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FROM THE FRONT

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WITH CHINA: BIDEN

**MONEY 10**  
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# Canada isolated as India roars

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Amid a huge diplomatic conflagration following Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's allegations of a "potential" involvement of Indian agents in the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, India on Wednesday issued an advisory urging its nationals in Canada and those contemplating to travel there to exercise utmost caution in view of anti-India activities in some parts of that country.

This note of caution came a day after Canada issued an advisory to its nationals to remain vigilant while travelling to India.

In another development External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar reportedly briefed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday here about the chain of events over the last two days.

A day after Trudeau's allegation of India's involvement in the killing of Nijjar, the Canadian media reported that Ottawa's Five Eye allies were not keen on taking sides. Canada is part of a "Five Eyes" network which is an intelli-



gence alliance consisting of the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. They showed little inclination to wade into an escalating row between Ottawa and New Delhi over allegations.

India on Tuesday rejected Trudeau's allegations as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.

Reacting to developments, US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said, "Canada is a dear friend, partner and ally and happens

to be our northern neighbour. We care deeply for Canada just as we care deeply for India. I think that moments like this don't define our relationship, but they certainly can slow down progress...With an active criminal investigation, I hope that we can make sure that perpetrators are brought to justice and that we can all allow the space for that information and that investigation to occur before anybody leaps to judgment."

The advisory issued by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), it said, "In view of growing anti-India activities

and politically-condoned hate crimes and criminal violence in Canada, all Indian nationals there and those contemplating travel are urged to exercise utmost caution. Recently, threats have particularly targeted Indian Diplomats and sections of the Indian community who oppose the anti-India agenda.

"Indian nationals are therefore advised to avoid travelling to regions and potential venues in Canada that have seen such incidents.

"Our High Commission/Consulates General will continue to be in contact with the Canadian authorities to ensure the safety and well being of the Indian community in Canada."

Given the deteriorating security environment in Canada, Indian students in particular are advised to exercise extreme caution and remain vigilant.

Indian nationals and students from India in Canada must also register with the High Commission of India in Ottawa or Consulates General of India in Toronto and Vancouver through their respective websites, or the MADAD portal madad.gov.in.

# Women's Reservation has many miles to go

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The new Parliament building, on its second day of functioning, made history by passing the long-awaited Women's Reservation Bill, rebranded as the "Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam", with an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present during the voting on the Bill.

Setting the tone of the debate, former Congress president Sonia Gandhi made a strong pitch for bringing OBC women in the ambit of the proposed law and asserting that any delay in bringing the reservation into effect would be "gross injustice" to women.

During the course of the over eight-hour-long debate, many Opposition MPs objected to the Bill, citing a delay in implementing women's reservation until after the delimitation process. However, the Bill was passed with 454 MPs in support, and only two MPs from AIMIM in opposition.

Intervening in the debate, Home Minister Amit Shah brushed aside apprehensions of a delay in the implementation of the proposed law and asserted that the next government

## Lok Sabha passes Bill



Congress MP Sonia Gandhi arrives at Parliament House complex during the special session in New Delhi on Wednesday

PTI

will conduct a census and delimitation exercise soon after the elections, setting in motion the process to make women's reservation a reality.

The Bill will be tabled in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday and is likely to be passed there as well after a full day of debate, as scheduled. Following its passage in Parliament, the Bill will require consent from half of the total State Assemblies in the country.

Subsequently, the approval of President Draupadi Murmu will transform it into an Act.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday expressed delight at the passage of the Bill and wrote on X: "The Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam is a historic legislation which will further boost women empowerment and will enable even greater participation of women in our political process."

The constitutional amendment Bill "Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam", was introduced in the Lower House on Tuesday. Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal presented the Constitution (128th

Amendment) Bill, aiming to reserve 33 per cent of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies.

The Bill has been proposed by various governments since 1996, but failed to garner consensus each time. This is not only a historic moment for the Bill, which ensures equal representation of women in the lower house of Parliament, but it is also the inaugural Bill to be tabled and passed in the new Parliament building.

Despite the majority agreeing on the importance of women's reservation, there was a heated debate over two clauses. Firstly, the issue of "delimitation" raised objections, as it would significantly postpone the implementation of the Bill.

Secondly, the exclusion of OBC from the reservation, which included quota for the SC and the ST, was contentious.

A total of 27 women MPs, spanning across party lines, including Union Minister Smriti Irani and Congress Parliamentary chief Sonia Gandhi, spoke during the Lok Sabha debate. BJP legislators supported it, while Opposition parties also backed it, demanding its immediate implementation. Currently, there are 82 women MPs in the Lok Sabha, out of a total strength of 543.

DSPL-188

# BIJU SWASTHYA KALYAN YOJANA

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# Polsara BJD MLA alleges threat to life

**Police register case**  
**PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR**

Polsara BJD MLA Srikanth Sahu has lodged a complaint at the Polsara police station in Ganjam district alleging that a plan has been hatched to kill him and his daughter.

Sahu lodged the complaint after an alleged chat relating to the murder plot went viral on social media.

The MLA accused a man

identified as Bikash Behera and also Sanjukta Mahala of conspiring to kill him.

In his FIR, Srikanth has accused Bikash and Sanjukta of plotting to kill him and his daughter and sought their immediate arrest. He also claimed that both Bikash and Sanjukta should be held responsible if anything happens to him or any of his family members.

On the basis of the complaint, a case has been

registered under Sections 506, 507 and 120-B of IPC.

On the other hand, Sanjukta has accused the MLA of framing her in a false case. She further alleged that Srikanth intentionally made the fake account using the name of Bikash Behera.

She claimed that she doesn't know any Bikash Behera. She had a chat with him a long time ago. Her only mistake was that she had given him her phone number, but he has never

contacted here," Sanjukta claimed.

She alleged that this is a conspiracy by the MLA himself. He has made the fake account in the name of Bikash Behera and lured her. He is doing all this to implicate her in a false case.

She said that earlier she lodged a written complaint with the Bhubaneswar Mahila police against the MLA, but no action was taken against him.

# 'Press freedom muzzled in Odisha'

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC) president Sarat Pattanayak on Wednesday accused the BJD Government of trying to muzzle the Press freedom.

The media houses and journalists who are trying to bring out truth through their "fact-based reporting" on the "misrule," "corruption" and "nepotism" of the State Government are being hounded and prosecuted. "Odisha is now facing a kind of undeclared Emergency," he alleged. State



agencies like EOW of the Crime Branch and Income Tax Department are used to suppress the media, he added.

Senior Congress leader Panchanan Kanugo said, "When the Constitution of India guarantees freedom of

speech and expression as a fundamental right of citizens, it is being ruthlessly trampled upon by the BJD in Odisha."

# CM releases KALIA aid on Nuakhai

**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday announced KALIA assistance for 44.56 lakh farmers of the State on the occasion of Nuakhai through videoconferencing.

Rs 2,000 was sent to every farmer's account. The beneficiaries included 43.88 lakh small, marginal farmers and 68.750 landless farmers.

The CM said till now, famers of the State have been provided with assistance of Rs 12,500 crore. His

Government for the benefit of farmers is paying premium for crop insurance. This year more than 22 lakh farmers have registered for crop insurance.

He said he wants that the farmers' children should become doctors, engineers and other good professions. Notably, the Government is providing KALIA scholarship to the children of farmers.

Besides, under the KALIA assistance, small and marginal farmers are provided with fertilisers pesticides and agricultural implements.

# In Cuttack 2 hurt in group clash over Puja donation

**PNS ■ CUTTACK**

Two persons sustained critical injuries in a violent clash over collection of donation for Ganesh Puja at Nuasahi in the Bidanasi area of Cuttack city on Tuesday night.

According to sources, members of two puja committees had a faceoff for

collection of donation. As both groups insisted on collecting the donation from their area, an argument ensued. Tension mounted as argument led to heated argument and both groups physically attacked each other with knives and broken bottles.

In the violent clash that continued for almost half an

hour triggered panic in the area, two persons were injured. They were identified as Shyam Sundar Das and Bapina Jena.

Getting information, a team of the Bidanasi police reached the spot. But both groups fled the area. The police rushed the two injured to the SCB Medical College Hospital in the city. Their condition was stated to be critical.

# Low pressure triggers heavy rains

**More spells predicted**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

Several parts of the State have been experiencing moderate to heavy rainfall under the influence of a low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal since Tuesday.

The Regional Office of the India Meteorological

Department (IMD) here on Wednesday said Koraput town recorded the highest 168 mm of rainfall in the past 24 hours.

As per IMD, two places in Odisha recorded extremely heavy rainfall while 19 places recorded heavy rainfall activities in the past 24 hours. Several low-lying areas also were waterlogged. Water Resources Department

Engineer-in-Chief Bhakta Ranjan Mohanty said that at present there is no flood threat. Excess water from the Hirakud Dam was released through two gates and the water-level was constantly registering a drop. The IMD said that on Thursday heavy to very heavy rainfall (7 to 20cm) is very likely to occur in several districts.

# Swati Nayak wins Norman Borlaug Field Award

**Third Indian, first Odia to receive the honour in USA**  
**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

A wave of immense pride has gripped Odisha after the World Food Prize Foundation (IOWA, USA) announced Odia scientist Dr Swati Nayak as the recipient of prestigious Norman Borlaug Field Award, 2023.

The award is given to exceptional scientists under 40 years of age who work in the field of food and nutrition security, hunger eradication and exhibit the character and attributes of Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and Green Revolution's Chief Architect Dr Norman Borlaug.

Announced on September 19 at New York Climate Week through a Press release, the award and honour will be received by Dr Nayak during the week of October 22-28 at IOWA, USA, where various mega events will happen on the eve of world food prize week and International Borlaug Dialogue. She will be

the third Indian and first Odia to receive the award. She is recognised for her innovative approach to engaging smallholder farmers in demand-driven rice seed systems, from testing and deployment to equitable access and adoption of climate-resilient and nutritious rice varieties.

Working as a scientist with Manila-based CGIAR-International Rice Research Institute as South Asia lead at present, Dr Nayak currently resides in Delhi along with her husband Priyadarsi Bal and daughter Advika Nayak Bal.

Dr Nayak's parents Laxmidhar Nayak and Bijayalaxmi Naik reside in Bhubaneswar. Striving to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and its practical applications for farmers, she started working as the only woman administrator at the Integrated Tribal Development Agency in a remote forest region of Andhra Pradesh, India after graduating in 2010 with her Masters from the Institute of Rural Management Anand.



Her grassroots experience paved the way for her to be appointed to head the first-ever dedicated Indian government initiative for women farmers.

She was a central member of the team which crafted a comprehensive blueprint for the programme, collaborating with more than 10 Indian States to establish a national programme from scratch. Her work laid the foundation for the still-flourishing programme to benefit four million women farmers to date. Dr Nayak joined the IRRI

in 2013, where she has provided pivotal leadership in numerous global flagship programs on rice and rice-based food systems. She is the current lead for cereal seed systems under the key initiative SeedEqual of CGIAR, a worldwide research partnership focused on agricultural food systems.

Together with her team, she created innovative, participatory solutions to the daunting challenge of feeding and nourishing a rapidly growing global population amid climate change, through

the rapid scaling up of improved rice varieties, seed systems innovations, and climate-smart technologies around the world. In that effort, she has organised more than 10,000 extensive on-farm trials for more than 500 rice varieties, working with thousands of smallholder farmers across diverse ecosystems in different countries across Asia and Africa.

She was central to the massive effort toward the successful dissemination and adoption of more than 20 promising climate-resilient and biofortified rice varieties. In 2021, through Nayak's efforts, women-led seed enterprises were able to produce, distribute, and sell approximately 8.5 metric tonnes of quality seeds. Resilience to climate change is also a central part of Nayak's advocacy for sustainable agriculture. Many climate-resilient rice varieties have been successfully deployed in India, Bangladesh and Nepal through her strategy, partnerships and unique

positioning models. According to projections, by 2022, 1 million hectares would be planted in India with flood-, drought-, and salt-tolerant rice varieties.

In one case, Nayak and her team formulated a strategy for introducing the drought-tolerant rice variety Shahabghi Dhan in Odisha. The variety soon became an integral element of every farm family's diet and crop rotation. Years later, Sahabghi Dhan remains one of the most in-demand products in Odisha and the rest of India. Nayak is fondly referred to by the local communities with whom she has worked as "Bihana Didi," meaning "Seed Lady."

Dr Nayak received a PhD in Competitive Intelligence & Strategic Management for Agricultural Extension Management Strategy at Amity University (2017-2022), a Master in Rural Management at the Institute of Rural Management Anand (2008-2010) and a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at Acharya NG Ranga Agriculture University (2003-2007).

# Man found dead in city



**PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR**

A man was found dead under mysterious circumstances near the Congress Bhawan under the Capital police station in the capital city on Wednesday.

The identity of the deceased was yet to be ascertained. His age was estimated to be around 35 years, said police.

"We received a call regarding the matter at around 11 am. As our team

reached the spot, they found the man in an unconscious state. He was rushed to the hospital. However, he was declared brought dead by the doctor," said a police official.

"Preliminary probe revealed that there was no injury on the body. We are examining CCTV footage to ascertain the circumstances under which the person reached there. We have sent the body for postmortem and waiting for the report," the police official added.

# HITTING THE BULL'S EYE

# Saintly last Moghul was taken captive this day in 1857

The Mughal Empire of South Asia between the 16th and 19th centuries stretched from the outer fringes of the Indus River Basin in the west, northern Afghanistan in the northwest and Kashmir in the north to the highlands of present-day Assam and Bangladesh in the east and the uplands of the Deccan Plateau in South India.

Babur, born on 1483 in the city of Andijan, contemporary Uzbekistan, was the first Moghul who began an empire by defeating Ibrahim Lodi in 1526 at the battle of Panipat now in Haryana. On record, the first six Moghuls are considered great: Babur, Humayun, Akbar, Jehangir, Shahjehan and Aurangzeb. They may have invaded India to rule, but their contribution to keep India together as a nation cannot be brushed aside.

Aurangzeb, though a hardcore Islamic monarch, had Chanakya-like wisdom and austerity. His madness for Islam brought his empire down. The huge empire declined to eventually crumble during the rule of Bahadur Shah



**BISWARAJ PATNAIK**

Zafar, who declared war of independence against the British by way of being the Emperor of India.

Bahadur Shah was the rallying point for the Sepoys in the Revolt of 1857 and the war was fought in his name as the native Indian 'Emperor'. The revolt was the First War of Independence. Though fairly widespread, the 'Sepoy Mutiny' was a failed rebellion against the British. The mutiny had spread to Delhi, Agra, Kanpur and Lucknow lasting between the May 20, 1857 and July 8, 1859.

On 29 March 1857 at the Barrackpore parade ground, near Calcutta, 29-year-old Mangal Pandey of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry, was wildly angered by the actions of the East India Company. So, he openly challenged his commanders. Pandey was arrested and sentenced to death for attacking British officers. Anticipating a revolt, the British authorities had preponed his initial execution date from April 18 to April 8.

Immediately after this, Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Emperor of colonised India, was captured by the British. The Sepoys had demanded to get rid of a foreign power and reinstating Bahadur Shah Zafar as the supreme ruler of India.

Bahadur Shah was a ruler without any imperial ambition. He had given the British company the right to collect taxes in Delhi. The rebel soldiers from Meerut soon arrived in Delhi, and started attacking company officials and looting the marketplaces. Many Europeans were also killed by the rebels. As

soon as the rebelling Indian soldiers had reached the Red Fort in Delhi on 1 May 1857, the saintly emperor conducted his court and made various appointments to declare war against the British. Soon, he established the Greater Administrative Affairs Council and assigned different responsibilities to different personnel according to their abilities and loyalty, irrespective of religious affiliations. However as the 'head' of the rebels, he was against any act of violence and looting. But as a truly patriotic monarch, he publicly supported the rebels' cause only to make India free.

Encouraged by the emperor's support, the Sepoys and palace servants killed 52 Britons held captive within the palace, after being hunted out of hiding holes in the city. And despite Bahadur Shah's protests and appeals, the Sepoys killed the English officers. Bahadur Shah was powerless in the Sepoys' hands.

Sensing rising tension and turmoil, on the advice of close aides, Bahadur Shah had to abandon his

palace along with his wife and two young sons and take refuge at Humayun's Tomb. It was on September 18, 1858. But only three days later, Major Hodson traced him and took him under custody. The emperor was taken back to Delhi. Major Hodson also took into custody Bahadur Shah's two sons and one kid grandson. All the three princes were executed in front of a mob citing a plea that the violent mob was about to snatch the princes away. This heinous act of Hodson's was criticised even by some top British officials.

The capture of the emperor and the consequent seizure of Delhi were a psychological blow to the Sepoys who broke down and lost spirit. Further, the Sepoys witnessed huge number of precious ancient books and jewels being brazenly stolen from the Emperor's palace. Today, all that is on display in several museums across the UK. Notably, Bahadur Shah's sword and crown are part of the Royal Collection in London.

Bahadur Shah was tried at the

Red Fort being held guilty of aiding and abetting the Sepoys in the murder of English subjects.

The saintly emperor defended himself stating his lack of real authority over the Sepoys. But the jury would not believe him. He was exiled to Rangoon, Burma mainly because his most trusted Prime Minister Hakim Ahsanullah Khan betrayed him for personal gains. Uncared for like hardcore criminals, the last Moghul emperor of Hindustan, a truly, patriotic, noble soul died of illness in November 1862 when he had turned 87. They buried him in Rangoon the way ordinary criminals are put beneath the surface disgracefully.

Bahadur Shah's surrender and death had clearly signalled the end of the Mughal rule over India that started 300 long years ago.

Bahadur Shah Zafar born on 24 October 1775 to father Akbar Shah-II and mother Lal Bai was a spiritually-inclined person from childhood. He was equally strong in worldly knowledge as much as in penning poetry. As a monarch,

he had also trained himself in multiple weapons' use and martial arts. He had always exhorted his warriors to stay determined not to lose Delhi. But the British did manage to pick moles for inside information to attain objective. Fierce fighting had taken place 72 times between the Indian warriors and the East India Company troops till September 14, 1857. Finally, the British troops entered the Red Fort and seized it completely on September 19, 1857.

On this day, September 21 in 1857, they captured Bahadur Shah Zafar hiding with his small family at Humayun's Tomb. They tried Zafar and declaring him an offender, deported him to Rangoon Jail on December 8, 1858. He was accompanied by his Begum Jeenath Mahal and two kid sons. They led a horrific life in Rangoon Jail for four years. The last Moghul emperor died in jail on November 7, 1862. He had once bemoaned: 'How unfortunate you are Zafar! You could not organise two yards of land in your beloved Hindustan for your grave'.



# Puri-Rourkela Vande Bharat trial run

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The trial run of Puri-Rourkela Vande Bharat Express train was held on Wednesday morning.

The train departed from the Puri railway station at 5 am and reached Bhubaneswar at around 6 am. It arrived at the Rourkela railway station at 12.45 pm.

In the return direction, the semi-high-speed train departed from Rourkela at 2.10 pm and arrived at Puri at 9.40 pm.

The train had 10 stoppages: Puri, Khurda Road, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack,



Dhenkanal, Angul, Kerejanga, Sambalpur city, Jharsuguda and Rourkela. It covered a 505-km distance in 7.45 hours at an average speed of 63.33 kmph-65.16 kmph.

The train will run six days a week except Saturday.

On September 12, the first trial run of the train had been conducted from Puri to Talcher.

The second Vande Bharat Express train for Odisha is likely to be flagged off by the end of September.

# State hands over more land for Gopalpur Port

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Department of Commerce & Transport has last week signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Gopalpur Port Private Limited under which land measuring 119.716 acres was handed over to the Gopalpur Port for its further development and expansion.

The MoU was signed by Padmalochan Roul, Director, Ports & Inland Waterway Transport, Commerce & Transport, and Janardan Rao, CEO, Gopalpur Port Private

Limited. Minister, Commerce & Transport Tukuni Sahu, Transport Commissioner Amitabh Thakur and Commerce & Transport Special Secretary Sanjay Kumar Mishra were present.

Notably, the Gopalpur Port was operated by the Government of Odisha as a seasonal lighterage port from 1986-87. The port was awarded to the Gopalpur Ports Private Limited for transforming it to an all-weather direct berthing port in PPP mode.

The Concession Agreement between the Government of

Odisha and the Gopalpur Ports Private Limited had been signed on September 14, 2006. At present, the port has three berths built over a length of 800m to accommodate multiple vessels with an annual cargo handling capacity of 20 MMT. The port has generated direct and indirect employment opportunities for 8000 persons. The port will also facilitate industrial as well as economic growth of the State in general and southern Odisha in particular. In the first phase, 393.670 acres of land had been handed over to the port.

## Paradip boat capsized 3 fishermen still missing; rescue op on

PNS ■ PARADIP

A fishing boat named 'Ma Basulei Bharasha-2' with eight fishermen on board sank in the Paradip Nehru Bungalow river estuary on Tuesday.

Till now, five fishermen have been successfully rescued while three others remained missing.

The Odisha Marine Fish Producers' Association dispatched a boat that rescued three fishermen from the sea

while the Paradip Port marine department managed to rescue two others.

The Indian Coast Guard on Wednesday joined the rescue operation, deploying both helicopters and ships to aid in the search operation. The mishap occurred when the fishing boat encountered heavy currents while heading into to sea. With rough seas and low visibility due to fog and darkness, the search operation resumed on Wednesday morning.

## Coastal Cleanup Day Gopalpur beach cleaned; rally held

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The International Coastal Cleanup Day was celebrated here on Saturday by organizing a beach cleaning drive at Gopalpur. A rally for raising awareness about clean coast was also taken out.

It was jointly organized by the Department of Environmental Studies, Berhampur University, National Centre for Coastal Research, Chennai, State Pollution Control Board (Regional Office), Berhampur, and Rotary Club International of Berhampur.

The theme of this year's programme was "Fighting for Trash Free Seas". It was inaugurated on the beach premises. Berhampur University Prof Geetanjali Dash presided. Regional Officer of State Pollution Control Board Er Deepak Ku Sahoo, among others were present. VC Prof Dash in her address appreciated the collaborative efforts of multiple agencies for a common cause. Total 170kg waste was collected from the half km stretch of beach area, which was transferred to the material recovery facility of Gopalpur NAC.

