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ROURKELA-BHUBANESWAR-PURI Vande Bharat Express Train

Benefits

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- Better connectivity for the people of Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Angul, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Khordha, Puri and nearby districts
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Narendra Modi

Prime Minister
(Through Video Conferencing)

on Sunday, 24th September, 2023 at 12:30 PM from Bhubaneswar Railway Station

Key Features of Vande Bharat Express

- Indigenously built Vande Bharat Train with maximum 160 km speed per hour
- Improved access to charging point under each seat and 360° seat rotation with increased reclination angle facility
- Seat numbers in Braille script on seat handles and special Lavatory for Divyangjans
- Equipped with special antibacterial UV lamps, better ventilation and air conditioning to keep the air clean
- Equipped with Kavach (Train Collision Avoidance System)
- Each coach equipped with CCTV cameras and infotainment facilities
- Aerosol based better fire-fighting safety systems installed

Time Table

PUI-ROU	Station	ROU-PUI
Dep. 0500	Puri	Arr. 2140
0535/0540	Khurda Road	2055/2057
0600/0605	Bhubaneswar	2030/2035
0630/0632	Cuttack	2000/2002
0724/0726	Dhenkanal	1845/1847
0804/0806	Talcher Road	1813/1815
0814/0816	Angul	1800/1802
0925/0927	Rairakhol	1650/1652
1005/1010	Sambalpur City	1605/1610
1113/1115	Jharsuguda	1523/1525
Arr. 1245	Rourkela	Dep. 1410

BJD, BJP, Congress all take credit over women Bill

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The politics of claims and credit over women empowerment has intensified in Odisha, especially after the smooth passage of Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, more popularly known as Women Reservation Bill, 2023, in Parliament.

The ruling BJD and the opposition BJP and Congress have made claims that they have their own shares of credit behind the Bill.

On Saturday, BJD spokesperson Sipra Mallick said CM Naveen Patnaik had in fact played an "inspirational" role that in a

way prompted the BJP-led NDA Government to seriously pursue the Bill.

"The Odisha Legislative Assembly had in 2018 passed a resolution seeking 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and State legislatures. Besides, in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJD gave tickets to seven women candidates. This number constitutes 33% of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in the State. These steps put a kind of moral pressure on the NDA to seriously pursue the women reservation issue," said Mallick.

BJP leader and Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, who arrived in

Bhubaneswar on Saturday, claimed that the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi deserved all credit for the passing of the Women Reservation Bill in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha as no other party had expressed so much seriousness to make such a piece of legislation.

"No political party in the past had seriously pursued the Women Reservation Bill to see that it becomes a law by getting passed in Parliament. The BJP will celebrate this across the 50,000 villages in Odisha by organising awareness rallies," said Pradhan.

Pradesh Congress Committee (OPCC)

president Sarat Pattanayak said his party had in fact been the pioneer in pushing the Women Reservation Bill. "It was the Congress-led UPA Government which had passed this Bill in Rajya Sabha in 2010. All political parties, including the BJP, had then voted for the Bill after UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi made an appeal to vote in favour of it," said Pattanayak, adding that the Congress would sensitise the people of Odisha about its role in passing the Women Reservation Bill ahead of the 2024 twin Lok Sabha and Odisha Assembly polls.

SUM first to conduct knee surgery with robot

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Institute of Medical Sciences and SUM Hospital here has started conducting Total Knee Replacement (TKR) surgery by employing a fully automated robot.

"A robot has been working meticulously without any error and we have already conducted more than 40 such surgeries within the last six weeks," Prof (Dr) Aniruddh Dash, Head of Department of Orthopaedics in the hospital, said.

Speaking at a programme marking the formal launch of the apparatus, said to be the world's first fully automatic Active CUVIS Robotic System



on Friday, Prof (Dr) Dash said the new device was ensuring better precision and accuracy in surgery with several other advantages.

SOA Vice-Chancellor Prof Pradipta Kumar Nanda attended the programme as chief guest. Director, Medical Education and Training Prof (Dr) Sachidananda Mohanty, Chief District Medical Officer,

Khurda Dr Artabandhu Nayak, SOA's Principal Advisor (Health Sciences) Prof (Dr) Ashok Mahapatra, Dean, IMS and SUM Hospital Prof (Dr) Sanghamitra Mishra and Medical Superintendent of the hospital Prof (Dr) Pusparaj Samantasinghar were present along with representatives of the company marketing the robot manufactured by a South

Korean firm.

A representative of the company said that IMS and SUM Hospital was the first medical college in the country to adopt fully automated robotic surgery for total knee replacement. The aim was to develop the hospital as a Centre of Excellence where orthopaedic surgeons from other hospitals could be trained, he said.

Housing loan fraud ED files charge-sheet against builder, bank officials

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Directorate of Enforcement (ED) has reportedly filed a Prosecution Complaint under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) against Uma Sankar Patro, director of GDS Builders Pvt Ltd, Ashwini Kumar Patra, former Assistant Manager, Union Bank of India, Nayapally branch, Bhubaneswar, Bhubaneswar Mohapatra, former Branch Manager and Dwarka Jewellers in the Khordha Sessions Judge Court-cum Special Court (PMLA), Bhubaneswar.

The court has taken cognisance of the Prosecution Complaint, an ED release said.

The ED initiated investigation on the basis of FIRs registered by the CBI, ACB, Odisha under various sections of the IPC, 1860 and Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 against Uma Sankar Patro, bank officers, borrowers and the real estate company in connection with

misappropriation of housing loans.

The ED initiate an investigation based on FIRs registered by the CBI, and Odisha ACB under various sections of IPC, and Prevention of Corruption Act, against Patra, bank officers, borrowers and the real estate company in connection with misappropriation of housing loans.

The ED had earlier carried out search operations under PMLA at eight premises related to Patra and his related persons wherein cash amounting to Rs 15 lakh and gold jewellery to the tune of Rs 1.13 crore were seized.

A Provisional Attachment Order in the case was also issued on May 29 attaching properties spread across Puri and Bhubaneswar, worth Rs 19.67 crore.

Patra was taken into ED custody from whereby further incriminating evidences were gathered. Further investigation into the matter is ongoing, the release stated.

Utkal Varsity staff held for duping jobseekers of Rs 40L

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police on Saturday arrested an employee of Directorate of Distance and Continuing Education (DDCE) at the Utkal University here on a charge of duping several youths of lakhs of rupees on the promise of arranging government jobs.

The accused was identified as Madhab Chandra Sethi, an Academic Coordinator at DDCE in the university, said Saheed Nagar police station

Inspector-in-Charge Gautam Kisan.

He said that one Basant Kumar Das had lodged a complaint against Sethi with the Saheed Nagar police on Friday that Sethi had promised him of arranging an Assistant Section Officer (ASO) job at the Odisha Secretariat in lieu of Rs 12 lakh.

Das had paid Rs 2 lakh to Sethi in advance, but the latter failed to arrange the ASO job for the former. Das lodged a complaint in this

regard with police after Sethi did not return the money.

"The police had registered a case against Sethi under Sections 420 and 506 of IPC and detained him for questioning. Sethi was arrested today on the basis of the evidence found against him during the investigation. He will be produced in a local court," said the IIC.

According to police, Sethi has duped around 40 youths of above Rs 40 lakh on the promise of arranging government jobs for them.

Sarpanchs hold demo over 15-point charter

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Sarpanchs from across the State held a demonstration at the Lower PMG here on Saturday seeking fulfilment of their 15-point charter of demands.

The demands included giving full power to the Sarpanchs as per the provision in the three-tier Panchayatiraj system, increase in exigency funds and increase in the amount of pension from Rs 2,350 to Rs 30,000.



Two months earlier, the Sarpanchs in the State had submitted memorandums in this connection to the Chief Minister through the Collectors. However, they were forced to stage protests at

different block headquarters and capital city as their demands are not met.

The agitators under the banner of the Sarpanch Mahasangh, alleged that despite working for people in

"Sethi was well-known to many students as he was working as the Academic Coordinator at DDCE in Utkal University. Our investigation has suggested that most of the duped youths are former students of Utkal University," Kisan said.

The Commissionerate police would take the necessary steps to find out details regarding the ill-gotten wealth of Sethi. Besides, police were trying to find out whether he has been booked in any case in the past, he added.

their community round-the-clock without any leave, they are being paid a paltry Rs 2,300.

They also alleged that most of the Government projects are being implemented at the grassroots by block level officials without their knowledge and their power and rights are being curtailed.

The Mahasangh threatened that if their demands are not met, its members would tender mass resignation and go on an indefinite strike.

CII's Logistics Summit

Time to focus on gender-led logistics: Com Secy

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Commerce and Transport Department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee batted for gender inclusivity in the logistics sector.

Talking at the Logistic Summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Odisha Chapter here, Padhi shed light on high logistics cost for big as well as small and medium companies which is affecting the competitiveness of market



and overall growth.

The National Logistics Policy envisages placing India among the top 25 countries of the world. Similarly, PM Gati Shakti focuses on convergence of different modes of transportation. Multi

Modal Logistics is also another area of focus. As far as regulation is concerned, the air and port sector come to a certain maturity level. But for the railway and road sector, we need to improve the regulation, she said.

On the occasion, Paradip Port Trust Deputy Chairman Nilabhra Dasgupta talked about the beneficial effects of PM Gati Shakti and Sagarmala project on the port sector.

CII Odisha State Council Chairman Sashi Sekhar Mohanty said, "We need to focus on how digitisation and smart logistics can redefine efficiency, accuracy and transparency in the logistics sector of Odisha."

Former Chairman of CII Odisha State Council Santosh

Mohapatra said that logistics contribute to high cost of production. Odisha needs container port for small and medium scale industry sector, he added.

Chairman and Managing Director of Balmer Lawrie Adika Ratna Sekhar said logistic sectors are projected to grow at a CAGR of 15.5 percent by 2024.

Convenor of CII Odisha Infrastructure and Logistics Panel Pramod Jain among others spoke.

FMU gets 'A' grade from NAAC

PNS ■ BALESWAR

The Fakir Mohan (FM) University has been awarded 'A' grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) after the current cycle of assessment which is the highest GPA received by an accredited public university under the Higher Education Department of Odisha.

The NAAC in the second cycle of assessment has awarded the gradation

certificate to the varsity regarding the upgraded status.

The FMU has received a rating of 3.18 cumulative grade point average out of 4.

Vice-Chancellor of FMU Santosh Kumar Tripathy has lauded the efforts and team spirit of the officials for the new and improvised rating.

"In the first cycle, we were 'B+', but we scaled to 'A' with 3.18 CGPA. We will maintain this and strive to get 'A+' in future," said Tripathy.

According to the NAAC

certificate, the FMU received 3.2 grade points for curricular aspects, 3.43 for teaching learning and evaluation, 2.44 for research, innovations and extension, 3.65 for infrastructure and learning resources, 3.67 for student support and progression, 2.98 for governance, leadership and management and 3.78 points for institutional values and best practices. Notably, the NAAC peer team visited the FMU campus between September 12 and 14.

Why edu, health services not poor man's cup of tea

It's a shame for India and Indian policy makers whose irresponsible decisions in the past 75 years have doomed the education sector in India; hence barring a few colleges or universities, most of the higher educational institutions have failed to even appear in the top 200 in the world. Not even all IITs or IIMs appear in the top 50 institutions in world rankings.

