responsible for keeping my mother in CIA (police) custody for a week and he also got my friends arrested. He was hand in glove with police. He destroyed my home just to gain his own afsar shaahi"

Notably, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs had designated Arsh Dala a terrorist earlier this year due to his involvement in a range of heinous crimes.

Women's quota Bill tabled

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After an inordinate delay, the much awaited and long-pending demand of several political parties, the Centre on Tuesday introduced a Bill to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. The Bill, known as the "Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam", was introduced and became the first Bill to be taken up for discussion and passage in the new Parliament building.

Officials said even if the Bill is passed during the ongoing Special Session, its implementation may still take some time and is unlikely to be in force for the next Lok Sabha elections in 2024 as the reservation will come into effect only after a delimitation exercise is completed.

The Bill will need to overcome several hurdles before becoming a reality, including support cutting across political lines and early census and



Congress members celebrate the Women's Reservation Bill in New Delhi on Tuesday. Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

delimitation exercise.

Lok Sabha data shows that women MPs account for nearly 15 per cent of the lower House's strength while their representation is below 10 per cent in many State Assemblies.

In the present Lok Sabha, 82 women members were elected which account for less than 15 per cent of the total strength of 543. In the Rajya Sabha also,

women's representation is about 14 per cent, according to the data shared by the Government with Parliament last December.

The provisions in the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill make it clear that the women's reservation will come into effect only after the delimitation exercise or the redrawing of constituencies

taking into account the data of the census conducted once the bill becomes a law.

Constitutional experts said after the passage of the Bill by both Houses of Parliament, it will also have to be approved by at least 50 per cent of State Assemblies to become a law.

According to Article 82 of the Constitution, amended in 2002, the delimitation process can be carried out based on the first Census taken after 2026.

The first Census after 2026 was to be carried out in 2031, which would be followed by delimitation or redrawing of constituencies.

The Government postponed the 2021 census exercise in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will have to be put on a fast track by the Government for the Women's reservation to be turned into reality before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. In 2011, the census was carried out in February-March and the provisional figures were released on March 31 that year.

CM's security enhanced; anti-sabotage team formed

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's security has been augmented with creation of a dedicated anti-sabotage check team.

As per official sources, the dedicated team will mainly be used during the CM's visits for attending garlanding events and to public meetings.

The team will consist of two

deputy commandant-rank officers, two assistant commanders, four armed sub-inspectors, havildars and sepoy.

The security at CM's residence has also been increased. Now 91 personnel, including a group of armed sub-inspectors, will be deployed.

Sources said a decision to increase the security cover for the CM was taken after concerns were expressed over the

works of Personal Security Officers (PSOs) following the murder of Health Minister Naba Das in January this year.

Besides, a dedicated security training centre will also be set up for which new posts have been created. Apart from the CM, the security cover for Assembly Speaker, Deputy Speaker and Ministers has also been revised. Around 72 additional police personnel will be

deployed. A total of 203 new posts have been created for the purpose.

Home Department Special Secretary Santosh Bala has informed the Accountant General (AG) regarding the approval of the Odisha Governor for the strengthening of the security wing under the Intelligence Directorate by the creation of new posts, the sources informed.

Low pressure forms over BoB

Heavy rains predicted in State

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Tuesday said that under the influence of a cyclonic circulation over north-west and adjoining Central Bay of Bengal (BoB), a low-pressure area has formed over

northwest Bay of Bengal off West Bengal-Odisha coasts.

Under its influence, heavy to very heavy rainfall is very likely to occur in seven districts of the State during the next 24 hours, the IMD said and issued an Orange warning for the next three days.

On Wednesday, heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20cm) is very likely to occur in the dis-

tricts of Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Subarnapur, Balangir, Boudh, Sambalpur, Angul, Bargarh and Jharsuguda.

Also heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely to occur in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Nuapada, Nabarangpur, Rayagada and Ganjam.

Thunderstorm with lightning

is very likely to occur in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Angul, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Bargarh, Nuapada, Balangir, Subarnapur, Boudh, Kalahandi, Kandhamal, Ganjam, Nayagarh, Puri and Khordha.

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'Swayam Siddha' on women rights inaugurated

Joint initiative of Mo College Abhijan, Women Commission

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In this 21st century, women are being empowered from every aspect of social and legal rights. Many organisations have come forward to make them aware about their capabilities and self-confidence. There is still a need to create awareness among several girl students of different colleges across State.

'Swayam Siddha', a State-level legal awareness programme on women rights, a joint initiative of Mo College and Odisha State Commission for Women was inaugurated on Monday at the Rama Devi Women's University here in the



presence of Mo College Abhijan Chairperson Akash Dasnayak and State Commission for Women Chairperson Dr Minati Behera.

Dasnayak said, "Only if we can create awareness among girl students to protect themselves, their rights and

the laws that protect their rights, they can safeguard their families, friends and neighbors. In coming days, several college-level programmes are to be organised in different districts."

Dr Minati Behera enlightened the girl students

on different social problems like child marriage, sexual harassment, cybercrime and the laws and Constitutional rights and protections one can avail.

RD University Vice-Chancellor Prof Aparajita Choudhury also educated the girls on their rights and duties.

In Sundargarh Man kills wife over suspected affair

PNS ■ SUNDARGARH

Police recovered a body of a 35-year-old woman from a locked house in the Talsara police limits of Sundargarh district on Tuesday. The deceased, identified as Pramila Soreng of Ghutupada in Subdega block of the district, is suspected to have been strangled to death by her husband Ali over suspected extramarital affair though the exact reason behind the death was not yet ascertained.

Preliminary investigations revealed that Pramila along with her husband Ali and seven year-old son was staying in a rented house of one Runi Kahali in Ghutupada.

Ali, a worker at Bansal Traders in Subdega, was reportedly going through a rough patch in his marriage.

On September 16, he had a fight with his wife suspecting her to be involved in an illicit affair. Next day, he even confided to an acquaintance, a liquor trader, that his son had witnessed his wife having physical relationship with another man. Three days later, as foul smell emanated from the house and the door was locked, neighbours suspected something wrong and informed police who along with the local tehsildar and a scientific team reached the spot.

They broke open the door and recovered Pramila's body and sent it for postmortem. Sources said Ali fled the scene along with his son after committing the crime.

A case was registered and further investigation was underway.

In Kalahandi Truck hits auto; 3 dead



PNS ■ BHAWANIPATNA

At least three people were killed when a truck dashed against an auto-rickshaw near Dasigaon village under Junagarh block in Kalahandi district on Tuesday.

According to reports, the auto-rickshaw carrying passengers from Thuamul Rampur block was moving to Junagarh in the morning. The

three-wheeler was hit by a truck at Chikili Chhak in which nine people, including the driver, sustained critical injuries.

On receiving information, the Chiliguda police outpost official reached the spot and took all the injured persons to the Kalampur CHC, where three victims were declared dead.

The identities of the victims were yet to be ascertained.

'Aap Hain Sachche Viswakarma' Dalmia honours 162 contractors

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Dalmia Bharat Limited honoured 162 experienced contractors across the eastern region as part of its 'Aap Hai Sachche Viswakarma' initiative, an annual tradition celebrated during the Viswakarma Puja. The initiative aims to appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of constructors whose skilled hands have helped shape countless dream homes into reality and their role in mentoring other skilled professionals in the industry.

As part of the celebrations held in Odisha, 57 experienced contractors were felicitated by Dalmia Cement representatives in the presence of their families, dealers and other members of the contractor community. - The Dalmia Cement also featured their photographs on retail arch gates at the dealer points from where they were nominated.

A company spokesperson stated, "Dalmia Bharat takes great pride in this initiative as it reinforces the company's core values of craftsmanship, unity and respect."

3 new scrub typhus cases detected in Sundargarh

Total cases now 183

NALINI SAHU ■ BHUBANESWAR

At least three more people on Tuesday tested positive for scrub typhus in Sundargarh district, informed Chief District Medical Officer (CDMO) Kanhucharan Nayak.

Eleven people were found to be scrub typhus positive a day back.

With the fresh addition, the total number of cases in the

district now reached 183. Of the infected people, 10 patients were from outside Odisha and nine from other districts, the CDMO added.

In Sundargarh district, currently, scrub typhus test facilities have been made available at Rourkela Government Hospital and District Headquarters Hospital.

The Health Department has deployed ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists) and Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife (ANM) volunteers to spread awareness about the disease.

According to reports, at least seven people have died due to the disease in Odisha in the past few days. Six of the deceased hailed from Bargharh district while another person belonged to Sundargarh.

Scrub typhus infection spreads through bites of infected chiggers (larval mites). The common symptoms of the disease include fever and a black inflamed mark on the skin called 'eschar.'

People who frequently visit farmland or forests are vulnerable to the infection.

"Scrub typhus is one of the tropical rickettsial infections. If left untreated, it can have fatal consequences. It is caused by Orientia tsutsugamushi and transmitted by the bite of the mite larvae or chiggers. It is a systemic illness and can present as a vasculitis-like infection. We appeal to the people to visit the nearest hospitals immediately after experiences various infections. It's treatment process is very simple and the patient gets cured very early," said Dr Basanta Choudhry, a physician.

'Thinkers' Club talk 'Rama Devi served neglected people in society'

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Prof Dr Sanghamitra Bhanja of Rama Devi Women's University joined the 85th webinar of the Thinkers' Club as chief speaker to discuss on the life of Rama Devi and her contribution to the freedom struggle of the country and her association with Mahatma Gandhi and her services to the neglected persons of the society.

Dr Bhanja said Rama Devi was the niece of Kulabrudha Madhusudan Das. Her father, Gopal Ballav Das was a Deputy Magistrate under the British Government. She married to Gopabandhu Choudhury who was also a deputy Magistrate under the British Raj. She was of 15 years only, when she married. She had two children. Manmohan Choudhury and Arnapurna Moharana.

According to Professor Bhanja, Rama Devi, though a daughter of a Zamindar family, she was maintaining a very simple life. She was devoted to high thinking, service to the downtrodden, a believer of truth and a practitioner of honesty. She was a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi. She undertook many creative activities along with Gandhi to uplift the country men that irritated the Britishers and for which, she was imprisoned several times. She participated in the Bhudan movement, Harijan Padajatra, upliftment of the tribals, said Prof Bhanja. The meeting was coordinated by club president Baroda Prasanna Das.

Dr Rajat Satapathy, Dr Bhabani Das, Dr Nanda Nandan Das, Professor Umasankar Mishra, Professor Dr Pushpanjali Parida, among others participated in the meeting.

Will see two action superstars together

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a much-awaited cinematic experience for the audience, an Odia movie, "Ram", will see two action superstars come together with the film release scheduled for this Durga Puja. The upcoming movie of actor Arindam Roy, which has created much buzz, will also see popular Bollywood and Tollywood star Rahul Dev, adding to the excitement of the public.

Shooting for the movie, produced under the banner of Ratna Films, is going on at full pace at various locations near the twin cities of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. The soundtracks and songs of the action thriller have already been recorded,



sources said.

With actor Arindam Roy making a comeback to Odisha film industry after a pause, the big-budget movie directed by Ashok Pati, is likely to win the hearts of the audience. Bharadwaj Panda has written the dialogues for the movie while Asad Nizam-Linkan duo composed its music.

An action sequence of the movie was shot at a location

near Bhubaneswar recently. Rahul Dev along with Arindam and others participated in the shooting. Even though the makers of the movie are yet to divulge anything regarding its plot, there are speculations that Rahul Dev could be essaying the role of the antagonist.

"Actor Arindam Roy is all set to present a big budget action thriller to the audience of Odisha during the upcoming

Dussehra. The presence of Bollywood actor Rahul Dev in the Odia movie will be a treat for the audience," said Pranay Jethi, the film's media planner.

Bengali beauty Rupsa Chatterjee and Odia actor Anubhav Mohanty will also be seen in the feature film. Recently, a photo of Prabhika dancing with Arindam in a song of the film had gone viral on social media.

For marrying lovers against parents' 'Sudhikriya' of 'living' girls by parents uncalled-for

It is a matter of utter shame and deep concern that young women who have completed the statutory age of 18 are being declared "dead" by their parents by way of performing their "Sudhikriya" (death rituals) because they dared to have their love marriage against their parents' consent.

As reported widely, Deepanjali Mallick, 20, of Demal village under Aul PS of Kendrapada, did her love marriage on 28.08.2023 in a local temple defying her parents. Her father Muna Mallick and her father-in-law Ananta Mallick are residents of the same Village Demal and



BRAMCHANDRA CST VOLTAIRE

incidentally they belong to the same SC Kandara caste.

The young man Rajendra whom Deepanjali married out of love is 23 years old. He is studying B.Tech course. Before her marriage with her Lover she

Eloped with him, a missing case was filed in the Aul Police Station. Police traced her. She was handed over to her parents.

Deepanjali found that her parents were planning to get her married to some other young man. This forced her to leave the house of her parents and reached her lover's house on the same day. She married her lover in a traditional way in a temple. This did not go well with her parents. So they did the "Sudhikriya". This is totally unfair and insulting to the image of their "living" daughter Deepanjali.

The other case was reported

in Gajapati district. Chandini Sahu, a +2 Science student who belongs to Khandayat Caste and is a resident of Chandiput village under Mohana PS, deserted her parents to marry her lover Dhanyaja Nayak, 28, a +3 Arts student of Christian Community of the same village. The duo reached AMOFOI Office on September 5. They married by exchange of garlands after having deep love affairs for nearly 10 years.

This caused a great deal of heart-burning for Chandini's parents Sahadev Sahu and Sanju Sahu. So to keep their caste image intact, they performed Chandini's

"Sudhikriya" on 11.09.2023 in total violation of the Right to Life as guaranteed to every citizen of India under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. Her parents might have done it to prevent themselves from social "ostracisation" by their Khandayat community. This social evil is very much rampant in many parts of Odisha, more so in Ganjam and Gajapati districts.

It is a matter of great worry that after 73 years of launching of the Constitution of India, parents are still considering their grown-up daughters as their "slaves", not being treated as individuals of dignity. In the Kerala Hydia case, the

Supreme Court of India has made it clear on March 8, 2018 that any woman of India who has completed the age of 18 "enjoys absolute autonomy over her person". It means that parents have no role at all to interfere in the personal life of their own daughter. She has all freedom to choose her life partner and marry him as per her wish. This being the law of the land, civil authorities, the State and the district administration must see to it that no young woman is "dishonoured" in any manner for doing her love marriage. (The writer is general secretary, Freethought Party of India; Mob: 9238878280)

Kudmi Samaj stir to hit train services from today

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

An indefinite rail roko agitation by the Adivasi Kudmi Samaj scheduled to start from September 20 is likely to hit train services in Odisha.

The Adivasi Kudmi Samaj has called for rail roko agitation in three States, West Bengal, Jharkhand and Odisha. This could affect the running of certain trains from Wednesday morning, the East Coast Railway (ECOR) stated on Tuesday.

The ECoR has already cancelled Neelachal Express and Bhubaneswar-Dhanbad

Express scheduled to leave Bhubaneswar on Tuesday evening.

Moreover, four trains have been diverted in Odisha.

Notably, the Kudmi community announced to stage rail roko agitation for an indefinite period from September 20 over alleged government apathy.

The outfit has been demanding to include the Kudmi community people in the Scheduled Tribe (ST) category and Kudmi language in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

the pioneer

Nuankhai Juhar

Soul of Brahmin worshipped by Dalits in Nuankhai

Other than Pidar, Ista Devi

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

Nuankhai or popularly known as Nuankhai is one of the several popular festivals celebrated with much fanfare in western Odisha. It is an agriculture-based festival observed in the month of Bhadraba in adoration of the Mother Earth and the Nature which provide everything to human beings.

Nuankhai which literally means eating of new crop of the year is celebrated in almost



killed a young cow belonging to a Brahmin (Gosein) of the village, which strayed in to the house. The Gosein, who was following the cow arrived after some time and asked the ancestors to hand over the cow.

The ancestors said that they didn't have any. Gosein was sure that the cow was inside. So he vowed if the cow was not found inside, he would offer his head to the deity. The ancestors went into the house and

prayed the deity to save them from embarrassment. The deity converted the beef in to a pork. The Gosein was thus falsified and he was sacrificed. His soul is worshipped by the ancestors since then.*

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the same manner across western Odisha. It spreads over three days. The first day is Upas (Fasting) second is Nuakhia (eating new crop) and the third day is Basi (celebration with scrumptious food).

There is, however, a little difference in observance of rituals and practices among the Dalits.

"We worship our Pidar (ancestors), our Ista Devi and the Gosein (soul of a Brahmin who was sacrificed by the ancestors) on the day of fasting. Pidar - because they invented the crops that we eat to survive; Mahalakshma and Kanabhaira because they are our family deity (Ista Devi) who represent the Mother Earth and Nature and Gosein because one of our ancestors had sacrificed the Brahmin," says Fakira Jagat of Tukula village.

"The family deities are different for different clans like for some the deities are Kalisundri, Dulha, Mirchuk etc." he adds.