## TTPS holds street plays for health awareness

PNS ■ TALCHER

The NTPC Talcher Thermal (TTPS) has taken a unique step to fight diseases like dengue, malaria, jaundice, and diarrhoea in Talcher area. In an innovative approach, the TTPS has collaborated with the Prachina Lokanrutya Sangha to convey vital health information to the community.

The TTPS conducted street plays for two days in four panchayats under Talcher block, consisting of

Gurujanguli, Santhapada Jagannathpur, and Bantol.

The performances were met with enthusiastic responses from the residents, fostering a sense of unity and a shared commitment towards a healthier community.

According to a release, through these street plays, NTPC Talcher Thermal aims to raise awareness about the importance of hygiene, sanitation, and the use of preventive measures in order to eradicate these diseases from the region.

## Ozone Day: Sensitisation prog held in BU

By OSPCB

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A sensitisation programme was organised by the State Pollution Control Board (Regional Office, Brahmapur) in association with the Department of Environmental Studies, Berhampur University and OSCOM, IREL (India) Ltd at the university campus to mark the International World Ozone Day on September 16.

The meeting was presided over by the Chairman, PG Council, Berhampur University, Prof SK Baral, Regional Officer of State Pollution Control Board, Er Deepak Kumar Sahoo, Unit Head IREL (India) Ltd., OSCOM, CVR Murthy and HoD, Department of Environmental Studies, Dr B Anjan Kumar Prusty. Besides, delegates from nearby prominent industries like



Grasim Pvt Ltd, Ganjam, Gopalpur Port Pvt Ltd and United Spirits Pvt Ltd, faculty members and students were present.

The theme for this year was "Montreal Protocol: Fixing the Ozone layer and reducing Climate Change".

Er Sahoo initiated the session with a brief introduction of the guests and proceeded with the relevance of the Ozone Day.

He pointed out the fact that India has played a pivotal role in the recovery of the ozone layer and is a major contributor in the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. He further stressed upon reducing vehicular pollution and CFC usage for sustaining a better environment.

Murthy put emphasis on industry-academia cooperation. Chairman, PG Council Prof Baral urged the students

to adopt an ecofriendly lifestyle.

Dr Prusty discussed about the international treaties governing the phasing out of Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS), and the role citizenry.

PK Mishra from IREL informed about the rare earths and their utilization in green energy production.

Suchismita Patnaik from Grasim Industries, among others spoke.

## NIST holds 27th Foundation Day fest

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The NIST (Autonomous) celebrated its 27th Foundation Day here on Monday. Thousands of students and faculty members celebrated the day recalling the contributions of the institute to higher learning.

The dignitaries present on the occasion were Brahmapur MLA Bikram Kumar Panda, Vice-Chancellor BPUT Dr Amiya Kumar Rath, Vice-Chancellor of Berhampur University Dr Geetanjali Dash and Governing Body Member of NIST Er Bimal Kumar Mishra.

The ceremony was also graced by the Founder Chairman Dr Sukant Kumar Mohapatra. The programme was coordinated by Dr Akankshya Patnaik.

Different constituent clubs



of NIST like NSS club, NIST Musical Society Club, Dance Club, Art and Drama Club, Innova Club, Audio Visual Club, Club Multimedia, Club Excel, Data Science Club, etc.

In the evening, a cultural program was also conducted

by the Students Activity Centre (SAC) headed by Saroj Padhy.

The guests of the evening Vice Chancellor of Khallikote University Dr Prafulla Kumar Mohanty, former Chairman OPSC Dr LC Patnaik, Re-

gional Director, Department of Higher Education Dr Sidharth Sankar Padhy attended the cultural event. About 100 alumni members and 30 teaching and non-teaching faculty members were felicitated.

# Assembly by-poll outcomes: I.N.D.I.A's fragility wide open

In the age of split-voting, it is highly risky to assume the Assembly election/by-election performance of a political party to be its poll prospects for next Lok Sabha poll. However, the Assembly poll/by-poll results provide some inputs about the mindset of the voters. The last Assembly by-elections (except Uttar Pradesh) sent a status-quoist message to the NDA and the I.N.D.I.A.

Assembly by-elections were held for seven seats in six States in September 2023. The seven Assembly seats were Bageshwar in Uttarakhand, Ghosi in Uttar Pradesh, Dhupguri in West Bengal, Boxanagar and Dhanpur in Tripura, Dumri in Jharkhand and Puthuppally in Kerala.

The Bageshwar seat in Uttarakhand was retained by the ruling BJP against the opposition Congress. Here the opposition I.N.D.I.A. worked united but got defeated by the



LALIT MOHAN MISHRA

BJP. In the Ghosi seat of Uttar Pradesh, the I.N.D.I.A.'s SP (Samajawadi Party) defeated the ruling BJP. The Dhupguri Assembly seat of West Bengal was captured by the ruling TMC. The contest was among the TMC, the BJP and the Congress (supported CPI(M)) as the I.N.D.I.A. group fought the poll divided.

In Boxanagar and Dhanpur Assembly seats of Tripura, the fight was between the ruling

BJP and the I.N.D.I.A.'s CPI (M). Both the seats went to the BJP. Local party, Tipra Motha, which was not in the fray, was said to have helped the BJP indirectly.

Dumri Assembly seat of Jharkhand was retained by the ruling JMM with wide margin. It was a fight between the I.N.D.I.A. block and the NDA alliance AJSU. In Puthuppally Assembly seat in Kerala, the Congress retained the seat, defeating the ruling CPI(M). Here the ruling party is LDF which includes the CPI(M) and the opposition is UDF which includes the Congress.

To sum up, the I.N.D.I.A fought amongst themselves in two Assembly seats of West Bengal and Kerala. They fought against the BJP in five Assembly seats of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Tripura and won only in two seats. Firstly, it showed the weakness in the opposition unity. Secondly, the

result indicated that even if the Opposition got united, it was not enough to defeat the BJP-NDA.

Usually a State's ruling party wins the Assembly by-polls. It happened in Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Tripura and Jharkhand. But it did not happen in Uttar Pradesh and Kerala. However, the ruling parties of Kerala and Uttar Pradesh may console themselves by saying that these lost seats were the traditional strongholds of the Opposition.

However, this loss of Assembly-seat in Uttara Pradesh is a setback for the BJP as the ruling party had earlier lost Mainpuri Lok Sabha and Khatauli Assembly by-polls in December 2022 to the SP and its alliance RLD respectively.

Let us consider the two States, Kerala and West Bengal, where the I.N.D.I.A members fought among themselves. In Kerala, the LDF and the

UDF may work together or may get divided for 2024-Lok Sabha election. Either way, situation shall have no negative impact on the Opposition's poll outcome as the BJP is too weak in Kerala. But the by-poll friction in West Bengal has set in the process of rupture in the Opposition's alliance for Lok Sabha poll.

The Jharkhand alliance appears to be stable for the I.N.D.I.A. for 2024 Lok Sabha poll. In fact, the Opposition alliance shall be stable in those States where there is Assembly level alliance like Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Tamilnadu. The I.N.D.I.A. is still unstable in Bihar as the JDU joined the Opposition camp after the Assembly poll, leaving the BJP.

In Tripura, the I.N.D.I. A. block may have to carry Tipra Motha party for better impact.

Uttarakhand's by-poll indi-

cated that it is the Congress which has to be strengthened in the State to defeat the BJP. Its alliance with the AAP had no effect on the strength of the I.N.D.I.A.

The most important State for Lok Sabha poll is Uttar Pradesh which has 80 seats. I.N.D.I.A. succeeded from here in the by-poll which is an encouraging message. The BSP did not give its candidate in Ghosi to support the I.N.D.I.A. But it has to be studied if BSP's votes could go to I.N.D.I.A. However, the I.N.D.I.A. should keep talking to the BSP for alliance in 2024 poll.

On the whole, the by-poll results don't give any new hope for the I.N.D.I.A. except Uttar Pradesh.

In the last coordination meeting of the I.N.D.I. A., the members decided to hold its first joint public rally in Bhopal in October. But the proposed rally was cancelled

## INBRIEF

### AASTHA HOSP OPENS 1ST MULTISPECIALTY CENTRE IN BBSR

Bhubaneswar: The Aastha Hospital unveiled its first multispecialty centre at Soubhgya Nagar herer on Sunday. A unit of the Aastha Foundation, it's a 25-bed hospital that facili-



tates OPD consultation in various disciplines like medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, paediatric, dermatology and neuro medicine. It has also planned radiology diagnostic tests in near future. Corporator Binayini Jena inaugurated the centre. Centre founder Suchitra Mohapatra said, "The hospital will not only provide healthcare services at the centre but also doorstep services especially for geriatric patients. It also aims to expand its footprints across key districts through Outreach Centers (ORC) in coming days."

### 'AYUSMAN BHABA' HELD IN KEONJHAR

Keonjhar: To diagnose diseases like breast cancer, throat cancer, hypertension, diabetes, etc., a programme 'Ausman Bhaba' was held at Raisuan un under Sadar block of Keonjhar district. Total 80 patients attended the programme organised by Dr



Devraj Panda. Basanta Kumar Sahu, PS Member Gopinathpur GP, inaugurated it. Among others present were Dr Sudhir Behera, Pratap Mahanta, pharmacist. Tarun Chakra, supervisor, health workers Puspanjali Senapati, Bishnupriya Behera and Deepak Sethy. This programme will continue for next four week and community health checking will be held every Monday.

### VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE OF TPSODL

Brahmapur: The TP Southern Odisha Distribution Limited (TPSODL) has taken a stride towards fostering opportunities for skill development, knowledge enhancement and employability by establishing a Vocational Training Centre (VTC). In a partnership with the the Pratham Education Foundation, the TPSODL inaugurated this centre in Aska on Tuesday.

### ALMONDS VOTED AS A HEALTHY DIET IN INDIA

Bhubaneswar: In a YouGov survey conducted by the Almond Board of California between January 24 and February 6, 2023,



most cities in India reported a rise in lifestyle-related health issues such as obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease. A noteworthy mention in the healthy snacking category was almonds. In the survey, almonds were found to be most preferred healthy snacking option owing to its strong nutritional profile, especially high presence of protein and fibre and its various health benefits.

### T-20 CRICKET C'SHIP FOR DEAF FROM SEPT 25

Bhubaneswar: The Indian Deaf Cricket Association's (IDCA) T-20 National Cricket Championship for Deaf will commence here from September 25 with 19 teams participating in a seven-day tournament. The teams, which will be divided into four different groups, will play total 42 matches with each other before making it to the final scheduled on October 1 at the East Coast Railway Sports Association Stadium. The event will be hosted by the Odisha Deaf Cricket Association.



# Five Eye allies divided over Trudeau's India allegations

PIONEER NEW SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

A day after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged India's involvement in the killing of a prominent Sikh separatist leader, the Canadian media reported that Ottawa's Five Eye allies were not keen on taking sides though they have said that the claims should be thoroughly probed.

Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF) and one of India's most-wanted terrorists who carried a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh on his head, was shot dead by two unidentified gunmen outside a gurdwara in Surrey in the western Canadian province of British Columbia on June 18.

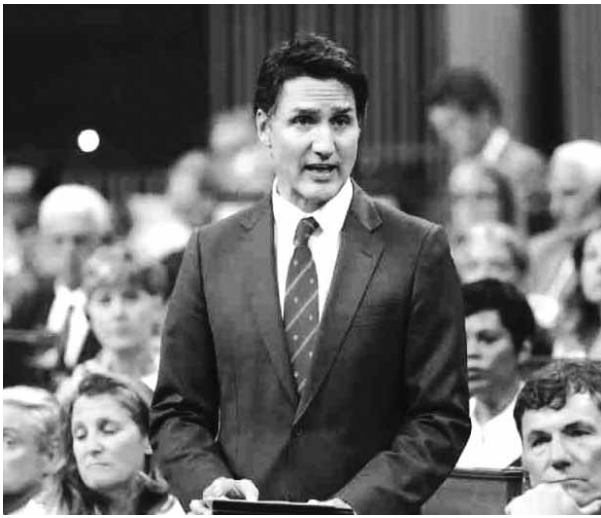
Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau told the House of Commons on Monday that he waited until he was able to raise the issue with allies and with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi earlier this month before telling the public about the possible link.

India has dismissed Trudeau's allegation as "absurd and baseless."

"We wanted to make sure that we had a solid grounding in understanding what was going on in analysis and indeed in facts. We wanted to make sure we were taking the time to talk with our allies, to share what we knew," the Canadian Press news agency quoted Trudeau on Tuesday.

Canada is part of a 'Five Eyes' network which is an intelligence alliance consisting of the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Trudeau has also said he does not want to make things



worse for relations with India. "We are not looking to provoke or escalate. We are simply laying out the facts as we understand them, and we want to work with the government of India to lay everything clear."

According to a report by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), Canada's other Five Eyes allies "showed little inclination Tuesday to wade into an escalating row between Ottawa and New Delhi over allegations."

Most opted to treat the allegation as a matter still to be investigated — in spite of the fact that the Trudeau government feels it has enough information to make an accusation in Parliament and expel a diplomat, it noted.

The United States, United Kingdom and Australia have all issued statements calling for the allegations to be thoroughly probed. Terming the US National Security Council (NSC) spokesperson Adm John Kirby as "perhaps the most supportive of Canada," the CBC report said that Kirby "urged India to participate and cooperate in that investi-

gation" as "it is important to find out exactly what happened."

Kirby, who is also the NSC coordinator for Strategic Communications, said in an interview with CNN: "I'm going to protect diplomatic conversations and I'll leave it at that. Certainly, the President (Trudeau) is mindful of these serious allegations, and they are very serious. And we support Canada's efforts to investigate this."

"We believe a fully transparent comprehensive investigation is the right approach so that we can all know exactly what happened and of course, we encourage India to cooperate with that," Kirby said.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese refused to comment on the matter at all even as Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong told a press conference in the UN Headquarters on Tuesday that "these are concerning reports, and I note that investigations are still underway" and that "We are monitoring these developments closely with our partners, and we'll continue to

do so."

Another of the allies, UK made no official announcement but its Foreign Secretary James Cleverly put out a tweet on platform X without any mention of India, the CBC report said.

"All countries should respect sovereignty and the rule of law. We are in regular contact with our Canadian partners about serious allegations raised in the Canadian Parliament. Important that Canada's investigation runs its course and the perpetrators brought to justice," read Cleverly's tweet.

On September 18, Trudeau alleged in the Parliament that Canada's national security apparatus has reason to believe that "agents of the Indian government" had carried out the killing of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil.

Meanwhile, within Canada, Liberal Party members also say they hope to maintain normal ties with a country Ottawa has selected as a key partner in the Indo-Pacific, The Canadian Press reported.

Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre said Trudeau must share more information about what led him to make the statement in Parliament. He said the prime minister did not share more details with him than what he had said in the House of Commons.

"We need to see more facts. The prime minister hasn't provided any facts," he told reporters on Tuesday. New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh has written to the newly appointed head of the public inquiry on foreign interference, asking Justice Marie-Josée Hogue to include India in her probe. The Liberals have suggested her terms are wide enough to include any country as well as the Nijjar case.

"In my experience, as a Sikh-Canadian, there have always been suspicions that India was interfering in the democratic rights of Canadians," Singh wrote in the letter.



## Canada PM's remark on Nijjar 'concerning', say British Sikh MPs

PTI ■ LONDON

British Sikh members of Parliament Preet Kaur Gill and Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi have reacted to "concerning" reports emanating from Canada, after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau alleged Indian involvement in the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in the country.

The Opposition Labour MPs, who represent heavily Sikh constituencies in England, took to social media on Tuesday to claim they had been contacted by their constituents about allegations by Trudeau in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, 45, the chief of the banned Khalistan Tiger Force.

They said they are raising their concerns directly with the government ministers.

"PM Trudeau's statement on Hardeep Singh Nijjar's murder is deeply concerning," tweeted Gill, who is the MP for Birmingham Edgbaston in the West Midlands region of England.

"It is important that Canada's investigation runs its course, and those responsible see justice. I want to reassure my constituents that I and my colleagues are raising our concerns with ministers," she said.

Dhesi, MP for Slough in south-east England, also tweeted to claim many British Sikhs have been in contact with him over the issue.

"Concerning reports coming from Canada. Many Sikhs from Slough and beyond have contacted me; anxious, angry or fearful. Given that Canadian PM Trudeau stated they've been working with

close allies, we're in touch with the UK government to ensure justice is delivered," he said.

It follows Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau's statement in the country's Parliament on Monday that the authorities are "actively pursuing credible allegations" related to Indian government involvement in the murder of Nijjar, a designated terrorist, in British Columbia in June. In an emergency statement to the House of Commons in Ottawa, Trudeau said that any involvement of a foreign government in the killing of a Canadian citizen was "an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty".

India has strongly rejected Trudeau's claims as "absurd and motivated" and dismissed a senior Canadian diplomat in a reciprocal move.

"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. The inaction of the Canadian government on this matter has been a long-standing and continuing concern," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. Soon after, a UK government spokesperson said Britain is in close touch with the Canada over the "serious allegations" but declined to comment further.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's spokesperson told reporters later that "work on the trade negotiations will continue as before" and that the UK was "not looking to conflated these issues".

## SC refers 'immunity to MPs in bribery' matter to 7-judge Constitution bench

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday referred to a seven-judge Constitution Bench the question of whether the legal immunity enjoyed by legislators under Articles 105(2) and 194(2) of the Constitution protects them from prosecution for taking a bribe. Article 105(2) confers on MPs immunity from prosecution in respect of anything said or any vote given by them in parliament or any parliamentary committee. Article 194(2) grants similar protection to MLAs.

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in JMM bribery case involving former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao had held that Article 105(2) even protects MPs from facing bribery charges. A 3:2 majority reasoned that 105(2) applies not only to voting but anything connected to voting including taking bribes that influenced the voting. A larger bench will now be constituted to reconsider this judgment.

A Bench of Chief Justice of



India DY Chandrachud and Justices AS Bopanna, MM Sundresh, JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra noted that MPs and MLAs must be free to express their views on the floor of the house without fear of consequences, but are not necessarily immune to criminal action. "While Article 19(1)(a) recognises individual right to free speech, the object of Articles 105(2) and 194(2) does not prima facie look to render immunity from launch of penal proceedings for violation of criminal law which may arise independently from the exercise of rights and duties as a member of Parliament...purpose of 105(2) and 194(2) is...not to make them separate with higher privileges than the common man

who has remedies before the criminal law," the Bench said.

The five-judge Constitution Bench was hearing a case dealing with the question of whether the legal immunity given to MPs and MLAs protects them from prosecution for taking a bribe even if the amount was not used as per the demand of the bribe-giver. The issue arose in a plea filed by Sita Soren, sister-in-law of current Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who was accused of taking a bribe to vote for a particular candidate in the 2012 Rajya Sabha Elections.

A complaint was filed in 2012 with the Chief Election Commissioner of India seeking CBI probe into the case. Soren was charged with the offences of criminal conspiracy and bribery under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), and for criminal misconduct by a public servant under the Prevention of Corruption Act. In 2014, while hearing her plea seeking quashing of the case, the Jharkhand High Court noted that Soren had not cast her vote for the person who had offered her the bribe.

## Sajjan acquitted in anti-Sikh riot murder case

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Delhi's Rouse Avenue trial court on Wednesday acquitted former Lok Sabha MP and Congress leader Sajjan Kumar and all other accused in a murder case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in the Sultanpuri area. Initially, the case was filed against five accused individuals, including Kumar. However, two of the accused passed away during the trial proceedings. The former Congress leader is also accused of setting a gurdwara on fire during the riots. Kumar is already lodged in jail after Delhi High Court in 2018 convicted him in other cases related to anti-sikh riots of 1984.

The court acquitted Kumar in Sultanpuri case, giving him the "benefit of doubt". Special Judge also acquitted two other accused -- Ved Prakash Pial and Brahmanand Gupta.

## Sonia backs Women's Reservation Bill, demands quota for SC, ST, OBC

DEEPAK K UPRETI ■ NEW DELHI

While backing the Women's Reservation Bill, Congress parliamentary party chief Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday demanded that the quota be implemented immediately and SC, ST and OBC women also be given reservation following a caste census as she stressed that her husband Rajiv Gandhi was instrumental in bringing reservation to women in the local units.

Sonia initiated the debate on 'Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam' immediately after Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal moved the women's reservation bill for passage in the Lok Sabha, saying it is a very important bill and urging members to pass it with unanimity and consensus.

Meghwal said the government will consider whatever suggestions come up during the discussion on the bill. He asserted that if Parliament decides, the quota for women can be extended beyond 15 years.

The constitutional amendment bill 'Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam' - providing 33 per cent reservation to women in Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies - was introduced in the Lower House on Tuesday.

It was also the first bill introduced in the new Parliament building.

Reading from a prepared text in Hindi on the bill from the opposition's side, Sonia said

that any delay in bringing the reservation into effect would be "gross injustice" to Indian women.

"Rajiv Gandhi's dream is only half fulfilled. It will be fulfilled with the passage of this bill. The Congress supports this bill. We will be happy with the passage of this bill but we also have a concern. I want to ask a question, for the last 13 years Indian women are waiting for their political responsibilities, and now they are being asked to wait for a few more years -- two years, four years, six years, eight years," the former Congress chief said. Is such behaviour with Indian women appropriate? she asked.

"It is the demand of the Indian National Congress that the bill be immediately implemented... But along with that, provision should be made for the reservation of SC, ST, OBC women after conducting a caste census," she said.

The government, the Congress leader told the House, should take the required steps for this.

"This is the most appropriate moment to acknowledge and thank women for their contribution," she said.

"On behalf of the Indian National Congress, I demand from the government that the Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam 2023 be implemented as soon as possible while clearing all roadblocks in its way. Doing this is not only necessary but also possible," Sonia said.

## NIA releases list of wanted gangsters having links with Khalistanis in Canada

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has issued a list of wanted gangsters who have been accused in the terror-gangster nexus case, including those linked to Khalistan propagandists based in Canada, registered by the agency in August last year.