Why are there not sufficient numbers of well-equipped Government schools or colleges in our surroundings? While there are thousands of schools run by business houses? The irony is the Government schools are disproportionately less compared to the demand and are poorly maintained with no proper teaching facilities or faculties available. The parents don't want to send their children to the Government



PK PRAMANIK

schools due to poor education quality and results which can affect children's future education and career. They unwillingly opt for private schools /colleges which are too expensive as there is little choice. The Government educational institutions are in a shambles simply because the Government has not prioritised education in their plans. The

admission fees in most private schools and colleges are in lakhs, in addition to capitation fee, hefty development fee etc. They are fleeing the people virtually.

Recently I met one of our neighbours who admitted their daughter in MBBS in Vizag. He will spend more than Rs1.50 crore for MBBS in 4 years in UG course. Further for post-graduation courses like MD or MS, he will have to shell out another Rs 1crore or more depending upon the ranks or college. How many parents can afford this if their wards fail to make it to limited medical seats in Government colleges?

In a country of 140 crore population with 60% in the age bracket of 18 to 35 years, we have only 740 medical colleges (388 Government or semi Government, 52 deemed to be universities and 263 are purely run by private

owners with no regulations in the fee structures). We have approximately 1,07,000 seats (56,090 seats in Government colleges and around 54,000 in private colleges) which offer MBBS or other courses like BDS and physiotherapy etc.

I fail to know why the Medical Council of India or now NMC which has the authority to grant permission has not done its duty in forcing Governments in the States or Centre to establish new medical colleges to ensure sufficient seats for MBBS or MD courses to meet its own health requirements at affordable cost?

Similarly, the free hands given to doctors or hospitals in the name of private practices, and star hotel-like facilities in hospitals is a dangerous trend. It must be strictly regulated as these so-called super speciality hospitals are openly

indulged in looting patients and the Government is a silent spectator.

In other words, neither studying medicine is cheap or treatment is cheap in Indian hospitals whereas Government hospitals are overloaded with patients with doctors hardly concerned about their duties. Unregulated or poor Government control has led to open looting of the poor.

I also wish to suggest ways to meet the shortage of doctors. Why can't MBBS be segregated into two different courses like Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery and reduce the tenure from four to two and similarly reduce the cost to make it affordable to most aspirants?

It seems Governments have no priority in real health services in India as people are forced to die due to unavailability of medical services in most small cities or

villages.

Now let's talk about Engineering or Management courses. Barring a limited number of Government schools /colleges like NITs or IITs, where the fees are less and affordable, most private technical colleges for 4yrs courses could cost from Rs6 lakh to Rs 20 lakh. Time has come and the Government must interfere in these things. It must not

Govt must not allow private education mafias to loot students and parents and make education beyond the reach of common man.

The situation is that private schools and colleges in general category are no better. The cost of admission in schools run by mafias for the admission in nursery to Call 12th is more than Rs 1 lakh. Higher are the classes, higher are the fees. Sometimes it can go up to Rs 10 to 50 lakh. The monthly tuition fees

range between Rs 2,500 and Rs1lakh. The Government is just silent and in fact is fully responsible for these unacceptable costs of education in India.

Who stops the Government from controlling the cost of education in India? No one. Then why so much cost? The reason could be, the Government is enjoying this system as it is a part of the corrupt system.

If you check thoroughly, most educational houses are directly or indirectly owned by politicians or industrialists close to political parties. In my opinion the basic services like education and health services must be regulated strictly if the Government is really concerned about a healthy, happy and vibrant India.

(The writer is a social activist and career consultant based in Bhubaneswar)

WORLD 5

NAWAZ TO RETURN HOME
AS PLANNED: SHEHBAZ

MONEY 6

TRAJ MOOTS PLI SCHEME TO SPUR
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INDIA GOES BALLISTIC ON TERROR

Crackdown on Khalistani terrorists; NIA seizes Pannun's properties

RAKESH KUMAR SINGH ■
NEW DELHI

Tightening its noose around Canada-based 'designated individual terrorist' Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday confiscated the house and land of the self-styled general counsel of the outlawed Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) outfit in Amritsar and Chandigarh.

This is the first time that the NIA has confiscated the properties of an absconding accused under a relevant section of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The action, which comes as a big boost to the country's crackdown on the so-called Khalistani "terror and secessionist network being operated from various countries", including Canada, followed confiscation orders passed by the NIA Special Court, SAS Nagar, Mohali.

Pannu has been on NIA's radar since 2019, when the anti-terror agency had registered its first case against the terrorist, who has been playing a major role in promoting and commissioning terror acts and activities, and spreading fear and terror in Punjab and elsewhere in the country through his threats and intimidation tactics, the agency said.

Non-bailable warrants of

arrest were issued against Pannu by the NIA Special Court on February 3, 2021, and he was declared a "Proclaimed Offender (PO)" on November 29 last year.

NIA investigations have revealed that Pannu's organisation, Sikhs for Justice, was misusing cyberspace to radicalise gullible youth and to instigate them to undertake terrorist crimes and activities.

It further emerged during the NIA investigations that Pannu was the main handler and controller of the SFJ. Sikhs for Justice was declared as an "Unlawful Association" by the Government of India, vide a notification dated July 10, 2019.

"Pannu, who was declared a 'designated individual terrorist' by the Centre through a notification dated July 1, 2020, has been actively exhorting Punjab-based gangsters and youth over the social media to fight for the cause of independent state of Khalistan, challenging the sovereignty, integrity and security of the country," the NIA said in a statement.

Recently, Pannu has been in the news for issuing blatant threats to senior Indian diplomats and government functionaries in public forums. He had also threatened Canadian Hindus a few days back, asking them to leave Canada and claiming that they had adopted a "jingoistic approach" by



House of Gurpatwant Singh Pannu, chief of banned outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) confiscated his immovable properties in Chandigarh on Saturday

siding with India.

The properties confiscated on Saturday include 46 kanal agricultural land situated in Village Khankot, Amritsar, and 1/4th share of House Number 2033, Sector 15/C, Chandigarh.

These properties were earlier attached following orders passed by the government in

two different cases. The properties have now been confiscated on the court's orders under section 33(5) of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), 1967, in the case RC-19/2020/NIA/DLI dated April 5, 2020, registered under sections various sections of the Indian Penal Code and relevant provisions of the Unlawful

Activities (Prevention) Act.

The case was originally registered as FIR number 152 dated October 19, 2018, at Police Station Sultanwind, Amritsar (City) and later transferred to the NIA.

A total of 10 accused, including Pannu, have so far been charge-sheeted in the case.

Pakistan is haven for terrorists: India at UN

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/
AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/
UNITED NATIONS

Rejecting Pakistan's caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar ul Haq Kakar's statement on Kashmir, India has termed that country as "home and patron" to the largest number of proscribed terrorist entities and urged Islamabad to take action against perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks.

Making this assertion in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) late on Friday, First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN Petal Gahlot also asked Pakistan to refrain from engaging in "technical sophistry."

She enunciated India's stand in its Right of Reply in the UNGA after Kakar raised the Kashmir issue in his address at the General Debate during the high-level 78th session of UNGA.

"Pakistan has been the home and patron to the largest number of internationally proscribed terrorist entities and

individuals in the world. Instead of engaging in technical sophistry, we call upon Pakistan to take credible and verifiable action against the perpetrators of the Mumbai terror attacks, whose victims await justice even after 15 years," Gahlot said in the scathing response.

She said Pakistan needs to take three-fold action for there to be peace in South Asia. "First, stop cross-border terrorism and shut down its infrastructure of terrorism immediately. Second, vacate Indian territories under its illegal and forcible occupation, and third, stop the grave and persistent human rights violations against the minorities in Pakistan."

In his address earlier, Kakar said Pakistan desired peaceful and productive relations with all its neighbours, including India. "Kashmir is the key to peace between Pakistan and India," he said.

Gahlot reiterated that the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh are an integral part of India. "Matters

pertaining to the UTs of J&K and Ladakh are purely internal to India. Pakistan has no locus standi to comment on our domestic matters."

The Indian diplomat asserted that as a country with one of the world's worst human rights records, particularly when it comes to minority and women's rights, Pakistan "would do well to put its own house in order before venturing to point a finger at the world's largest democracy."

India stressed that Pakistan has become a "habitual offender" when it comes to misusing the august forum of the United Nations to peddle "baseless and malicious" propaganda against India.

The First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN said the member states of the United Nations and other multilateral organisations are well aware that Pakistan does so to "deflect the international community's attention away from its own abysmal record on human rights".

ABVP dominates DUSU polls

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) won three out of four seats contested in the 2023 Delhi University Students Union (DUSU) elections held on Friday, while a candidate of the Congress-affiliated National Students' Union of India (NSUI) won the race for DUSU vice president post.

ABVP's Tushar Dedha won the post of DUSU president, defeating NSUI's Hitesh Gulia by 3,115 votes. Dedha received 23,460 votes, while Gulia received 20,345. Dedha had previously won the election for college cultural coordinator at Satyawati College in 2016. He was also an executive council member at DUSU.

Dedha, attributing the victory to ABVP's positive campus activism, said, "ABVP's dedication to issue-based campaigning resonated with the diverse student body of Delhi University."

NSUI's Abhi Dahiya secured the position of vice-president. Dahiya received 22,331 votes and defeated ABVP's Sushant Dhankar by a margin of 1,829 votes. Dahiya, currently pursuing a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies, received 22,331 votes, defeating his closest competitor, ABVP's Dhankar, by 1,829 votes.

ABVP's Aparajita and Sachin Baisla won the positions of secretary and joint secretary,



ABVP's Tushar Dedha (president), Aparajita (secretary) and Sachin Baisla (joint secretary) and others after they won in the DUSU election in New Delhi on Saturday

respectively. While Aparajita defeated NSUI's Yakshana Sharma by a margin of 12,937 votes, Baisla defeated the NSUI's Shubham Kumar Chaudhary by a margin of 9,995 votes.

Hailing from Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh, Aparajita completed her BA (Honours) degree in history from Dyal Singh College. She is pursuing a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies. Baisla graduated from Ramanujan College and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Buddhist Studies.

As the results were announced, students from the metro station to the campus released balloons into the air, broke out in dance, and showered the winners with flower petals. Security at both DU

campuses was heightened, and barricades were deployed as preventive measures to avoid any untoward incidents.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah congratulated the winning candidates of the ABVP. "Hearty congratulations to all the workers of the council on the landslide victory of ABVP in the Delhi University Students Union elections. This victory reflects the faith of the young generation in the ideology that puts national interest first. I have full confidence that the workers of the council will continue to work with determination to keep the ideals of Swami Vivekananda and the spirit of nationalism alive among the youth," Shah posted on X.

Union Minister Kiren

Rijiju also posted on X, congratulating the ABVP. He wrote: "#ABVP sweeps #DUSU. Rahul Gandhi campaigned in Delhi University Students Union election which helped ABVP to increase its vote share! Congratulations to all the Winning Candidates of ABVP, its cadres as well as all the well-wishers!"

BJP MP and party youth wing president Tejasvi Surya posted, "Congratulations to Team ABVP on winning the DUSU elections. A clear indication of the ideological positions that our students and young people are taking in the country. Vande Mataram."