The village deity in Tukula village is Gadien who is the protector of village (Gada Rakshak). She is known in different names in different villages like, Bastaren, Pardesen, Raktamauli, Mahuli Budhimaa and Baburay etc.

The heads (husband-wife) of the house observe fasting on the first day. The Pidar, Istadevi and Gosein are worshipped in the evening. In the second day morning all village people will gather near the adobe of the Gadien which is commonly known as the Gudi. The Jhankar (traditional priest) would offer the crop to the Gadien through various rituals and would distribute paddy crop pinnacle to each household. Returning from the Gudi, each household would start the process of Nuakhia in their respective houses.

The first step is to prepare the dish of flattened rice in the newly harvested paddy (mixing the paddy brought from

Gudi Ghar). Various kinds of delicious food items would be prepared. After offering foods alongwith the flattened rice to the Pidar, Mahalakshma Kanabhaira and Gosein, the Nuakhia by family members would start. It is an usual practice to eat flattened rice in Kure leaf and all the members of the family would eat at the same time sitting at one place.

The celebration of Juhar Bhet then follows. The younger ones bow before the elders in the family and village and are blessed by the latter. The third day is for merrymaking with delicious and non-vegetarian food and by some people through drinking of liquor.

*There is a story of why the soul of a Brahmin is worshipped by certain groups of Dalits in Nuapada. The story narrated by one Jagat reveals the ancestors

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Weaponising disruptions in Parliament antithetical to democracy: Dhankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Urging Members of Parliament to bury the strategy of “weaponising” disturbances and disruptions in parliamentary functioning, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said these are antithetical to democratic values.

Addressing a function to commemorate the rich legacy of the Parliament of India in the iconic Central Hall of the old Parliament building, he also called for emulating the exemplary conduct and decorum of the members of the Constituent Assembly.

Dhankhar said the time has come to give up the justification of transgression of conduct and outrageous disregard of rules in the temples of democracy by making reference to past instances.

“As we march into the new Parliament building, we must



enhance cooperation and consensual approach. Time for us to bid farewell to confrontational stance and resolve to ever keep national interest uppermost,” he told the gathering of parliamentarians in the central hall.

“Time to bury the strategy of weaponising disturbance and disruptions in parliamentary functioning as these are antithetical to democratic values and can never have the sanction of the people – our

ultimate masters,” Dhankhar said.

“Time has come to give up once and for all the premise of justifying the transgression of conduct and outrageous disregard of rules in the temples of democracy by making reference to past instances,” he added.

The Vice President said, “In this very chamber, the members of the Constituent Assembly embarked upon the journey to accomplish the

daunting task of drafting the Constitution.”

He said the deliberations in the Constituent Assembly in this theatre exemplified decorum and healthy debate. “Contentious issues were negotiated in a spirit of consensus with scholarly debate and spirited deliberations. We need to emulate the exemplary conduct of our founding fathers,” he noted.

Dhankhar also recalled the final speech of B R Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly where he had said, “If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives.”

“Let us heed his clarion call,” Dhankhar asserted.

“This historic walk to the new building of Parliament, in Amrit Kaal, be the march to

Bharat in 2047 as a Vishwaguru,” the Chairman said. He also called for making the new chambers of Parliament the sanctum sanctorum of “our temple of democracy in togetherness”.

Marking the day as a “momentous occasion,” he said, “I congratulate you all on our phenomenal rise. Traversing over a seven-decade journey, from Samvidhan Sabha to the present day in Amrit Kaal, these hallowed precincts have witnessed many a milestone.”

Dhankhar also said “From the ‘tryst with destiny’ at midnight of 15th August 1947, to unfolding of innovative forward-looking GST regime at midnight of June 30, 2017, and now this day.”

In this very Central Hall, Rajya Sabha chairman said, the members of the Constituent Assembly embarked upon the journey to accomplish the daunting task of drafting the Constitution of India.

—RAJYA SABHA: DAY 1— Heated exchanges between Treasury, Opposition benches



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first day of the Rajya Sabha sitting in the new Parliament House on Tuesday witnessed heated exchanges between the treasury and Opposition benches after Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge made remarks on the manner in which political parties select women candidates from weaker sections and raised the issue of “delayed” GST payments to non-BJP ruled states.

Addressing the Upper House at its first sitting, during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present, Kharge, who is the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, referred to the Women Reservation Bill which was passed in 2010 in the House.

His comments that all political parties only give tickets to those women from backward classes who cannot assert themselves evoked sharp reactions from the treasury benches.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the “sweeping statement” of Kharge that all parties do not choose effective women candidates is “absolutely unacceptable”.

“I speak on behalf of all our women. We all have been empowered by our party, by our Hon’ble Prime Minister. Hon’ble Rashrapati Droupadi Murmu ji is an empowered woman. Every (female) MP of my party is an empowered woman,” she added. Sitharaman stressed that the opposition leader cannot insult

people like this.

To this, Kharge, who is president of the Congress party, said: “Women belonging to backward classes, scheduled caste women do not get the kind the opportunities she (Sitharaman) gets”. Sitharaman again objected and asked, “Who is Droupadi Murmu? Opposition leader cannot insult the people like this, cannot draw a differentiation between women... We are asking for reservation for all women”.

After the intervention of Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, House proceedings continued. Kharge said he welcomes the women’s reservation bill titled Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

Later Kharge referred to the remarks made by Prime Minister Modi regarding federal structure and competitive federalism in the country and alleged, “Federal structure is being weakened under your leadership day-by-day”. This statement was vociferously objected to by BJP members.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the prime minister’s speech was totally “apolitical”, unbiased and balanced, and urged Kharge to speak in the House like a “statesman”. The senior Congress leader accused the central government of engineering the fall of governments led by opposition parties in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

This remark too was vehemently objected to by the ruling party MPs. Kharge also

accused the central government of delaying GST dues to the non-BJP state governments and also grants for welfare schemes like MNREGA.

However, Finance Minister Sitharaman challenged the statement regarding the payments of dues. “A factually incorrect statement has been made by the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) wherein he’s saying that GST revenue is not given to the states on time. This is absolutely wrong,” she said.

The minister also told the House that her ministry even borrowed money and paid to the states. “Three times we have paid the money in advance. There is no money pending for any state in GST and there is no delay in payment to the states. It is wrong on the part of the LoP to blame like this,” Sitharaman added.

Chairman Dhankhar asked both the finance minister and Leader of the Opposition to table documents in supporting their remarks on the table of the House during the course of the day. Kharge’s remarks that the prime minister can speak for 2-3 hours but will not say anything on the Manipur situation also evoked a sharp reaction from the BJP members.

Dhankhar said that he was ready for a discussion on the Manipur issue in the House but it could not take place because of objections by opposition members. The House proceedings were adjourned till Wednesday morning after Kharge’s speech.

India-Malaysia review bilateral ties at 12th defence cooperation panel meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia on Tuesday reviewed the entire spectrum of their defence ties here and explored effective and practical initiatives to further expand bilateral defence engagements during the 12th meeting of Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM).

Giving details of the parleys, defence ministry officials said both sides assessed the existing defence cooperation between the two countries and held wide-ranging discussions on issues of mutual interest including regional issues.

They agreed to establish a Strategic Affairs working Group (SAWG) to formulate a consultative mechanism intermediate between the MIDCOM and the two Sub-committees to handle all aspects of the defence cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Deputy Secretary General (Policy), Malaysia Mohd Yani bin Daud. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the outcomes of the two sub-committee meetings name-



ly Sub Committee on Military Cooperation held on July 27, 2023 and Joint Sub Committee on Defence Science Technology and Industry Cooperation held on September 18, 2023.

The two chairs also articulated steps in the direction of emerging areas of cooperation like cyber security and issues pertaining to global commons. They identified means to enhance existing areas of collaboration, especially in the field of

defence industry, maritime security and multilateral cooperation.

During the MIDCOM, the Defence Secretary shared an 8-point proposal with the Malaysian side to expand cooperation between India and Malaysia on a wide range of areas such as Government to government-level engagement, Tri-Service cooperation, Training, UN Peacekeeping, Bilateral Services Engagement, Defence Industrial Cooperation, Research & Development and Regional/ Sub-Regional Engagements.

The Defence Secretary highlighted the potential of the domestic defence industry with capacity and capability to cooperate with the Malaysian Armed Forces in its shipbuilding and maintenance plans. Malaysia expressed confidence in the capability of the Indian defence industry and discussed possibilities for co-design, co-production and co-development in the field of defence industry.

Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to implement fully the Enhanced Strategic Partnership based on mutual trust and understanding, common interests and shared values of democracy & rule of law.

It's ours, says Sonia amid Opposition reactions to women's reservation Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Mixed reactions poured in amongst the Opposition parties over the women reservation bill in a rechristened format – Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam – after it was introduced in Parliament on Tuesday. Some of the women leaders welcome the move, Congress too appreciated but with a rider that the Bill was first introduced by the Congress. JD(U) and BJD mentioned that the Bill on women reservation was inspired by their party.

Congress’ parliamentary party chief Sonia Gandhi said the women’s reservation bill “is ours”. “It is ours, apna hai,” Sonia said in first recation to the proposed Bill. It was during the UPA government that the bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha on March 9, 2010 but not taken up in the Lok Sabha, stated Congress.

Noting the Centre has stated that the reservation will be effective only after a Census and delimitation exercise is conducted post-enactment of the bill, Congress termed as “election jumla” and “huge betrayal of hopes of women”.

Former chief ministers – Mayawati, Rabri Devi, Mehbooba Mufti – all welcomed the announcement and hailed the decision a great one. “Having navigated the rough terrain of a predominantly male political landscape myself, I am happy to see that finally the Women Reservation bill will become a reality.

Despite constituting half of the population, we are grossly underrepresented. It’s a great step,” PDP chief and former Jammu and Kashmir CM Mehbooba said.

Former Uttar Pradesh CM Mayawati said her party will support any bill that allows reservation for women in Parliament and other legislatures, even if the party’s demand for a quota for the SC, ST and OBC within that



quota is not met.

Former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi said the women’s reservation bill brought by the Narendra Modi government should have provided separate quotas for those belonging to SCs, STs and OBCs. She also alleged that the bill was “a gimmick, aimed just at making some noise” since the implementation was proposed only after a fresh round of delimitation.

Odisha’s ruling BJD said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik’s efforts bore fruit with the Narendra Modi government introducing the women’s reservation bill in Lok Sabha. BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra said his party nominated 33 per cent women candidates from the state in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Of the seven women candidates fielded by the party, five won the elections. The BJD government has also reserved 50 per cent of seats for women in the local bodies of the state, he said.

According to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, reservation for women should be a balance of gender justice and social justice and demanded clarity on share of backward, Dalit, minority, and tribals in the seats set aside.

While AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi said the government should have also provided for reservation of Muslim and OBC, AAP

leader and Delhi minister Atishi questioned the provision of delimitation and census.

“This means that women reservation won’t be implemented ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls,” she said.

Another Opposition party hailing allegiance to the India bloc, Janat Dal (U) claimed that Women’s Reservation Bill brought by the Narendra Modi government was “inspired” by quotas for women brought long ago by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

“Bihar, in 2006, became the first state in the country where women were given 50 per cent reservations in local bodies and Panchayats.

Nitish Kumar took the bold step within months of taking over as Chief Minister in November 2005”, a statement to this effect was issued by JD(U) national general secretary and spokesman Rajib Ranjan who asserted “the bill proves that Bihar shows the way”.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal attacked the government asking why did Prime Minister Narendra Modi wait for almost 10 years for it and saying that probably 2024 general elections is the reason. Sibal, who was a Union minister during the UPA 1 and 2 regimes, quit the Congress in May last year and was elected to the Rajya Sabha as an independent member with the Samajwadi Party’s support.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The country’s top drug regulator, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed the retail price of 51 formulations, including pain killers, pulmonary drugs, and those used to treat high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and bacterial infections. Fixing the retail price of these daily used drugs particularly diabetes will come as a huge relief to the patients in the sector.

An official from the NPPA said that the decision was taken at the 116th Authority meeting held on September 6 where the authority deliberated on the new drug applications for price fixation under various clauses of drugs prices control order,



2013.

These include Synokem pharmaceutical/Torrent Pharmaceutical’s fixed dose combination Rosuvastatin plus Clopidogrel Capsules, Daiwik Pharnasphere/ Aristo Pharmaceuticals’ Diclofenac Diethylamine, Methyl Salicylate and Menthol Gel, E x e m e d

Pharmaceuticals/ Abbott Healthcare’s Linagliptin and Metformin Hydrochloride Tablets, Sai Primus Life Biotech/Primus Remedies’ Linagliptin plus Metformin Hydrochloride Tablet.

The list further includes, Skymap Pharmaceuticals’ Linagliptin plus Metformin Hydrochloride Tablet, Skymap

Research finds link between non-stick cookware, cancer

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Are certain chemicals including polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which are used in thousands of household and industrial products, including in stain- and heat-resistant items like non-stick cookwares fueling the rise in ovarian, skin, breast and other types of cancers in women?

A new research funded by the US government based on data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found evidence of this disturbing link. The study is published in the Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology.

The researchers also found similar links between women diagnosed with cancer and high exposures to phenols, which are commonly used in food packaging, dyes and personal care products. They did not find similar associations between the chemicals and cancer diagnoses in men.



PFAS is referred to as ‘forever chemicals’ due to their longevity in the environment. These are found in products such as Teflon pans, waterproof clothing, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, and food packaging.

The study showed that women in particular who were more exposed to PFDE, a long-chain PFAS compound, were twice as likely to have a previous melanoma (form of skin cancer) diagnosis.

While the women with higher exposure to two other long-chained PFAS compounds, PFNA (Proximal

Femoral Nail Antirotation) and PFUA (Perfluoroundecanoic acid) had nearly double the odds of a prior melanoma diagnosis.

Researchers had analysed blood and urine samples from more than 10,000 people and found a link between PFNA and a prior diagnosis of uterine cancer.

They found that women with higher exposure to phenols, such as BPA (used in plastics) and 2,5-dichlorophenol (a chemical used in dyes and found as a by-product in wastewater treatment), had higher odds of prior ovarian cancer diagnoses.

Work from home can result in reduced carbon footprint: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opting for hybrid working or work from home can result in a reduced carbon footprint compared to full-time office work, according to a new study.

Published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the study found that hybrid workers who work from home two to four days per week can reduce their carbon footprint by 11 percent to 29 percent, but working from home one day per week is cutting carbon footprint by only 2 per cent.

The study, conducted by researchers at Cornell University and Microsoft, used survey data and modelling to incorporate factors sometimes overlooked when calculating carbon footprint, including residential energy use based on time-use allocation, non-commute distance and mode of transportation, communications device usage, number of household members and office



configuration, such as seat sharing and building size.

“Remote work is not zero carbon, and the benefits of hybrid work are not perfectly linear,” said study senior author Fengqi You, a professor in energy systems engineering at Cornell.

The study found that seat sharing among hybrid workers under full-building attendance can reduce carbon footprint by 28 percent. Hybrid workers tend to commute farther than onsite workers due to differences in housing choices.

According to the study, effects of remote and hybrid work on communications technologies such as computer, phone and internet usage have negligible impacts on overall carbon footprint.

ECI officers ask 12 DEOs to complete poll preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of the upcoming Lok Sabha general elections, Senior Deputy Election Commissioners of Election Commission of India (ECI) Dharmendra Sharma and Nitesh Vyas asked the district election officers/ district magistrates (DEOs/DMs) of 12 districts of this region including Varanasi to complete poll preparations on time. Holding a meeting with the DEOs/DMs of Varanasi, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Prayagraj, Amethi and Bhadohi at a meeting held here on Monday, they also reviewed the progress of preparations.

They also discussed the preparation of the voter list in the context of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, 2024. To make the voter list proper, instructions were given to all the 12 DEOs regarding registering the names of eligible voters in the voter list, removing the names of dead voters from the voter list and improving elector population (EP) and gender



ECI officers holding a meeting with 12 DEOs/DMs on poll preparations in Varanasi on Monday.

ratio.

In the meeting, SDECs instructed the DEOs/ DMs that efforts should be made that the name of any eligible voter is not deprived of being registered in the voter list and directed them to take efforts to register the names of young voters of 18-19 age group in the voter list. For this, they said that special camps should be organ-

ised in educational institutions like universities, technical and medical colleges, ITIs, Polytechnics etc. Besides, they also asked the DEOs/ DMs to organise regular meetings with political parties to help in purifying the voter list.

The ECI officers said that the suggestions of the political parties should also be taken and steps should also be taken

to implement their suggestions after examining them on their merits and demerits. ECI Director Deepali Masirkar, Secretary Pawan Diwan, Under Secretary Prafulla Awasthi, Chief Electoral Officer, Uttar Pradesh Navdeep Rinwa along with Additional Chief Electoral Officers Nidhi Srivastava and Kumar Vineet were also present in the meeting.

CM distributes certificates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath watched the cultural talents of children and distributed certificates to them in the programme of Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav (KSSM) organised in the Divisional Auditorium here on Monday evening during his one-day visit when the CM was in the city to inspect the preparations for the proposed visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his parliamentary constituency on September 23. During his visit, the PM will also give awards to the winners of mega event of KSSM to be held at Rudraksh International Convention Centre.