The NIA also released posters of five such accused with reward ranging from Rs 5 lakh to 10 lakh on each of these suspects. Those named in the posters are known Khalistan supporters Lakhbir Singh alias Landa and Harvinder Singh Sandhu alias Rinda, both with a cash reward of Rs 10 lakh each for inputs leading to their arrest, and the trio of Satnam Singh alias Satbir Singh alias Satta Naushera, Yadvinder Singh alias Yadda) and Parminder Singh Khaira alias Pattu with carrying a reward of Rs 5 lakh on their head for information leading to their arrest.

Those in the list of 43 named by NIA include dreaded gangsters/criminals Goldy Brar and Arshdeep Singh Gill are known for supporting pro-Khalistan terrorists.

Taking to social media platform X, the NIA released the pictures of 43 accused gang leaders and criminals in the case numbers RC-38/2022/NIA/DLI and RC-39/2022/NIA/DLI registered in August last year.

These accused persons have been involved in killings, extortion, and running and promoting crime syndicates. The NIA had alleged that the accused persons were allegedly involved in conspiring to carry out terror attacks in Delhi and were obtaining funds for the same through smuggling of weapons.

In its post, the NIA included pictures of Lawrence Bishnoi, Jasdeep Singh, Kala Jathari alias Sandeep, Virender Pratap alias Kala Rana, and Joginder Singh, as well as their full names.

The NIA emphasized that many of these gangsters are based in Canada.

The NIA also asked for information on the properties/assets/businesses they owned in their own names or in the names of associates, acquaintances, and relatives. It has also requested details regarding their business partners, workers, employees, and collection agents.

"Persons shown in the photos below are accused in the NIA Cases RC-38/2022/NIA/DLI or RC-39/2022/NIA/DLI. If you have any information about properties/assets/ business owned by them in their name or in the name of their associates,



friends & relatives, please WhatsApp DM @ +91 7290009373," the NIA posted on X.

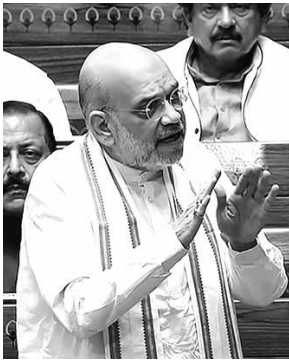
Those named in the list of 43 are Lawrence Bishnoi, Jasdeep Singh, Kala Jathari alias Sandeep, Virender Pratap alias Kala Rana, Joginder Singh, Rajesh Kumar alias Raju Mota, Raj Kumar alias Raju Basodi, Anil Chippa, Mohammad Shahbaz, Goldy Brar Ansari, Sachin Thapan Bishnoi, Anmol Bishnoi, Vikramjit Singh alias Vikram Brar, Darman Singh alias Darmanjit Kahlon, Arshdeep Singh Gill, Surender Singh alias Chiku, Dalip Kumar alias Bhola, Parveen Wadhwa alias Prince, Yudhveer Singh, Vikas Singh, Lakhbir Singh alias Landa, Gaurav Patyal alias Saurav Thakur, Sukhpreet Singh alias Budda, Amit Dagar, Kaushal Choudhary, Asif Khan, Naveen Dabas alias Naveen Bali, Chhotu Ram alias Bhat, Jagseer Singh alias Jagga, Sunil Balvan alias Tillu Tajpuria, Bhupinder Singh alias Bhupi Rana, Sandeep alias Bandar, Sukhdool Singh, Gurminder Singh, Neera alias Pandit, Daler Singh, Dinesh, Sharma, Manprit Singh Peeta, Hariom alias Titu, Harpreet, Lakhveer Singh, Irfan alias Chhenu Pehalwan and Sunny Dagar

The NIA's move comes after hostilities between India and Canada have escalated after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on September 18 accused India of killing the Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil.

Without buttressing his claims with any evidence, Trudeau claimed that Canada is pursuing "credible information" about Indian agents being involved in Nijjar's killing. Post the outlandish claims by Trudeau, Canada expelled one Indian diplomat over the issue leading to a reciprocal action by India with New Delhi also expelling a senior Canadian diplomat posted in their mission here.

India rejected Trudeau's charge saying allegation of India's involvement in Nijjar's killing is 'absurd and motivated'.

## Shah dispels fears of delay in women's quota implementation



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Brushing aside apprehensions of a delay in the bill's implementation, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday asserted that the next government will conduct the census and the delimitation exercise immediately after the elections and set in motion the process to make reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State Assemblies a reality.

Shah appealed to the opposition for the unanimous passage of the women's reservation bill and said shortcomings, if any, can be set right at a later date," the home minister said.

Intervening in the debate on the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill, the home minister indicated that women's reservation will become a reality after 2029.

He said the passage of the women's reservation bill will mark the start of a new era, and recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had presented the vision of women-led development at the recent G20 Summit.

The Modi government has been pushing for empowerment of women since the day it assumed office, he said.

Women's security, respect and equal participation have been life force of the government, he said.

Shah said this was the fifth attempt to push a bill for women's reservation.

"Why did it fail to clear hurdles earlier? First it was brought by H D Deve Gowda government in 1996. It lapsed. Second time, it was brought by the government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In 2008, a bill was brought by UPA. It also lapsed after the dissolution of the then Lok Sabha.

"Women have been disappointed by this Parliament on four occasions. This time I request that it be passed with unanimity. Shortcomings, if any, can be set right at a later date," the home minister said.

The constitutional amendment bill, which provides for 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies, was passed in the Lok Sabha on Thursday.

## First C-295 medium tactical transport aircraft from Spain lands in India

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■  
NEW DELHI

Giving a boost to IAF's transport aircraft fleet, the first C-295 medium tactical transport aircraft landed in Vadodara on Wednesday, days after it was handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF) in the southern Spanish city of Seville. The aircraft will be formally inducted into the

IAF at a ceremony in Hindon near Delhi on September 25.

Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari on September 13 received the first of the 56 C295 transport aircraft two years after India sealed a Rs 21,935-crore deal with Airbus Defence and Space to procure the jets to replace its ageing Avro-748 fleet.

"The IAF's first C-295

MW aircraft landed in Vadodara today. The aircraft would be handed over to the IAF in a formal ceremony on 25 Sep 23 at AF Stn Hindon by the Honourable Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh," the IAF tweeted.

Under the deal, Airbus will deliver the first 16 aircraft in 'fly-away' condition from its final assembly line in Seville by 2025 and the subsequent 40

aircraft will be manufactured and assembled by Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) in India as part of an industrial partnership between the two companies.

The production of components of these aircraft has already started in the Main Constituent Assembly (MCA) facility in Hyderabad. These parts will be shipped to the Final Assembly Line (FAL) in Vadodara which

is expected to be operational by November 2024. In October last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the manufacturing facility for 295 planes in Vadodara. It will be the first military aircraft to be manufactured in India by a private consortium.

The IAF is procuring the C295 aircraft to replace its fleet of ageing Avro-748

planes that entered the service over six decades back.

The C295 is known to be a superior aircraft used for tactical transport of up to 71 troops or 50 paratroopers, and for logistic operations to locations that are not accessible to current heavier aircraft. The aircraft can airdrop paratroops and loads, and also be used for casualty or medical evacuation.

# Chief secy, DGP take stock of preparations for PM’s visit

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Secretary (CS) Durga Shankar Mishra, along with Director General of Police (DGP) Vijay Kumar, took stock of the preparations for the proposed visit of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the city on September 23. He instructed the officers that all security arrangements should be made carefully so that there is no negligence at any level. Addressing a meeting of officers, he directed all departments concerned to complete all preparations on time. In the meeting, Commissioner of Police (CP) Ashok Mutha Jain gave a presentation to the CS and DGP about the preparations of the Police department during the PM’s visit in which he mentioned the proposed route chart, parking arrangements, preparations made at the public meeting venue and the helpads. Then Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma presented the proposed programmes of the PM, including the foundation stone laying ceremony of the International Cricket Stadium in Ganjari where the PM will also address a public meeting and the inauguration of the Atal Residential School by



CS DS Mishra reviewing preparations in Varanasi on Wednesday for PM’s visit.

pressing the button at the Rudraksh Convention Centre, Sagra. He said the PM will also address the Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav (KSSM) closing function in which the district level participants will be seen and then the victorious route chart, parking arrangements, preparations made at the public meeting venue and the helpads. Then Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma presented the proposed programmes of the PM, including the foundation stone laying ceremony of the International Cricket Stadium in Ganjari where the PM will also address a public meeting and the inauguration of the Atal Residential School by

posed routes up to the airport and no garbage heaps should be seen anywhere. He directed the Health, Power and other departments to make proper arrangements at the meeting venue. Before the meeting, Mishra, along with the DGP, inspected the proposed places for laying the foundation stone of the cricket stadium at Ganjari and the meeting place, during which information related to the stadium was given by District Magistrate S Rajalingam. He also inspected the Atal Residential School built in Karsada, where they took information about the facilities being provided to the students, including classroom, hostel, library, mess and appro-

priate questions and answers were also given to the children of the class. Saplings were also planted in the school premises by the CS and DGP.

Earlier, both the top state officials reached Kashi Vishwanath Temple (KVT) on Wednesday afternoon. After reaching the temple, both the officers offered prayers. Later, the CS inquired about the arrangements of the temple. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Sunil Kumar Verma said for the convenience of visitors coming to the temple, a health centre has been established two days ago, which was also inaugurated by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and so far, about 100 people have taken medical consultation within two days. Apart from this, arrangements for first aid have been made in this health centre. After knowing the arrangements of the temple, the chief secretary left for his destination. A large number of officers, including District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Commissioner of Police (CP) Mutha Ashok Jain, SDM Shambhu Sharan and Special Duty Officer Umesh Kumar Singh were also present.

# BJP gears up to make Modi’s public meeting a success

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its activities to make the proposed public meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Ganjari in Rajatalab area on September 23 a grand success. Meanwhile, the district administration has also made hectic efforts to complete all pending preparations and the team of Special Protection Group (SPG) visited the venue sites to see the security arrangements. At Ganjari, the PM will lay the foundation stone of an international cricket stadium.

It will be the first international standard cricket stadium to be constructed by the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI) itself in the country and for this land has been provided by the state government. The function may also be attended by senior BCCI officers including secretary Jay Shah and senior cricket stars of yesteryears like Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar and Ravi Shastri. However, the visits of all of them have yet not been confirmed. In order to make the public meeting unprecedented, regional BJP president (Kashi Region) Dilip Singh Patel launched the public rela-



Regional BJP chief DS Patel contacting people in Varanasi on Wednesday for proposed PM’s public meeting.

tions campaign on Wednesday. He himself joined the group of BJP workers and knocked door-to-door and invited the people to attend the public meeting. He was accompanied by district general secretary Sanjay Sonkar and regional party office bearers. Patel said the PM will address a huge public meeting in Ganjari on September 23 at 11 am in which BJP workers as well as people of parliamentary constituency will participate. He said the party has decided that public representatives and BJP office-bearers will conduct intensive public relations in the villages surrounding the meeting venue. Regional spokesman

Navratan Rathi said as per the plan made at the regional level, district president and MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma, Praveen Singh Gautam, Suresh Singh, Rakesh Patel, Mahendra Patel etc apart from Mandal unit office-bearers and workers did extensive public relations in Birbhanpur. Similarly, in Kundaria, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Morya did public relations with the party leaders and invited people to come to the public meeting. Former MLA Surendra Narayan Singh Odhe did public relations in Belaudi and Gangapur Bazaar areas.

In the same direction, the district president of Mahila

Morcha did public relations in Harpur under the leadership of Vinita Singh and Sunita Singh. Surendra Patel, Guddu Patel, Manish Patel did the same in Parmanandpur while Devendra Pratap Singh and Jagdish Jaiswal in Nagpur. Similarly, in Kanari, Dr Ashok Rai did public relations inviting people to attend the public meeting of the PM.

Besides, during his visit the PM will also formally inaugurate all Atal residential schools set up at divisional level in all the 16 divisions of the state to impart standard education to the kids of construction workers as well as orphans of Covid-19 pandemic by visiting local school at Karsada. As many as 80 students have been admitted in the school of the age group of six to 14 years and they will be provided free quality education in primary, junior high school and secondary school by the state government. The school has been built on 12.25 acres with a cost of ₹66.54 crore. During his visit, the prime minister will also attend a programme at the Rudraksh International Convention Centre at Sagra where he will give awards to the winners of Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav.

# ‘Clean Station Day’ observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Under the ongoing cleanliness fortnight to be continued till October 2, ‘Clean Station Day’ was observed at different stations of various categories including A1, A, B and D on the direction of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava. For making the campaign successful, senior officers were nominated for these stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER), including Banaras, Varanasi City, Prayagraj Rambagh, Mau, Ghazipur City, Mairwa and Ballia. Efforts were also made to create awareness by running a comprehensive cleanliness campaign at Bhatni, Azamgarh, Indara, Belthara Road, Siwan and Chhapra Jn stations. By running an intensive cleanliness campaign during the day, stations were made clean and passengers were educated about single use plastic. The passengers were asked to discourage the use of plastic by using plastic bottle crusher machines installed at stations so that drains or water outlets are not



Campaign under ‘Clean Station Day’ being launched at the Banaras station in Varanasi on Tuesday

clogged with discarded plastic bottles. All efforts have also been made to ensure that platforms at important stations should remain garbage-free. During the day the working of solar power plants/panels and solar energy equipment located at the stations was checked and adequate arrangement of dustbins was ensured at the stations. Besides, the railway users were made aware about different dustbins available at the stations for separate collection of waste apart for making extensive cleaning of drains and toilets of the stations. At the Banaras railway station, Senior Divisional Mechanical

Engineer (EnHM) Apoorva Swarnkar and team of chief health inspectors (CHIs) made the passengers aware by giving them more information about the use of dustbin. About 50 dustbins were distributed free of cost at Banaras station to spread awareness among passengers. Extensive cleaning of bottle crusher machines, drainage, toilets and drains was done at Varanasi City railway station. At Ghazipur City station, through the cartoon Motu Patlu, people were told about putting garbage in the dustbins and using different dustbins for dry and wet garbage. A plant distribution

programme was organised at Mau railway station and the passengers were made aware of cleanliness. At Ballia station, ‘shramdaan’ was done by the station superintendent and other senior officers while at Deoria station, cotton bags were distributed to the passengers.

Station Superintendent Sanjay Kumar and others participated. A plantation programme was organised at Azamgarh station and thorough cleaning of the railway station’s offices and drains was done. At Mau and Belthara Road railway stations, the passengers were made aware through pamphlets to maintain cleanliness. At Indara station DMO/Mau administered the oath of Swachhta Pakhwada and conducted a cleanliness awareness campaign by making the passengers aware on a wide scale. At Mairwa railway station, a cleanliness campaign was conducted by Senior DMO Siwan and the passengers were made aware about cleanliness. Extensive cleanliness drives were also done at Bhatpar Rani, Siwan and Chhapra railway stations.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

As part of Air Force Day 2023 celebrations here the 11th edition of Induction Publicity Exhibition Vehicle (IPEV) drive of IAF began on Wednesday. The drive will cover five premier educational institutes in Prayagraj and will be held till September 25. The IPEV road drive is an excellent opportunity for the youth here to interact one on one with the IAF team and know about various exciting career options available in IAF. The vehicle contains a flying simulator, touch screen kiosks, virtual reality equipment, miniature aircraft model, LED displays etc are laid down to give a glimpse of the IAF to the youth. The road drive here is a part of series of events marked to celebrate the 91st anniversary of IAF. On the occasion of its anniversary, the IAF has also planned an enthralling air display over Sangam Area, OD Fort which can also be witnessed from Saraswati Ghat, Arail Ghat, Shastri Bridge and Jhushi Area. It is open for

viewing of the public on October 6 and October 8 from 2:30 pm onwards.

**LIGHT AND SOUND SHOW:** Pilgrims and tourists visiting Sangam on any day of the entire year will get to enjoy an open-air light and sound show on the sandy banks of the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna after sunset. In a bid to provide a fillip to tourism in Prayagraj, efforts have begun to start a unique light/laser and sound shows showcasing mega religious fairs of Kumbh and Mahakumbh organised here besides highlighting the importance of Prayag itself that for centuries has remained a must-visit site of pilgrimage for millions of Hindus. The Prayagraj Mela Authority and the Tourism department will jointly ensure starting of this proposed new attraction all throughout the year. For this the Tourism department has been instructed to prepare an action plan. Officials said for this proposed spectacle all weather-proof equipment including high-end LED screens will be used so that

even during rainy season they remain safe and functional. “This will also ensure that equipment will not suffer any damage due to rain and will not need to be removed during the monsoon unless the site of installation itself gets inundated,” said one of the official. The light and sound show here is a part of efforts to ensure that tourists coming to Sangam city spend some time here too and not move on to other cities like Varanasi or Lucknow after a brief stopover here. Night markets are being set up at different places in the city beside the riverfront like roads and proper parking as well as toilet facilities near Sangam too are part of this very effort. To ensure that the light and sound show remains interesting, the present three themes of ‘Kumbh/Maha kumbh’, ‘Prayag’ and ‘Magh’ will be expanded further once the crowd starts arriving and staying put for the show, the officials explained. Presently, the laser light and sound show are only held during special occasions and the same was dis-

played in the 2019 Kumbh.

**RAM LILA:** The authorities of Kaushambi’s Daranagar Ram Lila are busy these days selecting kids below 13 years who will be portraying the main characters of Ramayan in 13 different localities of Kadha Dham area of the district.

Interestingly, this is the only Ram Lila, which is being organised only during daytime at different localities. It is set to commence from October 15 and continue till October 27. While children will portray characters of Lord Ram, Goddess Sita characters of Hanuman, Jmavnt, Sugreev and Angad are played by adults. Another attraction of the Ram Lila will be the historical ‘Kuppi Yuddh’ between the armies of Lord Ram and demon king Ravan and the event will be organised on October 24 and 25. Interestingly, visitors from across the country will be arriving to see famous ‘Kuppi Yuddh’, which is being played on 10th (Dashmi) and 11th day (Ekadashi) of Ram Lila. The fight is arranged at a special ground.

# Training of farmers held

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A farmer ‘goshti’ (seminar)/training programme and farmer field visit was organised by the Department of Agronomy, Institute of Agricultural Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in Chakhaniya village of Chandauli district on Tuesday. This programme was mainly focused for improving productivity/livelihood of farmers of the weaker section of the society (Scheduled Caste). In this programme, Dr UP Singh, Senior Professor and Head, Department of Agronomy explained about management practices of direct seeded rice (DSR) and conservation agriculture and its significance in lowering cost, enhancing income, climate mitigation and safer environment.

He also advocated that by adopting DSR and conserva-

tion agriculture based practices, farmers can reduce 20-25 per cent (pc) cost and increase in 10-15 pc as well as conserving/enhancing the quality of the natural resource base. Prof Singh also focused on adopting a permanent No-till system (Zero Tillage) DSR-ZT Wheat-ZT Mungbean along with 40-50 pc residue retention of all the crops in view of improving resource use efficiency, soil health and biodiversity conservation.

A team of scientists led by Dr P Muthuraman, Head, TTT from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-Indian Rice Research Institute Hyderabad, along with Dr P Jayakumar, Dr Brajendra, Shitanshu Kumar and Sudha Nair also participated and shared their experiences. Dr Brajendra from ICAR-IIRR Hyderabad, demonstrated the soil testing kit and trained

farmers to test the soil. Under this programme, sprayers, fertilisers and soil testing kits were distributed to the SC-farmers. Farmers shared their positive response towards direct seeded rice and zero tillage wheat in terms of cost saving and higher productivity. Dr Nikhil Kumar Singh, Assistant Professor, research scholar Kajal Verma, Sitesh Jha and Santosh Kumar, Data Collector also participated in this programme and expressed their views. The scientists’ team along with farmers visited the fields and were happy to see the performance of demonstrations conducted by the BHU team. Progressive farmers Awanish Kumar, Pradeep Kumar, Prem Shankar Singh, Shashikant Rai, Ratan Singh with 100 farmers of Kandawa, Amara, Chakhaniya, Sikatha and Daina villages participated in this programme.

# Blood donation camp organised

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

A blood donation camp was organised at Central Hospital, North Central Railway (NCR) here on Tuesday in coordination with Allahabad Medical Association Blood Bank, Prayagraj. Principal Chief Medical Director (PCMD), NCR/ Prayagraj Dr JP Rawat inaugurated the function. PCMD Rawat emphasised the importance of blood donation stating that one donor benefits four needy patients. The PRBC used for anaemia patients, whole blood in case of blood loss due to trauma etc, platelet concentration in case of thrombocytopenia and FFPS for patients with clotting factor requirements. He stated the donor after donating blood feels mentally and psychologically satisfied. MD Central Hospital Dr Sanjeev Kumar Handoo, ACDS Dr Manjulata Handoo and



ACHD Dr Gautam Sen were among the first three doctor donors to donate blood. It was a unique opportunity for the donors to donate blood to save a life. In this camp total 49 donors donated blood. One of the donors said, “It gives us immense contentment to be able to contribute towards our community by way of donating blood for the needy patients”. After donating the blood, the donors were given refreshment

and an appreciation certificate by MD Central Hospital, Dr SK Handoo. Dr Usha SP Yadav ACHD/Microbiology, David Nawin Tewari, Jitendra Verma, Ratan Mishra, Vasudeo Pandey and the team of Central Hospital put in lot of efforts for making this camp a success. This camp helped railway employees in getting awareness about their social responsibilities and showed enthusiastic participation for the same. “Someone

lives when someone donates. Sympathy alone cannot save people in chronic conditions, but blood can. A unit of blood donated is a life saved, and this was the stronghold that guided our employees into an impressive turnout for the cause,” said Dr Usha SP Yadav ACHD/ Microbiology. Vasudeo Pandey along with other volunteers contributed immensely in this blood donation camp. In the functions ACMS/ NCR, Dr Reena Agarwal, Sr DMO Dr SS Nayak and all doctors and staff of the Central Hospital were present.

**TALK SESSION:** The Allahabad Management Association organised a talk session on ‘How to organise life through spiritual journey’ at AMA office, MG Marg, Civil Lines here. The speaker was Prof Satya Narayan, a renowned teacher of Cancer Biology at Florida University.