The DUSU election was conducted after a gap of three years. The DUSU elections were last held in 2019. The polls could not be held in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, while possible disruptions to the academic calendar prevented their conduct in 2022. The students' union election recorded a voter turnout of 42 per cent. A total of 24 candidates were in the running for the four positions of DUSU president, vice-president, secretary, and joint secretary. The election took place on Friday, with around one lakh students eligible to vote. The counting of votes for the DUSU's central panel positions of president, vice-president, secretary, and joint secretary concluded on Saturday evening.

Another low pressure likely by Sep 29

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

More rains are likely in the State as a fresh low-pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal next week, the Regional Office of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) here said on Saturday.

A cyclonic circulation is likely to form over north Andaman Sea and neighbourhood on September 29. Under its influence, a low-pressure area is likely to form over north Andaman Sea and



adjoining East-central Bay of Bengal during the subsequent 24 hours. The system is likely to intensify and move to west-north-westwards.

The weather office issued a Yellow warning for thunderstorm and heavy rainfall for

several districts for three days starting from Saturday.

On Sunday, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Puri, Khordha,

Nayagarh, Ganjam, Gajapati, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Dhenkanal, Boudh, Kandhamal, Malkangiri Koraput and Rayagada.

On Monday, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur in the districts of Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapara, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Dhenkanal, Boudh, Nayagarh, Kandhamal, Khordha, Puri, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati.

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In Baleswar

Minor girl takes poison after gang-rape

3 youths, including lover, detained

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A minor girl consumed poison after allegedly being gang-raped by three youths, including her lover, at a hotel in Chandipur in Baleswar district.

The victim was admitted to the Baleswar Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

According to reports, the girl of the Baleswar Sadar block area visited the Chandipur sea beach on Friday afternoon. She and her lover stayed in a hotel situated at the sea beach.

Taking advantage of the situation, the lover allegedly raped the girl; and two others, who were with the accused, gang-raped the girl in the hotel room.



Being betrayed by her lover, the victim reportedly consumed poison back at home to end her life.

Following a complaint by the victim's family, the

Baleswar Sadar police raided the hotel at 8 pm on Friday and detained all three accused youths as well as the hotel manager for interrogation.

In Keonjhar

Denied mobile phone, boy takes pesticide

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

In a shocking incident, a 14-year-old boy reportedly consumed pesticide after being denied a mobile phone by his parents in Keonjhar district on Saturday.

The boy, a Class-VIII student of the Mahadeijoda Laxminarayan High School in Keonjhar Sadar, was rushed to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH) in a critical state.

As per reports, the boy asked his parents for a mobile phone in the morning at around 8 am. However, his parents refused to buy him one. Upset, he went and consumed pesticide. As his condition deteriorated, family members rushed him to the DHH. The hospital authorities informed that his condition was critical. Further details were awaited.

In Baripada

Doc found hanging in med college hostel

PNS ■ BARIPADA

A body of a House Surgeon was found hanging in a hostel room at the Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College Hospital in Baripada of Mayurbhanj district on Friday.

The deceased was identified as Sachin Sahoo, who was a native of Keonjhar and working as a House Surgeon at the medical college after completion of his medical studies.

As per reports, Sachin went to his hostel room after completing his duty at the hospital in the morning.

However, he did not come out of his room even after long. His friends did not get any response when they knocked at the door of his hostel room. Later, they broke open the room window to find him hanging.

Sachin was rushed to the hospital. However, doctors declared him brought dead.

Getting information, the Baripada police reached the spot and launched an investigation into the incident. "While it is suspected to be a case of suicide, the exact reason will be ascertained after a thorough probe," said a police official.

Women among 3 held in baby kidnap in B'swar



PNS ■ BALESWAR

In connection with an alleged infant kidnapping case, the Sahadevkhunta police arrested three persons including two women. They were identified as Pooja Das (27) of Suteibadagaon village under Industrial police station limits, Shaik Shafi Gul Ali (39) and Nazma Bibi (39), both of Aradbazar area under Sahadevkhunta police station limits.

According to reports, complainant Savitri Singh (21) of Dahapada while was busy in household works, prime

accused Pooja Das kidnapped Savitri's 8-month-old son who was in a cradle and later, sold him to Shaik Shafi Gul Ali and Nazma Bibi for Rs 50,000.

Not finding her baby, Savitri and her husband Aju Singh filed a police complaint. Based on the complaint, the police stepped up immediate investigation and apprehended the trio within two hours of the registration of FIR. Rs 42,480 cash and a mobile phone were seized from the accused persons, added reports. The rescued child was handed over to his parents after a medical examination.

Rayagada: Class-III girl raped by school peon

Mob torches police vehicle; accused held

BADAL TAH ■ RAYAGADA

A Class-III girl of the Dangasil UP School of Kashipur block in Rayagada district was allegedly raped by the school peon on Friday.

The accused Sibaram Mishra lured the minor girl to his room and raped her. Later, some of friends of the victim, who saw her crying and profusely bleeding, informed the school Headmaster and her mother.

Getting information, police reached the spot and took the accused into custody. However, irate locals of the Dangasil village assembled near the police outpost and demanded the culprit to be handed over to them. The mob said rarely justice is meted out



in such cases and no FIR would be lodged.

But when police didn't listen to their demand, they torched a police van and vandalised another vehicle.

In a bid to control the violent mob, police resorted to a lathicharge and detained six persons. The victim was shifted to the Donagasil

Community Health Centre and later referred to the District Headquarters Hospital (DHH). The condition of the girl was stated to be stable.

The Rayagada Additional SP is camping in the area and additional forces have been deployed. Most of the men of the village have fled fearing arrest.

Meanwhile, Rayagada Child Welfare Committee Chairperson Bidulata Huika expressed serious concern about the incident. She along with a team of the CWC went to the DHH and interacted with the victim and her mother. The CWC has assured of necessary justice to the family as per law.

BJP-backed unions to stage protest before PPL

On Sept 25

PNS ■ PARADIP

The Paradeep Phosphates Limited (PPL) faces a threat of a substantial shutdown on September 25 as part of a widespread movement, with backing from the BJP.

Four organisations, namely the PPL Land Loser Welfare Association, Paradip Industrial Contractors Association, PPL Phospho Gypsum Dealers and Paradip Youth Voice members are planning a collective protest in front of the PPL gate. The move is expected to disrupt gypsum and fertilizer businesses, potentially leading to dire consequences in the current economic landscape.

Sources revealed that gypsum extraction from PPL has increased from 12 lakh tonnes annually to 18 lakh tonnes, yet the 13 contractors

responsible for transporting gypsum have been unable to meet their quotas, citing various reasons. This has resulted in a surplus of gypsum within the plant, prompting the company to appoint a super dealer with strict adherence to all regulations.

The PPL had also attempted to reassure local contractors, promising to facilitate all other contracts except for gypsum, citing environmental concerns and urging them not to stage any protests that could hamper production. However, the organisations involved are determined to proceed with their plans, organising a movement to persuade the public of their cause. The situation remains tense as the protest date approaches, raising concerns about the impact on local industries and commerce.

CUO talk

‘Role of newspapers in freedom movement crucial’



PNS ■ KORAPUT

A national seminar was organised by Dept of Journalism and Mass Communication, CUO, Koraput on ‘Role of Indian newspapers and Editors in freedom movement’ on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and it was held at the National Library of India at Kolkata.

Assistant Professor & HOD (i/c), DJMC Dr Sourav Gupta presented the welcome

address and welcomed the resource persons from various parts of India. Dr Gupta said that the purpose of the seminar was to discuss the publishing of a seminal book to establish the role of journalism in the freedom struggle.

Vice Chancellor, CUO, Prof Chhakra Chatterjee inaugurated the seminar and said that the newspaper Editors fought against the British and were subjected to jail and several harsh treatments. He

emphasised that the book by DJMC will establish the role of newspapers and Editors from various parts of India and present a national spectrum of united journalism in the freedom movement. Prof Tripathi announced that the book will be edited by Dr Pranab Kumar Saha and Rittwick Kr Mallick, eminent researchers.

Director General, National Library of India, Dr Ajay Pratap Singh was the chief guest of the seminar. Dr Singh

lauded the efforts of the Central University of Odisha to highlight the role of Press in national movement in the Amrit Kaal. Dr Singh invited the CUO for further academic collaboration.

The resource persons who joined the seminar were eminent academics, journalists and researchers from the States of Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, Assam, Rajasthan, New Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir.

Utkal TV holds Silver Jubilee fest in B'pur

Amid presence of city's who's who

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

Utkal TV, one of the oldest TV networks of Brahmapur, celebrated its Silver Jubilee on completion of 25 years of its existence here on Sunday. The event was inaugurated by MLA Bikram Kumar Panda. A large number of dignitaries, elected representatives, eminent persons, intellectuals and scribes attended the function.

Prominent among them include SP of Brahmapur



Police District Dr Sarvana Vivek M, Southern Range IG Satyabrata Bhoi, VC of Khallikote University Prof Prafulla Kumar Mahanty, BeMC Mayor Sanghamitra Dalai, DIPRO Rabinarayan Behera, Sudhir Kumar Sabat, Narayan Mahankud, renowned stage anchor Hrushikesh Panigrahi, BJD leader Subash Maharana, senior scribes Ashoak Brahma, Prakash Pattnaik, Asit Kumar Panda, Gopal Pattnaik, Brahmpaur Edition Chief of

Sakala Shaktidhar Rajguru and several corporators of BeMC.

Earlier a mini-marathon (from Khallikote University to Subba Rao Chhak) was conducted to mark the event in which hundreds of school and college students participated. The Brahmapur SP flagged off the event. Among others, the Chief Editor of UTV and secretary of the Press Club Gopal Pattnaik, director Nageswar Prusty, Rabinarayan Maharana, News Editor Sudip Sahoo were present.

Govt unfazed

Stir for med college on 19th day in Kendrapada

Agitators resort to ‘economic blockade’

RAJESH BEHERA

■ KENDRAPADA

Demanding a medical college and hospital (MCH) at Kendrapada district, intellectuals, social activists and senior citizens along with leaders of different political parties under the fold of the Kendrapada Zilla Medical College and Hospital Pratistha Milita Kriyanusthan Committee has been carrying out fast-unto-death in front of



a Gandhi statue at Garapur since September 5.

The agitators on Saturday resorted to an 'economic blockade' by stalling traffic on the State and National Highways in the district.

Though BJD MLA Sashi

Bhushan Behera expressed his solidarity with the agitators, he failed to give any promise on the issue. He only assured to raise the issue in the Assembly.

Though 19 days have passed to the agitation, there has been no discussion with the

INBRIEF

LIONS CLUB B'PUR SILKS HOLDS READING ACTION PROG

Brahmapur: The Lions Club Brahmapur Silks organised a reading action programme by distributing notebooks, pencils, cutters, erasers and chocolates to all tiny students of nursery, LKG,



UKG at Kids Planet Play School, Brajnagar 2nd line. Lion P Dharma Rao, Deputy PRO Lions District 322C4 team leader Devi Prabha Rath, president Kumudini Choudhury, secretary Sunita Sahu, P Sandhya and Namita Padhi coordinated the programme. School Principal Sunita Rani Sabat, teachers Suchitra Panigrahy and Bijaylaxmi were present.