During the programme, the CM was also honoured by UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal by giving him an angavastram and a memento. UP Labour and Employment Minister Anil Rajbhar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' along with Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma, District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Chief Development Officer



CM Yogi Adityanath distributing a certificate to a participant of KSSM in Varanasi on Monday.

Himanshu Nagpal etc were also present.

Meanwhile, the district level competitions was held at five places in the series of KSSM being organised with the aim of promoting Indian culture in genres like dance, music, singing, street drama etc. A cultural competition in solo and

group categories of classical and sub-classical singing genres was organised in Police Commissionerate in different age groups. The event was presided over by UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu'. Additional Municipal Commissioner Rajiv Rai, Education Officer Shashikant

Srivastava, Project Officer of DUDA Nidhi Bajpai and many others were also present.

A street drama competition was organised for participants in the age group of 18 to 40 and above 40 at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Education, Sarnath. The competition was inaugurated by lighting the lamp by MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma. At an event held at Sunbeam Varuna, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya was the chief guest. Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma lit the lamp while Sunbeam Group Chairman Deepak Madhok and Director Bharti Madhok welcomed the guests.

In Sant Atulanand Convent School, solo competition category in folk playing Naal and Tasha Damru and cultural competition in group playing Naal Damru and Naal genre was organised.

The event was presided over by Nagendra Raghuvanshi, member Central Khadi Board and local corporator Sandeep Raghuvanshi. At Padma Vibhushan Giri Devi Cultural Complex, Chowkaghat events. The chief guest was MLA Sunil Kumar Patel from Rohaniya.

38 ATVM kiosks installed at 25 railway stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 38 Automatic Ticket Vending Machine (ATVM) kiosks have been installed at 25 railway stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) on the instructions of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava. Under the leadership of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (SDCM) Shaikh Rehman, these ATVM kiosks have been installed at 38 locations in 25 stations of the division to enable passengers to book unreserved tickets in a smart manner by avoiding the hassle of long queues at the unreserved ticket counters.

The SDCM said that now it would be easier for common passengers to get unreserved tickets and they would be able to get unreserved tickets themselves through ATVM kiosks. He informed that four such ATVM kiosks each have been installed at Chhapra Junction and Siwan Junction railway stations, two each at Banaras, Varanasi City, Ghazipur City, Azamgarh, Ballia, Mau and Deoria Sadar stations and one ATVM kiosk each at Prayagraj Rambagh, Gyanpur Road, Siswan Bazaar, Kaptanganj, Suresmanpur, Belthara Road, Rasra, Ekma, Jakhania and Aunrihar.



He further informed that facilitators have been deputed on all these ATVM kiosks to help the passengers. Nine such facilitators have been deputed in Chhapra, eight in Siwan, three each in Ballia, Mau, Deoria Sadar, two each in Banaras, Varanasi City, Ghazipur City, Prayagraj Rambagh, Indara, Suresmanpur, Duraundha, Mairwan, Thawe and Bhatni stations and one each in Azamgarh, Gyanpur Road, Siswan Bazar, Kaptanganj, Belthara Road, Rasra, Ekma, Jakhania and Aunrihar.

Shaikh Rehman said that through these ATVM kiosks, passengers can not only get unreserved tickets but can also make an inquiry like the station from which one has to go.

"Now passengers will not have to stand in long queues. If they wish, they can get their tickets issued through these ATVM kiosks themselves or can get their tickets issued with the help of a facilitator. In this machine, tickets can be obtained by scanning the QR code through Android mobile and making digital payment or in case of any problem, one can get the facility to get one's journey ticket by paying cash to the facilitators appointed by the Railways at ATVM kiosks," he said.

Telling about working mechanism of ATVM kiosks, the SDCM said that for travel ticket booking, one has to select the destination station from the map or by entering other station options, select the

ticket type, select passenger number and train type, payment option and then select QR Pay option from any UPI App, scan the QR code shown on the screen and make the payment and do not take it out until the entire ticket is printed and automatically gets separated from the machine, he said, adding that precautions to be taken while using ATVM kiosks as this is a touch screen machine, so please use only finger to select it and do not use pen, pencil or sharp objects to select the screen. Besides, one should also not spit or spill liquids on the kiosk/screen. In case of any inconvenience related to ATVM kiosks, one should contact the Chief Booking Supervisors/Shift Supervisors, he said.

Kaushambi triple murder: Cong delegation visits village

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Four days after three members of a family, including a pregnant woman, were killed by their neighbours over property dispute in Panda chauraha in Kaushambi on Friday, a 26-member Congress delegation visited the village and demanded justice for kin.

"Cases of atrocities on Dalits are on the rise in Yogi-led state government. Congress party will launch a massive agitation against the triple murder," said Congress national secretary Pradeep Narwal. The Congress leaders including, Alok Prasad, Suresh Yadav, Mukund Tiwari, Vivekanand Pathak, Haseeb Ahmed and others, said they were with the grief-stricken family.

Three persons of a family, including a pregnant woman, her husband and father, were shot dead allegedly by their neighbours over property dispute near Panda chauraha under Sandipan Ghat police station of Kaushambi on Friday. Irked over the killings, agitated mob of villagers had gone on a rampage for around two hours and torched about half a dozen huts and make-shift shops and two vehicles. The delegation of Congress

leaders also will investigate the cause of the triple murder. The Congress aims to highlight the 'poor law and order' situation in the state under BJP's rule. The delegation will present a detailed report to the party high command.

ARRESTED: The arrest of four Bihar-based criminals, who were held from city for committing crimes in UP, West Bengal and Assam has revealed that the gang didn't use mobile phones fearing being trapped and preferred bikes to move from one place to other, police said.

They also made advance booking of tickets (for one member) in premium trains like Rajdhani if the amount of looted cash was more than expected.

The four members — Neeraj Kumar Banjara, Shankar Kumar Yadav, Kishan Yadav and Kashi Banjara — were arrested by Prayagraj police on Sunday. The police also seized Rs 8.35 lakh cash, three 0.315 bore licensed pistols along with six live cartridges, two bikes, eight SIM cards, four packets each of itching and chilly powder and other valuables from their possession. The gang had executed Rs 7 lakh loot in Prayagraj and Rs 9 lakh loot in

Sitapur on September 12 and 15 and had stayed in Varanasi and Lucknow respectively, they said. The gang, police said, had taken a cue from a similar gang in Odisha.

"The gang members used to travel on their bikes to different cities to execute crime. They didn't prefer mobile phones and once they reached a particular city to execute crime, then they purchased basic mobiles and SIM cards on forged documents," DCP (City) Deepak Bhuker told reporters.

Before executing loot in Prayagraj on September 12, the gang members had travelled to Varanasi from Katihar (Bihar), and took shelter in a hotel on fake identities.

"Once they arrived in Prayagraj, they purchased three keypad mobile sets and SIMs and destroyed it after executing the loot. The robbers then escaped to Lucknow and deposited the looted amount in the accounts of their wives. Cops, however, managed to freeze the accounts," the DCP said.

Bhuker added that efforts were on to compile more information about Pushpendra - said to be kingpin of the gang - and other members. The DCP

said compilation of CCTV and video footages has helped the cops connect the missing links and identify the criminals.

Senior police officials said the gang had made Katihar as their base camp where they assembled after executing crimes.

"They used to conduct proper recce before committing a crime. Moreover, the gang struck only at places where they could get hefty amount. They kept on changing their location to dodge police. They moved in groups of three to five and they didn't execute crime in cities where they stayed," they said adding that the gang was expert in executing snatchings and robbery swiftly.

"Every member of the gang was assigned different task right from snatching loot or valuables to its transportation to safer areas. Now, police are on the lookout for other operatives of the gang. The gang preferred to travel long distances to execute crimes. The gang always remained prepared for any eventuality and had a back-up plan ready.

They changed their names and carried fake identities to dodge law enforcement agencies," they said.

Letter writing competition launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The 'Dhai Akhar' letter writing competition on topic 'Digital India for New India' has been launched by Department of Posts. The winners will get prizes from Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000. The last date for sending entries is October 31.

The Digital India campaign has been started by the Government of India to make citizens of the country aware and digitally empowered. When every citizen of the country is aware and digitally empowered, the country will develop rapidly. In view of this a national level letter writing competition is being organised by the Department of Posts on the topic 'Digital India for New India'. If letter of the applicant is selected, the applicant will receive a prize ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000.

While providing above information, Postmaster

General (PMG), Prayagraj Region, Krishna Kumar Yadav, said for this various schools and colleges can organise their own competitions in association with the Postal Department. The last date has been fixed as October 31.

The PMG said people of any age can participate in the 'Dhai Akhar' letter writing competition. The first category will be up to 18 years and the second will be above 18 years of age. The letter will be accepted only in an inland letter or in envelope issued by the Department of Posts in which letter can be written by hand in English, Hindi or local language in 500 and 1,000 words respectively. This letter should be sent to the Postmaster General of the region concerned by October 31 with full name, address, date of birth, mobile number and name of the school of participant. The participants of Prayagraj,

Kaushambi, Pratapgarh, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra, Sultanpur and Amethi districts under Prayagraj region will have to send their letter addressed to the Postmaster General, Prayagraj Region, Prayagraj - 211001.

Yadav said three prizes each in different four categories will be given to the winners of the competition at the state and national levels. The best letter selected at the circle (state) level will be given prizes of Rs 25,000, Rs 10,000 and Rs 5,000 in the first, second and third category respectively. The prizes of Rs 50,000, Rs 25,000 and Rs 10,000 will be given to the best letters selected at the national level in the first, second and third category respectively. Overall, prizes worth Rs 40.20 lakh will be given to the winners across the country. For more information superintendents of various postal divisions and postmas-

ter of the Head Post Office can be contacted.

RUCKUS: Enraged over the death of Nageshwar Singh (24) of Belhat village in the Koraon police station area, the kin created a ruckus and gheraoed the Koraon-Meja Highway bringing the traffic into a standstill for hours here on Tuesday. The operation of youth's stone was done by doctors and the youth died after some time. Angered by it the family members created a ruckus.

The police reached the spot and somehow pacified the agitators. On information, Koraon police station incharge Vinod Singh reached the spot. After hours, the police convinced the family members. Singh said that investigation is being done on the basis of the complaint filed by the relatives of the deceased. A case will be registered soon and action will be taken.

Jagat Taran School first in group song competition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Jagat Taran Golden Jubilee School stood first while Mahila Sewa Sadan Inter College secured the second place in a group song competition organised by Bharat Vikas Parishad Prayagraj and the CAV Inter College got the consolation prize.

The programme was organised at Jwala Devi Saraswati Inter College hall. Former vice-chancellor of Raja Maan Singh Tomar Music and Arts University Prof Swatantra Bala Sharma was the chief guest who garlanded the portrait of Bharat Mata and Swami Vivekanand to inaugurate the competition.

Appreciating the programme Prof Sharma said such competitions inculcate the feel-

ing of nationalism and bravery in the younger generation. She spoke about national heroes and asked children to beware of anti-nationals and their activities of disturbing the fabric of unity in diversity.

President of the organisation Dr Alpna Agrawal welcomed the guests and participating institutions. The judges of the competition were Dr Geeta Banerjee of Sanskrit department of Allahabad University, Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh from Hindi department, Allahabad Degree College and Prof Indu Sharma from Music department, Allahabad Degree College. They also emphasised the need of holding such programmes at regular intervals to awaken national feeling in children.

The coordinator of the

programme Dr Brijesh Kumar conducted the proceedings while vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Purshottam Das. Dr NC Agrawal honoured the chief guest by presenting a memento and a shawl.

Principal of Jwala Devi Saraswati Inter College Vikram Bahadur Singh, Umesh Dutt Bhatt, Prof Jagdish Dwivedi and others, were present.

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMME: Good news awaits the students doing postgraduation (PG) and research from Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-A).

The students pursuing MTech, MBA or PhD will be able to obtain degree from renowned educational institutions abroad.

The institute is starting a joint degree programme

wherein in the first phase, PG and research are being added. In the second phase, graduate level courses will also be added.

The postgraduate students will be able to study a part of their course from foreign technical educational institutions and universities. The joint degree will have the name and logo of both the institutions. This decision was taken in the meeting held recently in the institute.

Director of the institute Prof Mukul Sutavane said that after the implementation of the New National Education Policy (NEP), MoUs have been signed with technical institutions of other countries including USA, France, Germany and Korea, where students of the institute will be able to study while pursuing their joint degree.

Minister inspects Amrit Sarovar

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State for Rural Development Vijay Laxmi Gautam while holding the meeting of the officials concerned with the Rural Development and Rural Engineering Services at Ashtabhja guest house on Monday directed the officials to carry out works by adopting the norms. After the meeting the minister inspected a Upavan Vatika located at Vijaypur village under Chhanbey block where she planted saplings. During the inspection she was apprised by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS that the Vatika was developed within two-three years and around Rs 20 lakh had been spent through MGNREGA. Appreciating the Vatika the minister asked the official concerned to plant saplings to make it more use-

ful. In Kamapur village of Chhanbey block a chaupal was organised in which the minister interacted with people, especially women, and greeted them on the occasion of Teej festival. She watched the Shilaphalakam constructed under the scheme 'Meri Mati Mera Desh' and she taught the lesson of nationalism to the people. Inspecting the Amrit Sarovar (pond) the minister appealed to people to maintain the it and make it useful that it can prove to be an asset for the village. She said the government was working for the welfare of every section of the society but online application is necessary for new candidates to avail the facilities. Referring to the new PM Vishwakarma Scheme which was launched by the prime minister on September 17 the minister said 18 types of skilled artisans were covered under the scheme including those who were

involved in their traditional profession like washermen, cobblers, barbers etc. She said loan of up to Rs 3 lakh was available for workers of that category without any security and toolkit worth Rs 15,000 was being provided by the government free of cost. During her visit the minister was accompanied by MLAs Ratnakar Moshra and Rinki Kol, block pramukhs Indra Bahadur Pandey and Suman Singh, veteran BJP leader Dhanendra Pandey and others. Prior to the government programmes the minister performed the rituals at the Vindhya vasini temple.

SHADI ANUDAN YOJANA: Backward Class Welfare Officer Rajesh Sonkar has informed that marriage aid will be sent directly to the beneficiary's account but that account should be linked to the Aadhar card. Giving details about the changes in the Shadi

Anudan Yojana said from the year 2023-24 verification of Aadhar and e-KYC has been made compulsory for applicants and all process will be carried out through online system. He said persons who had already applied through manual process their applications will not be considered and they were being suggested to submit online applications again.

ARRESTED: The Kachhawaan police have arrested an accused in an assault case on Monday. Ajay Kumar Upadhyay of Baraini village under Kachhawaan police station had lodged a named case on August 8 alleging that the accused had assaulted him and snatched a gold chain. On being tipped off by an informer the police nabbed the accused Harsh Singh of Bajahana village under Kachhawaan police station, sent him to jail and seized his vehicle.

Send your feedback to:
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FIRST COLUMN

SELF-LIBERATION
THROUGH FORGIVENESS

The power to forgive comes from compassion; move with what is good



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

If we want to love, we must learn how to forgive, said Mother Teresa. Like her, many saints, gurus and spiritual teachers have often said to their followers that if anyone misbehaves with you, talks bad about you or indulges in mudslinging and character-assassination, you should forgive such a person and forget about his misdemeanour. They further advise that one should repay such a person with his acts of friendliness and think of improving the self instead of retaliating against such a negative person or person. But the question that most of us would naturally have is that if we forgive such evil-doers and forget about their malicious and maligning campaigns, will we not be letting loose many mad bulls or elephants run amuck? Will we not be encouraging such kinds of people in their nefarious designs and wicked acts? Before we come to any conclusion, one question that we all need to ask ourselves is that - is it as easy to forgive as it sounds to be?

The majority of us would say 'NO' because the ability to forgive others depends on how honest we are with ourselves. Have we journeyed through our life pure, perfect and clean with never a wrong thought, a wrong word or action? If we look at ourselves honestly, then how can we not forgive another person? When we face our shortcomings, then anger against others disappears. In the past, we have all acted wrongly, either because of not knowing what is right, or out of fear or misunderstanding. Looking back on the past, most of us regret many things that we have said or done. With time and knowledge we realize what is right and begin to make amends. Just by having the desire to do this, we begin this process of our forgiveness. If this process is to progress, we have to forgive others. We cannot condemn others and excuse ourselves. This is cheating and the universally applicable Law of Karma will not allow it.



There can be many answers to the questions raised by many individuals regarding forgiveness, however, what we should understand in our capacity as human beings is that, if the tendencies to evil or misbehaviour are within tolerable limits and are not likely to obtain a boost by our action of forgiveness and if the person charged with misconduct expresses sincere regrets and apologies after deep realisation of his evil acts, then we should forgive and forget else we should take such preventive, non-violent, non-aggressive steps that do not downgrade our worth as a human being. And, let us remember that vengeance, vindictiveness, violence, virulent acts, vile and guile or wickedness and wrong-doing are not the ways of a noble-minded person.