He is also a spiritual speaker and has researched on multiple aspects of Bhagwat Geeta. Prof Narayan deliberated on how to organise life through spiritual journey by devoting some time to the Almighty by using the mind and using physical part of the body for family and materialistic needs. He cited many examples and stories from the religious scriptures wherein the rishis and saints attained salvation and even normal citizens were alleviated of their problems by leaving things to God. He also touched the karma path and the karmic theory. He talked about the paths adopted by Yudhishtir, Vidur and Valmiki. V Bajpai introduced the speaker and Ravi Prakash president AMA presented a memento. The programme was conducted by secretary Dr Navaneet Singh and PRO Dr Shanti Chaudhri proposed the vote of thanks.

# Research work on vegetable crops reviewed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A meeting was organised to review the research work being done on vegetable crops under Consortia Research Project (CRP) on Agro-Biodiversity, funded by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi and National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources at ICAR-Indian Vegetable Research Institute (IIVR) here on Tuesday. This project is being conducted by six research institutes of the country including Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI), New Delhi, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana, Indian Vegetable



Progress of agrobiodiversity project being reviewed at IIVR in Varanasi on Tuesday.

Research Institute (IVRI), Varanasi, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU), Coimbatore, Indian Horticultural Research Institute (IHRI), Bengaluru, and

National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR), Thiruvur. The review programme was chaired by Dr Gyanendra Pratap Singh, Director, NBPGR, New Delhi

and co-chaired by Dr TK Behera, Director, IVRI, Varanasi. Project coordinators from six institutions presented the work done and progress. In this project special research is being done on the biodiversity and disease resistance of brinjal, cucumber and ladyfinger. This programme was conducted by Dr Shailesh Tiwari, senior scientist of the institute. Dr Sushil Pandey, Dr Chitra Devi, and Dr Pragya from National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources, New Delhi participated. Head of the Department of Crop Improvement Division, Dr Nagendra Roy, Dr PM Singh, etc were present in this programme.

# 30-year-old man run over by train

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

A man was run over by a train in an area under Padari police station on Tuesday. The Padari police received information that a body was lying on the railway track near Kathinayi village. Acting on the information the police reached the spot, recovered the body and made efforts to identify the deceased. With the help of the locals the deceased was identified as Veerendra Kumar (30), a resident of Hinauti Shivagrh under Padari police station. The police informed the family members and completed the legal formalities. The deceased worked as a mason and is sur-

vived by his wife and two daughters.

**INAUGURATED:** New buildings of anganwadi centre Medhara and Pajara under were inaugurated by Lalganj BDO Sanjay Srivastava on Tuesday amidst the chanting of the Vedic shlokas along with rituals. The BDO appealed to the staff of the centres to work with the dedication for the bright future of kids in the larger interest of the nation. He said that the government had provided all the facilities for fight against malnutrition. The inaugural function of the buildings concluded with the ‘godh bhara’ and ‘annaprashana’ under which health kits were provided to pregnant women

and kids.

**REVENUE COLLECTION REVIEWED:** District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjan ordered to withhold the salary of 10 officers for not achieving the target of revenue collection. She took such while reviewing the revenue collection through taxes and non-taxes at Collectorate on Tuesday. The officers whose salary has been withheld include assistant commissioner stamp and registration, district excise officer ARTO, EE electric distribution division-1 and others.

**AWARENESS CAMP:** Under the plan of action of National Legal Services Authority (NLSA), an awareness camp was organised by

District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) at district jail on Tuesday. In his inaugural address the ADJ and secretary DLSA Lal Babu Yadav said that plea bargaining law has been started in the country under which the undertrial prisoners could get relief. He said that under Section 436-A of the CrPC the provision was only for those cases under which the punishment was less than seven years. He appealed to the interested prisoners to avail the facility. The awareness camp was attended by Superintendent of Jail incharge Arun Kumar Mishra, deputy jailer Smita Bhatia, Ashwini Upadhyay, Deepak Srivastava and others.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Drifting apart

India and Canada have enjoyed warm ties but now they seem to be at loggerheads

In international diplomacy, misgivings, misunderstandings, upmanship and disputes are the most common pitfalls. Therefore, it is essential to sift through the perceived facts and allegations to arrive at a balanced understanding and perspective. The recent standoff between India and Canada following the killing of Khalistan sympathiser Hardeep Singh Nijjar has raised concerns. While Canada has voiced its opinion about India's alleged and implicit role in the incident, India has brushed aside the allegation. It is, therefore, crucial to examine the situation from all angles before reaching any conclusion. Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a vociferous pro-Khalistan supporter, was gunned down on June 18 outside a Sikh cultural centre in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada. As he was indeed on India's most wanted list, Canada alleges that Nijjar was targeted and eliminated by Indian security forces. As it goes about demanding an explanation from the Indian Government, India has officially denied any involvement in the killing. For its part, and



as history can vouch, India has been the target of numerous terrorist attacks over the years, resulting in the loss of countless innocent lives. Given this context, India has consistently demonstrated its commitment to combating terrorism both within its borders and beyond by legal means. Besides, India has never had a policy of eliminating such wayward elements by sending assassination squads for the person in its crosshairs. It has always firmly and openly believed in following the legitimate judicial process and, in numerous cases, sought extradition of such characters. India has consistently called for united efforts to combat global terrorism and has been a significant contributor to international counterterrorism initiatives. In the case of the alleged murder of Nijjar, India has emphasised the importance of credible intelligence sharing.

Accusations alone are not sufficient ground to indict a country for any perceived wrongdoing. In any legal or diplomatic context, the burden of proof lies with the accuser. Canada's allegations regarding India's involvement in Nijjar's killing must be substantiated with concrete evidence before any punitive measures can be sought or taken. Otherwise, it is a clear case of jumping the gun. It is also worth noting that India has expressed its willingness to cooperate fully with Canada in any investigation into the incident. This willingness to engage in a transparent and open process speaks volumes about India's commitment to resolving this issue through diplomatic means. Both India and Canada have shown their intent to engage in diplomatic dialogue to address the concerns surrounding the Canadian national's killing. Unfortunately, the expulsion of a senior Indian diplomat by Canada, a kneejerk move reciprocated swiftly by India, has only made things worse between the countries. As the diplomatic process unfolds, it is essential for all parties involved to maintain open lines of communication, adhere to international norms and agreements, and prioritise the fight against terrorism.

### PICTALK



Women devotees chant 'Atha varshirsha' in front of Utsav Mandap on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Pune. PTI

## A paradigm shift in the automobile sector

The New Car Assessment Programme (NCAP) policy will give a boost to the secondary car market, especially in the luxury car segment

The recent introduction of Bharat NCAP has been welcomed by the automobile industry. The industry players are awaiting its implementation with much anticipation starting from October 1. The overall sector is quite optimistic that the program has the potential to place the Indian automobile industry on a higher pedestal with the ability to compete in the global market.

The policy aimed at elevating and strengthening road safety standards. After taking into account the existing Indian driving conditions and regulations, the Bharat NCAP provides a rating to the vehicle in a range of one to five stars. Evaluating the vehicles on the parameters of adult occupant protection, child occupant protection, and safety technologies in a car, not only promotes safer cars in the country but also empowers customers to make an informed decision while purchasing a car.

The pre-owned luxury car industry is quite hope-



ful of leveraging the assessment program to the fullest. Considering that the NCAP focuses on the safety of the car, pre-owned luxury cars are well-equipped with advanced safety technologies. Coming with innovative features like intelligent alerts, parking assistance, driver assistance features, and many more, luxury cars are adept at providing that extra protection to the occupants of the car.

Moreover, luxury cars come with some standard features such as more than six airbags, electronic stability control, improved emergency braking systems, etc. that further add to the resilience of the vehicle. Where the pre-owned luxury cars are themselves fur-

nished with innovative safety features, the introduction of NCAP is only expected to augur the proposition of the cars in the market. Even though the pre-owned luxury car industry has come a long way, a lot of scepticism still lingers among the masses. They are highly doubtful about the condition and safety of the cars. However, with the pre-owned luxury cars conforming to the ratings of the new assessment program, it can instil faith among the customers.

While the organized players in the segment have been playing an instrumental role in giving a comprehensive structure to the sector, Bharat NCAP can help amplify the penetra-

tion of pre-owned luxury cars deeper into the market. If the LocalCircles survey is to be believed then 72% of buyers have shown keen interest in considering Bharat NCAP as the deciding factor for making purchasing choices.

In addition to this, the online players in the pre-owned luxury car industry relentlessly work towards fostering a transparent buying and selling ecosystem for the customers. They ensure the pre-owned cars undergo thorough safety checks to render authentic and quality vehicles in the inventory. Therefore, looking at the benefits the new assessment program has to offer, the initiative is being highly appreciated by the industry players. They are optimistic about harnessing its benefits to inculcate loyalty among the customers. Focusing on boosting the safety of the passengers and the cars, it is very likely that the NCAP can complement the pre-owned luxury car industry.

(The author is the Co-Founder and CEO of Luxury Ride)



HIMANSHU ARYA

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# The art of leading from the front

The sacred culture of 'leading from the front' by army officers has survived despite challenges and other institutional concerns

Three recent losses of precious lives i.e., Colonel Manpreet Singh, Major Aashish Donchak, and DSP Humayun Bhatt, seem to be a timely reminder of the civilisational and constitutional values in some of us, that guarantee our freedom. Distracted, as the nation was in peddling phoney controversies, fake outrage, meaningless rhetoric, or sheer bombast – these men simply gave their all for the nation. They did not unleash hate or anger amongst us internally, instead, they chose to 'lead from the front' by letting their work (and lives) do the talking, not words. To reiterate, they didn't incite or order from the comfort and safety of distance, but put themselves in harm's way, fully knowing the possible consequences, as only true leaders do.

The saga of the Indian Armed Forces is not necessarily etched by the better-known Generals, Admirals or Air Marshals, in as much, if not more, by the unmatched steel, fire, and ramrod-straight posture of its junior-middle leadership (from Junior Commissioned Officers to Unit Commanding Officers and their equivalents), who hold the fort, literally. Beyond the hagiographies of victory, the Kargil War is a grim reminder of doing the impossible with the hearts, legs, arms, and sharp minds of the junior-middle leadership, and not so much on account of any strategic brilliance by senior leadership, be it Military or Political. Many international Military historians marvel at the surreal conditions of impossibilities (in terms of topography, weather conditions, battlelines et al) that were neither matched, before or after, in modern battle accounts. Yet, the Indian Armed Forces had triumphed, against all odds and disproven all militaristic ratios and assumptions.

However, there was one vital and unique element that differentiated the Indian Armed Forces from all other global Militaries, which made Kargil possible, despite its counterintuitive draw of unfavourable militaristic ratios and assumptions i.e., cliched as it sounds, 'leading from the front'! Put simply, the Officer-to-Soldier



fatality/wounded ratio of the Indian Army is by far the highest as compared to any other professional Military in the world. In the thick of battle, the reality of leadership matters more than anything else, ever does. Kargil, India is believed to have lost 26 Officers out of a total casualty of 527. Considering that there are approximately 18-20 officers per Infantry battalion of about 800 odd soldiers, the value of 'leading from the front', can never be overstated.

Even in the unforgiving conditions of Galwan Valley, the heroics of Col BS Babu (Commanding Officer, 16 Bihar Regiment) who was killed in action is a testimony. There is never a similar reportage of a leadership-level officer getting killed in action, amongst Militaries of neighbouring China or Pakistan (occasionally in ambush or IED blast, but never in combat). This culture of 'leading from the front' is borne out of an inexplicable admixture of regimentation, normalised expectation and esprit-de-corps that has withstood the test of time, civilian morass, regression, and polarisations.

Some lazily attribute 'leading from the front' to overambition, misplaced bravado or momentary lapse of better sense – it may be some shades



PUT SIMPLY, THE OFFICER-TO-SOLDIER FATALITY/WOUNDED RATIO OF THE INDIAN ARMY IS BY FAR THE HIGHEST AS COMPARED TO ANY OTHER PROFESSIONAL MILITARY IN THE WORLD

of all of the above, and the likes of Kargil were only possible thanks to that unique josh that is still fires and cranks up performance. Never forget, those who dare, do so knowing that they are in the line of fire (when they needn't be) but still choose to do so.

The irrepressible and probably the boldest Military General of the Indian Army 'led from the front' and never lost a battle in his life i.e., Lt Gen Sagat Singh. Legend of him liberating Goa, inflicting a bloody nose on the Chinese at Nathu La and Cho La (by 1967 itself), or dashing to Dhaka to liberate Bangladesh by repeatedly overflying enemy territory in a helicopter (which took bullets) to control battle, is a fact not fiction. You may never hear of such leadership conduct in Ukraine, the Middle East, or any other conflict zone, anywhere in the world.

Before Colonel Manpreet, Major Dhonchak and DSP Humayun had answered their calling in life, it was a well-beaten path that had been carved by the likes of Colonel Ashutosh Sharma, Colonel MR Rai, Colonel Santosh Mahadik etc., all Commanding Officers of the various Rashtriya Rifles battalions, like the 19th Rashtriya Rifles, Commanded by the gal-

lant Colonel Manpreet Singh. As 'Commanding Officers' they could have avoided literal 'leading from the front', but still did so – while they and their families paid an irreplaceable price for the same, the Indian Army and the nation at large, remain eternally grateful for their ultimate sacrifices.

This sacred culture of 'leading from the front' by officers, especially by the junior-middle leadership has survived so many other institutional concerns that undeniably stare. The Officer-to-Soldier ratio was 1:18 in the 1965 War, 1:20 in the 1971 War and still, 1:17 in Kargil 1999. While die-hard Infantry folks like to flex 'When it was a victory, the cavalier claimed it outright, the Gunner boasted of his guns, Signalmans publicised his worth, but the Infantryman remained silent with victory at his feet'. Beyond the lighthearted intra-services banter, the Indian Armed Forces have thankfully retained traditions, regimentation and culture at the junior-middle level of the forces, and perhaps owing only to the same, it still bashes on regardless.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TRUST DEFICIT

Sir — Regrettably, it has come to our attention that after approximately four months, an Indian Army Jawan was tragically abducted and killed while on leave in Manipur. Furthermore, in another distressing incident, a mob attempted to storm the Porompat police station in Imphal East on a fateful Saturday night, with the aim of releasing suspects. These incidents serve as glaring examples of the escalating divide between various communities in Manipur, a divide that seems to widen with each passing day. The ramifications of this growing mistrust and division are not confined to Manipur alone; they cast a shadow over the entire nation, particularly in the North-East.

It is imperative to recognize that the armed forces' effectiveness is significantly impacted by the presence of an efficient and cooperative civil and political administration. The disconcerting silence from both the state and Union government has not only unsettled the people but also demoralized the Manipur civil society. Urgent intervention by the Union government is paramount to quell this violence and facilitate a peaceful resolution to the situation in Manipur. Together, we can work towards a more harmonious future for all.

SK Khosla | Chandigarh

### STANDOFF WITH CANADA

Sir — Amidst the deteriorating diplomatic relations between India and Canada, New Delhi has taken the decision to expel a senior Canadian diplomat currently stationed in India. The diplomat has been given a five-day notice to depart from India, as conveyed through a summons received by the High Commissioner of Canada to India, Cameron Mackay, on Tuesday, 19 September. The decision to expel the diplomat reflects the growing concerns of the Government of India regarding Canadian diplomats' interference in

## Women reservation bill



Congratulations on the forthcoming implementation of the Women's Reservation Bill, set to take effect after the next delimitation exercise in 2026. We hope that the execution of this bill will be well-organized and system-

atic, ensuring that it provides opportunities for women from all walks of life, including the most economically disadvantaged.

The essence of women's rights lies in the idea that no one, regardless of gender, age, or profession, should dominate or harm others. It is crucial that this bill does not inadvertently create divisions or conflicts among women, as unity is vital for its success. The bill, known as the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' (NSVA), proposes a commendable 33% reservation for women in both the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. Let us celebrate this milestone and work together for its effective implementation.

PV Rao Sreelekha | Secunderabad

internal matters and their involvement in anti-India activities.

These developments unfolded in the wake of Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's emergency statement in Parliament on Monday, 18 October. Trudeau accused the Indian government of involvement in the fatal shooting of Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar and stated that Canadian security agencies were actively investigating credible allegations of a potential link between Indian government agents and the murder.

India vehemently rejects these allegations, terming them "absurd and motivated." The external affairs ministry issued a statement denying any involvement in acts of violence in Canada. The possibility of India severing ties with Canada looms large, which could have serious implications, particularly for Indian citizens residing in Canada, who may fear being targeted by the Khalistani group supported by the Canadian government.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

### FUNCTIONING OF PARLIAMENT

Sir — Following the successful G-20 Summit, India International Convention

and Expo Center 'Yashobhoomi' has been officially dedicated to the nation. In addition to this milestone, several noteworthy announcements are anticipated during the special session of the House scheduled from 18 to 22 September. It is now crucial to enhance the productivity of our parliamentary sessions.

Both the ruling party and the opposition bear a significant responsibility towards our nation. It is imperative that they recognize the need to move beyond futile debates on 'dharma-adharma' or other extraneous matters and focus on addressing pressing issues. Such issues encompass inflation, unemployment, healthcare, law and order, poverty alleviation, and the economic landscape. The future of our nation hinges on constructive and substantive debates. As we traverse the Amrit Kaal, the Parliament's working style must adapt to meet the demands of the times. A more informed and engaged Parliament will instill confidence in our government and pave the way for a brighter future.

N Ashraf | Mumbai


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FIRST COLUMN

WHAT IS ‘SUKHA’ AND HOW TO ATTAIN IT?


Seek ‘sukha,’ the real one, while enjoying ‘sukha’ of the mundane type



AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

The word *sukha* has been used extensively in the Bhagavad-Geeta but in different contexts. This word essentially means: what pleases. The English words for *sukha* are happiness and pleasure. Lord Krishna has spoken about *sukha* to describe what pleases in three different ways. The first one is what is according to dharma and its only source is God. Let us call this *sukha* for this article. The second one is: what is according to dharma but brings good and bad results depending upon how it was obtained. This has been called ‘*vihara*’ in the Geeta. There is just one verse where this word has been used. The third kind is against dharma and brings only misery as a result. The word for this *sukha* is ‘*kama*’. I will use this word for this article. There are many verses in the Geeta in this connection.

Beginning with the real *sukha*, I will refer to some of the verses in their order as described in the Geeta. The first one is: “In a state of having real spiritual intelligence, one transcends the feeling of material suffering.” (2.65) A classical example is that of Shri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, who carried on his spiritual activities even with throat cancer. Personally speaking, I have accepted some pains, which are inevitable due to my advanced age. They don’t bother me much and I go on with my life. The next verse clarifies where only real *sukha* can be obtained: “One must be linked with God, and one must have faith in God.” Then, one will be peaceful, which is essential to be *sushi*.” (2.66) It is quite logical, isn’t it? Peace can only come from God because we, grown-ups, can feel secure only if we have taken shelter from God. How does a small child go to sleep peacefully in the lap of his mother?



The third verse is about control over *kama* and anger. “Unless that is accomplished, where is any scope for *sukha*?” This is only possible to accomplish if we are enjoying the shelter of God. (5.23) We can either be in control of *kama* or of God. For example, if I am indulging in sexual thoughts, I have effectively taken their shelter. The fourth verse chosen is very encouraging. It states, “God accompanies the conqueror of self, who is blissfully peaceful.” (6.7) This means that such a person has fully surrendered to God, and God obliges by being with him or her. The fifth verse chosen tells us about unlimited bliss experienced through intelligence. (6.21) An advanced devotee realizes that God is responding to him; He is even using him as His ‘*nimitta*’ (instrument) to get important acts done. His *sukha* knows no bounds.

Now the second level of *sukha* is called *vihara* in the Geeta. Lord Krishna states, “One whose eating and recreation (*vihara*) are appropriate; one who strives appropriately in activities; one who sleeps and stays awake, as required suffers less.” Because: “Contact between senses and their objects are givers of cold, heat, pleasure (*sukha*) and misery (*duhkha*). They, being temporary, come and go; tolerate them.” (2.14) If one acts in goodness, it will be like poison in the beginning but in result will be like nectar, which is the result of spiritual knowledge. (18.37)

Now to the last type of *sukha*, which has been described as *kama*. Lord Krishna has given sufficient warnings about indulging in this kind of *sukha*. In verse # 16.21, the Lord warns sternly, “*Kama* is a door to hell; causes ruination of soul; should be given up.” How? “Kill this difficult to conquer enemy in the form of *kama*.” (3.43). So what is sensible to do? Seek *sukha*, the real one by linking with God earnestly. Meanwhile, *sukha* of the *vihara* type can also be enjoyed. But one must remember that it must be *yukta* (proper) at all times, otherwise, misery will be invited. A classic example is that of cricket fans. Not only do they spend a lot of money and time watching matches in person but suffer great disappointment when their team loses.

*(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views expressed are personal)*

Skills gap hinders future employability

It is crucial to bridge the skills gap by providing training in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning



The rapidly changing nature of jobs and skills requirements across the world is creating a skills gap that hinders employment opportunities. Business leaders need to quickly identify this gap and prepare their workforce for the future by providing clear direction to employees on how to build the skills they need to succeed. In the Asia-Pacific region, approximately 86 million workers need to acquire advanced digital skills through upskilling or reskilling to keep up with the fast pace of technological changes.

The UNDP’s Human Development Index ranks India at 132 out of 191 countries. This is a critical concern, as companies face a shortage of skilled workers while millions of educated individuals remain unemployed. To address this problem, India has been working to transform into a skill-based economy over the past decade. The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the National Skill Development Corporation have been established to bring skill development to the forefront. The Skill India Mission, which began in July 2015, aims to address the shortage of skilled workers in the country. However, there is still a huge mismatch between the number of candidates trained, certified, and finally placed, with the International Labour Organization predicting a shortage of around 29 million skilled personnel in India by 2030.

Employees across various industries are facing pressure to upskill and reskill, but many find it challenging to take time out for learning due to long work hours. A lack of support systems that prioritize worker well-being can hinder motivation for upskilling and reskilling. Organizations can create new financial incentives through skills-based compensation to encourage employees to self-learn new skills.