OUTREACH PROG FOR VEER NARIS IN GANJAM

Brahmapur: An AWWA outreach programme for the Veer Naris was organised by Army Air Defence on Saturday. The Veer Naris of Ganjam and adjoining districts were provided assistance at their doorsteps. The Chairperson, Family Welfare Organisation, Army Air Defence Centre and Records visited the houses of Veer Naris at Brahmapur and interacted with them for resolution of their problems. Ten Veer Naris of Ganjam district were presented with SPARSH installed smartphones during a felicitation ceremony at Brahmapur. A familiarisation capsule was also conducted by Army Air Defence Records.

BLOOD DONATION CAMP AT BALANGA COLLEGE

Balanga: The Balanga College NSS Wing organised a blood donation camp at the college premises on Friday. Balanga Medical Officer Dr Sunil Kumar Mallick inaugurated the camp. Balanga police station OIC Dibya Ranjan Panda joined by as chief guest. College Principal Pravat Kumar Sahoo managed the camp. NSS Wing Programme Officer Manas Ranjan Mohanty, Balabhdra Rath and education department head Dr Prados Kumar Pati coordinated the camp.



BALANGA POLICE IN ACTION MOOD BEFORE FESTIVAL SEASON

Balanga: The Balanga police are in action mood before festival season to control law and order. Police have launched a drive of checking bikes and other vehicles. They collected fine of Rs 14,000 in one day. As per direction of Puri SP K Visal Singh, Balanga OIC Dibya Ranjan Panda conducted the raid along with his staffs on Friday night and seized 22 litres of illegal foreign liquor and arrested one person in this connection.

TATA STEEL PROJECT WINS CSR LEADERSHIP AWARD

Jodaa: The Kalamang and Gandhalpada Project of Tata Steel has received 'Best CSR Leadership Award' at the 8th Edition of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Summit & Awards-2023 organised by UBS Forums in New Delhi. Sanjay Sardar, Unit Lead, Tata Steel Foundation, and Tejinder Singh, Asst Manager, HR, Kalamang & Gandhalpada Project, received the award on behalf of the company. The event, held annually, serves as a platform to acknowledge and celebrate organisations and individuals who have demonstrated exemplary dedication for CSR initiatives.

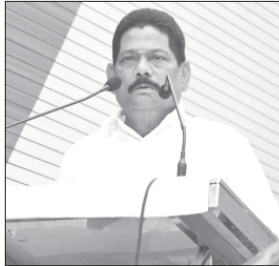


Assns hold Vishwakarma Puja in Paradip

PNS ■ PARADIP

The East India Oil Refinery Workers' Union (EIORWU) held the Vishwakarma Puja from September 17 to 23. The festivities commenced with the worship of the Lord following traditional rituals that included the consecration of the idol and Vedic ceremonies.

Each evening till Friday was marked by cultural and entertainment programmes. The Jagatsinghpur District Truck Owners' Association and the Paradip Port Land Losers Farmers' Union and Dumper Owners' Association also observed the puja with much fanfare.



The event was attended by EIORWU president Santosh Kumar Pattnaik, who presided over the proceedings. Members of these associations and guests joined in the celebrations, partaking in the divine prasad. The culminating Bisarjan (immersion) festival was observed with great pomp and enthusiasm on Saturday.

Citizens should feel law belongs to them: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said in International Lawyers Conference that “the law belongs to them” and that Government is trying to draft new laws in India “in simple language”. Inaugurating the Bar Council of India’s (BCI) two-day “International Lawyers Conference 2023”, he also flagged concerns about cyber terrorism and money laundering besides the use of artificial intelligence for destructive purposes.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud was the chief guest of the programme. Modi said these dangers do not recognise borders and jurisdiction and called for collaborative efforts among legal frameworks of different countries to deal with them.

“When danger is global, then the manner to deal with it should also be global,” he said.

The prime minister cited the example of cooperation between air traffic control sys-

tems of all countries to ensure air travel and said preparing a global framework to deal with these dangers is not about one government or country.

Besides CJI, Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice of the United Kingdom Alex Chalk KC, Attorney General for India R Venkataramani, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, Bar Council of India chairman and senior advocate Manan Kumar Mishra and others, including several judges of the apex court, were present at the event.

Commenting on the legal system, he said the language used to write laws and in the judicial process plays a big role in ensuring justice.

“We in the Indian government are thinking that law should be produced in two ways. One draft will be in the language you are used to,” he said to the audience drawn from the legal field. “The second draft will be in a language which the country’s common man can understand. He should consider the law his own.”

Modi said there had been a practice of drafting laws in a complex manner.

One of the aspects of justice delivery on which there is very little discussion is the language and the simplicity of law, the prime minister noted.

He said the government is trying to make laws simple and understandable to the common man but the system has been born and brought up in the same framework and he was trying to pull it out of that.

Modi said that he has a lot to do and a lot of time for it. “So I will keep doing it,” he said.

“We have made the first beginning in the Data Protection law,” the prime minister said, referring to attempts to draft laws in simple language. He also welcomed the Supreme Court’s decision to provide the operative part of a judgment to the litigant in his language.

Dubbing the Indian Penal Code and the Evidence Act as colonial-era laws, the government had recently introduced the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and the Bharatiya



Sakshya Bill to replace the IPC, Evidence Act and the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Referring to the passage of the women’s reservation bill in Parliament, he said this will give new direction and energy to women-led development.

He also spoke of the G20 Summit and the successful Chandrayaan mission.

With India working hard to achieve the goal of becoming a developed country by 2047, it requires the base of a strong and impartial justice system, he said. Impartial justice has a big role in the growing faith of the world in India,

Modi added.

Speaking on alternate dispute resolution, the prime minister said with the increasing complexity of commercial transactions, the ADR mechanism has gained currency all over the world.

To systematise the informal tradition of dispute resolution in India, the government has enacted a law on mediation. Similarly, Lok Adalats are also playing a big role and they have settled nearly seven lakh cases in the last six years.

Speaking on the occasion, CJI Chandrachud said institutional collaboration is the pre-

cursor to solution finding while adjudicating judicial questions and it also plays a significant role in increasing access to justice.

He said it is utopian to think that there will be a day when “we find perfect solutions with no challenges to the justice delivery”.

“However, it is definitively not utopian to aspire for a world where nations, institutions and most importantly individuals are open to engage with and learn from one another without feeling threatened or belittled,” Chandrachud ssaid.

He said that while the Constitution provides for separation of power among the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, it also creates a space for institutions to learn from each other and deliver justice.

“Institutional collaboration is a precursor to solution finding not only while adjudicating judicial questions but it also plays a significant role in increasing access to justice,” Justice Chandrachud said.

In his speech, the CJI said that instead of addressing spe-

cific challenges to justice delivery, he seeks to present an “umbrella framework” to address these challenges and find innovative solutions.

Referring to engagement between nations, institutions and individuals, Justice Chandrachud said, “It is in this engagement that I believe lies the framework to find usual solutions.”

Knowledge sharing is a two-way street and decisions of the Indian Supreme Court are being regularly cited and relied upon by foreign courts, he said.

“At the administrative level too, the Indian judiciary must remain receptive to collaboration with various nations. India has played a pivotal role by constructing the Supreme Court buildings in Mauritius and in Bhutan,” the CJI said.

He said that drafting of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly is a classic example of engaging beyond partisan lines.

“We find the same bi-partisan effort and this is something to which we, as citizens of India must be proud, has

gone into the passing of the women’s reservation bill in Parliament recently,” Justice Chandrachud said.

He further said, “In our tendency to emphasise differences, we often forget the abundant examples of collaboration between institutions to further the interest of justice. This holds true not only in lofty constitutional challenges but more frequently in the everyday interaction between the courts and the government.”

Citing an example, the CJI said a constitution bench of the Supreme Court is presently hearing a challenge pertaining to whether a person holding a driving licence for light motor vehicles can drive a commercial vehicle under the Motor Vehicles Act.

“Instead of viewing the case as an adversarial challenge, the court and the government are collaborating to protect the livelihoods of millions of drivers across the country,” he said, adding that the ultimate aim of different institutions is the same and that is the progress and prosperity of the nation.

Jaishankar holds talks with Quad leaders on visit to attend UNGA

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/NEW YORK



External Affairs S Jaishankar has commenced his nine-day visit to the United Nations and the US by holding bilateral and multilateral meetings with his global counterparts. He exchanged views on strengthening bilateral ties and issues of common concern as he arrived in New York for the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session.

Jaishankar hit the ground running shortly after landing in New York early Friday morning, beginning his hectic schedule for the day with the Quad Foreign Ministers meeting with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoko Kamikawa.

A joint readout of the Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting issued after the meeting reaffirmed the group’s “unwavering support for the United Nations, the enduring importance of upholding mutually determined rules, norms, and standards, and to deepen Quad cooperation in the international system.”

Jaishankar held bilateral discussions with Kamikawa, Japan’s new top diplomat and

exchanged perspectives on “our Special Strategic and Global Partnership.

“Delighted to meet Foreign Minister of Japan Yoko Kamikawa at #UNGA78. Discussed our regional, multi-lateral and global cooperation and taking them forward,” Jaishankar said on X.

Jaishankar also met Wong for bilateral discussions. “Great to catch up with FM @SenatorWong of Australia on #UNGA78 sidelines. Noted the positive trajectory of our ties and discussed specific steps to take them further. Our exchange of regional and global assessments are always valuable.”

Later, he held discussions with South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor and Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira under the IBSA

Coast Guard conducts 2-day conjoined exercise Sagar Kavach

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



Indian Coast Guard conducted a two-day conjoined exercise Sagar Kavach for the State of Odisha and West Bengal to validate the effectiveness of coastal security mechanism along the Odisha and West Bengal coast. The exercise commenced on Thursday and ended on Friday, Coast Guard officials said here on Saturday.

The main aim of the exercise was to evaluate the threats emanating from seaward in present geo-political scenario and validate existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of all stakeholders for enhanced coastal security mechanism.

The exercise was also aimed at checking the efficacy of layered security arrangements i.e air-surveillance, deep sea patrol by bigger ships of Coast Guard and Navy and close coast patrol by Coast Guard Interceptor Boats, boats of Marine Police, Central Industrial Security Force(CISF), Customs and Forest department.

One Nation, One Election panel to seek views of parties, Law Commission

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI



The high-level committee on simultaneous elections headed by former president Ram Nath Kovind in its first meeting on Saturday decided to invite political parties and the Law Commission to seek their views on holding synchronised polls in the country.

Home Minister Amit Shah, Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal, former Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Gulam Nabi Azad, former Finance Commission chairman N K Singh, former Lok Sabha secretary general Subhash C Kashyap and former chief vigilance commissioner Sanjay Kothari attended the meeting.

The committee, according to a statement said, decided to invite recognised national parties, parties having governments in states, those having their representatives in Parliament, other recognised state parties “for seeking suggestions/view points on the issue of simultaneous elections in the country”.

In addition, the committee will also invite the Law Commission for its suggestions and view points on the issue of simultaneous elec-

tions, a law ministry statement said.

Noted lawyer Harish Salve joined the meeting virtually.

Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was not present in the meeting, the statement noted.

After he was named in the committee, Chowdhury had written to Shah “declining to serve on the committee”.