Remember! The power to forgive comes from compassion, which means we should compassionately and peacefully move forward with what is good, towards what is better. But before we start to forgive others, we must learn to forgive ourselves, otherwise, the process of releasing the burden would neither begin nor progress. Forgiving ourselves means letting go of the past. But it also means not making the same mistakes again and again; not inventing convenient ways to excuse ourselves. A person who has hardened his own heart against others cannot feel even God's forgiveness and compassion. Hence, if we want to be forgiven, then we must be willing to forgive first because the one who forgives first not only proves his justice but especially proves his love. That is why it is said that 'A life well lived is your best revenge'. So, instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain, the power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty and kindness around you. This will make the world a better place to live in.

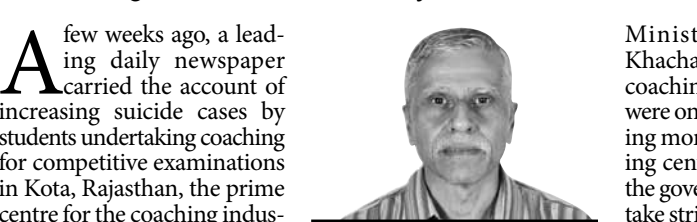
(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK)

Reign in coaching centres in the country

Coaching centres have only fostered a fiercely unhealthy competition among students which is taking a heavy toll on their mental health

A few weeks ago, a leading daily newspaper carried the account of increasing suicide cases by students undertaking coaching for competitive examinations in Kota, Rajasthan, the prime centre for the coaching industry in India. The following paragraph is extracted from the article Kota: As student suicides soar, ministers blame coaching 'mafia', the burden of education loans, published in Times of India on 29th August 2023.

Minister Mahesh Joshi recently said that the burden of educational loans on parents was one of the causes of stress among the students and the Centre must formulate a policy so that the parents do not have to borrow money for education. Food and Civil Supplies



ATUL SEHGAL

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

How green are the electric vehicles?

Electric vehicles are not the ultimate solution for our environment. The solution lies in adjusting our lifestyles, consumption and mobility patterns

India has set an ambitious target of 30 per cent Electric Vehicle (EV) penetration in private cars, 70 per cent in commercial vehicles, and 80 per cent in two and three-wheelers by 2030. To achieve the targets, the Government is giving various incentives to buyers and manufacturers of EVs, including subsidies, tax relief etc. Across the world also, automakers are being prodded by their governments to promote the sale of EVs to fight climate change. But how green, truly, are the EVs? While EVs are more climate-friendly than our traditional cars driven by internal combustion engines (ICE), they are not free from their adverse impacts on the environment. Let me make it clear that this is not an article against EV which is the road to the future, but that road needs to be negotiated with caution, and not craze.

A vehicle's impact on the environment can be judged by the totality of its impact on production, running and scrapping at the end of its useful life. Let us consider these stages one by one. As regards production, to assess the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted during EV manufacture, we need to estimate how their components are made and where their raw materials are sourced from. While manufacturing an ICE car based on petrol or diesel or an EV without its battery releases about the same amount of carbon dioxide (CO₂) - about 7 to 10 tonnes, it is the EV-battery production that adds significantly to the emission.

The battery is the heart of an EV, and about 150 kgs of CO₂ are released to create every kilo-watt-hour (kWh) of battery capacity. An average EV consumes 0.20 kWh per km, and for an EV to have a decent range (say 300 km) between charges, it needs a battery capacity of 60kWh, which means additional CO₂-emission of 9 tonnes, which makes an EV almost twice as environment-unfriendly as an ICE-car. Making EVs thus evidently creates more emissions, and improving technology is the only solution. Also, while the EVs don't emit toxic exhaust fumes, their batteries can emit toxic fumes, if damaged.

The raw materials for the battery have to be mined, and the process of mining, refining and transportation also adds a lot of GHGs. The raw materials include rare earth materials like lithium, and neodymium, besides copper, cobalt, aluminium, nickel and also manganese and graphite. The rare earth materials are available only in a few countries. Lithium, the third element in the periodic table of elements, is lighter compared to other elements used in batteries like lead and has an extra electron in its outermost shell which increases power flow through the cell.

While Australia is currently the largest supplier of lithium, the 'lithium triangle' of Bolivia, Chile and Argentina accounts for half the total global reserves. But it is China that controls 77 per cent of the global lithium-ion battery manufacturing capacity and is home to six of the world's 10 largest manufacturing companies. India currently imports all of its lithium from Australia and Argentina and 70 per cent of its lithium-ion cell requirements from China. The recent discovery of large lithium reserves in Rajasthan and Jammu may catapult



WHILE AUSTRALIA IS CURRENTLY THE LARGEST SUPPLIER OF LITHIUM, THE 'LITHIUM TRIANGLE' OF BOLIVIA, CHILE AND ARGENTINA ACCOUNTS FOR HALF THE TOTAL GLOBAL RESERVES

(The writer, a former Director General at the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India, is currently a Professor at the Arun Jaitley Institute of Financial Management; views expressed are personal)

India to become a major producer of the element in future.

Mining lithium is hazardous and leads to the emission of significant amounts of GHGs. Further, extraction of every tonne of lithium requires 500,000 litres of water, and lithium mining can pollute the air and water with chemicals and heavy metals. A 2019 study shows that 40 per cent of the adverse climatic impact from the production of lithium-ion batteries comes from the mining process itself. It is indeed a paradox that the clean energy of EVs can come only from dirty mining. Another metal used extensively in EV batteries is cobalt, of which 70 per cent of the world's reserves are in the Democratic Republic of Congo - one the poorest countries in the world and a failed state. Its mining is akin to modern-day slavery which is not limited to adult men and women only - children as young as four are often forced to work as slaves to extract cobalt with nothing other than primitive hand-held tools; in fact, they grow as slaves into adulthood while still mining lithium in a never-ending loop through generations. Scarcity of the rare earth elements will limit the transition to EVs across the world unless technology brings a solution. There are also geopolitical issues associated with their extraction. The alternatives suggested like green hydrogen or bio-fuels are equally unviable - 99 per cent of the world's hydrogen is still produced from fossil fuels

and increasing biofuel production may compromise the area available for food production.

But the most important factor is that EVs are only as green as their power sources. Their environmental impact depends on how the electricity that charges them is made, and these are not green, as of now, in most countries. The share of coal in electricity production varies from 20 per cent in the USA to 63 per cent in China and 73 per cent in India. A coal-fired power station emits about 800 grammes of CO₂ per kWh, while renewable sources like solar panels or wind turbines emit only 36 grammes. The solution thus lies in greening the electricity grid, and there is a long way to go for that. Till then, switching to EVs will only add to GHGs in our atmosphere. Emissions will drop only when we make our grids zero-carbon.

At present it is a mix of renewable and non-renewable sources, and this energy mix used to recharge EV batteries strongly impacts their carbon footprint. The net negative impact of EVs today is greater for coal-intensive countries like India, China or Poland compared to the ICE cars. EVs will become an attractive option only with the gradual decarbonisation of electricity. Only six countries - China, the USA, Japan, Canada, Norway, and the UK - now have EV market shares above one per cent of the total vehicle sales. A Thomson-Reuters study projects the best scenario that by 2040, half of the vehicles on

the road will still be powered by fossil fuels, but all new vehicles sold will be EVs only. While it will significantly reduce CO₂ emission by almost 40 per cent, it will also lead to much-increased demand for electricity to power these EVs - an additional electricity generation of 3,000 terawatt hours would be needed by 2050 to meet that demand.

To put that figure in perspective, the EU today generates a total of 3,200 terawatt hours. Imagine the renewable and non-renewable sources that will have to be tapped - and their carbon footprints - to power the global fleet of future EVs, not to talk about the huge additional investments needed. Disposal of these batteries also poses a threat to the climate. Though they contain less toxic waste than other batteries and have much longer lives, a study from Australia found that 98 per cent of them end up in landfills, increasing the chances of landfill fires that can burn for years; these are now becoming increasingly more common.

For our environment, EVs are thus not the ultimate solution. The solution lies in adjusting our lifestyles, consumption and mobility patterns. Limiting the production of new EVs means promoting alternatives like walking, cycling, public transport, carpools shared vehicles, etc. with the same urgency that we are today showing towards EVs. We must employ all the levers, technological and non-technological - to shift to sustainable mobility and a sustainable world.



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

Biden lauds G20 achievements

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday highlighted “groundbreaking” achievements — including an economic corridor linking India, the Middle East and Europe; and admission of the African Union in the G20 grouping — made at the G20 Summit in New Delhi, as he addressed world leaders at the high-level UN General Assembly session.

The annual G20 Leaders’ Summit was hosted by India under its presidency from September 9-10.

“In groundbreaking effort, we announced at the G20 to connect India to Europe through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel,” Biden said in his address to Heads of State and Government at the 193-member UN General Assembly on the opening day of the General Debate.

He said this would “spur opportunities” for investment across two continents.

“This is part of our effort to build a more sustainable, integrated Middle East. It demonstrates how Israel has a greater normal-

isation and economic connection with its neighbours” which will bring positive and practical impacts.

The ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was jointly announced by the leaders of the US, India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union on the sidelines of the G20 summit.

The new economic corridor is seen as an alternative to China’s controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The IMEC is expected to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe.

The IMEC will comprise two separate corridors, the east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe.

It will include a railway that, upon completion, will provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement existing maritime and road transport routes — enabling goods and

services to transit to, from, and between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Principles of an India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor said.

In his address from the iconic UN General Assembly podium, Biden also referred to the admission of the African Union to the G20 during the summit.

“We strengthened the G20 as a vital forum, welcoming the African Union as a permanent member. By upgrading and strengthening our institutions, that’s only half of the picture. We must also forge new partnerships, confront new challenges,” he said. Referring to the Quad, Biden said in the Indo-Pacific, “We’ve elevated our Quad partnership with India, Japan, Australia to deliver concrete progress for the people of the region, on everything from vaccines to maritime security.” The Quad comprises Japan, India, Australia and the United States.

Biden travelled to New Delhi to attend the G20 Leaders’ Summit that culminated in the successful adoption by consensus of a joint declaration.

In a significant milestone under India’s G20 presidency, the African Union became a new permanent member of the grouping of the largest economies of the world during the summit in Delhi. It was the first expansion of the influential bloc since its inception in 1999.

All member countries of the G20 accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s proposal to bring the key bloc of the Global South to the high table of the world’s top economies.

In his inaugural remarks at the Summit, Modi had asked the President of the Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Azali Assoumani to join other leaders at the high table, making the 55-member bloc the second multinational grouping, after the EU, to be a permanent member of the G20.

Biden also reiterated Washington’s support for reform of the UN Security Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent members.

“Simply put, the 21st century results are badly needed to move us along. That starts with

the United Nations, starts right here in this room. In my address to this body last year, I announced the United States will support expanding the Security Council, increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members,” he said.

Biden underlined that the US has undertaken serious consultation with many member states. “We’ll continue to do our part to push more reform efforts forward,” he said.

He said Washington recognises that to meet the “new challenges of our decades-old institutions and approaches, they must be updated to keep peace with the world”.

“We have to bring in more leadership and capability that exists everywhere, especially from regions that have not always been fully included. We have to grapple with the challenges that are more connected and more complex. We have to make sure we’re delivering for people everywhere, not just somewhere, everywhere,” Biden said.

He emphasises that nations have to look for points of common ground and make progress in the year ahead.

Russia launches massive drone attack on western city of Lviv

AP ■ LVIY

Russia launched a massive drone attack on the western city of Lviv early Tuesday, damaging a warehouse facility in a fiery blaze and killing one man, Ukrainian authorities said. Ukraine intercepted 27 of 30 Shahed drones overnight, the Air Force said. But drones that got through air defense systems sparked an inferno at the industrial storage facility that was not used for military purposes, Gov. Maksym Kozytsky said. An artillery strike in Kherson in the south struck a bus, killing a police sergeant and wounding two men, said Ihor Klymenko, Ukraine’s minister of internal affairs. That strike also set a warehouse on fire. The developments in the war front came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in New York to address the UN General Assembly and Security Council before going to Washington on Thursday to meet with lawmakers and President Joe Biden. Zelenskyy



Emergency services work to extinguish a fire after a Russian attack in Lviv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. Agencies

has continued to drum up funding and support for new weapons as the counteroffensive Ukraine launched in June approaches what could be its final weeks before wet weather slows progress. Ukraine has made small advances but no major breakthroughs. Meanwhile, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said, while in Germany attending the

meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, that the 31 M1 Abrams tanks it promised will soon begin arriving in Ukraine, as was expected. Norway said it will donate approximately 50 tracked cargo carriers to Ukraine. In a statement Tuesday, Norwegian Defence Minister Bjorn Arild Gram said it would help get supplies to areas without roads.

Erdogan says he trusts Russia as much as he trusts West

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that he trusts Russia as much he trusts the West. Explaining his recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Erdogan said he had failed to get him to resume the Black Sea grain deal the Kremlin withdrew from in July but had elicited a pledge for Russia to supply 1 million tons of grain to Africa.

“I have no reason not to trust them,” Erdogan said during an interview late Monday with US broadcaster PBS in New York, where he is attending the UN General Assembly.

“To the extent the West is reliable, Russia is equally reliable. For the last 50 years, we have been waiting at the doorstep of the EU and, at this moment in time, I trust Russia just as much as I trust the West.” Ankara has maintained close ties with both Russia and Ukraine during the 19-month war. In July last year,

Turkiye and the UN engineered a deal to allow Ukrainian grain to be safely shipped from its Black Sea ports, helping alleviate a global food crisis.

Moscow pulled out of the agreement two months ago, claiming a parallel deal to allow its exports of foodstuffs and fertiliser had not been honoured. Erdogan is visiting New York four months after winning elections that extended his 20-year rule for another five years.

His fresh mandate has seen signs of an improvement in Ankara’s often fractious relationship with the West.

at an event on Monday, the Turkish leader appeared to roll back comments he made immediately prior to his departure for New York, in which he suggested Turkey could end its 24-year bid for European Union membership. “We see that a window of opportunity has opened for the revitalization of Turkiye-European Union relations in a

critical period,” Erdogan said, according to a text of the meeting published by his office.

“We continue to emphasize the importance of revitalizing Turkiye’s EU accession process.”

Erdogan also indicated improving ties with Washington, which have recently focused on Ankara’s approval of Sweden’s NATO membership application and a possible deal to supply Turkiye with F-16 fighter jets.

“We are pleased with the development of our cooperation with the US,” Erdogan said. “We have resolved most of the deadlocks during the talks with Mr. Biden and we have decided to hold more talks in line with the positive agenda.” Turkiye and Hungary are the only NATO members not to have approved Sweden’s bid to join the defence alliance, which Stockholm made following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The issue is due to be debated by the Turkish parliament when it returns from recess next month.

US defence chief urges nations give Ukraine air defence systems

AP ■ RAMSTEIN AIR BASE

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin urged allied leaders on Tuesday to “dig deep” and provide more air defence systems for Ukraine, to help the country block increasing barrages of Russian missiles. But while the allies said they will discuss how they can best help Ukraine’s counteroffensive, they appeared no closer to commitments on the longer-range missiles that Kyiv’s leaders insist they need.

“Air defence is saving lives,” Austin said as he opened the meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group at Ramstein air base in Germany.

“So I urge this group to continue to dig deep on ground-based air defence for Ukraine. We must continue to push hard to provide Ukraine with air-defence systems and interceptors.” The group is made up of the defense and military leaders

from more than 50 nations and is the main forum for raising contributions of weapons, other equipment and training for Kyiv’s war effort. It meets about once a month, in person and virtually, and this is the 15th gathering. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian leaders have repeatedly pushed for the longer-distance weapons. Proponents have argued that Ukrainian forces need to be able to strike Russian troops and facilities while still staying out of range.

But the US has continued to balk, expressing longstanding worries that Kyiv could use the weapons to hit deep into Russian territory and enrage Moscow. The Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, could give Ukraine the ability to strike Russian targets from as far away as about 180 miles (300 kilometers), but the US also has other variants of the missile that have a shorter

range. Speaking before the meeting began, Bill Blair, the Canadian defence minister, told reporters that the allies are listening to Ukrainian leaders’ descriptions of their military needs and are discussing “new and important ways” to help bolster the ongoing counteroffensive. Austin said the 31 M1 Abrams tanks promised months ago will soon begin arriving in Ukraine, as has been expected. A defence official said they have arrived in Europe and will begin crossing the border into Ukraine within the coming days. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the precise location of the tanks is sensitive.

Ukrainian troops began training on similar tanks in June, while the ones arriving soon were being refurbished in the US. Defence leaders are working to continue what they say is unbowed support of

Ukraine, despite growing worries that public and international government backing for the war, which is well into its second year, may be starting to wane.

Zelenskyy will be in Washington, DC, later this week to meet with President Joe Biden and congressional leaders in a move to shore up support for continued American funding and weapons. The visit comes as there is a growing partisan divide in Congress over continued Ukraine funding.

Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has told reporters that he wants more aid for Ukraine to be debated on its own merits as a standalone bill, rather than attaching it to other priorities like government funding. But Senate leaders want to combine the aid with other priorities, such as a short-term spending bill that will likely be needed to avoid a shutdown at the end of September.

Ex-Belarusian operative under Lukashenko goes on Swiss trial

AP ■ GENEVA

A former member of Belarusian President Aleksander Lukashenko’s special security forces was going on trial on Tuesday in Switzerland over the enforced disappearances of political opponents in the late 1990s — seen as a landmark case of international justice.

Yuri Harauski, a former member of a military unit known as SOBR, exited a tinted-window van wearing a hood as he entered the courthouse in the northern city of St. Gallen.

Activists have said the two-day trial marks a pivotal moment in international justice that could trigger prosecutions abroad of other Belarusian officials — including Lukashenko. The court case was brought under a rarely applied legal principle known as universal jurisdiction, under which foreign courts can prosecute severe crimes that happened in other countries.

Harauski will be tried over the enforced disappearances of Yuri Zakharenko, a former interior minister who was fired by Lukashenko in 1996; opposition leader Viktor Gonchar; and publisher Anatoly Krasovsky, said Trial International, an advocacy group that has spearheaded the case.

The defendant lives in Switzerland, where he applied for asylum in 2018. He has made high-profile confessions about his involvement in the kidnapping and murder of Lukashenko’s political opponents in 1999. The motives behind the confessions were not entirely clear. An extract of the court filing, obtained by The Associated Press, indicated that prosecutors planned to seek a three-year prison sentence — of which two would be suspended — against Harauski for his alleged role in the disappearances.

‘Russia, China must edge closer’

AP ■ MOSCOW

A senior Kremlin official on Tuesday called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted China’s top diplomat for security talks. Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia’s Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Moscow “seeks progressive development and strengthening of the Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation.”

“Amid the campaign unleashed by the collective West that is aimed at the double containment of Russia and China, it’s particularly important to further deepen Russian-Chinese coordination

and interaction on the international arena,” Patrushev said.

He noted that Putin is set to hold “substantive” talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during next month’s trip to Beijing to attend a summit of the Chinese Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Patrushev, a longtime Putin associate, reaffirmed Russia’s “invariable” support for Beijing’s policy on issues related to Taiwan, the western Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, which he said “are being used by the West to discredit China.”

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around the island. Chinese authorities also have sought to eradicate any possibility of unrest in regions that are home to sizeable ethnic and religious groups, includ-

ing Tibetans and the Uyghur community in Xinjiang, north of Tibet, the harsh policies that have drawn strong criticism from the West.

The Kremlin has continuously expressed support for Beijing as Russia and China have grown increasingly close while their relations with the West deteriorate.

Last month, China helped engineer an expansion of the BRICS partnership, which included six more countries to join what has been a five-nation bloc that includes China, Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa.

Beijing has sought to project itself as neutral in the Ukraine conflict, even while it has refused to condemn Moscow’s actions and declared last year that it had a “no-limits” friendship with Russia. China has denounced Western sanctions against Moscow, and

accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin’s military action.

Beijing has also proposed a peace plan that was largely dismissed by Ukraine’s allies that insist that Moscow must withdraw its forces from the neighbouring country.

Wang arrived in Russia on Monday on a four-day visit following his weekend talks with US President Joe Biden’s national security adviser in Malta. He began his trip by conferring with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

“The more violent the unilateral actions of hegemony and bloc confrontation become, the more important for us to keep up with the times, show a sense of duty as great powers, and further fulfil our international obligations,” Wang said at the start of Monday’s talks with Lavrov.

Indian-origin expert joins UK panel to review clashes in Leicester

PTI ■ LONDON

Dr Samir Shah, an Indian-origin race relations expert has been named on a three-member panel set up by the UK government to independently review the unrest that took place in the city of Leicester last year as community groups clashed in the aftermath of an India-Pakistan Asia Cup cricket match in Dubai. Shah, conferred a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) honour by the late Queen Elizabeth II in 2019 for services to heritage and television, will join fellow expert panellists to publish their findings by next year, the UK government said on Monday.

Shah, in his 70s, has experience conducting such

reviews as a former Commissioner for the UK’s Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. He was also the former chair of the country’s independent race equality think tank, the Runnymede Trust, for 10 years and was a member of the Holocaust Commission.

“Leicester has a proud history of diversity, tolerance and community cohesion, which makes what happened last year all the more troubling,” said Lord Ian Austin, the chair of the review announced by the government in May.

“We want to listen to people in Leicester to understand last year’s events, what can be learned from them and how communities in the city can work together to prevent problems in future. It is, therefore,

vital that the review is comprehensive and even-handed and that this aim is reflected in the panellists we appoint,” he said.

“The diverse panel brings together a wealth of experience and knowledge, which should result in an honest, frank and productive review,” he added. Hilary Pilkington, Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester and Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences, whose research focus covers the study of youth participation, activism, stigmatisation and extremism in the UK, is another expert on the panel. They are joined by Dr Shaaz Mahboob, Head of Digital Development at NHS England and Trustee of British Muslims for Secular Democracy for 10 years until 2018.

Lanka gazettes Online Safety Bill, opp flays

Colombo (PTI): The Sri Lankan government gazetted the Online Safety Bill on Tuesday, drawing criticism from the Opposition, who labelled it harmful to the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Constitution. Gazetted by the Minister of Public Security, the bill aims to establish the Online Safety Commission, make provisions to prohibit online communication of certain statements of fact in Sri Lanka and prevent the use of online accounts and inauthentic online accounts for restricted purposes. It also makes provisions to identify and declare online locations used for prohibited purposes in the island nation, suppress the financing, and other support of communication. The Opposition leader, Sajith said the new bill aims to curb the people’s right to create social platforms for organising themselves.

Google brings its AI chatbot ‘Bard’

AP ■ NEW YORK

Google is introducing Bard, its artificially intelligent chatbot, to other members of its digital family — including Gmail, Maps and YouTube — as it seeks ward off competitive threats posed by similar technology run by Open AI and Microsoft.

Bard’s expanded capabilities announced Tuesday will be provided through an English-only extension that will enable users to allow the chatbot to mine information embedded in their Gmail accounts as well as pull directions from Google Maps and find helpful videos on YouTube. The extension will also open a door for Bard to fetch travel information from Google Flights and extract information from documents stored on Google Drive.

Google is promising to protect users’ privacy by prohibiting



human reviewers from seeing the potentially sensitive information that Bard gets from Gmail or Drive, while also promising that the data won’t be used as part of the main way the Mountain View, California, company makes money — selling ads tailored to people’s interests.

The expansion is the latest development in an escalating AI battle triggered by the popularity of OpenAI’s ChatGPT chatbot and Microsoft’s push to infuse similar technology in its Bing search engine and its

Microsoft 365 suite that includes its Word, Excel and Outlook applications. ChatGPT prompted Google to release Bard broadly in March and then start testing the use of more conversational AI within its own search results in May.

The decision to feed Bard more digital juice in the midst of a high-profile trial that could eventually hobble the ubiquitous Google search engine that propels the USD 1.7 trillion empire of its corporate parent, Alphabet Inc. In the biggest US antitrust

case in a quarter century, the US Justice Department is alleging Google has created its lucrative search monopoly by abusing its power to stifle competition and innovation. Google contends it dominates search because its algorithms produce the best results. It also argues it faces a wide variety of competition that is becoming more intense with the rise of AI. Giving Bard access to a trove of personal information and other popular services such as Gmail, Google Maps and YouTube, in theory, will make them even more helpful and prod more people to rely in them. Google, for instance, posits that Bard could help a user planning a group trip to the Grand Canyon by getting dates that would work for everyone, spell out different flight and hotel options, provide directions from Maps and present an array of informative videos from YouTube.

London police force says it will take years to root out bad cops

London: London’s police force says that over 1,000 officers are currently suspended or on restricted duties as the department steps up efforts to root out bad cops following a scathing report that found it was institutionally racist, homophobic and misogynistic. Deputy Assistant Commissioner Stuart Cundy said it will take years for the Metropolitan Police Service to get rid of officers who have breached standards or weren’t properly vetted before they were hired, with about 60 officers facing disciplinary hearings each month. “This is going to take one, two or more years to root out those who are corrupt,” Cundy said in a statement released on Tuesday. AP

Iraq prez to summon Turkish ambassador

Baghdad (AP): The Iraqi president announced Tuesday that he will summon Turkiye’s ambassador and hand him a formal letter of protest over recent Turkish airstrikes on Iraqi territory. The official protest came a day after an airstrike on a military airport in Arbat, southeast of the city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

Three members of the region’s counterterrorism force died and three of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces were wounded, according to local officials. “Day after day, systematic military attacks on Iraqi territory, specifically in (the Kurdish) region, are escalating without military or security justification,” Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid said in a statement. The “aggression targeted innocent

civilians and military and security headquarters,” he said. Rashid belongs to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party, which has its main seat of power in Sulaymaniyah. There was no immediate comment from Turkiye.

The targeted airport had recently undergone rehabilitation to facilitate the training of anti-terror units affiliated with the PUK, one of the two often-competing main parties in the region. Bafel Talabani, the party’s leader, in an official statement on Monday labelled the Turkish attack as part of a series of “conspiracies” aimed at jeopardising Kurdistan’s security. He urged the federal government to “uphold its constitutional and national duties” in safeguarding Iraq’s territory and airspace, specifically in the Kurdish region.

Americans released by Iran arrive home, declare ‘Freedom!’

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Americans detained for years in Iran arrived home Tuesday, tearfully hugged their loved ones and declared “Freedom!” after being let go as part of a politically risky deal that saw President Joe Biden agree to the release of nearly USD 6 billion in frozen Iranian assets. The prisoners landed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, with clapping and cheers heard in the predawn hours. Siamak Namazi, the first off the jet, paused for a moment, closed his eyes and took a deep breath before leaving the plane. Loved ones, some holding small American flags, enveloped them in hugs and exchanged greetings in English and Farsi, the main language of Iran.

“The nightmare is finally over,” Namazi’s brother, Babak, said at the airport.

“We haven’t had this moment is over eight years,” he added, his arm around his brother and his formerly detained father, Baquer, who had been earlier released by Iran. “It’s unbelievable.”

The former prisoners later posed for a group photograph with their families, calling out: “Freedom!”

The successful negotiations for the Americans’ freedom brought Biden profuse thanks from their families but heat from Republican presidential rivals and other opponents for the monetary arrangement with one of America’s top adversaries. “Today, five innocent Americans who were imprisoned in Iran are finally coming home,” the Democratic president said in a statement released as the plane carrying the group from Tehran landed in Doha, Qatar, on Monday.

Iran’s hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi, on hand for the United Nations General Assembly in New York, suggested the exchange could be “a step



in the direction of a humanitarian action between us and America.” “It can definitely help in building trust,” Raisi told journalists.

However, tensions are almost certain to remain high between the US and Iran, which are locked in disputes over Tehran’s nuclear programme and other matters. Iran says the program is peaceful, but it now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

The prisoner release unfolded amid a major American military buildup in the Persian Gulf, with the possibility of US

troops boarding and guarding commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent of all oil shipments pass.

After the plane slowed to a stop in Doha, three of the prisoners — Siamak Namazi, Emad Sharghi and Morad Tahbaz — emerged.

They hugged the US ambassador to Qatar, Timmy Davis, and others. The three then threw their arms over one another’s shoulders and walked off toward the airport. In a statement issued on his behalf, Namazi said: “I would not be free today, if it wasn’t for all of you who didn’t allow the world to forget me.” “Thank you for being my voice when I could not speak for myself and for making sure I was heard when I mustered the strength to scream from behind the impenetrable walls of Evin Prison,” he said. The United States did not immediately identify the other two freed Americans. All were released in exchange for five

Iranians in US custody and for the deal over the frozen Iranian assets owed by South Korea. The Biden administration said the five freed Iranians pose no threat to US national security.

Two of the imprisoned Americans’ family members, Effie Namazi and Vida Tahbaz, who had been under travel bans in Iran, also were on the plane.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said two of the Iranian prisoners will stay in the US Meanwhile, Nour News, a website believed to be close to Iran’s security apparatus, said two of the Iranian prisoners were in Doha for the swap.

Nour News identified the two in Doha as: Mehrdad Ansari, an Iranian sentenced by the US to 63 months in prison in 2021 for obtaining equipment that could be used in missiles, electronic warfare, nuclear weapons and other military gear, and Reza Sarhangpour Kafrani, an Iranian charged in 2021 over allegedly unlawfully exporting laboratory equipment to Iran.

The USD 5.9 billion in cash released to Iran represents money South Korea owed Iran — but had not yet paid — for oil purchased before the US imposed sanctions on such transactions in 2019. The US maintains that, once in Qatar, the money will be held in restricted accounts to be used only for humanitarian goods, such as medicine and food. Those transactions are currently allowed under American sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic over its advancing nuclear program.

Iranian government officials have largely concurred, though some hard-liners have insisted, without evidence, that there would be no restrictions on how Tehran spends the money. The deal has already opened Biden to fresh criticism from Republicans and others who say the administration is helping boost the Iranian economy at a

time when Iran poses a growing threat to American troops and Mideast allies. That could have implications in his re-election campaign. Former President Donald Trump, currently the lead Republican challenger in that race, called it an “absolutely ridiculous” deal on the Truth Social social media site. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell accused Biden of “rewarding and incentivising Tehran’s bad behaviour.” Biden held what the White House described as an emotional phone call with the families of the freed Americans after their release. In his statement, Biden demanded more information on what happened to Bob Levinson, an American who went missing years ago. The Biden administration also announced fresh sanctions on former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence.

Pak denies selling arms to Ukraine for IMF funding

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Secret Pakistani arms sales to the US to be used by Ukraine helped cash-strapped Islamabad secure a crucial IMF bailout earlier this year, a report cited internal Pakistani and American government documents as confirming. The arms sales were made for the purpose of supplying the Ukrainian military — marking Pakistani involvement in a conflict it had faced US pressure to take sides on, the Intercept, an online investigative website has reported.

Pakistan’s Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Monday, however, rejected as “baseless and fabricated” the American non-profit news organisation’s report, saying that the cash-strapped country provided arms to the US to get its support to clinch the USD 3 billion deal with the IMF towards the end of June to avoid default.

Pakistan has struggled to maintain a balance in ties with the Kremlin and Washington since the Russia-Ukraine crisis began earlier last year.

“The IMF Standby Arrangement for Pakistan was successfully negotiated between Pakistan and the IMF to implement difficult but essential economic reforms. Giving any other colour to these negotiations is disingenuous,” Dawn News quoted Baloch as saying.

Baloch said Pakistan maintained a policy of “strict neutrality” in the dispute between the two countries and did not provide them any arms or ammunition in that context.

“Pakistan’s defence exports are always accompanied by strict end-user requirements,” she said. During a visit to Pakistan in July, Ukrainian

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba had rejected similar reports that Islamabad was supplying arms to Ukraine to support its military during the ongoing conflict with Russia, according to Dawn.

He had clarified that the two nations had no deal for the supply of arms and ammunition.

Former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had also expressed similar views, maintaining that Pakistan had not signed any agreement with Ukraine for military supplies since the war began.

An earlier report had also claimed Pakistan set up a defence trading firm in Warsaw to smoothen the process of arms supplies to Ukraine. In April in an interview with BBC, a Ukrainian commander had talked about receiving rockets from other countries including Pakistan. But officials strongly reject

claims of providing any ammunition to Ukraine insisting the country maintained a “policy of strict neutrality”.

An official, however, had said if a third party supplied weapons purchased from Pakistan to another country, it was their responsibility.

The revelation is a window into the kind of behind-the-scenes manoeuvring between financial and political elites that rarely are exposed to the public, even as the public pays the price, the Intercept report said. The Russia-Ukraine crisis began last year when President Vladimir Putin ordered the latter’s invasion on February 24.

In July, the IMF transferred USD 1.2 billion to cash-strapped Pakistan, part of the USD 3 billion bailout programme for nine months to support the government’s efforts to stabilise the country’s ailing economy.

Libyan leader says flooded city divided to create buffers in case of disease outbreaks

AP ■ DERNAL (LIBYA)

The prime minister of Libya’s eastern administration said on Tuesday that authorities have divided the flood-stricken city of Derna into four sections to create buffers in case of disease outbreaks, a day after thousands of angry protesters demanded the city’s rapid reconstruction. Last week, two dams collapsed during Mediterranean storm Daniel, sending a wall of water gushing through Derna. Government officials and aid agencies have given death tolls ranging from about 4,000 to 11,000. “Now the affected areas are completely isolated, the armed forces and the government have begun creating a buffer out of fear of the spread of diseases or epidemics,” Prime Minister Ossama Hamad said in a telephone interview with Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV. No further details were given.

On Monday, the United



Nations warned that a disease outbreak could create “a second devastating crisis”.