A skilled workforce is critical for higher growth, but only 45% of trained



INDIA CURRENTLY LACKS AN EFFECTIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM THAT IS BOTH ASPIRATIONAL AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL YOUNG PEOPLE

The writer is a Co-Founder and MD of Orane International, a Training Partner with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), and a Network Member of India International Skill Centres, (an initiative of GoI)

individuals in India are employable, with only 4.69% of the workforce having vocational training. This indicates a significant skill gap in the country, which can be attributed to a lack of training infrastructure and limited private-sector participation. The lack of a monitoring body for these training institutes is also a contributing factor.

India’s demographic advantage will become a challenge if the young population is not skillfully upskilled, reskilled, and skilled. By 2025, an estimated 70% of India’s population will be of working age, and without proper employment opportunities, unemployment will remain a significant challenge. The National Education Policy (2020) needs to make sincere efforts in skill development from the school level. There is a need to create a sound National Vocational Education and Training System that provides every child with an option to go for vocational education and training after 10 years of schooling. Most developed countries have a well-defined national vocational education and training system that facilitates job readiness among youth and encourages skill-empowered entrepreneurship.

Inadequacies in skills are directly linked to the kind of education that is being imparted right from the school level and the ecosystem we put in place to equip every job seeker with market-driven skills. If someone wishes to be a carpenter, plumber or electrician, he or she needs to have undergone at least a globally certified course for which we need to have a skill training centre in every high school where job seek-

ers should be trained in the fields of their interest during non-school hours. Similarly, education providers must support students with knowledge and skills relevant to the world of work to make them productive and able to be employed. All skill courses at school levels must be synchronised with employment for a wholesome integration between skill providers and industries will be of paramount importance.

Today, education is not confined to what is taught in schools and colleges, but the scope of learning has become wider, owing to the evolving market and technological advancement. To secure a career in the competitive and evolving job market, upskilling and remaining industry-relevant are crucial for youths. Acquiring market-driven skills will offer great placement opportunities to the youths and help them build promising careers.

India currently lacks an effective vocational education and training system that is both aspirational and accessible to all young people. To address this issue and achieve the national goal of making India the skills capital of the world, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship should establish a National Skills University (NSU), as proposed in the National Skills Universities Bill 2015. This university would offer industry-relevant curricula and skill-based certificates, diplomas, and degree programs to enhance employability.

In addition to the NSU, state governments can establish Multi-Skills Development Centres (MSDC) in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. These

centres can identify skill gaps in major industrial clusters and provide cluster-specific Skill Development Centres to upgrade the skills of existing workers. Advanced Skill Development Centres can also be set up to provide the latest know-how and courses to meet the high-end skill requirements of the industry. The World Bank has approved the \$250 million Skill India Mission Operation (SIMO) to improve the marketability of short-term skill development courses of 3-12 months.

To keep pace with the rapidly evolving technological landscape, it is essential to conduct global skill gap mapping and shift recruitment from “degree-based” to “skill-based”. According to a report by The World Economic Forum, 150 million new technology jobs will be created globally over the next five years, with 77% of all jobs requiring digital skills by 2030. Currently, only 33% of technology jobs worldwide are being filled by skilled workers, which could hinder technological advancements on a global scale.

Therefore, it is crucial to bridge the skills gap by providing training in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), blockchain, robotics, IoT, 3D printing, drones, and data analytics. A skilled workforce capable of understanding, implementing, and driving innovation is essential to the success of these technologies and the industries that rely on them. By focusing on vocational education and the latest skills training, India can create a workforce equipped to meet future demands.

Challenges to attain net zero emissions

A multipronged mitigation strategy is necessary but many techniques such as carbon dioxide removal must be approached with caution

The era of global warming has ended; the era of global boiling has arrived,” the UN chief recently remarked. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted in its recent report that projections based upon stated policy commitments fall short of containing the global warming levels at 1.5°C or even 2°C. So, when emissions mitigation is not happening at the pace desired and extreme climate events indicate an earlier-than-expected tipping point, carbon capture may offer a pathway to the solution.



ISHOO RATAN SRIVASTAVA

*(The writer is Deputy Chief Mechanical Engineer, North Western Railway and UK Commonwealth Scholar; views are personal)*

**Challenges to Net Zero**

The developmental imperatives demanding equity and justice, sub-optimal

technology readiness levels and challenges related to lifestyle adaptations make the net zero road, a difficult terrain to tread on. Food, energy, transport and materials like cement & steel contribute significantly to emissions but are such fundamental necessities that they cannot be wished away overnight from our lives. Take the case of food, the global population has increased nearly eightfold since the early 19th century. Quite obviously, it is the fertiliser-intensive farming without which it is estimated that half of the world’s population cannot be fed. These fertilisers are synthesised using fossil fuels which contribute to emissions.

Regarding electricity, renewable sources come with

intrinsic uncertainties and only reliable storage solutions can fully replace fossil fuels. This necessitates mining significant amounts of lithium which has its commercialised mining predominantly concentrated in the South American lithium triangle and notably it has a high water footprint. Additionally, mining cobalt, a key element in Li-ion batteries, is associated with ethical issues concerning child labour. Pumped hydro, an alternative to battery storage, also has environmental concerns.

**The Concept of Carbon Dioxide Removal**

Carbon dioxide removal involves capturing CO<sub>2</sub> at various sources of generation



or directly from the atmosphere and securely storing it to prevent escape. Natural systems such as forests, rocks, and oceans act as carbon sinks, absorbing and sequestering carbon. However, a warmer climate diminishes the capacity of these systems to absorb CO<sub>2</sub>. To augment the capacities of these natural systems, conservation efforts and engineered techniques for enhanced absorp-

tion are necessary. These include afforestation, increased rock weathering which enables rocks to absorb more CO<sub>2</sub>, and enhanced ocean fertilisation which is a geoengineering technique that may result in higher organic growth in ocean systems thus implying higher carbon absorption and bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS), which introduces circularity in the emissions balance sheet. Technology-based solutions involve capturing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions during production processes or electricity generation using fossil fuels predominantly using chemicals called amines which can absorb and release CO<sub>2</sub> upon temperature regulation. The captured CO<sub>2</sub> is

stored in deep geological formations, preventing its release. The pumping of CO<sub>2</sub> in the oil reservoirs for enhanced oil recovery is an established practice in the oil and gas industry. Another technology namely Direct Air Capture, involving CO<sub>2</sub> capture from air surrounding us instead of a concentrated point source is also gaining traction however it has cost concerns.

**The Pros and Cons**

The fact that certain techniques are already practised in the industry, builds a certain amount of confidence towards the feasibility of the proposition. However, there is scepticism over its large-scale adoption, particularly in terms of potential interfer-

ence with oceans and other natural systems. Additionally, increased afforestation and adoption of BECCS may have adverse impacts on our food supplies as well. The possibilities of CO<sub>2</sub> leakage from geological formations too cannot be ignored. Also, it is argued that excessive reliance on carbon removal pathways may lead to complacency in emissions mitigation and adaptation efforts.

The world needs to act swiftly on climate change and undoubtedly, a multipronged mitigation strategy is necessary. However, considering the uncertainties associated with carbon removal, its deployment should be approached with caution and a gradual scaling up as we learn more about it.



# US not seeking conflict with China: Biden

## Will push back on intimidation

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS/ NEW YORK

President Joe Biden has told world leaders that the US is not seeking conflict with China but it will “push back on aggression and intimidation” as his administration seeks to “responsibly manage” its tense relationship with Beijing. Addressing the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Biden said his administration is also ready to work together with China on issues where progress hinges on “our common efforts.”

“When it comes to China, I want to be clear and consistent: We seek to responsibly manage the competition between our countries so it does not tip into conflict,” Biden said in his address to the Heads of State and Government at the 193-member UN General Assembly on the opening day of the General Debate.

Tensions between Washington and Beijing escalated earlier this year following an incident involving a spy balloon over American airspace, China’s support for Russia’s conflict in Ukraine, trade disputes and human rights.

“I’ve said, “We are for de-risking, not decoupling with China,” Biden said.

“We will push back on aggression and intimidation and defend the rules of the road, from freedom of navigation to oversight to a level economic playing field that has helped safeguard security and prosperity for decades,” Biden said as his administration sought to counter China’s growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region and its military might.

Biden’s comments come as his administration has increased outreach to China, even as Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping have gone nearly a year without having a face-to-face meeting. However, the Biden administration has taken the lead in having regular channels of communication with Beijing to avoid conflict.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan recently met with China’s foreign minister Wang Yi. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo have both made recent trips to China for meetings with government and business officials.

Meanwhile, Chinese Vice President Han Zheng met on the sidelines of the General Assembly on Monday with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session.

“I had a candid and constructive meeting with People’s Republic of China Vice President Han Zheng about responsibly managing our bilateral relationship and addressing global and regional issues,” Blinken posted on X.

US Special Presidential Envoy for Climate John Kerry also met Vice President Zheng on the margins of the 78th UN General Assembly in New York City on Tuesday.

The two sides discussed the critical importance of bilateral and multilateral efforts to address the climate crisis, including promoting a successful COP 28. Secretary Kerry reiterated

ed the urgency of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, which will require ambitious action by the United States and China. He also emphasised the need for China to raise ambition in efforts to, among other things, accelerate decarbonisation and reduce emissions of super pollutants like methane, the State Department said in a press release.

### BIDEN AND LULA ARE MEETING IN NY

President Joe Biden will meet his Brazilian counterpart Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Wednesday in New York as the leaders of the Western Hemisphere’s largest democracies seek areas of common ground despite some recent differences on Russia’s war in Ukraine and other matters. The two are expected to discuss labour and the environment. And senior US administration officials who previewed the meeting said the two nations are rolling out a partnership on workers’ rights.

Initial hopes that Lula would prove a staunch ally for Biden have been tempered in recent months, with the Brazilian leader voicing opposition on some issues and at times even seeming to thumb his nose at Washington.

That has included dismissing allegations of Venezuela’s authoritarianism, calling for decreased dependence on the dollar for global trade and accusing the US of fuelling bloodshed in Ukraine by providing military aid.

In his speech at the UN General Assembly on Tuesday, Lula criticised the US embargo and sanctions targeting Cuba.

“What Lula expects is not to be lectured by the US and the White House, but treated as a partner who they will sometimes disagree with, but who they do respect,” said Thomas Traumann, a Brazilian political analyst. “Not an enemy, not an opponent, someone who is on your side, but not always on your side.”

Biden had frosty relations with Lula’s predecessor. Far-right former President Jair Bolsonaro, an open admirer of Donald Trump, waited weeks before recognising Biden’s 2020 election victory.

Over a year passed before a bilateral meeting took place in the context of US concerns that Bolsonaro, who had been casting doubt on Brazil’s election system, could reject its results.

After Bolsonaro’s defeat, his supporters stormed the capital in an attempt to oust Lula from power. The circumstances bore a clear resemblance to Trump and the January 6 Capitol riot.

Lula quickly travelled to Washington, where he and Biden bonded over the challenges to democracy they had both overcome.

Despite the shared experience and apparent bonhomie, the trip disgruntled Brazilian officials, who viewed the White House’s reception of the newly sworn-in president as historically underwhelming, said Traumann, who worked in the prior administration of Dilma Rousseff, Lula’s protegee. The meeting on Wednesday will be their second. Their planned labour partnership will be a vehicle for stopping the exploitation of workers, forced labour and child labour as well as workplace discrimination, according to the US officials. They spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the announcement.



Japan’s Prime Minister Fumio Kishida addresses the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday at U.N. headquarters. AP/PTI

## Iran’s prez urges US to demonstrate it wants to return to 2015 N-deal

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi said Tuesday that his country will never give up its right “to have peaceful nuclear energy” and urged the United States “to demonstrate in a verifiable fashion” that it wants to return to the 2015 nuclear deal. Addressing the annual high-level meeting of the UN General Assembly, Raisi said the American withdrawal from the deal trampled on US commitments and was “an inappropriate response” to Iran’s fulfilment of its commitments.

Then-President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled the US out of the accord in 2018, restoring crippling sanctions. Iran began breaking the terms a year later and formal talks in Vienna to try to restart the deal collapsed in August 2022. Iran has long denied ever seeking nuclear weapons and continues to insist that its programme is entirely for peaceful purposes – points Raisi reiterated

Tuesday telling the high-level meeting that “nuclear weapons have no place in the defensive doctrine and the military doctrine” of the country.

But UN nuclear chief Rafael Grossi said in an interview Monday with The Associated Press that the Iranian government’s removal of many cameras and electronic monitoring systems installed by the International Atomic Energy Agency make it impossible to give assurances about the country’s nuclear programme. Grossi has previously warned that Tehran has enough enriched uranium for “several” nuclear bombs if it chose to build them. The IAEA director general also said Monday he asked to meet Raisi to try to reverse Tehran’s uncalled for ban on “a very sizable chunk” of the agency’s inspectors. Raisi made no mention of the IAEA inspectors but the European Union issued a statement late Tuesday saying its top diplomat, Josep

Borrell, met Iran’s Foreign Minister on Tuesday and raised the nuclear deal and the inspectors as well as Iran’s arbitrary detention of many EU citizens including dual nationals. At his meeting with Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, the EU said Borrell urged Iran to reconsider its decision to ban several experienced nuclear inspectors and to improve cooperation with the IAEA. Borrell again urged the Iranian government to stop its military cooperation with Russia, the EU statement said. Western nations have said Iran has supplied military drones to Russia for use in the war in Ukraine, which Tehran denies. Raisi spoke to the General Assembly a day after Iran and the US each freed five prisoners who were in jails for years.

The US also allowed the release of nearly USD 6 billion in Iranian frozen assets in South Korea for humanitarian use.

## Russia has turned even children into weapons: Zelensky

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said that Russia is “weaponising” everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine — and he warned world leaders that the same could happen to them.

“When hatred is weaponised against one nation, it never stops there,” he said at the UN General Assembly’s annual top-level meeting on Tuesday. “The goal of the present war against Ukraine is to turn our land, our people, our lives, our resources into weapons against you — against the international rules-based order”

The war in Ukraine has deepened major global supply disruptions caused by the pandemic, driving a huge spike in food and energy prices, jolting the global economy and increasing hardship in many developing countries.

Decades-old energy supply channels to Europe from Russia, a major oil and gas producer, were halted or severely disrupted by the war due to sanctions, trade disputes, pipeline shutoffs and a major push by Western countries to find alternative sources. Both Russia and Ukraine also are major grain exporters, and Russia withdrew this past summer from a deal that allowed shipments of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy pointed to the food and fuel crunches, and he highlighted what Ukraine says were kidnappings of at least tens of thousands of children taken from Ukraine after Moscow’s invasion: “What will happen to them?”

“Those children in Russia are taught to hate Ukraine, and all ties with their families are broken. And this is clearly a genocide,” Zelenskyy said in remarks that ran 15 minutes — the meeting’s often-disregarded time limit. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant in March for Russian



President Vladimir Putin and another official, accusing them of abducting children from Ukraine. Russian officials have denied any forced transfers of children, saying some Ukrainian youngsters are in foster care.

Russia gets its chance to address the General Assembly on Saturday. Deputy UN Ambassador Dmitry Polyansky sat in Russia’s seat during Zelenskyy’s address.

“Did he speak,” Polyansky asked with a wry smile when an Associated Press reporter asked about his reaction to the address. “I didn’t notice he was speaking. I was on my phone.”

Zelenskyy took to the world stage at a sensitive point in his country’s campaign to maintain international support for its fight. Nearly 19 months after Moscow launched a full-scale invasion, Ukrainian forces are three months into a counteroffensive that has not gone as fast or as well as initially hoped.

Ukraine and its allies cast the country’s cause as a battle for the rule of international law, for the sovereignty of every country with a powerful and potentially expansionist neighbour, and for the stability of global food and energy supplies.

“We must stand up to this naked aggression today and deter other would-be aggressors tomorrow,” US President Joe Biden told the assembly Tuesday in his own speech.

## Azerbaijan, Armenian forces reach cease-fire deal

AP ■ YEREVAN (ARMENIA)

Azerbaijan and Armenian forces reached a cease-fire agreement on Wednesday to end two days of fighting in the separatist Nagorno-Karabakh region that has been a flash-point for decades, officials on both sides said. An hour after the truce was announced, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said that the intensity of the hostilities in the region “has decreased drastically.” Azerbaijani authorities said they had halted the military operation launched a day earlier once separatist officials

announced laying down arms. But it wasn’t immediately clear if some fighting continued. On Tuesday, Azerbaijan unleashed heavy artillery fire on Armenian positions in Nagorno-Karabakh — a mountainous region that is part of Azerbaijan and came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces during a separatist war in the 1990s. Scores of people were reportedly killed and wounded in the latest fighting. The hostilities also exacerbated an already grim humanitarian situation for residents who have suffered food shortages for months. The escalation

raised concerns that a full-scale war in the region could resume between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which have been locked in a struggle over the region since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The most recent heavy fighting occurred over six weeks in 2020, when Azerbaijan retook parts of the region and areas around it that were lost in the earlier separatist war. The conflict has long drawn in powerful regional players, including Russia and Turkey. While Turkey threw its weight behind Azerbaijan, Russia has taken on a mediating role and brokered the

armistice that ended the 2020 fighting.

Its contingent of peacekeepers, in fact, are charged with monitoring that truce, and both sides said on Wednesday that they helped reach the current agreement. Talks between Azerbaijani officials and the region’s ethnic Armenian authorities on its “re-integration” into Azerbaijan were scheduled to take place on Thursday.

The deal envisions the withdrawal of Armenian military units and equipment from Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as disarming the local defence

forces, Azerbaijan’s Defence Ministry said. Armenia’s Pashinyan said his government didn’t take part in discussing or negotiating the deal, but “has taken note” of the decision made by the region’s separatist authorities.

Azerbaijan said it fired on Armenian positions on Tuesday as part of what it called an “anti-terrorist operation” and vowed to continue until “illegal Armenian military formations” surrendered. Azerbaijan has alleged that Armenia has smuggled weapons into the territory since the end of the separatist war.

## Two Indians jailed in robocall scam

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Two Indian nationals have been sentenced to 41 months in prison for their role in a conspiracy to commit wire fraud by accepting illegally obtained USD 1.2 million in wire transfers from victims across the United States, a US attorney said. Arushobike Mitra (29) and Garbita Mitra (25) had previously pleaded guilty before US District Judge Esther Salas to one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud, Attorney Philip R. Sellinger announced on Tuesday. “These defendants and their conspirators preyed upon some of our most vulnerable citizens, using trickery and threats to coerce them into sending money,” Sellinger said.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court as part of an international fraud scheme, criminal India-based call centres utilised automated robocalls to contact victims across the country with the intent of defrauding US residents, particularly the elderly. After establishing contact with victims through these automated calls, other members of the conspiracy would

coerce or trick the victims into sending large sums of cash through physical shipments or wire transfers to other members of the conspiracy, including the Mitras, a media release said.

These conspirators used a variety of schemes to convince victims to send money, including impersonating government officials from agencies such as the Social Security Administration, or impersonating law enforcement officers from the FBI or DEA, and threatened victims with severe legal or financial consequences if they did not comply, federal prosecutors alleged.

Another method utilised by the callers involved convincing the victim they were speaking with someone from a tech support company and coercing the victim into granting the caller remote access to their personal computers. The caller would then access the victim’s bank accounts and make it appear to the victim that the caller had inadvertently added money to the victim’s bank account, when in fact the caller had simply transferred money from another one of the victim’s own accounts.

## Rishi Sunak signals plan to backtrack on climate goals

AP ■ LONDON

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is preparing to water down some of Britain’s environmental commitments on Wednesday, saying the country must fight climate change without penalising workers and consumers. The news drew wide criticism from political opponents, environmental groups and large chunks of UK industry, but was welcomed by sections of the governing Conservative Party.

Sunak issued a late-night statement on Tuesday in response to a BBC report saying the prime minister is considering extending deadlines for bans on new gasoline and diesel cars — currently set for 2030 — and on new natural-gas home heating, due in 2035.

Sunak said he would set out a “proportionate” approach to the environment. He summoned his Cabinet to an



unscheduled conference call to discuss the plans ahead of a speech hastily rescheduled for Wednesday afternoon. It had been due later in the week.

“For too many years, politicians in governments of all stripes have not been honest about costs and trade-offs,” Sunak said. “Instead, they have taken the easy way out, saying we can have it all.” Sunak did not confirm details of his announcements. He said he would keep a promise to reduce

the UK’s emissions of climate-warming greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050, but “in a better, more proportionate way”.

The government has previously boasted of Britain being a leader in cutting carbon emissions. UK greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by 46 per cent from 1990 levels, mainly because of the almost complete removal of coal from electricity generation.

The government had pledged to reduce emissions by 68 per cent of 1990 levels by 2030 and to reach net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

But with just seven years to go until the first goalpost, the government’s climate advisers said last month that the pace of action is “worryingly slow”.

Sunak’s decision in July to approve new North Sea oil and gas drilling also spurred critics to question his commitment to climate goals.

## France rolls out the red carpet for King Charles III’s state visit

AP ■ PARIS

King Charles III of the United Kingdom starts a three-day state visit to France on Wednesday meant to highlight the friendship between the two nations with great pomp, after the trip was postponed in March amid widespread demonstrations against President Emmanuel Macron’s pension changes. Charles and Queen Camilla were greeted by Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne at Paris-Orly airport. They were to attend a ceremony at the Arc de Triomphe in the presence of Macron and his wife, Brigitte.

The visit shows “the deep historical ties that unite our two countries. It is also an opportunity to showcase France’s cultural, artistic and gastronomic excellence”, the French presidency said. At the Arc de Triomphe, both national anthems will be played before a review of French troops and a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier to “mark the shared sacrifices of the past and an enduring legacy of cooperation”, according to Buckingham Palace. The jet fighters of the Patrouille de France and Britain’s Red Arrows, the acrobatic teams of the two air forces, will fly above the monument. The presi-

dential and royal couples will then head by car to the presidential palace, parading on the Champs-Élysées avenue.

Macron and Charles will hold a bilateral meeting, because the visit also “symbolises the relationship of friendship and trust” since they “have in the past worked closely together to protect biodiversity and combat global warming”, the French presidency stressed.

They will also have talks on Russia’s war in Ukraine and the migration issue as Italy’s southern island of Lampedusa was in recent days overwhelmed by people setting off from Tunisia.