The government had, on September 2, notified the eight-member “high-level” panel to examine and make recommendations at the earliest on the issue of holding simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipalities and panchayats.

Describing the meeting as introductory in nature, people aware of the details said it was called to discuss the roadmap on how to go about the mandate given to the panel.

Constitution, the Representation of the People Act and any other laws and rules that would require amendments for the purpose of holding simultaneous elections.

It has also been tasked to suggest a framework for synchronisation of elections and “specifically suggest the phases and time-frame within which simultaneous elections may be held if they cannot be held in one go....”

It will also examine and recommend if the amendments to the Constitution would require to be ratified by the states.

Certain amendments to the Constitution require a ratification by at least 50 per cent of the state assemblies.

The committee will also analyse and recommend possible solutions to scenarios such as a hung house, the adoption of a no-confidence motion or defection or any such event in case of simultaneous elections.

The panel has also been asked to recommend “necessary safeguards for ensuring the continuity of the cycle of simultaneous elections and recommend necessary amendments to the Constitution so that the cycle of simultaneous elections is not disturbed”.

Controversy erupts in RS over sloganeering in visitors’ gallery

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI



After the political fracas from Lok Sabha over the Ramesh Bidhuri-Danish Ali row, now a controversy has erupted in Rajya Sabha as political sloganeering allegedly happened in the visitors gallery soon after the “Women Reservation Bill” was passed in the night of Thursday which in complete violation of rules and regulations of the visitors manual of the Parliament.

This took place where even ‘whispering’ is not allowed by the guarding marshals at every two row of seatings.

It might be noted that during the two days of Parliament proceedings women visitors including female artists and actress were in full occupancy in both the house-Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha- to witness the introduction, discussion and then the passage of the historic women reservation bill as known as Nari Shakti Vandan Vidhiniyam.

Sources said female visitors including college and school going students from neighbouring states of Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh visited Parliament to witness the proceedings.

Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi has written to Chairman Jagdeep Dhankar that a group of people sitting in the Visitor’s Gallery was heard sloganeering, creating a ruckus in the precincts of the House.

“The incident in question not only caused a commotion but also raised serious questions about the enforcement of rules and regulations within the esteemed House. I write to you with grave concern and deep disappointment regarding the shocking incident that unfolded in the Rajya Sabha on September 21, 2023, during the Special Session,” Chaturvedi said in her letter a copy of which is with The Pioneer.

A senior Parliament official said stringent security measures are followed and marshals are deployed to restrict the visitors from doing any activities, talking etc.

“This incident occurred in clear violation of Rule 264, which explicitly outlines the conduct expected of individuals in the Visitor’s Gallery during parliamentary sessions,” official said.

As per the rules and conduct of business proposition in the Parliament, Rule 264 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya

Sabha lays out the regulations for visitors.

“Admission to Visitors’ Galleries of Rajya Sabha is regulated by the regulations made in pursuance of Rule 264 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Rajya Sabha. Under the regulations, a member can apply for a visitor’s card for a person who is known to him personally or in select cases, for those who have been introduced to the member by a person who is personally known to him. It is in the latter class of cases that members are to exercise utmost care. Members are advised to bear in mind that they are responsible for any untoward incident or undesirable thing happening in the galleries as a result of anything done by holders of cards issued at the request of such members.

Chaturvedi has alleged that over 50 visitors were able to raise slogans in favour of the treasury benches and Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a matter of grave concern.

BJP MP blames BSP’s Danish for provoking Bidhuri



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP leader Nishikant Dubey on Saturday blamed BSP MP Danish Ali of providing provocation to the party MP Ramesh Bidhuri to make derogatory comments against the former in the Lok Sabha on Thursday and asked Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to also probe the “unsavoury” conduct and remarks of Ali in the lower house.

In a letter to Speaker, Dubey accused Ali of offering a running commentary during Bidhuri’s speech in Lok Sabha and making unsavoury remarks aimed at instigating him to lose his composure.

Dubey, a Lok Sabha member, alleged that Ali also made a “highly objectionable and blasphemous” remark against Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He used “neech” barb, the BJP leader claimed, saying it was more than enough for “any patriotic public representative to lose his calm and fall into his trap by uttering unsavoury words.”

Dubey was, however, categorical in condemning Bidhuri’s comments, saying no

decent society can justify them and they cannot be condemned enough.

“But the Lok Sabha Speaker should also probe the unsavoury remarks and conduct of Danish Ali. Under Lok Sabha rules, obstructing another MP during the time allotted to him, speaking while sitting and giving a running commentary also call for punishment,” he posted on X.

In his letter, Dubey said TMC and DMK members also made comments about faith of another community.

What he has written is a verifiable fact, he claimed.

If Bidhuri has committed an inappropriate act, then other members, including Ali, have also contributed in spreading enmity amongst communities.

“I, therefore, request you to constitute an ‘Inquiry Committee’ to investigate the utterances made by various members during the said discussion and also to inquire the extent of culpability of various other members of Parliament in instigating our citizens by way of their comments made in the House,” he wrote to the Speaker.

‘Malnutrition prevention needs multi-disciplinary, integrated approach’

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Prevention of anemia and malnutrition requires an integrated multi-disciplinary approach with public-private partnerships and stakeholder engagement, usage of technologies among others, experts from the sector said on Saturday at an event here.

The suggestions came amid concerns that despite several efforts of the government, 67.1 per cent children below the age of 5 continue to grapple with anaemia and 57 per cent of women between the age of 15 and 49 are anaemic as has been indicated by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5.

The 2-day conference which began Friday witnessed participation of senior officials from the Union Health Ministry such as Roli Singh, Additional Secretary, Dr Zoya Ali Rizvi, Deputy Commissioner, Nutrition Division and Basant Kar, also known as Nutrition Man of India along with key public health experts and researchers.

Yugal Kishore Joshi, Director Mission Life, Niti Aayog called for taking a cue from Singapore which by using an integrated approach, turned itself from a water starved country to water resilient leader. “India should also use a similar strategy to tackle Anaemia to improve the public health system.”

The participants also dis-

cussed the role of state and welfare schemes in improving the nutrition outcomes, and that factors like mother’s education, age, income, and occupation affect the maternal and child nutrition.

Responding to the reason for lack of funds for longer duration health and nutrition interventions, Meera Satpathy, Founder and Chairperson, Sukarya said that “The government, corporates and non-profits NGOs should urgently come together and engage with communities to strengthen distribution of maternal and child healthcare to the last-mile.”

Talking about the role of data, technologies and implementation research in maternal and child nutrition interventions, the panelists deliberated threadbare on lack of clear regulations and guidelines for the use of AI in healthcare, using diverse training data to mitigate bias and combine technology with human intervention at adequate touchpoints.

Talking about maternal and child health services in Kenya, Dr Kirk Tickell (Faculty at the University of Washington’s Department of Global Health) shared how it’s important to include men in families and sensitize them about the importance of maternal and child healthcare because when it comes to patriarchal settings, they still play a key role in deciding crucial things pertaining to women’s reproductive health.

Two big semiconductor proposals under process, says Vaishnaw

PTI ■ SANAND

Two big semiconductor proposals are under process and expected to take shape in the coming few months, Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Saturday.

Without divulging specifics of the proposals, the minister said the projects will focus on a special area where India can emerge as a leader at the global level.

While speaking with PTI on the sidelines of the ground-breaking ceremony of Micron's semiconductor plant, Vaishnaw said that the global semiconductor company is noticing the progress made by India in the segment and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's capability to execute large and complex policy decisions.

"This has developed India as a major trusted geography in which global industry players want to come. We can see in the coming few months at least two more large semiconductor proposals taking shape," Vaishnaw said.

He said that there are some specific areas where India can take the lead and the focus of the semiconductor projects will be



Union Minister for Railways and Electronics & Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw, leaders and officials from Micron Technology and Tata Project during a 'Ground Breaking Ceremony' at Micron Technology, in Sanand, Gujarat. (Insert) Vaishnaw addresses during the 'Ground Breaking Ceremony' PTI



in areas that can help the country export technology to other parts of the world.

The minister said that the

Micron plant, for which construction has started, will start producing the first chip from December 2024 onwards.

Memory chip maker Micron in June announced setting up a semiconductor assembly and test plant in Gujarat entailing a total investment of USD 2.75 billion (around Rs 22,540 crore). Micron will invest up to USD 825 million in setting up

the plant in two phases and the rest of the investment will come from the Centre and the state government.

The company has roped in Tata Projects for phased construction of the new assembly and test facility in Sanand.

Phase 1 will include 500,000 square feet of planned clean-room space, and will start to become operational in late 2024.

The minister said semiconductor demand is expected to grow to Rs 5 lakh crore in coming years from about Rs 2 lakh crore.

"India is already a very large design hub. With manufacturing coming to India, the entire process and value chain will come to our country and Bharat will become a major semiconductor hub in coming years," Vaishnaw said.

Micron Senior Vice President Gursaran Singh at the event said that the company has boarded the first set of 34 employees for the plant.

Five suppliers of Micron including SIMTEC are evaluating possibilities to set up their plant in India, according to government officials.

Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the Micron facility in Gujarat marks the beginning of an exciting journey in India's semiconductor ecosystem, in making India a semiconductor nation. "Micron's state-of-the-art modern facility will serve as a beacon for all investors, manufacturers, and participants in the global semiconductor ecosystem, encouraging them to partner with India," Chandrasekhar said.

TRAI moots PLI scheme to spur telecom gear production

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

TRAI has mooted 'concurrent PLI scheme' focussing on components and sub-assembly manufacturing to facilitate collaborated production activities, as it released an extensive set of recommendations to promote manufacturing of networking and telecom gear in India through tax benefit, dedicated master fund and other sweeteners.

With a sharp gaze on goals of scaling domestic production and local value addition in global value chains, TRAI in its recommendations favoured additional two per cent benefit under the design-led PLI scheme for product lines meeting a certain criteria, while also talking of a dedicated 'Networking and Telecommunications Equipment Development' fund.

In order to spur innovation and encourage industry's drive towards beneficially owned resident Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), lower corporate income tax has also been recommended. This would apply if the enterprise is continuously engaged in R&D driven manufacturing and attains half of its turnover based on IPRs owned, TRAI said in its recommendations.

A dedicated Telecom Soft-



ware Development Fund with initial committed corpus of Rs 1,000 crore should be established under Public-Private Partnership mode with Rs 3,000 crore minimum corpus, by seeking participation from venture capital funds, TRAI said.

"In context of PLI scheme, TRAI has recommended that there should be a concurrent PLI scheme focussing over components and sub-assembly manufacturing to facilitate collaborated manufacturing activities. Further, the schemes should imbibe local value addition norms in its future-format and higher incentives proportionate to value addition should be available," a TRAI release said.

Under the design-led PLI scheme, it said, beyond the one per cent benefit, another slab of additional two per cent benefit

be introduced for such product lines that yield minimum local value-addition of 75 per cent where the components by value terms, used in the manufacturing of the specific end products are manufactured in India.

Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) should be nudged to deploy indigenously manufactured equipment by reducing their Applicable Gross Revenues on annual net basis, by an amount equivalent to the aggregate certified value of such indigenous products deployed in respective telecom networks during a financial year.

This shall widen market access for indigenous manufacturers, TRAI reasoned.