Libyan protesters gathered in central Derna on Monday in the first mass demonstration since the flood. Outside the city’s al-Shabana mosque thousands called for a rapid investigation into the disaster, the urgent reconstruction of the city and other demands.

On Monday evening, the former mayor of the city, Abdel-

Moneim al-Gaithi, said his home was set on fire by protesters. Public prosecutors opened an investigation on Saturday into the collapse of the two dams, built in the 1970s, as well as the allocation of maintenance funds for them. That same day al-Gaithi was suspended pending the investigation. Many of the city’s residents see politicians as the architects of the crisis. The country has been divided between rival adminis-

trations since 2014. Both are backed by international patrons and armed militias whose influence in the country has ballooned since a NATO-backed Arab Spring uprising toppled autocratic ruler Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. Both authorities have deployed humanitarian teams to the city but have struggled to respond to the large-scale disaster. The recovery operation, with help from international teams, has been poorly coordinated, and residents say aid distribution has been uneven.

Conflicting death tolls and statistics have been released by various official bodies.

Libya’s Red Crescent has said at least 11,300 people have been killed and an additional 10,000 are missing. After earlier reporting the same death toll, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is now citing far lower numbers, about 4,000 people killed and 9,000 missing.

Nawaz ‘excited’ to return to Pak ‘PDM saved country from default prevented ₹ 1000/ltr petrol price’

PTI ■ LAHORE/LONDON

Pakistan’s former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has said that he is “excited” to return to his country on October 21, ending a four-year “self-imposed exile” and to lead his party in the upcoming elections. Addressing an online meeting of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) ticket holders from London on Monday, the PML-N supreme leader also said that the price of petrol, which is currently hovering around Rs 330 per litre, would have been Rs 1,000 per litre had the coalition government led by PML-N not “saved” the country from default, Dawn News reported. Amid double-digit inflation, Pakistan’s caretaker government last week effected yet another hike in the prices of petrol and diesel taking them to a historic high — over Rs 330 per litre — prompting immediate protests and a legal challenge too.

The fuel price hike comes on the heels of a 27.4 per cent increase in the rate of inflation in August, putting an unbearable burden on the masses, as petrol is used by all private and public service vehicles. Petrol and diesel have become costlier by 20 per cent since the

caretaker government took over in August. Sharif told senior PML-N leaders, including Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz, Ahsan Iqbal, Pervaiz Rashid, Khurram Dastgir, Marriyau Aurangzeb, Azma Bokhari and Rana Sanaulah, that he was “excited and happy” to return to the country. Lashing out at the military and judicial establishment of 2017, the PML-N supremo said the people should know who the real culprits for their agony were. “The man (Nawaz) who rid the country of power load shedding was sent home by four judges,” Sharif, 73, said in his emotional speech, adding that the former army chief General (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa and ex-Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief General (retd) Faiz Hamid were behind his ouster. “(Former) chief justices Saqib Nisar and Asif Saeed Khosa were tools of [the former army chief and his spy chief]. Their crime is bigger than a murder offence. Giving them pardons will be an injustice to the nation. They don’t deserve pardon,” Sharif said, vowing to hold them accountable. “These ‘characters’ who unleashed economic misery on the people of Pakistan will have to face accountability,” the PML-N supreme leader pledged.

Defending the PML-N decision to form the 16-month government after sending Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan home through a no-confidence motion in April last year, Sharif claimed that had the PML-N-led Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) not saved the country from default, per litre petrol price would have been Rs 1,000.

“We put at risk our political capital to save the country from default. In fact, we paid the price of saving Pakistan from default. However, I can give in writing that in elections we will win,” Sharif claimed, recalling that in 2017, when he was in power, it was not the case. He said cheap flour, ghee and sugar were available then while the poor today were receiving heavy electricity bills and did not know how to pay them.

In July, the IMF transferred USD 1.2 billion to cash-strapped Pakistan, part of the USD 3 billion bailout programme for nine months to support the government’s efforts to stabilise the country’s ailing economy.

Pakistan’s economy has been in a free fall mode for the last many years, bringing untold pressure on the poor masses in the form of unchecked inflation.

Trump plans to meet striking autoworkers in Michigan

WASHINGTON (AP): Former President Donald Trump will travel to the battleground state of Michigan next week to meet with striking autoworkers instead of participating in the second Republican presidential debate, a person familiar with his plans said Monday. Trump, who also skipped the first debate last month, has signal led that he is

already focused on the 2024 election against President Joe Biden as he maintains a wide lead against his GOP rivals in primary polls. In recent days, he has been leaning hard into the strike, painting himself as sympathetic to the workers and accusing Biden of trying to destroy the car industry by expanding electric cars and green energy policies.

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/s India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd VS AMOL ASHOK BHANDGE
CIS NO NACT/20074/2017
CNR No. HRGR03-055627-2017
Next Date:- 20-09-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO :-
AMOL ASHOK BHANDGE :-
Address: FLAT NO C5 BARDHANA VIHAR HSG SOC WADGA ON BK PUNE-411041
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE HOUSING FINANCE LTD VS OCEAN
CIS NO NACT/19462/2017
CNR No. HRGR03-054736-2017
Next Date:- 20-09-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO :-
OCEAN :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR VANDANA KHANNA OFFICE AT 5 C SHAHPUR JAT BACK PORTION SOUTH DELHI
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE HOUSING FINANCE LTD VS AMARJEET KAUR
CIS NO NACT/722/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-001522-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO :-
AMARJEET KAUR :-
Address: R/O H-87 SANT NAGAR EXTN WEST DELHI
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE HOUSING FINANCE LTD VS SHRI RAM TELECOM
CIS NO NACT/734/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-001527-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO :-
SHRI RAM TELECOM :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR RAMIT SINDWANI OFFICE AT SHOP NO 1 PROP 244 PKT E 21 SEC 3 ROHINI NORTH WST DELHI 110085
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

Before the National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi
Company Petition no. IB-347/ND/2023
In the Matter of:
Tribhuvan Markplus Pvt Ltd
... Applicant
Versus
Green Valley Bio-Energy Pvt Ltd
...Respondent
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE
Notice may be taken by the directors of the Company, Green Valley Bio-Energy Pvt Ltd that a Company Petition being IB-347/ND/2023 has been filed by the above mentioned applicant before the National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi Bench Kindly note that the matter is listed on 27.09.2023.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.
VEHICLES FOR SALE
1) SWRJ MAZDA SARTAJ XM
REG. NO. DL1MA1554-YOM -2018
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 452446
2) ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED -AL 1618
REG. NO. HR55AC2859-YOM -2017
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 615000
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN THIS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION"
INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 05-10-2023 (PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P.) UP-201313 OR CONTACT : RAMAN AHUJA KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 8377988238 EMAIL-raman.ahuja@kotak.com

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE FINANCE LIMITED VS SANIKA MARBLE AND GRANITE
CIS NO NACT/2540/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-005945-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO :-
SANIKA MARBLE AND GRANITE :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR DINESH UTTERSHWAR BIKKED OFFICE AT S NO 29/22 MUMBAI PUNE BYPASSNR TRIMURTI GARDEN AMBEGAON PUNE MAHARASHTRA
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE FINANCE LIMITED VS SHRI RAM TELECOM
CIS NO NACT/2534/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-005969-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023
PUBLICATION ISSUED TO :-
SHRI RAM TELECOM :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR RAMIT SINDWANI R/O SHOP NO 1 PROP 244 PKT E 21 SEC 3 ROHINI NORTH WEST DELHI
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtcdh.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

Foreign cos in China feel tension with US affecting business plans

PTI ■ BEIJING

Foreign companies operating in China say tensions with Washington over technology, trade and other issues and uncertainty over Chinese policies are damaging the business environment and causing some to reassess their plans for investing in the giant market. The results of surveys released Tuesday by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China largely concurred in appealing for greater certainty and clarity over China’s stance toward foreign businesses.

“For decades, European companies thrived in China, benefitting from a stable and efficient business environment. However, after the turbulent past three years, many have reevaluated their basic assumptions about the Chinese market,” Jens Eskelund, the EU Chamber’s president said, in a letter that accompanied the report.

Eskelund said that predictability and reliability had been undermined by “erratic policy shifts,” hurting confidence in China’s growth prospects.

“At the top of a growing list of questions about the Chinese market is, what kind of relationship does China want to have with foreign enterprises?” he said.

The Shanghai AmCham’s survey showed a continued downgrading of China’s importance as an overseas destination for investment, even though two-thirds of the 325 companies responding said they had no immediate plans to change their China strategy.

Just over one in five of the companies surveyed said they were decreasing their investment

in China this year, with the top reason being uncertainty about the US-China trade relationship, followed by expectations of slower growth in China, it said.

Overall, the survey showed sentiment worsened from last year, when companies were embroiled in disruptions from “zero-COVID” policies that caused parts of entire cities, transport networks and travel to be shut down, sometimes for weeks at a time.

Such disruptions were a major “push factor” that companies cited in expanding their operations outside China, the survey showed. Asked about the survey, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that Beijing has recently taken measures to attract foreign investment and that China welcomes foreign companies to invest and operate in China.

“What I can tell you is that China’s economy is resilient, promising and dynamic, and the fundamentals of long-term development have not changed,” said the spokesperson, Mao Ning.

“The outstanding advantages of a super-sized market and a complete industrial system have also remained unchanged,” she said. While 52 per cent of those surveyed by AmCham Shanghai said they were optimistic about their five-year business outlook in China, that was the lowest figure since the group began the annual survey in 1999. Nearly nine in 10 companies said rising costs were a big challenge.

Intensifying competition has also been worsened by policies that favour local companies over foreign ones and courts that tend to favor Chinese companies in decisions on protection of intellectual property such as patents and trademarks, the chamber said.

Govt to tweak PLI schemes for pharma, textiles, drone sectors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government may soon tweak the production-linked incentive scheme for pharmaceuticals, drones and textiles sectors to encourage investment and boost manufacturing, an official said.

These sectors have been identified after inter-ministerial consultations on the performance of the scheme for various products.

The official also said that disbursement of production-linked incentives (PLI) for white goods (AC and LED lights) would start this month and that would push the amount of disbursement, which was only Rs 2,900 crore till March 2023.

The scheme was announced in 2021 for 14 sectors such as telecommunications, white goods, textiles, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles, specialty steel, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones and pharma with



an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore.

"We have identified the sectors. We are going to send the combined note to seek approval of the Union Cabinet. The changes include extending some time (for pharma sector) and adding some additional products in some sectors.

"In textiles, we are expanding the definition of certain other products in the technical textiles segment; in drones, we are increasing the amount," the government official, who did not wish to be named said.

The total amount allocated for the PLI scheme for

drones and drone components is Rs 120 crore spread over three financial years.

A senior official of the commerce and industry ministry had earlier stated that some course corrections or tweaking were needed in PLI schemes that were not doing well.

PLI schemes for sectors which are not picking up well include high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell (ACC) batteries, textile products and specialty steel.

On the other hand, the

scheme is doing well in sectors such as electronics, pharma, medical devices, telecom, food processing, and white goods.

The government is trying to sort out issues such as timely processing of claims, visa-related matters where vendors require Chinese professionals' expertise, and delay in getting environmental clearances that have been raised by certain stakeholders of PLI schemes.

The purpose of the scheme is to attract investments in key sectors and cutting-edge technology; ensure efficiency and bring economies of size and scale in the manufacturing sector; and make Indian companies and manufacturers globally competitive.

These schemes for all 14 sectors have been notified by the concerned ministries/departments after due approval. These schemes are in various stages of implementation.

The government is expected to disburse about Rs 13,000 crore to eligible firms seeking benefits under the schemes.

SMEV writes to Gadkari, seeks unified policy of road tax exemption for EVs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) on Tuesday urged the government to formulate a unified policy of road tax exemption for Electric Vehicles (EVs) across the country.

In a letter to the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, SMEV said a consistent and favourable policy environment is essential to accelerate the shift towards electric mobility in India.

"I am writing to request your esteemed office to weigh in on a unified policy of road tax exemption for EVs that will play a pivotal role in encouraging the adoption of clean and sustainable transportation options, which is vital for our nation's environmental and economic future," SMEV Chief Evangelist Sanjay Kaul wrote.

In July, SMEV had named Kaul as its Chief Evangelist to help revise the association's agenda.

In view of the Ministry of Heavy Industries' decision to



reduce the subsidy component mid-way through the FAME II scheme, this input (unified policy of road tax exemption for EVs) from the government would become even more relevant and critical, he stated.

Road tax and registration fees aren't just bureaucratic formalities; they're pivotal factors influencing the rise or fall of EVs, Kaul said.

"These fees can act as either a carrot or a stick, nudging consumers toward greener choices or pushing them back into the arms of traditional gas-guzzlers. EVs often carry a hefty price tag due to their advanced battery systems, so these extra upfront costs can be the tipping

point that deters would-be buyers," he said.

The patchwork of road tax policies across states is a roadblock to the EV revolution, Kaul said.

While some states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have already waived road tax and registration fees, others lag woefully behind, he wrote.

"This uneven playing field doesn't just sow confusion; it actively discourages eager EV adopters, stalling the momentum of a market ready to shift into high gear.

"Even more disheartening are states like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, who once enticed buyers with tax breaks only to backtrack and impose taxes, adding yet

another hurdle in the race toward a sustainable future," he noted.

Inconsistent tax policies across states are not merely confusing; they are crippling the EV movement in its tracks, Kaul stated.

"What India needs now is a unified, favourable framework that supercharges our transition to electric mobility. A centralised advisory from your esteemed office can cut through the noise and set the stage for widespread adoption of this groundbreaking technology," he added.

By issuing a nationwide advisory that advocates for a uniform policy on road tax exemptions for EVs, the government has a unique opportunity to drive India into a cleaner, greener future, he said.

Kaul has been tasked with helping the EV sector tide over the crisis faced since last year with almost all OEMs in the sector dealing with issues of non-compliance with policy details of the FAME II scheme.

'Working on using AI to reduce pendency of consumer cases'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Consumer Affairs Ministry on Tuesday said it is working on using artificial intelligence (AI) to reduce the pendency of cases in various consumer courts in the country.

The ministry also said the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has successfully resolved 854 cases during August, the highest disposal rate in the current year.

This was possible due to proactive steps taken by the NCDRC, streamlined processes and advanced technology like E-daakhil, which helped resolve cases faster than ever before, it added.

"In furtherance of keeping the same momentum of disposal of cases, the Department has made filing of cases through E-daakhil in consumer commissions compulsory and soon going to launch the feature of VC (video conference) on E-daakhil," the ministry said in a statement.

As the scope of artificial intelligence is increasing rapidly, the ministry is 'also working on using the AI facilities in reducing the pendency of cases



in the National, State and District Consumer Commissions," it added.

The case filed in the Consumer Commissions will be analysed through AI and will generate the summary of the case and many more actions will be done through AI in resolving the case, the statement said.

According to the ministry, NCDRC has significantly improved the disposal of consumer cases in the commission in 2023. NCDRC and the Department of Consumer Affairs successfully resolved 854 consumer cases in August, whereas the filing of cases during the same period was 455, making it the highest disposal rate of 188 per cent this year, it said.

This achievement underscores the NCDRC's unwavering commitment to safeguarding consumer rights and ensuring prompt redressal of grievances, the ministry said.

Even the regular monitoring of consumer cases by the ministry and holding various one-day regional workshops in Guwahati and Chandigarh helped expedite the process.

The ministry also conducted sector-specific brainstorming sessions on insurance and real estate to reduce the pendency in the consumer commissions.

State-specific meetings in various states like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra and Kerala were also held, the statement added.

Staff shortage at DGCA delays issuance of pilot licences

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is taking at least a couple of months to issue licences to trained pilots as the regulator is grappling with the shortage of staff at key positions, according to sources.

After training, individuals need to obtain a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) to be eligible to fly commercial flights.

Sources in the civil aviation ministry said that at present, a pilot has to wait for a couple of months to get his or her licence and the pendency time is likely to go up in the coming months.

"The Directorate of Training and Licensing (DTL), under the Operations Department which deals with licensing, has a total of 129 sanctioned posts of assistant directors. Of those, 92 posts or almost 72 per cent of the total strength are lying vacant," one of the sources said.

Till July 2022, the DGCA had only 72 sanctioned posts of assistant directors. In August 2022, the ministry created 57 new posts and the sanctioned strength rose to 129 positions.

However, DGCA has failed to initiate any process to fill the 57 newly created posts. As many as 35 old posts out of the 72 that fell vacant due to



retirement or promotions of the employees are also lying vacant," the source said.

When contacted, DGCA Director General Vikram Dev Dutt did not offer any comment on the issues.

However, a senior official on the condition of anonymity said that the hiring process is tedious and time-consuming, and that is the reason for the delay in filling crucial posts.

As per the DGCA's own 'Standard of Service', after due process, a CPL has to be issued within three days.

Further, the source said the regulator published an advertisement through the Union Public Service Commission (PSC) for filling entry-level posts in airworthiness, legal

and air safety areas. However, no advertisement for filling the posts in the operations cadre at the entry level for assistant directors that deal with the licensing process has been issued, the source added.