While the UK royal family long ago ceded political power to elected leaders, members of the royal family remain Britain’s preeminent ambassadors as presidents and prime ministers jockey to bask in the glamour and pageantry that follows them wherever they go. The visit comes amid a recent warming in the Franco-British relationship after years marked by Brexit talks and related disputes. At a bilateral summit in March, Macron and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak agreed to strengthen military ties and step up efforts to prevent migrants from crossing the English Channel.

← KIND ATTENTION : RAIL PASSENGERS! →

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

CHANGE IN TRAIN NUMBERS

This is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways have decided to change the Train Numbers of following Trains. These trains will run with new Train Number from the dates shown against them :-

EXISTING			REVISED			
Train No.	From	To	Train No.	From	To	W.E.F
14811	Sikar	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	14713	Sikar	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	04.10.2023
14812	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	Sikar	14714	Delhi Sarai Rohilla	Sikar	04.10.2023
14711	Rishikesh	Sri Ganganagar	14816	Rishikesh	Sri Ganganagar	01.10.2023
14712	Sri Ganganagar	Rishikesh	14815	Sri Ganganagar	Rishikesh	01.10.2023
19791	Jaipur	Hisar	14734	Jaipur	Bathinda	with immediate effect
14825	Hisar	Jaipur	14733	Bathinda	Jaipur	
09603 (79603*)	Jaipur	Bathinda	04704 (54704*)	Jaipur	Bathinda	01.10.2023
09604 (79604*)	Bathinda	Jaipur	04703 (54703*)	Bathinda	Jaipur	01.10.2023
01625 (54765*)	Dhuri	Bathinda	04765 (54765*)	Dhuri	Bathinda	01.10.2023
01626 (54766*)	Bathinda	Dhuri	04766 (54766*)	Bathinda	Dhuri	01.10.2023
04643 (54785*)	Firozpur Cantt.	Fazilka	04785 (54785*)	Firozpur Cantt.	Fazilka	01.10.2023
04644 (54786*)	Fazilka	Firozpur Cantt.	04786 (54786*)	Fazilka	Firozpur Cantt.	01.10.2023

For detailed information, please call RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit enquiry website: [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)

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# 6 Palestinians killed in fight with Israel

AP ■ TEL AVIV

Israeli military operations in the occupied West Bank and unrest in the Gaza Strip have killed six Palestinians, Palestinian health officials said Wednesday, the latest spike in a wave of violence that has roiled the region for more than a year. At least three of those killed were claimed as militant fighters.

The death toll from the most recent flare-up stood at four late Tuesday. But on Wednesday the Palestinian Health Ministry raised it, saying an Israeli raid into the Jenin refugee camp in the northern West Bank killed four people and wounded some 30 others, while a raid in a separate refugee camp killed another Palestinian. A sixth Palestinian was killed by Israeli fire in unrest in the Gaza Strip, officials said. The deadly violence between Israel and the Palestinians over the last year and a half has surged to levels unseen in the West Bank in some two decades. Israel has stepped up its raids on Palestinian areas and Palestinian attacks against Israelis have been mounting. Tensions also appear to be spreading to Gaza.

The Israeli military said Wednesday that troops opened fire toward a Palestinian who was throwing explosives at them while they were on an overnight arrest raid in the refugee camp of Aqabat Jabr. The camp, near the Palestinian city of Jericho, has emerged as one of the focal points of Israel's raids. The Palestinian Health Ministry said Israeli forces killed 19-year-old Dhargham al-Akhras in the raid. The bloodshed in the Jenin camp hours earlier was the latest in that stronghold of Palestinian militants where the Israeli military often carries out deadly raids. In July, Israel launched its most intense operation in the West Bank in nearly two decades, leaving widespread destruction in the camp. The

army said that forces carried out a rare strike Tuesday with a suicide drone during the operation and exchanged fire with gunmen in Jenin. While leaving the camp, the army said, an explosive detonated underneath an army truck as gunmen opened fire, damaging the vehicle. No soldiers were injured.

Three of those killed in Jenin were claimed as members of the Hamas militant group or the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and were identified as Mahmoud al-Sadi, 23, Mahmoud Ararawi, 24, and Ata Yasser Musa, 29. Videos posted on social media showed medics unloading the wounded at a hospital, while in other videos, explosions and gunfire could be heard echoing in the camp. As Israeli soldiers withdrew, a crowd of young men chanted: "Oh, you who ask, who are we? We are the Jenin Brigade."

After the Israeli military withdrew from the Jenin camp, dozens of gunmen and residents poured into the streets to protest against the Palestinian Authority and its failure to protect them, according to footage shared by residents. Israel says the raids are meant to dismantle militant networks and thwart future attacks. Some 190 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the year, according to a tally by The Associated Press. Israel says most of those killed have been militants, but youths protesting the incursions and others not involved in the confrontations have also been killed. At least 31 people have been killed in Palestinian attacks against Israelis since the beginning of 2023.

In the Gaza violence, health officials said the Israeli military killed a 25-year-old Palestinian along the volatile frontier with Israel as youths mounted violent protests at a separation fence. Unrest over the past week has escalated tensions and prompted Israel to bar entry to thousands of Palestinian labourers from the impoverished enclave.

# Thai king's estranged son urges open discussion on monarchy

AP ■ BANGKOK



cherish the monarchy, but I believe it is better to know than not knowing. Every person has their own opinion based on their own experiences. Not listening to them doesn't make their viewpoints or opinions disappear," wrote Vacharaesorn, who works at a law firm in New York. "It's another story whether you agree or disagree with them.

# Putin accepts invitation to visit China

AP ■ MOSCOW

Russia's President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday he accepted an invitation from his Chinese counterpart to visit China in October during the Belt and Road Summit. Speaking after a meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Moscow, Putin said Russia and China are "integrating our ideas of creating a large Eurasian space", noting that China's Belt and Road Initiative is a part of that.

The Initiative is a huge programme in which Beijing has been expanding its influence in developing regions through infrastructure projects.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine, Putin has pivoted the country toward China, selling it more energy, and increasingly carrying out joint military exercises.

China has adopted a neutral stance on the war in Ukraine and even denounced

Western sanctions against Moscow. It also accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin's military action and declared last year that it had a "no-limits" friendship with Russia.

On Tuesday, senior Russian security official, Nikolai Patrushev, called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted Wang Yi for security talks.

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

Wang arrived in Russia on Monday on a four-day visit following his talks with US President Joe Biden's national security adviser in Malta over the weekend. Putin's plan to visit China was initially announced in July.



In this photo released by Xinhua News Agency, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, foreground left, talks to Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Nikolai Patrushev as they arrive for their 18th round of China-Russia strategic security consultation in Moscow, Russia on Tuesday.

# UN urges Taliban govt to protect rights of detainees

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

The United Nations said on Wednesday it has documented more than 1,600 cases of human rights violations committed by authorities in Afghanistan during arrests and detentions of people, and urged the Taliban government to stop torture and protect the rights of detainees.

Nearly 50 per cent of the violations consisted of "torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment", the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan said.

The report by the mission's Human Rights Service covered 19 months — from January 2022 until the end of July 2023 — with cases documented across 29 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces. It said 11 per cent of the cases involved women.

It said the torture aimed at extracting confessions and other information included beatings, suffocation, suspension from the ceiling and electric shocks. Cases that were not considered sufficiently credible and reliable were not included in the report, it said.

The Taliban have

promised a more moderate rule than during their previous period in power in the 1990s. But they have imposed harsh measures since seizing Afghanistan in mid-August 2021 as US and NATO forces were pulling out from the country after two decades of war.

"The personal accounts of beatings, electric shocks, water torture, and numerous other forms of cruel and degrading treatment, along with threats made against individuals and their families, are harrowing," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk said in a statement issued with the report.

"This report suggests that torture is also used as a tool — in lieu of effective investigations. I urge all concerned de facto authorities to put in place concrete measures to halt these abuses and hold perpetrators accountable," he said.

The UN mission or UNAMA uses the term "de facto authorities" for the Taliban government.

Its report acknowledges some steps taken by govern-

ment agencies to monitor places of detention and investigate allegations of abuse.

"Although there have been some encouraging signs in terms of leadership directives as well as an openness among many de facto officials to engage constructively with UNAMA, and allow visits to prisons, these documented cases highlight the need for urgent, accelerated action by all," Roza Otunbayeva, the UN secretary-general's special representative for Afghanistan and head of the mission, said in a statement.

The report said of the torture and other degrading treatment that 259 instances involved physical suffering and 207 involved mental suffering. UNAMA said it believes that ill-treatment of individuals in custody is wide-

ly under reported and that the figures in the report represent only a snapshot of violations of people in detention across Afghanistan.

It said a pervasive climate of surveillance, harassment and intimidation, threats to people not to speak about their experiences in detention, and the need for prisoners to provide guarantees by family members and other third parties to be released from custody hamper the willingness of many people to speak freely to the UN mission.

The report said 44 per cent of the interviewees were civilians with no particular affiliation, 21 per cent were former government or security per-

sonnel, 16 per cent were members of civic organizations or human rights groups, 9 per cent were members of armed groups and 8 per cent were journalists and media workers. The remainder were "family members of persons of interest".

In a response that was included in the report, the Taliban-led Foreign Ministry said government agencies have taken steps to improve the human rights situation of detainees, and that Islamic law, or Shariah, prohibits torture.

It also questioned some of the report's data. The Ministry of Interior said it has identified only 21 cases of human rights violations.

# Ukraine's allies make legal arguments at top UN court

The Hague (Netherlands): Ukraine's international allies filed into the United Nations' top court on Wednesday to support Kyiv's case against Russia that alleges Moscow twisted the genocide convention to manufacture a pretext for its invasion last year.

The hearing came a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy told the UN General Assembly in New York that Russia is "weaponising" everything from food and energy to abducted children in its war against Ukraine — and warned world leaders that the same could happen to them.

An unprecedented 32 states were making brief legal arguments on Wednesday to the 16-judge panel at the International Court of Justice, which is holding hearings into Moscow's assertions that the World Court does not have jurisdiction and should throw out Ukraine's case.

Kyiv filed its case two days after Russia invaded Ukraine. It argues that the attack was based on false claims by Russia of acts of genocide in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions of eastern Ukraine. Ukraine insists the court has jurisdiction. Kyiv's allies supported that stance on Wednesday.

Legal representatives including Australian Solicitor-General Stephen Donaghe told judges that the case is about a dispute between Ukraine and Russia over the 1948 Genocide Convention that should be settled by the court. While most of the national presentations in the court's ornate Great Hall of Justice were dry legal arguments, Canada's representative, Alan Kessel, underscored what was at stake.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given that on the direction of our client Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited, Abdul Kadir is in process to purchase the First Floor without roof right area measuring 85 sq. Yard Built on Plot No. 80 in Block-A, area measuring 200 sq. Yard Situated at Residential colony Shalimar Garden Main at Village Pasoda Pargana Loni Tehsil & Distt. Ghaziabad, from Mr. Jain Aggarwal & Mrs. Tariq Hasan, availing HL from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited, they i.e. Mr. Jain Aggarwal & Mrs. Tariq Hasan acquired the said property vide sale Deed Dated 28.07.2022 (doc. No. 6130). All persons having any claim against or in respect of the said Property, or any part thereof, by way of sale, exchange, mortgage (equitable/registered or otherwise), gift, trust, inheritance, family arrangement, maintenance, bequest, partnership, possession, lease, sublease, tenancy, license, lien, charge, pledge, easement or otherwise whatsoever, are hereby requested to notify the same in writing to us with supporting documentary evidence at the address mentioned below within 7 days from the date hereof, failing which the claim or claims, if any, of such person or persons will be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned.

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
To be known to all, JOGINDER SINGH S/O LATE SH. KARAM SINGH R/O HOUSE NO.598, LOCK-D, POKET-2,SECTOR-29,ROHINI, DELHI is the co-owner of PROPERTY NO.598, BLOCK-D, POKET-2,SECTOR-29,ROHINI, DELHI has/have acquired for certified copies of conversion from leasehold to freehold in DDA.The original documents i.e. Demand Cum Allotment Letter, Possession Letter,Site Possession Slip & other documents of the above said plot has been lost. An FJR/VCR/UL No.81293/2023 dated 20/09/2023 to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person (s)claiming any right,interest,having any objection or found in possession of original documents,may write/contact with above named person at above Address/Phone No. 9818293904 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. If no person claiming any right, interest, objection with respect to this property, can personally inform or write to Deputy Director (LAB) Rohini or Director (LAB) Rohini, Delhi Development Authority, Vikas Sadan, New Delhi-110023.

**Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)**  
Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vaidhali, Gzb, U.P. Mob. 9810063551

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Notice is hereby given that on the direction of our client Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited, Mumtaz wife of shahid alias shahid is in process to avail the loan from Piramal Capital & Housing Finance Limited against her property bearing no. 288 measuring 125 sq. yds. out of khasra no. 36 situated at village meerpur turk in the shadi of gali no. 5, mongra nagar, karawal nagar, ilaqua shahdara, Delhi-94, having acquired the same vide Gift Deed 18/9/23 (doc. No. 2891) and whereas she has having undisputed possession of the said property.

**LOST & FOUND**  
I, Rahul Kumar Sodhani Son of Shri M.C. Maheshwari Sodhani Resident of Flat No.23, Anekan C.G.H.S. Ltd. Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096, inform that I am the Owner of Flat No.23, Situated in the layout plan of Anekan C.G.H.S. Ltd. Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-110096 that Original Allotment Letter, issued by Anekan Co-op. Group Housing Society Limited, and the General Power of Attorney executed by Shri Sunil Kakaria son of Shri Joginder Pal Kakaria on 28/8/1995 in the Office of SR-IV-Delhi has been lost/misplaced at Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi-96 at the time of getting the Photostat of the same.

**Kamal Kant Gupta (Advocate)**  
Unit No. FF-2, First floor, Mahalaxmi Metro Tower Sec-4, Vaidhali, Gzb, U.P. Mob. 9810063551

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 25.10.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 49,76,394/- (Rupees Nineteen Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Three Hundred Nineteen only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLGRG0037320, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.09.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 12.09.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges taken by the Secured Creditor from MANU MALHOTRA and NEHA along with ANAMIKA MALHOTRA (GUARANTOR). The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 14,10,000/- (Rupees Fourteen Lakh Ten Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,41,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Forty One Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
FIRST FLOOR (BACK SIDE / EASTERN PORTION), SHREERAM APARTMENT, WITHOUT ROOF RIGHTS OF THE BUILT-UP PROPERTY BEARING PLOT NO. 137 & PORTION OF PLOT NO. 138, AREA ADMEASURING 50 SQUARE YARDS I.E. 41.81 SQ. MTRS. OUT OF KHASRA NO. 351, SITUATED IN THE REVENUE ESTATE OF VILLAGE BINDAPUR, GALI NO. 6, BLOCK - T EXTN., UTTAM NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110059 AND WHICH IS BOUNDED AS FOLLOWS :-  
EAST : GALI NORTH : VACANT PLOT  
WEST : FRONT SIDE / ROAD 15' WIDE SOUTH : PLOT NO. 138

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

**Date : 13.09.2023**  
**Place : NEW DELHI**

**Authorized officer**  
Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. [CIN: L65922DL2005PLC136029] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 25.10.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 49,76,394/- (Rupees Nineteen Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Three Hundred Nineteen only) pending towards Loan Account No. HHLJA0255142, by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 12.09.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 13.09.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from LOVLESH TAK and MONIKA. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 34,40,000/- (Rupees Thirty Four Lakh Forty Thousand only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 3,44,000/- (Rupees Three Lakh Forty Four Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
RESIDENTIAL FLAT BEARING NUMBER B-3/204, SECOND FLOOR (WITHOUT ROOF RIGHT), HAVING SUPER COVERED AREA OF 900 SQUARE FEET (I.E. 83.61 SQUARE METER), COVERED AREA OF 750 SQUARE FEET (I.E. 69.70 SQUARE METER) APPROX IN "VXL EASTERN HEIGHTS" AT PLOT / KHASRA NUMBER 1553, 1554, 1556, 1557/1, 1557/2 AND 1558 SITUATED IN VILLAGE MAKANPUR, NEAR NYAY KHAND - III, INDIRAPURAM, TEHSIL AND DISTRICT GHAZIABAD, GHAZIABAD - 201014, UTTAR PRADESH ALONG WITH ONE OPEN CAR PARKING.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.indiabullshomeloans.com. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

**Date : 13.09.2023**  
**Place : GHAZIABAD**

**Authorized officer**  
Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Assets Care & Reconstruction Enterprise Ltd. [CIN: U65993DL2002PLC115769] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 25.10.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 3,87,73,04/- (Rupees Three Crore Eighty Seven Lakh Seventy Three Thousand Two Hundred Forty Only) pending towards the Loan Account No. D0020XXVII [old Loan Account being HHLDUB00482180], by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.09.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 12.09.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from DEEPAK LUTHRA and MOHINI LUTHRA. The old Loan Account along with its underlying security(ies), including the Immovable Property, had been assigned by Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. ("IHFL") to Indiabulls Asset Reconstruction Co. Ltd. ("IARCL") vide Assignment Agreement dated 31.03.2021. The said Loan Account has been further assigned by IARCL to and in favour of the Secured Creditor, acting as a Trustee of ACRE-102-Trust, vide Assignment Agreement dated 30.11.2021. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 5,00,00,000/- (Rupees Five Crore only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 50,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Lakh only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
RESIDENTIAL UNIT BEING PENT HOUSE DUPLEX BEARING NUMBER A-204 HAVING CARPET AREA OF 3893 SQUARE FEET SITUATED ON THE 20TH AND 21ST FLOOR IN TOWER - A IN THE GROUP HOUSING PROJECT KNOWN AS "ENIGMA" SITUATED IN SECTOR 110, GURUGRAM, HARYANA - 122001 ALONG WITH ALLOTTED THREE CAR PARKING SPACE BEARING NUMBER(S) 36, 37 AND 38 SITUATED IN UPPER BASEMENT.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.acreindia.in. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

**Date : 15.09.2023**  
**Place : GURUGRAM**

**Authorized officer**  
ASSETS CARE & RECONSTRUCTION ENTERPRISE LTD. TRUSTEE OF ACRE-102-TRUST

**APPENDIX IV-A**  
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]  
**Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Property**  
E-Auction Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described Immovable Property mortgaged to Assets Care & Reconstruction Enterprise Ltd. [CIN: U65993DL2002PLC115769] ("Secured Creditor"), the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "as is where is", "as is what is" and "whatever there is" basis on 25.10.2023 from 02.00 P.M. to 04.00 P.M., for recovery of Rs. 18,46,553/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Forty Six Thousand Five Hundred Fifty Three only) pending towards Loan Account No. B0270XXIII [old Loan Account No. HDHLND00491775], by way of outstanding principal, arrears (including accrued late charges) and interest till 11.09.2023 with applicable future interest in terms of the Loan Agreement and other related loan document(s) w.e.f. 12.09.2023 along with legal expenses and other charges due to the Secured Creditor from BHUPINDER SINGH and RAMANPREET KAUR. The old Loan Account along with its underlying security(ies), including the Immovable Property, had been assigned by Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd. ("IHFL") to Indiabulls Asset Reconstruction Co. Ltd. ("IARCL") vide Assignment Agreement dated 31.12.2021. The said Loan Account has been further assigned by IARCL to and in favour of the Secured Creditor, acting as a Trustee of ACRE-102-Trust, vide Assignment Agreement dated 29.06.2022. The Reserve Price of the Immovable Property will be Rs. 13,00,000/- (Rupees Thirteen Lakh only) and the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") will be Rs. 1,30,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Thirty Thousand only) i.e. equivalent to 10% of the Reserve Price.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY**  
BUILT-UP FIRST FLOOR WITHOUT ROOF/TERRACE RIGHTS OUT OF FREEHOLD PROPERTY BEARING NO. WZ-283/125, AREA MEASURING 39 SQ. YARDS, (26 FTX 13.1/2 FT) PART OF KHASRA NO. 19/16 AND 19/14, WITH COMMON RIGHTS TO USE COMMON ENTRANCE/GATE, STAIRCASE, PASSAGE AND ALL OTHER COMMON FACILITIES, SITUATED IN THE AREA OF VILLAGE KHAYALA, NOW COLONY KNOWN AS VISHNU GARDEN EXTENSION, NEW DELHI 110018 WITH THE PROPERTONATE FREEHOLD RIGHTS OF THE LAND UNDERNEATH THE SAID PROPERTY; AND THE SAME IS BOUNDED AS UNDER:  
EAST : ROAD 15 FT NORTH : OTHER'S PROPERTY  
WEST : PORTION OF THE PLOT SOUTH : OTHER'S PROPERTY

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on the website of the Secured Creditor i.e. www.acreindia.in. For bidding, log on to www.auctionfocus.in

**Date : 15.09.2023**  
**Place : NEW DELHI**

**Authorized officer**  
ASSETS CARE & RECONSTRUCTION ENTERPRISE LTD. TRUSTEE OF ACRE-102-TRUST

# Tornadoes kill 10 in China

Beijing (AP): Two tornadoes within hours killed 10 people and seriously injured four others in eastern China, state media said Wednesday. The first tornado hit parts of Suqian city in Jiangsu province on Tuesday afternoon, state broadcaster CCTV said. It destroyed 137 homes and damaged crop land and pig farms. Five people died and four were injured.

A second tornado in the evening killed five people in Yancheng city, which is in the same province about 190 kilometers (120 miles) southeast of Suqian. Videos posted online of the first tornado showed cars that had been tossed about, including at least one flipped onto its side, and debris swirling in the air above a several-story-high building.

CCTV said that power and road service had been restored in the Suqian area.

# S'pore lawmakers reject motion to suspend minister Iswaran

AP ■ SINGAPORE

Singapore's lawmakers have rejected a motion by an opposition party to suspend Transport Minister S Iswaran, under investigation for graft charges, from parliament and voted instead to consider the matter when the probes against him conclude. During a two-hour debate on Tuesday, Leader of the House Indranee Rajah said the ruling People's Action Party (PAP) would consider a backlash of Iswaran's MP allowance if justified, such as if he is given criminal charges.