Apart from the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme and Preferential Market Access (PMA), the formula suggested by the sector regulator to the government also touched upon areas like catering to financing requirement, tax relief, promoting entrepreneurship, telecom products development clusters, and treating 'telecom software' as a separate product category.

"To spur innovation and to encourage industry's drive towards beneficially owned resident Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs), lower corporate income tax has also been recommended.

PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that our client intends to enter into a transaction with Elan Limited and certain other land owning / collaborator / developer entities in relation to lands situated at Sector- 66, 67, 70, 84 and 106 Gurugram, Haryana (mentioned in schedule below).

If any person / entity / Bank or Financial Institution having or claiming any right, title, claim, benefit, estate, share, demand or interest of any nature whatsoever in respect of these lands or any part thereof by way of sale, transfer, exchange, assignment, charge, gift, covenant, trust, license, tenancy, share, sub-tenancy, inheritance, claim, let, lease, sub-lease, lien, mortgage, easement, devise, bequest, hypothecation, encumbrance, possession, development rights, possession in part performance, partnership, family arrangement/settlement, its pendons, decree or order of any Court of Law or otherwise howsoever by operation of law or otherwise, is hereby called upon to make the same known in writing, with notarized documentary proof, to the undersigned within 15 (fifteen) days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it shall be presumed that no adverse right, title, interest, share, claim or demand of any nature whatsoever exists into or upon or in respect of the these lands and the title and possession of the owners mentioned below to the these lands is clear and marketable.

SCHEDULE

Project Elan Empire (RERA registration number 37 of 2021) being developed on plot Commercial 1 in Project Marbella having land area measuring 1.4625 acres at Sector - 66, Gurugram (Village Maidawas, Tehsil Badshahpur) comprised in Rectangle No. 17 Killa Nos. 4/21min (0-5), 7/2 (4-10), 13min (2-9), 14/1min (2-5) and 14/21min (2-5) owned by Elan City LLP [part of License No. 97 dated 18.11.2010 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Project Elan Epic (RERA registration number 30 of 2018) having land area measuring 4 acres at Sector-70, Gurugram (Village and Tehsil Badshahpur) comprised in Rectangle No. 78 Killa Nos. 17/2 (2-4), 17/1 (5-16), 18min (6-10), 23/1 (2-1), 23/2 (4-16), 24/1 (2-1) 25/1 (3-16) and 24/2 (4-16) owned by Elan Limited [part of License No. 148 dated 02.08.2008 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Project Elan Town Centre (RERA registration number 23 of 2018) having land area measuring 1.733 acres at Sector-67, Gurugram (Village and Tehsil Badshahpur) comprised in Rectangle No. 123 Killa Nos. 17/1 (4-19), 17/2 (0-19), 24/3 (0-14), 18/1 (0-16.67), 24/1/1 (0-9), 24/1/3 (0-10) and 24/2 (5-10) owned by Elan Buildcon Private Limited [part of License No. 84 dated 28.08.2012 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Project Elan Miracle (RERA registration number 190 of 2017) having land area measuring 5.91875 acres at Sector-84, Gurugram (Village Hayatpur and Tehsil Gurugram) comprised in Rectangle No. 64 Killa No. 23/2 (2-7), Rectangle No. 65 Killa Nos. 3/3 (3-4), 4 (7-6), 7 (6-18), 8 (8-0), 13 (3-18), 21/2 (6-4), 3/1 (4-11), 9/1 (4-19) owned by Elan Buildcon Private Limited [part of License No. 34 dated 12.06.2014 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Land measuring 24.43 acres at Sector - 106, Gurugram (Village Pawla Khusrupur Tehsil Kadipur) comprised in Rectangle No. 18 Killa Nos. 21 (8-0) and 22/2 (4-0), Rectangle No. 19 Killa Nos. 24 (8-0), 25 (8-0), 16/2 (4-0), 23 (8-0), 22/2 (4-0) and 22/1 (3-1), Rectangle No. 21 Killa No. 5 (5-12), Rectangle No. 22 Killa Nos. 4 (8-0), 13 (8-0), 3 (8-0), 18/2 (3-5), 8 (8-0), 14 (8-7), 1/1 (6-5), 1/2/1 (0-12), 2/1/1 (1-0), 2/3 (3-5), 9/1 (4-8), 12/2 (5-3), 18/3 (1-3), 5 (7-3), 6 (8-0), 15/1 (4-0), 27 (0-17), 7 (8-0), 1/2/2 (1-3), 2/1/2 (0-10), 2/2 (2-7), 9/2 (3-12), 10 (5-16) and 12/1 (2-0), Rectangle No. 23 Killa Nos. 1 (8-0), 2 (8-0), 3 (4-7), 9/2 (3-9) and 10 (7-13) owned by Elan Avenue Limited [part of License No. 80 dated 17.8.2012 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Land measuring 5.45 acres at Sector - 106, Gurugram (Village Pawla Khusrupur Tehsil Kadipur) comprised in Rectangle No. 17 Killa Nos. 20/2 (1-18), 21/1/1 (1-18) and 21/2/1 (4-12), Rectangle No. 18 Killa Nos. 16/1/2 (2-7), 16/2 (4-9), 24 (4-0), 25/1 (6-5) and 25/2 (0-17), Rectangle No. 23 Killa No. 5/2 (3-16) and Rectangle No. 24 Killa Nos. 10/1 (6-4) and 1 (8-0) owned by Elan Avenue Limited [part of License No. 79 dated 17.08.2012 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Land measuring 1.075 acres at Sector - 106, Gurugram (Village Pawla Khusrupur Tehsil Kadipur) comprised in Rectangle No. 24. Killa Nos. 9/2 (5-4) and 21/1 (3-8) owned by Elan Avenue Limited [part of License No. 11 dated 12.03.2013 issued by DTCP Haryana].

Land measuring 10.7206 acres at Sector - 106, Gurugram (Village Pawla Khusrupur, Tehsil Kadipur) comprised in Rectangle No. 17 Killa Nos. 20 (6-2), 21/1 (0-2) and 22/1/1 (0-3-7), Rectangle No. 18 Killa Nos. 16/1 (0-4), 16/2 (1-0), 24 (2-13), 14 (7-2), 18/1 (7-6), 15/1 (3-6), 13/2 (1-5), 17 (8-0), 23 (6-0) and 27 (1-7), Rectangle No. 19 Killa Nos. 19/1 (5-12), 20 (8-0), 21/1 (7-16) and 21/2 (0-4), Rectangle 20 Killa Nos. 16 (8-0) and 25 (8-0), Rectangle No. 22 Killa Nos. 26 (0-17) and 22/1min (0-7) Rectangle No. 23 Killa No. 4/1 (2-0), Rectangle No. 24 Killa Nos. 21/2/1 (0-11) and 21/2/2 (0-16) and lands comprised in Village Daulatabad, Tehsil Kadipur in Rectangle No. 48 Killa No. 5/15 (1-9-1) owned by Elan Avenue Limited.

Agricultural lands measuring 5.06875 acres at Sector - 106, Gurugram (Village Pawla Khusrupur, Tehsil Kadipur), comprised in Rectangle No. 23 Killa No. 6/1 (6-4), 6/2 (1-16), 7 (5-15), 14/3 (2-0), 15 (8-0) 16 (5-5), 27 (0-11) and Rectangle No. 24 Killa No. 10/2 (1-16), 11/1 (7-0), 20/1 (2-4) owned by Kay Towers Limited Liability Partnership.

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TRAI recommends measures to boost telecom infra in North Eastern States

TRAI has issued recommendations for bolstering telecom infrastructure in North East, suggesting parleys with the state governments to harmonise their respective 'right of way' policies with related Central rules, as well as favouring provision of electricity to telecom sites on priority at utility tariffs.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) noted that while a number of initiatives have been taken by the government to improve telecom connectivity in the northeastern states, there is still a lack of high-speed mobile-based internet and fixed broadband connectivity, mainly due to the inadequate transmission bandwidth (optical fibre, Microwave and satellite). "The Northeast states continue to grapple with a significant digital divide due to various reasons such as inhospitable terrain conditions, poor availability of power supply, transmission media related limitations, poor return of investment

prospects for TSPs, and Right of Way (RoW) related issues," the sector regulator said in a release.

The Northeastern Region (NER) comprises the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Tripura - together they form part of the East Himalayan region.

The latest recommendations by TRAI assume significance given that while average tele-density of India (as of April 2023) stood at 84.46 per cent, the tele-density in Assam state is 71 per cent and that of Northeast Licensed Service Area consisting of six states of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura is 79.6 per cent.

The digital divide hampers the region's socio-economic growth, restricts access to essential services and information, and exacerbates the developmental gap between the Northeast and the rest of the country, TRAI noted.

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mail Patiala)
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
website: www.pspcl.in (Contact No. 96461-22185)

Tender Enquiry No. 288/SS(D)-355/Spares **Dated: 22.09.2023**

Dy.CE/ Substation Design/ TS Organization, PSPCL, C-1, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for Design, Manufacture, Testing at firm's works & at PSPCL site and supply of 2 nos. (Each) 'Prime mover/ Puller/ Truck of reputed make suitable for pulling trailer along with 62MT Pay Load' and Trailer for transportation of Heavy Power Transformer/ other material with maximum Payload Capacity of 62MT from one place to another in Punjab state complete with all accessories (ready for use in field) along with all the requisite Govt. clearances, RCs and set of Mtc. tools & tackles. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from **26.09.2023 (11:00 AM onwards)**.
Note: Corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov>.

C-67/23

76155/12/2215/2023/28150 **Dated CHD :- 9/22/2023**

कार्यालय नगर पालिका परिषद् धार जिला धार म.प्र.

Email- cmodhar@mpurban.gov.in

क्रमांक/5186/लो.नि. शाखा/2023 **धार दिनांक 21.09.2023**

:: पंचम ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना :: **Dhar Date: 22.09.2023**

Online bid are invited from registered contractors/reputed firm for work of water supply scheme under **AMRUT 2.0** for Nagar Palika Parishad Dhar (M.P.)

S. No.	Name of Work	Probable Amount (In lacs)	Completion Period In months including Rainy Season
1.	Work of Augmentation Water Supply Scheme of Dhar town under AMRUT 2.0	3471.60	24 Months

Interested Bidder can view the detailed NIT on website www.mptenders.gov.in last date of purchase is **07.10.2023 time 17.30 Hrs** further details would be published on website only, and not in Newspaper.

अध्यक्ष
न.पा. परिषद् धार

उपाध्यक्ष
न.पा. परिषद् धार

सभापति, लो.नि. समिति
न.पा. परिषद् धार

मु.न.पा. अधिकारी
न.पा. परिषद् धार

Office of the Superintending Engineer
3rd Circle, Public Works Department, Pithoragarh
Email : sepwdpth@rediffmail.com

Letter No. : 5741 / 962C-03(Yata 'C')/2023

Dated : 22/09/2023

National Competitive E-Tender Notice

The Superintending Engineer, 3rd Circle, Public Works Department Pithoragarh invites tender through E-Tendering (**Two Bid System**) on behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from date **04-10-2023 at 5.00 Pm** onward on website <http://www.uktenders.gov.in>

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (in Lac)	Cost of Tender (₹)	Validity of Tender (day)	Period of Completion (months)	Contractor's Category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Construction of Chandak-Bans-Awalaghat-Gangolihat Motor Road with bridge under State Sector Constituency Gangolihat District Pithoragarh.	9.54	5000.00 +G.S.T.	120	18	Category A & higher for road & bridge works, in state Govt./ Govt. of India

US Treasury Secy: India needs to grow at 8% to make transformational changes in lives of people

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has the potential and should aim to grow at 8 per cent annually to bring about transformative changes in the lives of millions of people by around 2050, said noted economist and former US Treasury Secretary Larry Summers here on Saturday.