The sources at the ministry said that institutes which provide training for drone flying have to get a licence from the DGCA. Over a dozen such institutes have applied for licences but their applications are lying for approval for a considerable amount of time, they added.

"Companies that sell drones to trained pilots have to obtain a UIN (Unique Identification Number) from the DGCA for each drone. Similarly, trained drone pilots

also have to get a licence from the DGCA to fly drones.

Aviation experts, who are aware of the issue, said that the pendency time in issuing licences to pilots might go up as the operations department under DTL is under the restructuring process due to which the files are moving among DGCA, the ministry and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

"So far as I know, even the higher positions such as the post of Deputy Director General (DDGs) are also facing severe shortage as the DGCA initiated new recruitment rules last year for these posts. "Out of total 18 DDGs posts at DGCA, 9 are vacant.

As many as 7 out of these 9 posts were created in August 2022," Captain SS Panesar, Ex-Director of Flight Safety and Training at Indian Airlines, said.

According to him, in the absence of recruitment rules, the feeder cadre, -- directors from legal, airworthiness, operations, flying training aircraft and engineering, among other departments, could not be promoted.

"This has also resulted in a roadblock in the career progression of all group A officers in DGCA and in future, will severely impact the aviation industry. The ministry immediately needs to fill all these technical positions with competent and highly skilled professionals," he said.

The operations department, which deals with drone licensing too, has crucial positions such as Deputy Director General (DDG), Director Operations and Deputy Director Operations remaining vacant for more than a year.

"There is pendency in all these services due to lack of officials," one of the sources said.

The sources also claimed that even Air Traffic Controllers Licensing and Aerodrome Licensing processes are also moving at a snail's pace.

Govt rolls out mandatory quality norms for solder wires

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has issued mandatory quality norms for solder wires, used in electronics and engineering industry, to curb the import of sub-standard goods and boost domestic manufacturing of these goods.

A notification in this regard was issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on September 18.

Items under Flux Cored Solder Wire (Quality Control) Order, 2023 cannot be produced, sold, traded, imported and stocked unless they bear the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) mark.

These orders will come into force with effect from six months from the date of publication of this notification, the DPIIT said on Tuesday.

Soldering is a critical process where quality of flux cored solder wire is of para-



mount importance as any failure will impact quality and safety of the products soldered particularly in electronic and automobile industry.

"The implementation of the Quality Control Order (QCO) for this product is crucial not only for the safety of consumers, but will also improve the manufacturing quality standards in the country and curb imports of sub-standard products into India," it added.

Till now, BIS certification rules were not applicable on these products.

Reliance KG-6 gas price to be cut by 14% from Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The price of natural gas produced from difficult areas like KG-D6 of Reliance Industries is likely to be cut by about 14 per cent from next month in line with softening energy prices, sources said.

For the six-month period starting October 1, the price of gas from deepsea and high-pressure, high-temperature (HPTP) areas is likely to be cut to around USD 10.4 per million British thermal unit from the current USD 12.12, they said.

The government bi-annually fixes prices of the locally-produced natural gas -- which is converted into CNG for use in automobiles,

pipined to household kitchens for cooking and used to generate electricity and make fertilisers.

Two different formulas govern rates paid for gas produced from legacy or old fields of national oil companies like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL), and for newer fields lying in difficult-to-tap areas, such as deepsea.

Rates are fixed on April 1 and October 1 each year.

In April this year, the formula governing legacy fields was changed and indexed to 10 per cent of the prevailing Brent crude oil price. The rate was however capped at USD 6.5 per mmBtu.

Rates for legacy fields are

now decided on a monthly basis. For September, the price came to USD 8.60 per mmBtu but because of the cap, the producers would get only USD 6.5.

Brent crude oil has averaged around USD 94 per barrel this month but rates will continue to be capped at USD 6.5. Sources said the price for difficult area gas continues to be governed by the old formula that takes one-year average of international LNG prices and rates at some global gas hubs with a lag of one quarter.

International prices had fallen in the reference period of July 2022 to June 2023 and so it will translate into lower prices for difficult fields, they

said.

The price for gas from difficult fields was cut to USD 12.12 per mmBtu for a month period, beginning April 1 from a record USD 12.46 earlier.

The global spurt in energy prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to rates of locally-produced gas climbing to record levels - USD 8.57 per million British thermal unit for gas from legacy or old fields and USD 12.46 per mmBtu for gas from difficult fields between October 2022 and March 2023.

On April 1, prices of gas from legacy fields were slated to climb to USD 10.7 per mmBtu using the old formula.

la. But the government changed the formula and put a cap to keep inflation under check.

Rates of CNG and piped gas for kitchens had risen by 70 per cent because of the previous gas price hike.

The ceiling price covers the cost of production of producers while protecting consumers, particularly CNG users, kitchens using piped cooking gas and fertiliser plants which had grappled with soaring input costs.

India is aiming to become a gas-based economy with the share of natural gas in its primary energy mix targeted to rise to 15 per cent by 2030 from the existing level of around 6.3 per cent.

Job fair draws 5K job seekers

New Delhi: CADD Centre's Job Pakka Fair 2023 held at Greater Noida Institute of Technology drew over 13,000 registrations and welcoming more than 5,000 eager participants.

The fair aimed to link students, fresh graduates, and professionals with over 3,800 job openings spanning engineering and non-technical sectors.

The inauguration witnessed the esteemed presence of Sushri Akriti, Civil Judge from Greater Noida, and Rohit Pandey, Head of Training & Placement at GNIO. This event, India's largest talent search, provided a robust platform for diverse fields, attracting major companies like Tech Mahindra, Adroit, and Decathlon in search of the right candidates.

Tender Cancellation Notice

SS/CW/RR/78/2023/64/7275 Date : 18.09.2023

In reference to the tender no. SS/CW/RR/78/2023/41 dated 28/08/2023 published in the portal www.assamtenders.gov.in, it is for information of the prospective bidders that the tender for the work, 'Repair & renovation works of State Mission Office of Samagra Shiksha, Assam, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19' hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

Sd/-Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog/CF/2737/23/20-Sep-2023

Google to integrate Bard with other Google apps, results in more languages

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Search engine Google has said it is opening up access to AI-powered chatbot Bard while integrating it with Google apps such as Maps, Docs and Drive and offering results in more languages and countries.

Touted as Google's answer to open-source GenAI platform ChatGPT, Google said Bard is now available in languages and countries worldwide. Users can collaborate on creative projects, start in one language and continue in up to over 40 languages and countries.

Bard will be able to interact with information from Gmail, Docs and Google Drive



to find, summarise and answer questions across personal content.

Google is also integrating real-time info from Maps, YouTube, Hotels and Flights - expanding Bard's capabilities

by pulling in information from the Google apps and services. These extensions are enabled by default, and you can disable them any time, Google said.

"With permission, you can enable Bard to interact with

information from your Gmail, Docs and Drive so you can find, summarise and answer questions across your personal content. Your Google Workspace data won't be used to train Bard's public model and you can disable it any time," the company said.

Google said it is making these features available in English and will be bringing it to other languages soon.

Bard will also be able to develop creative strategies, formulate points of view, create programs that are case-insensitive (where it does not matter if the text is capital or small), create interview questions with talking points, and so on.

VIT-AP University-PI Datacenters sign MoU

PNS ■ AMARAVATI / HYDERABAD

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the VIT-AP University and the PI Datacenters on September 15th during the opening ceremony of the company's new headquarters in Hyderabad's Financial District. Kalyan Muppaneni, the founder and CEO of PI Datacenters, and Dr. S. V. Kota Reddy, Vice Chancellor of VIT-AP University, both signed the MOU.

The MOU was signed in the presence of Sri Jayesh Ranjan, IAS-Principal



Secretary - ITE&C and Dept. of Industries & Commerce, Govt. of Telangana, Ms. Rebekah Drame - U.S. Consulate General (Acting), Hyderabad, Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commissioner Telangana & A.P., and Dr. Ameet Chavan, Director of IIEC VIT-AP University.

Kane set out for only trophy that truly matters

AP ■ MUNICH

Harry Kane's Bayern Munich host Manchester United on Wednesday, kick-starting their campaign in the competition which matters most to them this season.

Despite domestic dominance which has seen Bayern win the past 11 Bundesliga titles, the club judges itself on its performances in the Champions League.

Since winning in Lisbon in 2020, Bayern have been eliminated at the quarter-final stage of the Champions League for three straight years.

These early eliminations led to the exits of former managers Hansi Flick and Julian Nagelsmann.

Current Bayern boss Thomas Tuchel, who took over from a sacked Nagelsmann who had won eight from eight in the Champions League, is aware that making it at least to the semis is considered par for the course in Munich.

While this understanding is not new for Bayern or indeed any of the handful of modern superclubs where domestic success is assured, the big money addition of Kane makes winning now a necessity.



100 MILLION REASONS

Bayern broke their transfer record to lure Kane from Tottenham in the summer, paying 100 million euros (\$108 million) for the 30-year-old England captain.

With Bundesliga titles and

German Cups finding their way to Munich more often than not, Kane's move to Bayern has clearly boosted his chances of capturing that elusive first trophy.

But only by winning the Champions League will his

decision to leave England be seen as an unqualified success.

The England captain said as much when unveiled in Munich, explaining "I want to play for the Champions League title, that's why I came to Bayern."

Kane has shown few difficulties adjusting to life in Germany, having scored four goals in his first four league matches.

Kane said on Monday he was looking forward to "something special" in his first

Champions League match for Bayern -- and first against Premier League opposition since arriving in Munich.

The striker told Germany's Sports Illustrated that he "wants to get the supporters behind us as early as possible and

approach the game with a lot of intensity."

Early starts are common for Bayern in the Champions League. The six-time winners have won their opening match for the past 19 seasons.

Bayern will however need to see the match through without Tuchel, who saw red as his side was eliminated by eventual champions Man City last season.

Tuchel will watch from the stands, with his assistant Zsolt Low taking the reins.

Typically fiery, Tuchel has pointed much of his scorn at his own club this season, particularly after Bayern failed to sign a defensive midfielder.

Bayern had tried -- the club brought Fulham's Joao Palhinha to Munich on deadline day and had the Portugal star taking pictures in club shirts on deadline day -- but the deal broke down and the midfielder flew back to London.

Despite netting Kane, Serie A defender of the year Kim Min-jae and a host of other useful additions, Tuchel hit out at the club, calling the club "gutsy" for giving him such a "thin" squad.

"We will see if it's enough for the club's targets this season."

While squad complaints are a sport of their own for modern managers, letting go of

Benjamin Pavard, Ryan Gravenberch, Lucas Hernandez, Josip Stanisic and to a lesser extent Marcel Sabitzer and Sadio Mane could come back to haunt the side once the games start coming thick and fast.

WARY OF UNITED

Bayern and Man United are two of the most successful clubs in football history and have a strong rivalry of their own, headlined by the Red Devils' remarkable last-minute victory in the 1999 Champions League final.

They have however started the year in contrasting fashion.

While only goal difference is keeping Bayern from the top of the Bundesliga after an unbeaten start, United have stumbled out of the blocks this season.

Despite a strong opening season under former Bayern second-division coach Erik ten Hag, United have lost three of five league games this season and sit in the bottom half of the table.

Kane however said Bayern should be wary, saying on Monday "I know Manchester United are having a difficult time at the moment, but sometimes teams like that are dangerous because they're looking to come back in a big way."



Rice ready for first taste of Champions League

AP ■ LONDON

Mikel Arteta expects Declan Rice to play a pivotal role in Arsenal's return to the Champions League as the England midfielder prepares to make his debut in the tournament against PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday.

The Gunners are back in the Champions League for the first time since 2016/17, giving Rice his first taste of Europe's elite club competition after his close-season move from West Ham.

Arteta splashed out £100 million (\$124 million) on the midfielder precisely for occasions such as PSV's visit to the Emirates Stadium in Arsenal's opening Group B fixture.

Arteta believes Rice's astute reading of the game and unflappable demeanour strengthens his team. And the Arsenal boss said his new signing can also be a regular goal threat.

"For sure and when you see the technical ability that he has and how he executed it in this moment, his range when he's shooting from range, his accuracy, the power that he generates with no space, with both legs, he can do it with both feet. He's got the timing to arrive in the box."

Along with helping Arsenal challenge for the title -- the north Londoners are two points behind leaders Manchester City after Sunday's 1-0 win at Everton -- Rice will be firmly in the spotlight in the Champions League.

Having played his entire career with West Ham until this season, he has never experienced the thrill of lining up while the

Champions League anthem booms out before kick-off.

But he will finally be able to tick that off his bucket list on Wednesday.

"I'm so excited for that. I've said for many years now that I've wanted to play in the Champions League," Rice said.

"I've wanted to push myself at the biggest level. This opportunity at Arsenal has arisen. It's a great club."

Rice has already made his mark in continental action, captaining West Ham to their first major trophy since 1980 last season when they won the Europa Conference League.

He has made his mark for England as well, featuring as the fulcrum of Gareth Southgate's midfield in their run to the European Championship final in 2021 and impressing at last year's World Cup.

Despite their lengthy absence from the Champions League, the Gunners are expected to progress from a relatively undemanding group featuring Sevilla and Lens as well as PSV.

But Rice knows he must use Arsenal's opening group fixtures to show he can dominate at the highest level, with his sights already set on inspiring his side to a maiden Champions League triumph.

"At the end of the day you get one career, and I want to be as successful as I can with Arsenal, make as many Champions League appearances as possible and hopefully one day get my hands on that trophy," he said.

AP ■ MADRID

Jude Bellingham scored for Real Madrid on his debut, and in four of the five matches which have followed, in a superb start to life in the Spanish capital for the former Birmingham boy.

The England midfielder has five goals in five games in La Liga, taking the Spanish top flight by storm after his 103 million euro (\$110 million) move from Borussia Dortmund this summer.

Real Madrid boast a 100 percent record from their opening raft of domestic games, but their season begins in earnest with the start of the Champions League this week.

Bellingham, 20, is set to make his 'second' debut for Los Blancos against Union Berlin on Wednesday at the Santiago Bernabeu, in the competition they value above all others.

The record 14-time European champions were thrashed 4-0 by Manchester City in the second leg of last season's semi-final, 5-1 on aggregate, with Bellingham's purchase in part a response to that stinging defeat.

Madrid have started reducing minutes for their veteran players in midfield -- Luka Modric and Toni Kroos -- while allowing Bellingham, Eduardo Camavinga, Aurelien Tchouameni and Fede Valverde more opportunities.



China beat under-prepared India 5-1 in Asian Games

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

A severely-fatigued and under-prepared Indian team got a rude reality check with hosts China out-muscling them 5-1 in an opening group league encounter of the Asian Games football competition here on Tuesday.

Giao Tianyi (17th min), Dai Weijun (51st min), Tao Qianglong (72nd and 75th minute) and Hao Fang (90+2) scored for the hosts, while Rahul KP's (45+1 minute) equaliser from an acute angle was possibly the best strike of the match.

It was heartening to see a third-string team holding the title contenders on an even keel during the first 45 minutes, which saw Indian custodian Gurmeet Singh Chahal valiantly save a spot-kick taken by rival captain Zhu Chenjie.

India now need to beat Bangladesh and Myanmar in their remaining two games to qualify for the second round. Myanmar beat Bangladesh 4-2 in another game in this group.

Having reached the Games Village late on Monday evening, the third-string Indian team, with not even four specialist

defenders in their ranks, didn't have enough co-ordination amongst themselves. They looked jet-lagged, not rested enough and there was no way that there could have been a miracle.

The gulf in class and quality was evident and most of the Chinese attacks happened from India's wide left (China's right flank) side, which was being manned by Sumit Rathie. It became a free-ride for the Chinese attackers.

Also, the humidity and lack of training time had its

effect as the Indians didn't have the legs to last beyond the first hour. And, once the second goal was scored due to Sandesh Jhingan's poor anticipation, the floodgates opened.

Jhingan was also responsible for another goal when he had a brain fade and wanted to dribble his team past the danger in his own penalty box and committed harakiri.

A lot of players suffered from cramps due to humidity and, obviously, not having enough time to warm-up.

Hudson-Odoi saves Forest from defeat

AP ■ NOTTINGHAM

Callum Hudson-Odoi's stunning strike salvaged a 1-1 draw for Nottingham Forest as Burnley were denied a first Premier League win of the season on Monday.

Zeki Amdouni scored the only goal when the sides met in the League Cup last month and the Swiss international put Vincent Kompany's men in front four minutes before half-time.

Hudson-Odoi's career has drifted since he broke into the England team as a teenager.

But the former Chelsea



winger showed what he is capable of to level on the hour mark with a curling effort that clipped the inside of the post on its way into the top corner.

Burnley still thought they

had claimed all three points when Lyle Foster found the net 13 minutes from time.

But a VAR check ruled Sander Berge had handled before teeing up the South African.

Foster's frustration was then compounded in stoppage time when he was shown a red card in stoppage time for lashing out at Ryan Yates.

The 10 men held on to at least register Burnley's first point back in the Premier League.