The Progress Singapore Party's (PSP) motion had called for Iswaran to be suspended as an MP for the remainder of the current session of parliament. He was arrested in July and is under investigation by the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB). The investiga-

tion relates to F1 races being hosted in Singapore. But Indranee filed a counter-motion for parliament to consider the matter when the outcome of the ongoing investigation against Iswaran is known. PAP MPs voted for Indranee's motion while the PSP's two Non-Constituency MPs — Hazel Poa and Leong Mun Wai — voted for their own motion, according to a Channel News Asia report.

All eight opposition MPs from the Workers' Party (WP) voted for the PAP's motion and against the PSP. Poa said she was filling the PSP motion so that Iswaran would no longer receive the MP allowance while he was not performing his duties whether in parliament or in his West Coast constituency.

"This motion is therefore about the prudent use of tax-

payers' money, not a presumption of guilt," she said.

She also filed a second motion for permission to introduce a Private Member's Bill proposing amendments to the Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act so that Iswaran could be reimbursed for his MP's allowance if cleared of any wrongdoing.

Indranee's counter-motion, meanwhile, also affirmed the need for MPs to uphold integrity and conduct themselves lawfully and the need to deal firmly and fairly with any MP being investigated for possible wrongdoing.

After his arrest, Iswaran was instructed to take a leave of absence. He has been interdicted from duty with a reduced pay of SGD 8,500 (USD 6,200) a month. He continues to draw the full annual MP allowance of SGD 1,92,500.



# Sensex tanks 796 pts, Nifty closes below 20K

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty tumbled more than 1 per cent on Wednesday due to selling in index heavyweights in tandem with weak global trends ahead of the US Federal Reserve's interest rate decision.

Falling for the second day running, the 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 796 points or 1.18 per cent to settle at 66,800.84. During the day, it tanked 868.7 points or 1.28 per cent to 66,728.14.

The NSE Nifty declined 231.90 points or 1.15 per cent to end below the 20,000 mark at 19,901.40.

US bond yields surging to 16-year high levels and fears of high crude oil prices fueling commodity inflation also hit the investor sentiment, according to analysts.

Fresh foreign fund outflows and caution ahead of a host of interest rate decisions from global central banks also added to the overall bearish trend. Besides the US Fed meeting, the BoE (Bank of England) and the BoJ (Bank of Japan) are also scheduled to meet this week.



Among the Sensex firms, HDFC Bank emerged as the biggest loser, falling 4 per cent. JSW Steel, Reliance Industries, UltraTech Cement, Maruti, Tata Steel, Wipro, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel and Larsen & Toubro were the other major laggards.

Power Grid, Asian Paints, Sun Pharma, Axis Bank, NTPC, ITC and Infosys were among the gainers.

“The domestic markets remained under pressure due to rising US bond yields and a

stronger greenback. Concerns reigned over upcoming FED policy, interest rate trajectory and rising oil prices.

“Bank Nifty underperformed today due to rising cost of funds and reduction in deposits leading to moderation in net yield,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge fell by 0.51 per cent and midcap index declined 0.33 per cent.

Among the indices, finan-

cial services fell by 1.39 per cent, commodities dropped 1.39 per cent, metal (1.25 per cent), realty (1.20 per cent), bankex (1.05 per cent), telecommunication (0.95 per cent) and oil & gas (0.68 per cent).

Utilities and power were the gainers. In Asian markets, Tokyo, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower while Seoul settled with gains.

European markets were trading in positive territory. The US markets ended in negative territory on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude fell 1.23 per cent to USD 93.18 a barrel even as supply concerns remain due to production cuts announced by Saudi Arabia and Russia.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,236.51 crore on Monday, according to exchange data.

Snapping its 11-day rally, the BSE benchmark fell 241.79 points or 0.36 per cent to settle at 67,596.84 on Monday. The broader Nifty declined 59.05 points or 0.29 per cent to end at 20,133.30. Equity markets were closed on Tuesday on account of Ganesh Chaturthi.

# GSTN enables geocoding for ‘additional place of business’ address

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

GST Network has enabled geocoding functionality for the ‘additional place of business’ address of GST-registered businesses across all states and union territories.

The move is aimed at curbing fraudulent registrations under Goods and Services Tax (GST) by giving bogus addresses for the purpose of claiming Input Tax Credit (ITC).

“GSTN is pleased to inform that the geocoding functionality for the ‘Additional Place of Business’ address is now active across all States and Union



Territories. This builds upon the geocoding functionality earlier implemented for the principal place of business, operational since February 2023,” GST Network said in an advisory to taxpayers.

To date, over 2.05 crore addresses have been geocoded for both principal and addition-

al places of business by GSTN.

Since March 2022, all new business addresses are geocoded at the point of registration, ensuring consistent accuracy and standardisation from the beginning, it added.

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said the integration of geocoding func-

tionality assumes a pivotal role in detecting instances of tax evasion by furnishing tax authorities with precise geographical location data.

“Using tools such as heat maps and spatial analysis, tax authorities can uncover tax irregularities clusters, enabling enforcement agencies to allocate their resources more strategically. By harnessing the power of geocoding, tax authorities can elevate the effectiveness of their audit and enforcement endeavours, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and streamlined tax collection process,” Mohan added.

## Sai Silks IPO subscribed 7 per cent on first day of offer

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Initial Public Offering (IPO) of ethnic apparel retailer Sai Silks (Kalamandir) was subscribed 7 per cent on the first day of offer on Wednesday.

The IPO received bids for 26,16,752 shares against 3,84,86,309 shares on offer, as per data available with the NSE.

The category for Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) was subscribed 12 per cent and that of non-institutional investors

received 3 per cent subscription.

The public issue has a fresh issue of up to Rs 600 crore and an offer for sale of up to 2.70 crore equity shares.

The price range for the offer is Rs 210-222 a share.

At the upper end of the price band, the IPO will fetch about Rs 1,201 crore.

On Monday, Sai Silks said it has raised over Rs 360 crore from anchor investors.

The Hyderabad-based company was founded by Prasad



Chalavadi, a techie turned entrepreneur in 2005.

It has four store formats — Kalamandir, VaraMahalakshmi

Silks, Mandir, and KLM Fashion Mall.

Motilal Oswal Investment Advisors, HDFC Bank and Nuvama Wealth Management are the managers to the offer.

As of July 31, 2023, the company had a network of 54 stores in four major south Indian states — Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The equity shares of the company will be listed on the BSE and NSE.



## EPFO records highest net member addition of 18.75 lakh in July

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body EPFO has recorded the highest net member addition of 18.75 lakh in July 2023, according to the payroll data released on Wednesday.

The labour ministry in a statement said that the addition of 18.75 lakh during the month is the highest since the first publishing of EPFO payroll data from April 2018 covering the period of September 2017 onwards.

A growing trend has continued for the last three months with an increase of around 85,932 net members over the previous month of June 2023. The data indicates that around 10.27 lakh new members have enrolled during July 2023 which is the highest since July 2022.

The majority of new members joining EPFO are in the age group of 18-25 years constituting roughly 58.45 per cent of total new members additions during the month. This shows an increasing trend in youth enrollment, who are mostly first-time job seekers joining the organized sector workforce of the country, it explained.

The payroll data demonstrates that approximately 12.72 lakh members exited but rejoined EPFO, which is the highest in the last 12 months.

These members switched their jobs and re-joined the establishments covered under EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying for final settlement thus, extending their social security protection.

Gender-wise analysis of payroll data shows that during July 2023 around 3.86 lakh net female members have been added to the payroll.

Around 2.75 lakh female members have come under the ambit of social security coverage for the first time.

State-wise analysis of payroll data denotes that net member addition is the highest in the five states of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat and Haryana. These states constitute around 58.78 per cent of net member addition, adding a total of 11.02 lakh members during the month.

Of all the states, Maharashtra is leading by adding 20.45 per cent of net members during the month.

## Individual pays ₹44.20 lakh to settle insider trading case with Sebi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

An individual has settled a case pertaining to alleged violation of insider trading norms in the matter of ABC Bearings Ltd with capital markets regulator Sebi after paying Rs 44.20 lakh as settlement fee.

The order came after Sahir Patel (applicant) proposed to settle the proceedings through a settlement order.

“The instant proceedings initiated against the applicant vide showcase notice (SCN) dated September 20, 2022, are disposed of,” Sebi’s Adjudicating Officer Amit Kapoor said in the settlement order on Monday.

The case relates to ABC Bearings Ltd (ABC), which made a corporate announcement on the BSE in July 2017,



relating to the merger of ABC with Timken India Ltd (TIL) through a scheme of amalgamation and arrangement.

Further, it was observed that the price of the scrip of ABC registered an increase of 19.99 per cent in one trading day.

Thereafter, Sebi conducted

a detailed investigation in the matter to ascertain whether trading was done in the shares of ABC by certain suspected entities on the basis of unpublished price sensitive information relating to merger of ABC with TIL.

The investigation period was January 2017 to July 2017.

After the investigation, it was alleged that Sahir Patel had violated the provisions of PIT (Prohibition of Insider Trading) regulations.

Thereafter, a show cause notice dated September 20, 2022, was issued for the alleged contravention of the norms.

Subsequently, the applicant had filed a settlement application with Sebi, which recommended to settle the matter on payment of Rs 44.20 lakh.

## M&M market valuation crosses ₹2 lakh crore

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The market capitalisation of Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd crossed Rs 2 lakh crore mark, helped by a strong order book in the SUV segment and leadership position in tractor segment.

M&M shares closed at Rs 1,636.85 on the BSE, giving the firm a market value of Rs 2.03 lakh crore, according to stock exchange data.

The automaker’s market cap has doubled in less than one-and-a-half years - from Rs 1 lakh crore in April 2022 to over Rs 2 lakh crore this week. M&M market cap hit Rs 2 lakh crore mark on Monday.

The incremental m-cap in the last two years is more than

the incremental market value the firm had over the last decade.

Capital allocation actions have led to an overall better financial performance with several non-accretive divestments completed, analysts said adding net cash is at all-time high levels.

Mahindra’s auto and farm businesses are industry leaders and it is looking to capitalize on market leadership position. It is No. 1 revenue market share in the SUV segment and has about 50 per cent market share of LCV.

Its dominance in the domestic tractor segment has seen market share rise by about 300 bps in the last two years.

Mahindra’s services segment includes industry pioneers like Tech M and Mahindra

Finance, which contributed more than 50 per cent of FY23 group earnings.

While Mahindra Finance had the highest-ever disbursements in FY23 (Rs 49,000 crore, up 80 per cent) and much-improved asset quality (4.5 per cent gross NPAs, down from 8.4 per cent), Tech-M is leveraging strength in telecom by being at the forefront of 5G.

The firm, they said, has identified 9 businesses as ‘Growth Gems’ that will aid a 5x growth over the next several years. The growth engines include Mahindra Lifespaces, Mahindra Holidays and Mahindra Logistics.

Monetization and partnerships with PE firms have helped value discovery, they added.



## Infosys to train 50,000 employees on NVIDIA AI technology

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT company Infosys plans to train and certify 50,000 employees on NVIDIA AI technology to provide expertise to its customers across industries, the company said on Wednesday.

The development follows expansion of collaboration between Infosys and chipset company NVIDIA to provide generative AI-based solutions to enterprises worldwide. “Infosys plans to set up an NVIDIA Centre of Excellence, where it will train and certify 50,000 of its employees on NVIDIA AI technology to provide generative AI expertise to its vast network of customers across industries,” Infosys and NVIDIA said in a joint statement.

Infosys uses the full-stack NVIDIA generative AI platform, including hardware and enterprise-grade software to help customers create generative AI applications for business operations, sales and marketing.

The broadened alliance will bring the NVIDIA AI Enterprise ecosystem of models, tools, run-

times and GPU systems to Infosys Topaz - an AI-first set of services, solutions and platforms that accelerate business value using generative AI technologies.

“Infosys Topaz offerings and solutions are complementary to NVIDIA’s core stack. By combining our strengths and training 50,000 of our workforce on NVIDIA AI technology, we are creating end-to-end industry-leading AI solutions that will help enterprises on their journey to become AI-first,” Infosys, Co-founder and Chairman, Nandan Nilekani said.

Through the integration, Infosys will create offerings customers can adopt, to integrate generative AI into their businesses.

“The NVIDIA AI Enterprise ecosystem is ramping quickly to provide the platform for generative AI. Together, NVIDIA and Infosys will create an expert workforce to help businesses use this platform to build custom applications and solutions,” NVIDIA, Founder and CEO, Jensen Huang said.

## IN BRIEF

**₹280 CRORE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT**  
**New Delhi:** Real estate developer Tulip Infratech will invest Rs 280 crore to develop 350,000 sq ft of residential space, part of phase 2 of its project Tulip Monsella at Gurugram’s Golf Course road. Phase 2 will have about 112 unit. The overall project spans over 20 acres on Golf Course Road, sector 53 and is estimated to be valued at more than Rs 5000 crore.



**TECHNO-MANAGEMENT FEST FROM SEPTEMBER 21**  
**New Delhi:** SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), Kattankulathur is hosting Aaruush 2023 — a national-level techno-management fest from 21st September to 24th September 2023 at the institute’s campus. The fest will have over 100 events and will have about 250 plus national Universities/colleges and over 20 international colleges to take part. This year’s edition of Aaruush boasts distinguished speakers, experts, and luminaries from various fields, making it a unique and enlightening experience for all attendees.

**PFC, SJVN SIGN MOU WORTH ₹1.18,826 CRORE**  
**New Delhi:** PFC and SJVN Ltd. have signed an MoU for providing financial support to various projects, including massive Renewable Energy ventures (Solar, Hydro, and Pumped Storage) totalling 12,178 MW capacity, along with a 660 MW thermal generation project for an estimated project cost of approximately Rs 1,18,826 crore. The MoU was signed by Manoj Sharma, Director (Commercial) PFC, and Akhileshwar Singh, Director (Finance) SJVN in the presence of Parminder Chopra, CMD PFC, Nand Lal Sharma, CMD, SJVN and Geeta Kapur, Director (Personnel) SJVN. Other senior officials including HK Das, ED (Projects), V. Packirisamy, ED (Entity Appraisal), and Nitin Kumar, HOU (projects-CSP) were present on this occasion.

# Meta expands WhatsApp payments service in India

PTI ■ MUMBAI

WhatsApp on Wednesday announced the expansion of its payments service in India to make it easier for people transacting with businesses to pay for purchases directly in the chat, with a choice of UPI apps, including rival digital payment options, as well as credit and debit cards.

Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg asserted that India is leading the world in people and businesses embracing messaging.

WhatsApp said it is working with partners Razorpay and PayU “to make paying for something as simple as sending a message”, as the Meta-owned platform unveiled a host of new features to woo businesses in India’s booming commerce market.

“India (is) a country that’s at the forefront of a lot of what we’re going to talk about today. You’re (India is) leading the world in terms of how people and businesses have embraced messaging as the better way to get things done,” Zuckerberg said during a virtual address at the business messaging conference ‘Conversations’ in Mumbai.

A series of new tools have been announced for turbocharging businesses, including WhatsApp Flows and Meta verified badge, to ‘speed up how to get things done with businesses in a

WhatsApp chat”.

“Expanding our payments service in India to all Indian businesses using the WhatsApp Business Platform...People will be able to add items to a cart and send a payment using the payment method of their choice - either WhatsApp or other payment methods, including all UPI apps, debit and credit cards, and more - all without having to go to a website, open another app or pay in person,” according to a factsheet by the company.

This means payments through rival services like Google Pay and Paytm can be facilitated directly within the app and not redirected away from the app to a site.

The feature is already live in Singapore and Brazil (for small businesses).

Zuckerberg said Meta has continued to innovate with messaging formats, group chats and broadcast channels.

“And it’s the same focus that we’re bringing to how we support businesses, creating simple to use and easy to scale tools so they can connect with their customers in meaningful ways,” he said.

WhatsApp Flows is a new feature for businesses to create richer in-chat experiences for their customers like booking a reservation, ordering deliv-



ery or checking in for a flight, directly on WhatsApp. Businesses will be able to choose from a series of flexible, pre-made building blocks so they can easily design rich, customisable experiences for their customers.

Zuckerberg said WhatsApp Flows gives businesses the ability to create customised experiences within chat threads.

Citing some examples of how this would work, he said that with ‘WhatsApp Flows,’ a bank can build a

way for customers to book an appointment to open a new account, a food delivery service can build a way to place an order from any of their partner restaurants or an airline can build a way to check in for a flight and pick up a seat. All this without having to leave the chat thread.

The platform also announced expansion of Meta Verified to businesses on Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. This means businesses will be able to subscribe for a fee and get a

verified badge, account support, impersonation protection and premium features that help amplify their brand online and make it more efficient to chat with customers.

This will be rolling out to Facebook and Instagram business in select countries in the coming weeks, while WhatsApp will follow.

“We’ve been hearing from a lot of businesses that they’re very eager to build more credibility and get greater visibility. So, I am excited to start rolling out Meta Verified in the coming months. And we’re going to continue to evolve what’s included in the toolkit to make sure that we’re bringing the best value to businesses,” he said.

Meta India VP Sandhya Devanathan said WhatsApp is now a thriving platform even for business interactions and added that Indians are using it to debut businesses, discover businesses and interact with businesses.

“For these entrepreneurs, WhatsApp is their business, it’s their website, their digital storefront, their livelihood...Our commitment to their success is unwavering. And that is why we have committed to upskilling and digitally training ten million traders in twenty-nine states across the length and breadth of our country and in eleven Indian languages over a period of three years,” she said.



# PSG get better of Dortmund

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain got their Champions League campaign off to a winning start on Tuesday as a Kylian Mbappe penalty set them up for a 2-0 victory over Borussia Dortmund at the Parc des Princes.

The French champions had dominated the first half without overly troubling the Dortmund defence, but they went ahead four minutes after the break when Mbappe scored a spot-kick awarded for a Niklas Sule handball.

Achraf Hakimi added a memorable second, and PSG could have won the Group F encounter by a far more handsome margin in the end.

The result immediately puts them in control of the group, after AC Milan and Newcastle United drew 0-0 earlier, and coach Luis Enrique will hope they can build on this performance when they visit the English side next in a fortnight.

"It was an almost perfect evening," said Luis Enrique.

"I enjoyed practically everything about it, our intensity from the very beginning, the way we controlled the game for the first 75 minutes.

"We could have scored at least another goal but this win gives us confidence going forward. This is going to be a difficult group for everyone."

Dortmund, meanwhile, are nowhere near their best and must improve when they entertain Milan next in what is an unforgiving section.

They are still adapting to life without Jude Bellingham and coach Edin Terzic also dropped Sebastian Haller here, with the big striker enduring a difficult start to the campaign.

PSG are in the early weeks of a new era following the departures of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Marco Verratti, and Luis Enrique's arrival.

The former Spain coach, who won the Champions League with Barcelona in 2015, insisted on the eve of this game that he needs time to get his ideas across to his players,



## Alvarez saves Man City blushes after CL first night scare

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Manchester City overcame an early scare to get their Champions League defence off to a solid start on Tuesday.

Pep Guardiola's City were stunned when Red Star's Osman Bukari opened the scoring in first half stoppage time.

But Julian Alvarez continued his sparkling early season form by leveling just two minutes after the break.

The Argentine then got some help from Red Star goalkeeper Omri Glazer as he flapped at Alvarez's free-kick to allow the ball to fly into the far corner.

Rodri rounded off a 3-1 win with a composed finish 17 minutes from time.

"If we scored two goals early



in the beginning it would've been completely different," said Guardiola, who was frustrated at his side's finishing.

"Having 22 (first-half) shots on goal means you are playing really good. It has to be the responsibility of the people in front to score the goals."

City are next away to RB Leipzig, who share top place in Group E after a 3-1 win at Swiss champions Young Boys.

Mohamed Simakan earned the distinction of scoring the first goal of the group stages with the 2023/24 competition only three minutes old.

many of whom also arrived over the summer.

There were five new signings in PSG's line-up here, including Ousmane Dembele and Randal Kolo Muani in attack.

### HELPING HAND

Preferred to Goncalo Ramos, Kolo Muani was starting for the first time since joining from Eintracht Frankfurt.

With him, PSG controlled the first half, while Dortmund and their five-man defence sat back and offered little going forward.

Vitinha hit the upright in the 19th minute and Dembele later forced a save from goalkeeper Gregor Kobel at his near post, but PSG had precious little to show for a share of possession that reached almost 80 percent going into the break.

However, they got the breakthrough just after half-time, thanks to a helping hand from Sule, and the referee.

Barely 60 seconds of the second half had been played when a shot by Mbappe struck the Dortmund defender at close range.

Sule survived a VAR check when the ball struck his arm in the area late in the first half but this time Spanish referee Jesus Gil Manzano immediately pointed to the spot, although the award seemed harsh.

Mbappe stepped up to stroke in the penalty for his eighth goal this season, and the home side had done the hard part.

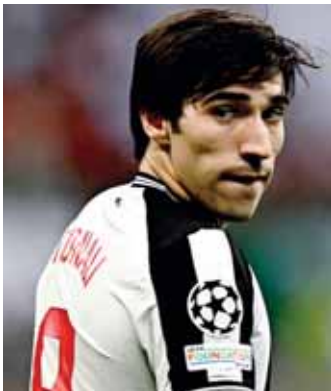
"The handball rule is not really clear," lamented Terzic.

"PSG naturally will say it was a handball and we will say it was not but in the end what annoys me the most is that we were just not aggressive enough."

The home side scored again on 58 minutes as Vitinha and Hakimi combined for the latter to run through and prod home from close range.

It was a great goal, although Hakimi was helped by Mats Hummels throwing himself to the floor rather than standing up and trying to make a block.

## Howe 'proud' of Newcastle's goalless draw against Milan



AP ■ MILAN

Eddie Howe was proud of Newcastle United's dogged return to Champions League football after two decades away, holding seven-time European kings AC Milan to a goalless draw in Tuesday's opening Group F match.

Howe was the happier of the two managers with taking a point from the clash at the San Siro as his team were mostly on the back foot against last season's losing semi-finalists.

Newcastle did little in their first fixture in Europe's top club competition since 2003, the Saudi Arabia-backed club barely creating a chance and lucky to escape with a draw on the balance of play.

Milan should have won after wasting a string of chances, particularly in the first half, and dominating the play on Sandro Tonali's return to his old stomping ground after being sold to Newcastle in July.