India's GDP growth in 2022-23 was 7.2 per cent as against 9.1 per cent in 2021-22. According to the Reserve Bank of India's projections, India's GDP will likely grow 6.5 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Summers clarified that 8 per cent growth was not his forecast on



the basis of current policy, but added, 'given India's potential, even in a more challenging world economy, I believe that it is an imaginable goal.'

"...An eightfold expansion in the economy is transformative in the lives of hundreds of millions of people.

Updater Services garners ₹288 cr from anchor investors ahead of IPO

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Integrated facilities management company Updater Services Ltd on Friday said it has raised Rs 288 crore from anchor investors days before the launch of its initial public offering (IPO).

The firm has allotted 96 lakh equity shares to 18 funds at Rs 300 apiece, which is also the upper end of the price band, according to a circular uploaded on the BSE website late Friday night.

Among the anchor investors that participated in the bidding are Nomura Singapore, Citigroup Global Markets Mauritius Pvt Ltd, BNP Paribas Arbitrage, Societe Generale, ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund (MF), Bandhan MF and Aditya Birla Sun Life Insurance Company.

The initial share sale, with a price band of Rs 280-300 per share, will be open for public subscription during



September 25-27.

The Rs 640-crore IPO will comprise a fresh issue of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 400 crore and an Offer for Sale (OFS) of up to 80 lakh equity shares by a promoter and existing shareholders.

Under the OFS, Tangi Facility Solutions Private Ltd, India Business Excellence Fund-II, and India Business Excellence Fund-IIA will be selling shares of the company.

The IPO is expected to fetch Rs

624 crore and Rs 640 crore at the lower end and upper end of the price band respectively.

Proceeds from the fresh issue will be used for payment of debt, funding working capital requirements, pursuing inorganic initiatives, and general corporate purposes.

About 75 per cent of the issue size has been reserved for qualified institutional investors (QIBs), 15 per cent for non-institutional investors, and the remaining 10 per cent for retail investors. Investors can bid for a minimum of 50 equity shares and in multiples thereof.

The company offers integrated facilities management services and business support services to its clients. It caters to customer segments across sectors such as FMCG, manufacturing and engineering, BFSI, healthcare, IT/ITES, automobiles, logistics and warehousing, airports, ports, infrastructure, and retail.

Respond to intimation of past tax demands for faster refund: I-T dept to taxpayers

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The income tax department on Saturday asked taxpayers to respond to intimation from the I-T department regarding outstanding demands of previous years to facilitate faster clearance of refunds for 2022-23 fiscal.

With some taxpayers taking to social media about receiving intimation from the I-T department regarding past unsettled tax demands, the department in a post on 'X' said, this is a taxpayer-friendly measure where an opportunity is being provided to assesses in line with "principles of natural justice".

SIDBI signs pact with DLAI to boost fintech sector

The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) on Saturday said it has inked an agreement with the Digital Lenders Association of India (DLAI) to boost the country's fintech sector. SIDBI and DLAI have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to this effect.

The MoU aims for collaborations with SIDBI to develop standard protocols to expedite the adoption of digital lending partnerships including alliances between banks and Lending Service Providers (LSPs), co-lending

collaborations among others, according to a statement. SIDBI will also provide resource support to eligible DLAI member NBFCs and also explore Assignment and Securitisation transactions, it added.

"We are happy to work with the Industry on other important aspects like standard protocols, customer protection, grievance redressal, among others to facilitate faster adoption of digital lending," SIDBI CMD Sivasubramanian Ramann said.

As a part of its business strategy,

SIDBI is using digital technology and partnerships to directly reach out to micro enterprises and will explore offering its credit products through the DLAI members, he added.

Under the agreement, SIDBI and DLAI will explore partnerships for its 'Prayaas' Scheme for informal enterprises, co-lending, GST Sahay, Express loan, green financing, and other direct credit schemes. "This partnership signifies an important step in India's fintech journey for enhancing their role in financing the MSME sector.

I N B R I E F

VIT-AP UNIVERSITY HOSTS 3RD CONVOCATION

AMARAVATI: VIT-AP University, a renowned institution dedicated to excellence in education, announced the successful culmination of its 3rd Convocation ceremony, celebrating the academic accomplishments and achievements of the Class of 2023. The event took place on Sept 23, 2023 at the university's picturesque campus, marking a significant milestone in the journey of the graduating students. The convocation ceremony was a momentous occasion attended by distinguished guests, esteemed faculty members, Staff, proud parents, and the graduands themselves. The ceremony was graced by Dr Justice B Siva Sankara Rao — Chairman, the Judicial Preview Committee, Govt of AP — as the Chief guest, and Ashish Sharma, Director, Microsoft, attended as the Guest of Honour. Speaking on the occasion Justice Rao said the hard work and dedication are indisputably the cornerstones of student success, and Convocations serve as a day to mark the culmination of their accomplishments. The day serves as an inspirational reminder of the power of commitment and diligence, motivating students to pursue their ambitions with assurance.

ISLRTC OBSERVES SIGN LANGUAGE DAY

NEW DELHI: Sign Language Day with the theme 'A World Where Deaf People Everywhere Can Sign Anywhere!' was celebrated by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre under the aegis of DEPWD, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Hangzhou Asian Games opens with futuristic ceremony

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Blending elements of artificial intelligence and eco-friendly technology, the Hangzhou Asian Games began here on Saturday with a one-of-a-kind opening ceremony, headlined by a futuristic light show and a digital torch relay.

The dazzling programme, held amid a diplomatic row over the denial of entry to three Indian athletes from Arunachal Pradesh, was a melange of technology, cultural history of China, and the spirit of the continent's unity.

In keeping with the main theme of 'Tides Surging in Asia', the ceremony was about the intermingling of China, Asia and the world in the new era, as well as the unity, love and friendship of the Asian people.

The water element through the surging tide of Qiantang river — which flows through Hangzhou — was the underlying theme of the grand evening which lasted more than two hours.

The ceremony sought to portray a distinctly Chinese and an uniquely Asian flair, capturing the country's cultural heritage and romantic imagery through the blending of its thousands of years old civilization and modern technology, through stunning visuals.

It portrayed the efforts of China's path to modernisation in a presentation that combined Eastern aesthetics and a viewpoint that connects with a global audience.

The technological might of China was written all over with the lighting of the cauldron — the Games' Flame — being done in a unique way.

Digital technology was utilised as torchbearers in the virtual and physical worlds joint-

ly lighted the cauldron.

3-D dual aerial performance technology was also used for the first time in a major stadium while depicting the tidal bore of the Qiantang river. Two performers, one male and one female, danced in the air and closely interacted with the tidal bores which appeared on the LED ground display.

A variety of tidal bores, including a scissor-shaped bore, a lineal bore, a back-flowing bore, and a bore resembling the scales of a fish, rose and fell on the LED ground display.

Chinese President Xi Jinping declared the Games open as more than 12,000 athletes from 45 countries gear up to fight for top honours till October 8.

The Olympic Council of Asia's (OCA) acting president Randhir Singh, International Olympic Committee (IOC) head Thomas Bach, heads of several countries, officials of National Olympic Committees and host of other dignitary were present on the occasion.

Singh urged the athletes to respect fellow athletes and the judges, and take part in the Games in the spirit of friendship and fair competitions.

The Games are being held belatedly due to a surge in Covid cases in China last year.

In keeping with the concept of 'Green Asian Games' or carbon-neutral Games, the opening ceremony used digital fireworks instead of real ones. It, nevertheless, created a thrilling atmosphere.

The nearly-packed 80,000 capacity 'Big Lotus' stadium was decked up elegantly for the occasion and welcomed the athletes from the participating countries, including India, with loud cheers.

After three wushu players



from Arunachal Pradesh were denied visa by the Chinese government, India had cancelled the visit of its sports minister Anurag Thakur. Indian Olympic Association President PT Usha was not present as she is currently in Paraguay as part of a Parliamentary delegation, though other officials attended the ceremony.

Loud cheers greeted the nearly 100 Indian athletes and officials as they marched into the stadium, led by flag-bearers Harmanpreet Singh and Lovlina Borgohain. The Indian contingent walked out for the athletes' parade in eighth position.

From the tennis team, only Ramkumar Ramanathan participated in the parade since the other players have matches on Sunday.

The male athletes were clad in bandhgala jacket and khaki kurta while their female counterparts donned high-necked blouse and khaki-textured saree made from recycled fabrics.

India is fielding 655 athletes in the Games.

To begin with, the theme 'Water in Autumn Glow' depicted

water as the heart and soul of Hangzhou, where water comes in many forms — West Lake, Qiantang Tidal Bore, the thousand-year-old Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal, and the water conservation system of the Archeological Ruin of Liangzhu City.

In a bid to use culture as a medium of blending the power of technology and the beauty of art inspired by traditional Chinese culture, the opening ceremony combined the flavour of Hangzhou, Zhejiang province imagery and elements unique to

the country.

Through innovative modern technologies, the ceremony also showcased the attractiveness, appeal and unique nature of Eastern aesthetics, as well as the profound impact culture has, the power of science, and the encompassing reach of art.

After around an hour-long protocol part of the ceremony, a cultural programme of 30 minutes and a laser show enthralled the crowd. That was followed by the lighting of the Cauldron and playing of the official song.

As September 23 falls on Autumn Equinox, or the Qiufen, one of China's 24 solar terms, it's the country's time to celebrate the harvest and welcome guests from around the world.

The Ruins of Ancient Liangzhu City, a sacred site in China's civilization and also a UNESCO Heritage site, from where the torch relay began, was also highlighted and 19 pieces of jade cong were used to represent the number of editions of the Asian Games.

The cultural programme part had sections on the natur-

al beauty and 'timeless grace' of Hangzhou and other cities of southern China, including Ningbo, Shaoxing, Suzhou and Wenzhou where a few events of the Games are also being held.

Instead of the traditional single torchbearer lighting the Cauldron, digital torchbearers were involved for the first time in a moment when the virtual and the real worlds meet.

Many individuals were selected as digital torchbearers to carry the hopes and dreams of hundreds of millions of people in Asia, join in as torchbearers in the final leg at the venue and light the Cauldron together. By hosting the continent's biggest multi-sporting event, China has heralded its opening from the pandemic with a giant competition, the largest ever in its history.

No doubt, the Olympics is the pinnacle multi-sporting event in the world but more athletes compete in the Asian Games, with over 12,000 taking part in Hangzhou.

About 11,000 participated in the Tokyo Olympics two years ago and about 10,500 will do so in the next year's Paris Games.

The 2018 Asian Games had seen a little over 11,000 athletes taking part, which will be surpassed in Hangzhou.

Besides Hangzhou, the 19th edition of the continental showpiece will be held in five other cities — Huzhou, Ningbo, Shaoxing, Jinhu and Wenzhou.