A draw is enough to edge Forest up to eighth.

Indian men's hockey team leaves for Asian Games

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian men's hockey team will look to extend its impressive run at the Asian Games in Hangzhou beginning September 23.

India will begin their campaign against Uzbekistan on September 24. India are placed in Pool A, alongside Pakistan, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore,

and Uzbekistan. Pool B consists of Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand, and Indonesia.

The top two teams from each Pool will qualify for the semifinals.

Harmanpreet Singh will lead the team once again, with Hardik serving as his deputy.

"The team has been rigorously preparing for the Asian

Games and we performed well at the recently concluded Asian Champions Trophy Chennai, so the goal is to maintain that level of performance," said Harmanpreet before the Indian team left for Hangzhou. "We have some tough opponents in our Pool, but we are confident in our preparation and hope to finish on the podium."

The team includes goalkeepers PR Sreejesh and Krishan Pathak Varun Kumar, Amit Rohidas, Jarnmanpreet Singh, Harmanpreet Singh, and Sanjay are the defenders selected for the Asian Games. The midfield will be anchored by Nilakanta Sharma, Hardik Singh, Manpreet Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Sumit, and Shamsher

Singh, while the attack will be led by Abhishek, Gurjant Singh, Mandeep Singh, Sukhjeet Singh, and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay.

"We have had some tough practice sessions in the lead-up to the tournament and everyone in camp is focused, working towards the same goal," vice-captain Hardik said.

Spain players arrive for national team camp

AP ■ MADRID

Six Spain players arrived at a Madrid hotel to join their women's national team camp on Tuesday, five of whom are currently striking over changes they want made in the Spanish football federation (RFEF).

Spain's women's World Cup final-winning goalscorer Olga Carmona and four others presented themselves, along with Athenea del Castillo, who is not on strike, while other players are expected to join up later for the camp in Oliva according to Spanish media reports.

Asked by a reporter if she was happy to be included in the squad, goalkeeper Misa Rodriguez replied "no" on her arrival to the hotel.

The striking players issued a statement on Monday in which they reiterated their wish not to be called up, but acknowledged legal consequences which may force them to attend.

The Spanish government said early on Tuesday that players who do not attend would have to be punished under the country's sports law.

New Spain coach Montse Tome named a surprise 23-



woman squad on Monday for upcoming Nations League qualifiers including 20 players who said they were striking until further changes were made in the RFEF after the kiss scandal which rocked Spanish football.

Disgraced former federation president Luis Rubiales forcibly kissed midfielder Jenni Hermoso on the lips after Spain won the World Cup in Sydney on August 20, provoking worldwide outrage.

Rubiales eventually resigned three weeks after the incident and controversial coach Jorge Vilda was sacked,

but many players want more wide-ranging improvements and structural changes.

As many as 39 players are on strike against the RFEF but they were told by the government early Tuesday that those who did not attend the team's camps when called up would have to be punished.

Hermoso was not named in the squad by Tome in order to "protect" her, the new coach, Vilda's former assistant, said Monday.

"Protect me from what? And from whom?" Hermoso posted on X, formerly Twitter, early Tuesday.

5 Indians miss FIDE Junior Chess C'ships due to visa issues

PTI ■ CHENNAI

In a major setback, five young Indian chess players will miss the FIDE World Junior Chess Championship in Mexico City from September 22 to October 2 due to visa issues.

Just days before their scheduled departure, the five players, funded by the government, and two coaches did not get their visas on time.

The affected players are Vrashank Chouhan, Arun Kataria, Bhagyashree Patil,

Prraneeth Vuppala and Femil Chelladurai, along with coaches Pravind Thipsay M and Kiran Agrawal.

"Despite the best efforts from the Indian government, we could not get the visas arranged," FIDE advisory board chairman Bharat Singh Chauhan said.

"It's a huge setback for the Indian contingent. It is not good news for the players involved, who will now be missing out on a great international exposure. They were also medal contenders.

ASHWIN BACK IN WORLD CUP RECKONING

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seasoned off-spinner R Ashwin on Monday made a comeback to the Indian ODI team for the three-match series against Australia and will be competing for a potential World Cup berth with Washington Sundar if Axar Patel doesn't get fit in time for the global event.

Senior players including skipper Rohit Sharma, senior batter Virat Kohli, all-rounder Hardik Pandya and in-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav were rested from the first two games, giving them a chance to get mentally fresh for the mega event.

K L Rahul will lead the side in the first two games against Australia before Rohit returns to lead a full strength squad in the third and final ODI ahead of the World Cup beginning October 5. The squad for the third game is effectively the 15 picked for World Cup and Ashwin and Washington.

Ashwin, who last played an ODI back in January 2022 in South Africa, could be a last minute addition to the World Cup side if Axar doesn't get fit before the September 28 deadline set by the International Cricket Council.

Axar had sustained a quadriceps tear during the recently held Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and missed the final against Sri Lanka on Sunday.

Chief selector Ajit Agarkar said both Ashwin and Washington are in contention for the replacement slot if Axar doesn't recover in time.

"There are couple of guys anyways, him and Washington. Look basically, what is being made known to us about Axar's injury is that he should be okay



and call we will make it once we know that but it leaves us with option to check these guys if they need to go that way," Agarkar told the media during a virtual session.

"If the need arises, we will look at that way but I don't think there is any need to speculate right now because we are hoping that Axar is fit," he added.

When the Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel had picked the 15-man squad for the World Cup at home earlier this month, questions over non selection of an off-spinner were raised with some of the opposition side's top order having multiple left-handers.

After the squad announcement on Monday, captain Rohit

was asked why Ashwin was not part of the Asia Cup squad if he was in the scheme of things. The India skipper responded by saying that a proven performer like Ashwin can be straightaway drafted into the team if the need arises.

Ashwin, who was sidelined from the India ODI set up following the Champions 2017 Trophy, made a recall to the side in January last year for the ODI series in South Africa. He made his comeback after four and a half years only to be sidelined again.

Ashwin's T20 career has also had a similar trajectory with the 37-year-old being left out of the team following the World Cup in Australia last year.

Injury-prone Shreyas Iyer,

who could only play two games in the Asia Cup due to a back spasm, is also available for all three ODIs.

"He got through his batting programme fine and at the moment, he is fit. We hope that he gets through all these three games," said Agarkar.

The first ODI will be played in Mohali on September 22, second in Indore on September 24 and third in Rajkot on September 27.

Following that, India will their two World Cup warm-up games against England and Netherlands on September 30 and October 3 in Guwahati and Trivandrum before playing their tournament opener against Australia in Chennai on October 8.

Squad for the first two ODIs: KL Rahul (captain), Ravindra Jadeja (vice-captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Shardul Thakur, Washington Sundar, R Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Prasidh Krishna.

Squad for third ODI: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, (vice-captain), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, KL Rahul (wicketkeeper), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel (subject to fitness), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, R Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Shami, Mohammed Siraj.

With Ashwin, lack of game time is not much of concern: Rohit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ravichandran Ashwin finds himself in contention for a World Cup spot despite lack of game time but it doesn't concern skipper Rohit Sharma one bit.

The 37-year-old Ashwin, who last played an ODI in January 2022, was picked for the upcoming three ODIs against Australia alongside Washington Sundar. Both the off-spinners will be fighting for that potential World Cup spot if Axar Patel doesn't get fit in time for the global event beginning October 5.

"With the kind of experience Ashwin has, close to 100 Tests (94), close to 150 ODIs (113) and yes it is all in the past but he has been consistently playing Test cricket and with guys like Ashwin having game time is not so much of a concern," said Rohit after the squad was announced for Australia series beginning September 22.

"...With guys like him, it's all in the head, more than body and the stuff. We made the decision speaking to him and understanding where he is at with regards to his body and stuff like that.

"It's not like he is not playing any cricket. Yes, he hasn't played the format but he has been playing Test cricket in West Indies, and if I am not wrong, played TNPL as well



and although no comparison there but there is still some cricket there, and it gives us chance to look at how he is bowling," he said.

The selectors have rested in-form Kuldeep Yadav for the first two ODIs.

Asked if that was done to keep an element of surprise in the World Cup, Rohit said, "Kuldeep is a wrist spinner and needs rhythm but we also deliberated that his bowling form is great and as Ajit (chief selector) said we needed to give some of the players chance as they played only one match in Asia Cup and are there in WC squad and we needed to check them as well.

"Kuldeep, we have seen for last 18 months and we didn't want to expose him. He will be playing in the last match and the best decision to see him is in 3rd match. We have two practice games and he will be back in bowling

rhythm," said the skipper.

Rest given to senior players in the first two ODIs will provide opportunity for fringe players like Tilak Varma and Ruturaj Gaikwad.

"Our endeavour is to give everyone a chance. If we only play 11 through the year, then you can't create bench strength. You can see that some other teams are facing injury problems because it also involves lot of travelling and we have to play 11 matches and criss-cross the country," Rohit said when asked about travelling involved over the course of the World Cup.

"So, we will have a lot of travelling and a lot of matches. We want to make sure that some of the guys sitting out have enough confidence by playing a few games and not like suddenly they are thrown in. Eventually players need to be ready and anyone can be called at any time.



Pujara suspended for one game after Sussex docked 12 pts

PTI ■ HOVE

India international Cheteshwar Pujara has been suspended from one county game after his team Sussex was docked 12 points in the County Championship due to a code of conduct breach during the match against Leicestershire.

Pujara received an automatic suspension after the club reached the threshold of four fixed penalties in the same season and won't be available for this week's game against Derbyshire, according to a report in ESPN Cricinfo.

Sussex have also made the decision to stand down three players - Jack Carson, Tom Haines and Ari Karvelas - for behaviour that in the words of head coach, Paul Farbrace, "tarnished" the dramatic 15-run win over Leicestershire last week, the website reported.

"We have made Jack and Tom unavailable for selection for this game at Derbyshire," Farbrace said. "Following the umpires and match referee's decision to charge both players with on-field level one and level two offences, we needed to take a stance, and show them we will not condone such behaviours.

"Ultimately it has cost us the availability of Cheteshwar and we have been deducted 12 points."

Rajinikanth to be 'distinguished guest' during WC: BCCI

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Superstar Rajinikanth will 'grace' next month's ICC World Cup as a "distinguished guest," the BCCI said on Tuesday, while extending him the Golden Ticket that allows unhindered access during the multi-country tournament.

BCCI Honorary Secretary Jay Shah presented the Golden Ticket to the top star, BCCI said on its X handle, sharing a photo of the two.

"The Phenomenon Beyond Cinema! The BCCI Honorary Secretary @JayShah presented the golden ticket to Shri @rajinikanth, the true embodiment of charisma and cinematic brilliance. The legendary actor has left an indelible mark on the hearts of millions, transcending language and culture," it said.

"We are thrilled to announce that Thalaiva will grace the @ICC @cricket-worldcup 2023 as our distinguished guest and will light up the biggest cricketing spectacle with his presence.



#GoldenTicket," BCCI added.

The marquee tournament will kick off in Ahmedabad on October 5, with the 2019 edition finalists-England and New Zealand-facing off in the inaugural tie.

The golden tickets are a promotional strategy used by the BCCI for the showpiece event it is hosting, with the recipients granted VIP treatment during World Cup matches.

Finland vs Canada in Davis Cup quarterfinals



AP ■ LONDON

Finland's reward for beating the United States of America and Croatia to reach the knockout stage of the Davis Cup is a quarterfinal match against defending champion Canada.

Finland has never reached this stage before in the top team event in men's tennis.

The draw for the Final 8 was made on Tuesday. Serbia will play Britain, the Czech Republic will meet Australia and Italy will take on the Netherlands in the other matches in the quarterfinals.

are issuing these charges on the ECB's behalf," ICC said in a statement.

Sanghvi has been charged under Articles 2.2.1 and 2.4.6 of the Anti-Corruption code.

The Article 2.2.1 pertains to "Placing bets on the results, progress, conduct or other aspect of International and Domestic Matches."

We are world champions, we will be favourites at Asian Games: Sen

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young star Lakshya Sen said India, the Thomas Cup champions, are favourites to win the Asian Games men's team gold in badminton, and he is also nourishing the dream of meeting compatriot and Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra during the quadrennial event.

Sen, a 2021 world championships bronze medallist, was one of the architects of India's epic Thomas Cup victory in May last year. He said India will be a top contender for the gold at Asian Games.

"Definitely, the team is looking really good. It is the same team that won the Thomas Cup, so we are going as world champions. I think the players who are playing against us know that it is not easy (to defeat India), as we can beat any team in the world," Sen told PTI.

Sen underlined the need for a collective effort at the Asian Games.

"I don't think we lack confidence. We have this camaraderie, and we know how to go about it. All the teams are tough and we have to give our best.

"We will need a good, collective effort to do well there. The whole team is positive and we are hoping for a good result," Sen said.

The 22-year-old from Almora, who won a silver at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games and a gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, will be playing only the team championships at the 19th edition of the showpiece.

"It will be my first experience at the Asian Games. It is a similar kind of atmosphere, like the Commonwealth Games and Youth Olympics. "So I am looking forward to the event and also I will be getting a chance to meet other



onships at the 19th edition of the showpiece.

"It will be my first experience at the Asian Games. It is a similar kind of atmosphere, like the Commonwealth Games and Youth Olympics.

"So I am looking forward to the event and also I will be getting a chance to meet other

Indian and foreign athletes, and learn about their sports and life," said Sen.

"In the Commonwealth Games last year, we were there with the TT contingent, as only we played from the first to last day of the tournament. Their matches were in next hall. So, I watched a lot of TT

matches. I didn't have time to see other events," he said.

Sen, who is currently ranked world no. 11, missed the individual event at the Asian Games after he lost to Kidambi Srikanth in the selection trials in May this year.

Sen hoped that it will give him some to meet Chopra, who will be competing in the javelin throw, in person.

"I'm only playing team event. So, I look forward to meeting Neeraj Chopra. If I get some time, I would love to go and watch him perform and support him.

"I have spoken to him before but never met him in person. So, I am really looking forward to that," he said.

The Indian players, who didn't get time to have a long training session due to busy international schedule, are currently honing their skills in a week-long camp in Hyderabad.

"This time there were some big events like China super 1000 and World Championships, which were kind of unavoidable.

"But we have been competing very recently and it is the same for everyone. The match preparation is there and it is all about playing well on the day.

"It is like a big pressure tournament, a lot of people in India give importance to Asian Games. So, I am going (to the Asian Games) with my full intention and expecting good results," he said.

Badminton events will start with the team competition on September 28.

ICC charges 8, including 3 Indians, for corrupt activities during Emirates T10 league

PTI ■ DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has charged eight people, including players, officials and a couple of Indian team owners, Parag Sanghvi and Krishan Kumar Chaudhary on different counts of corruption during the 2021 edition of Emirates T10 League.

The two Indians were co-owners of the team Pune Devils and one of their players in that edition, former Bangladesh Test batter Nasir Hossain has also been charged for breach of league's anti-corruption code.

The third Indian, who is indulged in corrupt activities, is a little-known batting coach named Sunny Dhillon.

"The charges relate to the 2021 Abu Dhabi T10 Cricket League and attempts to corrupt matches in that tournament - these attempts were disrupted. The ICC was appointed by the ECB as the Designated Anti-Corruption Official (DACO) for the purposes of the ECB's Code for this tournament and as such

Visa issues hit inaugural MotoGP race in India

PTI ■ GREATER NOIDA

Some of the riders and team Sofficials bound for the inaugural MotoGP round in India, including six-time champion Marc Marquez, are awaiting their visas ahead of the race this weekend.

Sources in Repsol Honda Team said that the arrival of its riders Marquez and Joan Mir in India has been delayed due to visa issues.

Both the Spanish drivers were scheduled to attend a promotional event near Delhi on Wednesday but now that visit stands cancelled.

"The riders are yet to reach India due to visa issues.

So there was no option but to cancel tomorrow's event," a source said.

Dorna Sports are the organisers and rights holders of the event. Fairstreet Sports are the local promoters of the event.

Sources in Fairstreet said that around 1800 visas needed to be applied for personnel in the paddock but a technical glitch in the application system caused the delay. However, sources said, as of Tuesday, most of the visas have been issued barring a few lacking proper documentation.

"The visa were applied on September 5 but due to a tech-

nical glitch on the part of the travel agency, the delay happened. 600 visa applications were pending till yesterday, now most of them have been cleared including the visa to Marquez.

"Few individuals who have not filled up the form properly are left. You can't do anything about that as one has to follow law of the land. Majority of the team officials and riders are already here," said a source.

India is hosting an event of this magnitude for the first time since the now defunct Formula 1 Indian Grand Prix. The race was dropped from the calendar following the

2013 season due to financial, taxation and bureaucratic issues.

Dorna and Fairstreet have signed a seven-year MoU for the race in India but the event's future hugely depends on how this weekend unfolds.

Earlier this year, India hosted its first FIA World Championship status in 10 years when the Formula E race was held in Hyderabad. It is unlikely that the championships will return next year after not finding a place on the provisional calendar for 2024.

Formula E was not pleased with how the local organisers left the preparations to the very last minute.