"Definitely pride in result and the performance and the mentality shown," Howe told reporters.

"Within the squad the result wasn't underestimated. Also they

are very honest players that acknowledge the fact that we can perform better.

"I think we'll get better and better as time goes on. Hopefully can grow into the tournament."

"You have to win when you play so much better than such a good team. Unfortunately we weren't able to capitalise on the situations we created," said Pioli.

"It's a shame that we didn't win the first match because it's going to be a difficult group. We're not happy with the result... We were lacking the most important quality of all."

### MARCELINO DEPARTS

Marseille have been plunged into crisis just six weeks into the new season as coach Marcelino Garcia Toral left the French giants on Wednesday while the club's president was reportedly considering walking away too after an angry encounter with supporters.

The club said in a statement that the confrontation on Monday "prevents Marcelino and his coaching staff from being able to do their job in good conditions".

"As a consequence of this deplorable situation, Marcelino and his staff will not pursue their work at Olympique de Marseille," the statement added.

The former Sevilla, Villarreal, Valencia and Athletic Bilbao coach, aged 58, was only appointed in June to succeed Igor Tudor, who had led the 1993 Champions League winners to a third-place finish in Ligue 1 last season.

Marseille are unbeaten five games into the new domestic season but supporters were furious with their insipid performance in drawing 0-0 with Toulouse at the weekend.

## Felix hits double as 'best' Barca thrash Antwerp



AP ■ BARCELONA

**Felix shone for the Spanish champions on a stroll on a warm night in the Catalan capital, helped on their way by an own goal, with Robert Lewandowski and Gavi also scoring**

worse loan at Chelsea, the Portuguese forward finally seems ready to flourish.

"We all played really well, I am happy with the win and enjoying myself," said Felix.

"The most difficult thing now is to maintain this level. I have started well, the team is playing well.

"Getting to this level it's not the most difficult thing, it's maintaining it. We all have to work hard to do that."

Barcelona's 2015 triumph was the last in a run of four victories over a golden decade in the club's history, during which current coach Xavi

Hernandez was a key figure in midfield.

Xavi said those feats weighed heavy on the club now, that the current team were under "brutal" pressure to succeed in Europe.

It did not show against Antwerp, with Barcelona brushing aside Marc van Bommel's Belgian title-winners with ease in their first Champions League appearance at the Olympic Stadium.

With Felix and Joao Cancelo joining on loan at the end of the summer transfer window, Barcelona immediately appear a more dynamic side, with supreme creative quality in the final third reflected in successive five-goal wins.

"Joao Felix has a lot of quality, a lot of talent and he's showing it," De Jong told Movistar.

"I hope he can keep going like this. If he keeps working like now, he will give a lot to us."

Xavi brought on 16-year-old starlet Lamine Yamal to become the second youngest player of all time in the competition's history.

Tougher challenges lie ahead, including a visit to Porto in their next European game at the start of October, but Barcelona's self-esteem is higher than at any point since Lionel Messi left in 2021.

Xavi said Barcelona's aim was to make it through the group first before worrying about bigger challenges, and this was a confident first step.

"It's an honour to watch the team play at the moment but we have to remain consistent now," warned the Catalan coach.

"We have to maintain these performances, the hunger, the focus... the players are enjoying themselves, we're creating a lot in attack."

Xavi's opposite number, a former team-mate of his at Barcelona, praised the hosts' display.

"For me, Barca, with how they have developed and evolved, of course they have a chance of winning the Champions League," said Antwerp coach Van Bommel.

"But they need some luck ... there are a lot of factors."



## Murray vows to make strong finish

AP ■ ZHUHAI

Three-time Grand Slam champion Andy Murray on Wednesday said he is "still going in the right direction" and is determined to make a strong finish to an "up and down" year.

The 36-year-old former world number one reflecting on his year so far, said: "Look, I would like the year to have gone better, for sure."

"There have been some good moments, but also some tough losses as well," said Murray, who had career-saving surgery in 2019 and now plays with a metal hip.

His five-set defeat in the second round at Wimbledon to fifth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas,

having been ahead when the match was forced into the next day because of a tournament curfew, still rankles.

Murray suffered an abdominal injury at the Canadian Open last month and went out in the second round at the US Open, where he is a former champion, in straight sets to Grigor Dimitrov.

Murray, who felt he started 2023 especially well and reached the final in Qatar, said: "It's been up and down."

"I got up to my highest ranking a few weeks ago since I had the hip operation so that's positive and shows that although it's not as fast a trajectory as I would have liked, I'm still going in the right direction."

AP ■ TEHRAN

Cristiano Ronaldo enjoyed a winning debut in the Asian Champions League as he helped Al Nassr to a 2-0 victory against 10-man Persepolis in Iran on Tuesday night.

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner, who has five UEFA Champions League titles to his name, captained the Saudi Arabian side to an opening three points in Group E.

The match at the Azadi Stadium in Tehran was played without fans after the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) upheld a one-game ban for Persepolis supporters dating back to 2021.

That clearly helped Nassr, who grabbed both goals in the second half against the two-time runners-up, through a Danial Esmailifar own goal and a fine strike by defender Mohammed Qassem.

It marked the first time a Saudi club played in Iran since 2016, after the AFC announced a "ground-breaking agreement" earlier this



month between the two countries' federations.

Iran and Saudi Arabia severed diplomatic ties seven

## Nine-man Celtic lose 2-0 to ruthless Feyenoord

AP ■ ROTTERDAM

Ruthless Feyenoord beat an undisciplined Celtic 2-0 in a scrappy Champions League Group E encounter Tuesday with the Scottish champions hit by two red cards in the space of five minutes.

Celtic started brightly but never recovered from losing Swedish defender Gustaf Lagerbielke and Norway's Odin Thiago Holm to a straight red card for a late challenge mid-way through the second half.

Feyenoord's Iranian striker Alireza Jahanbakhsh sealed the win for the Dutch champions in the 76th minute, finishing off a well-worked move by smashing the ball past Hoops keeper Joe Hart.

The hosts had taken the lead with only one minute left in first-half injury time, Dutch international Calvin Stengs drilling a long-range free kick through a poorly constructed Celtic wall and beating Hart, who was only able to palm the ball into the side netting.

It was a bitter pill for Celtic, who enjoyed the best of the first half in which the Dutch cham-



pions lacked penetration, clearly missing prolific goalscorer Santiago Gimenez, who was suspended.

Lashing rain and wind did not dampen the spirits, with a capacity 51,000 crowd at the Feyenoord stadium in Rotterdam, better known as "De Kuip" or "The Tub", giving the Celtic players a hostile reception throughout.

Feyenoord came into the match on a superb run of form, unbeaten in the Dutch top flight and scoring at least five goals in their last three games.

"Unfortunately for us, we got the two players sent off and it's

a difficult level 11 v 11, but 11 v nine is really difficult," he said.

"I think it's inexperience by the two guys, you've just got to let the ball run through, you don't have to be in the fight," said the manager.

But Rodgers was heartened by the "spirit and mentality" of the nine men left on the pitch, who managed to keep the score respectable, with Feyenoord having two late goals disallowed.

"Overall, I'm frustrated for the players because they gave so much, but the point for me was that their spirit was never broken," said the Hoops boss.

## Ronaldo helps Al Nassr to historic Asia Cup win in Iran

### INCHEON WIN

In the group's other match, Iran's Istiklol were held to a goalless draw in Dushanbe by Qatari heavyweights Al Duhail.

In Group A, 2003 winners Al Ain secured an impressive 3-0 victory at Pakhtakor in Tashkent, while Turkmenistan side Ahal defeated Saudi opponents Al Fayha 1-0 at home to record only a second win in the competition.

In the East Asian side of the draw, South Korea's Incheon United opened their Group G account with a 4-2 win over J.League champions Yokohama F Marinos in Japan.

As a result, Incheon sit on three points alongside Chinese Super League side

Shandong Taishan, who were made to work for their 3-1 victory in Manila over Kaya FC Iloilo of the Philippines.

In Group I, South Korean champions, and 2020 Asian Champions League winners, Ulsan Hyundai won at home over Thailand's BG Pathum United 3-1, while Japan's Kawasaki Frontale saw off hosts Johor Darul Ta'zim 1-0 in Malaysia.

The group stage, which this year returned to a home-and-away format for the first time since early 2020, runs until mid-December, with the 10 pool winners and the six best second-placed teams advancing to the knockout rounds.

That begins in February with the final taking place across two legs in May.



# ASHWIN VS SUNDAR: STORY BEHIND UNEXPECTED WC TRIAL

PTI ■ MOHALI

A month and half back, Ravichandran Ashwin was eloquently explaining on his Tamil YouTube channel, why a talent like Tilak Varma should be seriously considered for the ODI World Cup.

One of India's greatest match-winners in Test cricket wouldn't possibly have envisaged that in six weeks time he would be summoned for a two-match trial against Washington Sundar — nearly a decade and half junior to him.

Close selection calls are par for course when it comes to World Cup squads.

But just two weeks before the mega event, the Indian team management has called the two off-spinners for the three-match series against Australia to keep a ready back-up option in case Axar Patel's quadriceps tear doesn't heal on time.

It will be a virtual shoot-out and their performances on flat decks of Mohali and Rajkot will be monitored by Ajit Agarkar's selection committee.

"I think Ashwin will be slightly ahead now that a bowler of his stature has been called into the mix. I have always felt that Ashwin should have been in the mix from the time the team got into the ODI World Cup mode," said former chairman of selectors MSK Prasad, who was at helm when the 2019 squad was selected.

So, who will be his pick if Axar can't make it to the World Cup?

"Look, let us hope that Axar is fit for the final ODI in Rajkot. Because if he is fit, however well Ashwin or Wasby bowl, it will be Axar who will retain his place. If he has been your pick ahead of these two, then you have to have him if he is good to go," Prasad set the record straight.

"But this is one of the most fascinating World Cup trials



that you will get (to see). Question is: if they are looking at a 50-50 batting-bowling option then it is Wasby. But if they are looking at a purely spin bowling option, then Ash holds an edge as far as I am concerned," Prasad said.

Harbhajan Singh, however, has a contrarian viewpoint.

The 'Turbantor' believes that if the team management and selectors took an informed decision to summon Washington in Colombo for the Asia Cup final and even fielded him in the playing XI, then he should be the first-choice replacement.

"Washington bowls well in Powerplays. He is a brilliant fielder and last but not the least is a left-hander in that lower middle order. So, he does come as a package," said Harbhajan.

Another national selector, who refused to be named, had an interesting take on the Washington vs Ashwin debate.

"No offence meant but Axar's supposed hamstring

injury could just be a blessing in disguise. The decision to have a right-arm finger spinner should have been taken long back and now, perhaps, at eleventh hour, they have got that opportunity," the selector, who has seen some pitched battles between previous captains and selection commit-

tees, said. He then decoded the whole issue that the Indian team is facing.

"Not denying that Axar played two crucial knocks in the Asia Cup and one was in a winning cause against Sri Lanka. But just look at his bowling on a track that offered considerable

turn. If Charith Asalanka is picking up four wickets and you (Axar) are not even getting most of your deliveries to turn, it is a problem," added the former selector.

"Mind it, Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) is lethal when there is help off the surface and doubly

so, if Ashwin is operating at the other end. Also, why did they call two off-spinners and not a like-for-like replacement. The next in line are Shahbaz Ahmed and Abhishek Sharma (left-arm spin and left-handed bat). These two are okay for Asian Games level but certainly not for the World Cup," he added.

"Also at the moment, they asked Ashwin to report for his fitness update at NCA (after the Super 4 against Pakistan, if one goes by his Instagram handle), you would know that he is in line and there is a clear dilemma in Rohit (Sharma), Rahul (Dravid) and Ajit (Agarkar)'s mind as to who is the best option. "Is it a bits and pieces cricketer like Wasby or someone like Ashwin, who can turn a game or two on Indian tracks? Hence they called both," the selector said.

Prasad agreed to the point. "I believe some of the tracks will offer help for spinners. In Chennai, think about Ashwin's possible match-up against Steve Smith or a left-hander like David Warner. Yes, his success came in the red ball (cricket) but just think about the possibilities," the former India stumper added.



## Siraj back to No. 1 in ODI rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj has regained his number one spot in the men's ICC ODI bowling rankings after his six-wicket haul in the final of the recently-concluded Asia Cup. Siraj, who first grabbed the top position in January before being displaced by Josh Hazlewood in March, has surged eight spots after his memorable performance that helped dismiss Sri Lanka for just 50 runs and enabled India to complete a 10-wicket victo-

ry in the summit clash.

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav has moved down three places to ninth.

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah climbed up two places to 27th while Hardik Pandya rose eight spots to 50th.

Among batters, openers Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma have retained their second and 10th spots respectively while star batter Virat Kohli moved up a rung to eighth.

Pandya is the only all-rounder in the top 20, climbing up a spot to the sixth place.

## ICC confirms New York, Dallas, Florida as US venues for T20 WC 2024

PTI ■ DUBAI

The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday confirmed New York, Dallas and Florida as the three venues for the USA-leg of the ICC Men's World Cup 2024.

Broward County (Florida), Grand Prairie (Dallas) and Eisenhower Park (New York) will be the three stadiums hosting the matches in the US.

This is the first time the tournament will be played in the USA, and they will co-host it with the West Indies.

The ICC had awarded the event to the USA in 2021. Geoff Allardice, the Chief Executive of the governing body, said, these venues have been zeroed in after an extensive evaluation process.

"We're delighted to announce the three USA venues that will host part of the biggest ICC Men's T20 World Cup ever staged, with 20 teams competing for the trophy.

"We explored a number of potential venue options in the country, and we were hugely encouraged by the enthusiasm



the event generated amongst prospective hosts," said Allardice in an ICC release.

Allardice said the existing

ular stadium solutions.

He said the same technology will be used to build a 34,000-seat modular stadium at Nassau County, New York, and he hoped to acquire the required permit from local officials by next month. "We are very excited about the opportunity to use modular stadium technology. This technology has been used at previous ICC events to increase venue capacity and it's routinely used in other major sports around the world.

"In the USA, it will give us the opportunity to increase the

size of the venues in both Dallas and Florida and create what is going to be a stunning venue in New York," said Allardice.

A number of other venues around the USA, including George Mason University in Washington, the new home of MLC team Washington Freedom, have also been identified as potential venues for pre-event matches and training. The ICC's announcement has also allayed all concerns over USA hosting the T20 WC 2024 because of the doubts surrounding the readiness of the stadiums.

## B'desh hungry to gain pre-WC boost in ODI series vs NZ

AP ■ MIRPUR

After failing to reach this month's Asia Cup final, Bangladesh is hungry to gain a much-needed boost ahead of the 50-over World Cup by beating New Zealand in the three-match ODI series that starts on Thursday.

Bangladesh rested a host of key players for the Asia Cup, captain Shakib Al Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Najmul Hossain and Towhid Hridoy among them, in order to keep them fresh and injury-free, although it has still not named its squad for next month's World Cup.

New Zealand has sent only five World Cup-bound players to Bangladesh, stand-in skipper Lockie Ferguson, Trent Boult, Rachin Ravindra, Ish Sodhi and Will Young.

Tamim Iqbal, who stepped down as ODI captain last month, is back for Bangladesh after recovering from a back problem. Mahmudullah, axed after the England series



in March following poor form, also returns. Liton Das, who leads the side in Shakib's absence, said: "There are many things to achieve from the series. The first thing is to win, that will be a big achievement ahead of the World Cup.

"We won't play to show just individual brilliance. A five-wicket haul or a century doesn't matter if the team doesn't win."

Ferguson, yet to play on Bangladesh soil, believes conditions will test his New Zealand team to the limit.

"Bangladesh is very good in home conditions and is a huge challenge here," he said. "It's important for us just to focus on what's coming up tomorrow and try to adapt as quickly as possible to the conditions. Some of us haven't played here so we'll have to adapt quicker."

New Zealand hasn't won an ODI match in the country since 2008 and Ferguson said the input of former Bangladesh bowling coach Shane Jurgensen would be invaluable.



## Southee to undergo surgery on thumb

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand veteran fast bowler Tim Southee is set to undergo a surgery on his injured right thumb on Thursday and a call on his availability for the World Cup in India will be taken next week. Southee broke and dislocated his right thumb while attempting to take a catch in the fourth ODI against England last week.

New Zealand head coach Gary Stead is hopeful the 34-year-old seamer will recover in time for the side's opening game in the mega event on October 5.

"We've got our fingers crossed the surgery goes well for Tim," Stead said.

"He'll have some pins or screws inserted in his right thumb and, providing the procedure is a success, it will be a matter of ensuring Tim can tolerate the pain and manage the actual wound when returning to train and play."

Ahead of their opener against defending champions England, New Zealand are

## Ronaldinho to visit Kolkata during Durga Puja

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Retired Brazilian legend Ronaldinho is set to visit Kolkata during the auspicious occasion of Durga Puja next month.

An official privy to the development said that Ronaldinho is likely to visit the city between October 15-19 but the final date will be ascertained following the confirmation date of Barca Legends match at Congo.

According to the official, Ronaldinho, who will be visiting Kolkata for the first time, is expected to feature in a short charity match, besides visiting a football clinic and a Durga Puja pandal. He will also inaugurate a statue of Argentine FIFA World Cup winner Lionel Messi.

A two-time Ballon d'Or winner, Ronaldinho is also expected to attend some sponsor meet and greet events and visit the nearby town of Rishra.

The official involved has played a key role in bringing football legends to the city in the past, including Maradona, Pele and Cafu.

He also played a role in bringing current Argentinian World Cup-winning goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez this July to the city.

Notably, Ronaldinho also has his football academy in the city, the R10 Academy, in Rajarhat.

## Sreejesh eyes direct berth to Olympics through Asiad

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

At 35, PR Sreejesh is standing at the twilight of his career and the Hangzhou Asian Games is most likely his last appearance at the continental showpiece.

But the veteran Indian hockey goalkeeper is determined to win the gold at Hangzhou to give himself a chance to earn a direct entry to the Paris Olympics next year, and do better there winning a yellow-coated medal.

Eight-time champions India had won a historic bronze at the Tokyo Olympics after 41 years beating Germany 5-4 in the

play-off match.

"Obviously, next year's Olympics is my main target and I want to change the colour of my medal there. But having said that, we need to qualify through the Asian Games (to Olympics) so that we get ample time to prepare ourselves," Sreejesh told PTI.

Sreejesh reiterated that age is just a number for a sports person and gave the example of tennis great Novak Djokovic in this regard.

"I am right now taking one game, one tournament at a time. As (Novak) Djokovic said, 35 is the new 25. So, I'm definite-



ly there," he said.

Having handled the duties under the goal post of the Indian hockey team for more than 17 years, Sreejesh wants to groom the next generation of goalkeepers in India.

"Krishan (Bahadur Pathak) and me have been donning the goalkeeping responsibilities for a long time. We share a good rapport. There are upcoming goalkeepers like Suraj Karkera and Pawan Malik who are good and will only get better with time.

"I just want to ensure that there is enough back-up," he said.

The Indian men's hockey team goalkeepers, including Sreejesh, underwent some sessions under Dutchman Dennis van de Pol in the lead up to the Asian Games, which has been very helpful according to the veteran custodian.

"Dennis van de Pol is a good coach. It has really been beneficial to work with him. His experience and vast knowledge about goalkeeping has been very useful for us.

"He has deep knowledge about his skills and expertise and it has definitely helped us in all aspects of goalkeeping qualities," he signed off.

## Antim Panghal shocks reigning world champion Parrish, reaches semis

PTI ■ BELGRADE

Antim Panghal shocked reigning champion Olivia Dominique Parrish en route to the World Championship semifinals, raising hopes of locking a quota for the Paris Olympics even as other Indian contenders bit the dust in their respective categories, here Wednesday.

The two-time U20 champion Panghal slipped to a 0-2 deficit at the start of the bout against the American but edged her rival 3-2 in the women's 53kg opening round.

She later outplayed Poland's Rokšana Marta Zasina

by technical superiority and followed that up with a 9-6 win over Russian Natalia Malysheva, who is competing as a neutral athlete.

However, Manisha (62kg), Priyanka (68kg) and Jyoti Beralw (72kg) have lost their bouts and exited the tournament.

All 10 men's free-style wrestlers have already exited the tournament without winning either an Olympic quota or a medal in non-Olympic categories.

All Indian athletes are competing under the UWW flag because the wrestling federation is suspended.

## India face Bangladesh in must-win Asian Games football match

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Battered by hosts China in their opening match after playing without any training session, India will be up against a tricky Bangladesh side in their must-win group match in the Asian Games football competition here on Thursday. A rag-tag Indian team reached here late Monday evening and played its first match without proper rest and sleep and was hammered 1-5 by China on Tuesday.

Igor Stimac's team needs to beat Bangladesh in its second Group A game to remain in the fray for the knock-outs.

A loss on Thursday may not straightway knock India out of

reckoning as the best third-placed teams from the six groups can also advance to the Round of 16, but that will leave the team with a lot of uncertainties in the final game.

Qualifying as one of the best four third-place teams could also set India up against tougher sides in the pre-quarterfinals.

Bangladesh have never been an easy side for India in any level and they will also be desperate for a win after losing their opening match 0-1 to Myanmar.

India will, however, be strengthened after the arrival of defender Konsam Chinglensana Singh, who could not travel with the team before due to a visa delay. The Indian Olympic



Association (IOA) arranged 'express visa' — which could be procured in two-three days — for him and he has arrived here separately.

It will not be easy for the Sunil Chhetri-led side to beat Bangladesh and log its first win of the competition as the team was assembled at the last minute with very few known faces after the Indian Super League clubs refused to release their players.

The Indians played on an even keel in the first 45 minutes but they caved in the second half, exposing the gulf in quality between the two teams.

Stimac himself admitted after the China match that he has brought a third-rung team

with him.

"This is our third or fourth-choice team here. I would love to play against China with my best team. Then it would be totally opposite, but the players that are here are heroes," the Croatian coach said.

"What they went through, with travelling problems, arriving here very late, not having time to recover and handling the first 45 minutes in a brilliant way.

"I was realistic and knew that it wouldn't happen (to get a drawn match). With no-one on the bench, apart from three players which we had, we couldn't make any tactical changes. We couldn't influence the game in the second half."