Forty-five nations and territories in Asia will compete for 481 gold medals from 40 sports and 61 disciplines, including Esports which is making its debut in the Games.

Competitions in football, volleyball, cricket, rowing, sailing and modern pentathlon began even before Saturday's opening ceremony.



Monaco slip to defeat after Balogun misses two penalties

AFP ■ PARIS

Folarin Balogun missed two penalties on his first Monaco start before local rivals Nice grabbed a stoppage time winner to go top of Ligue 1 on Friday.

One week after stunning champions PSG at the Parc des Princes 3-2, Nice claimed the three points again when Jeremie Boga slalomd through the Monaco defence to score as Francesco Farioli's team continued an undefeated start to the season. Nice leapfrogged previously unbeaten Monaco to take top spot by one point after a third win in six games.

It was a miserable first start for US international striker Balogun who left Arsenal for Monaco in the summer on a 30-million-euro transfer.

He had penalties saved by Nice goalkeeper Marcin Bulka in the 12th and 54th minutes.

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He had penalties saved by Nice goalkeeper Marcin Bulka in the 12th and 54th minutes.

Pochettino defends Chelsea medical team amid rash of injuries

AFP ■ LONDON

Mauricio Pochettino insists Chelsea's medical department are not to blame for the rash of injuries that have derailed the start of his reign.

Chelsea's injury crisis left Pochettino with only 15 fit senior players for last weekend's disappointing draw at Bournemouth in the Premier League.

Although Chelsea have spent over £1 billion (\$1.2 billion) on signings since Todd Boehly's consortium took over in 2021, the squad is stretched to breaking point.

The Blues had 12 stars absent against Bournemouth, forcing Pochettino to include three players aged 19 or under who had no first-team experience on his bench, as well as two goalkeepers.

Christopher Nkunku, Reece James, Romeo Lavia, Wesley Fofana, Carney Chukwuemeka, Trevoh Chalobah and Moises Caicedo are among the players filling the treatment room.

Chelsea are languishing in 14th with one win from five games ahead of Sunday's clash with Aston Villa, but Pochettino doesn't believe the medical staff are at fault.

"Before we arrived here we did everything to try and have a clear idea of why there were



too many injuries last season also, to analyse the risk," Pochettino told reporters on Friday.

"It's about the profile of the player, the risk of the player. It's not the people working in the medical staff of performance area.

"I think we need to respect these areas at the club are very

good professionals, qualified people. That's why they are working in football. But there's an individual risk to certain players, you need to assess.

"Then there's bad luck. We have injuries that maybe happen in one season or maybe in two, but have happened to Chelsea because of different situations you cannot control."



Ten Hag baffled by Man Utd's defensive frailties

AFP ■ LONDON

Erik ten Hag admits he does not know why Manchester United have defended so poorly throughout their dismal start to the season.

Ten Hag's side have conceded 14 goals in their last five games in all competitions after slipping to a 4-3 defeat at Bayern Munich in their Champions League opener on Wednesday.

The Bayern collapse came after Brighton won 3-1 at Old Trafford in the Premier League to pile pressure on United boss Ten Hag. With a clash against struggling Burnley looming on Saturday, Ten Hag desperately needs to shore up United's leaky defence. Alarming for United fans, the Dutch coach conceded he is still trying to get to the

root of the problem.

"We have shown that we can do it because last year we had the most clean sheets in the Premier League because of the team, because we defended very good as a team, so we have to get back to that standard," Ten Hag told reporters on Friday. "Of course I am pushing the team and demanding from the team, and from the start of the season, but they are human beings, not robots, so, why they are not doing it, I try to find out and I try to give the solutions and try to motivate the players to do the job."

"When you are in a period like we are in always as a manager you are asking yourself these questions. My job is to get them to do the job."

Question marks have been raised about the attitude of

United's squad, with clips from the Bayern game apparently showing players not chasing back as hard as they might.

Ten Hag does not believe a lack of willingness was to blame, though, saying: "It's always a concern when we didn't run but I think against Bayern it was not the case. In certain situations: yes. So it's also to recognise which situation. Is it about they didn't recognise it and didn't make the right decisions or is it about willingness?"

"Against Spurs, we didn't run too much. But I think against Bayern we did our best from physical outputs but we didn't always run in the right moment."

"If we bounced back like we did in Munich, you can't say the spirit isn't right. I think we have other problems than that."

AFP ■ MIAMI

Seven Caribbean countries will host matches at next year's T20 World Cup, including Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Friday.

The ICC awarded the hosting of the event, to be held in June 2024, to the West Indies and the United States in November 2021.

Dominica, Guyana, St Lucia and St. Vincent and the Grenadines have also been named as hosts.

"The matches will again give cricket fans the unique experience of enjoying cricket in the Caribbean," said ICC chief executive Geoff Allardice.

Matches will also be held in New York, Florida and Texas in the United States, the first time a major ICC event has been held in the country.

One notable absence from the list of Caribbean host nations is Jamaica, whose Sabina Park ground in the capital Kingston is one of the iconic homes of West Indies cricket.

Jamaica has the largest population of the main cricket-playing nations in the Caribbean

Caribbean nations named as T20 World Cup venues but no Jamaica



but did not submit a bid to host the tournament.

Courtney Francis, chief executive officer of the Jamaican Cricket Association, said Cricket West Indies engaged with

national governments over potential bids and that Jamaica's administration had opted against participation.

"The government is the one who determines whether we

could be able to host matches because all the expenses would have come back to the government," he told CVM television.

"The government is the one who would have put up the bid

money. They would have been the one to carry out repairs to the infrastructure and so on.

"The government did not see it as a viable option in their view and that is the reason why

I believe that we have not been able to bid." West Indies hosted the tournament in 2010, three years after holding the 50 overs World Cup, and Cricket West Indies chief executive Johnny Grave said they were ready to put on a show again.

"The West Indies has got a huge experience in hosting ICC events and we're currently hosting the Caribbean Premier League, which has been another successful tournament."

"We have very experienced operators throughout the region that we work with and partner with and all the stakeholders will be ready to welcome the world and stage this iconic ICC event," he said. "We're all tremendously excited by the opportunity and the platform that it gives our region to promote itself to the world for tourism, for economic development, as well as hopefully to give our men's team a huge home advantage and going for a record third title."

Next year's tournament will be the first edition of the event to include a record 20 teams.

England are the current T20 world champions, winning their second title when they beat Pakistan in the final in Melbourne last year.

Record-equalling Guirassy fires Stuttgart to top of Bundesliga

AFP ■ STUTTGART (GERMANY)

Serhou Guirassy scored twice to tie a Bundesliga record and propel Stuttgart to the top of the table with a 3-1 home victory over struggling Darmstadt on Friday.

Stuttgart fell behind after 18 minutes when defender Dan-Axel Zagadou turned a low cross inside his own near post.

Enzo Millot replied five minutes later, side footing home from a Guirassy lay off.

The Guinea striker then put Stuttgart ahead in the 32nd minute, smashing the ball in from the edge of the area. It was his ninth league goal from nine strikes at goal this season.

In added time, Guirassy dinked over goalkeeper Marcel Schuhen to become the second player to reach 10 Bundesliga goals in five games. The first was Robert Lewandowski.

"I am very happy," a beaming Guirassy said. "We won, that's the most important thing. But of course I'm also happy



about my goals and that I was able to help my team with them. I have to continue that now."

Stuttgart have a league-leading 17 goals and Guirassy has 10 of them.

"He's in top form, outstanding. We are happy to have him," said midfielder Chris Fuehrich.

The victory lifted Stuttgart to 12 points, two ahead of Bayer Leverkusen who host Heidenheim on Sunday and third-place Bayern Munich, who entertain Bochum on Saturday.

Darmstadt dropped to last place on goal difference.

Pressure mounts on Iyer, Ashwin for performances that count



PTI ■ INDORE

Shreyas Iyer will be desperate for some runs after missing out on a flat track while the skillful R Ashwin will be searching for wickets in the middle overs when India take on Australia in the second ODI here on Sunday.

Despite missing four first-XI players, including skipper Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli, India were able to win the first ODI rather comfortably and look on course to secure the series at the Holkar Stadium which usually produces high-scoring games.

Rain in the city has brought the temperature down which will be welcomed by the players from either side after experiencing unusual heat and humidity in Mohali. The game on Friday had enough positives for India, mainly the performance of Mohammad Shami and Surya-

kumar Yadav, but few questions still need to be answered ahead of the World Cup, beginning October 5.

India's designated number 4 Iyer, whose fitness came under the scanner in the Asia Cup even though he was coming back from a long injury-lay off, has not been able to get time in the middle due to different reasons.

While a back spasm ruled him out of the business end of Asia Cup, an avoidable run out on Friday ended his nervy 8-ball stay in the centre.

The right-hander will be hoping for a bagful of runs in the coming two games which would make him and his team feel much better going into the global event.

Ashwin, on the other hand, came up with a tidy bowling effort in his comeback game but was not able to put the Australian batters in much dis-

comfort on a flat track. He was not able to generate much turn and his flatter deliveries were easily negotiated by the opposition.

The champion spinner could still make a last minute entry into India's World Cup if Axar Patel doesn't get fit in time but the team management expects more from the 37-year-old than what he managed on Friday.

It also remains to be seen if another off-spinner Washington Sundar gets a game. If that happens on Sunday, Ashwin might have to warm the bench.

Shardul Thakur too would be looking for an improvement from the first game, having conceded 78 runs in 10 overs while all the other bowlers returned frugal figures.

He does have a knack of picking wickets and coming up with a useful cameo with the bat

but he has not been able to do that consistently in the ODI format. Thakur will only be used sporadically in the World Cup and therefore, he would be keen to make the most of the chances he gets in the ongoing series.

In the batting department, world's best T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav seems to have cracked the ODI code after a prolonged lean patch.

The management has told him to consume 45-50 balls every game, which is enough for someone like him to make a telling impact on the match. He just did that on Friday with a well paced half-century.

Like India, Australia too were missing some of their key players in the opener including Mitchell Starc, Glenn Maxwell and Josh Hazlewood. Skipper Pat Cummins hinted after the game in Mohali that they might only be ready by the third game

in Rajkot on September 27.

Australia won the series in India earlier this year and find themselves in a must-win situation on Sunday. Josh Inglis showed promise with a run a ball 45 but the middle-order needs to be more consistent.

Veteran opener David Warner has carried his good form from South Africa to India and would be looking to maintain it over the next couple of months.

Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne were guilty of throwing their starts in Mohali and a big hundred will be needed from either of them if Australia are to comeback in the series. The last ODI was played here in January when India amassed 385 against New Zealand with Rohit and Shubman Gill smashing hundreds.

Rohit will not be around but trust Gill to do an encore in front of a vibrant Indore crowd.

You shouldn't feel low if you are not playing XI: Shami



PTI ■ MOHALI

"When I was playing regularly, there must have been someone, who had to sit out and I wasn't guilty. So you can't feel low if you are sitting out because the team is winning," a pragmatic Mohammed Shami said when asked about the sporadic chances he has been getting in 50-over cricket of late.

The Indian team management has indicated that when it plays full strength during the upcoming World Cup, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj will be the two front-line pacers.

But after his match-winning figures of 5 for 51, Shami said that rotation isn't a bad thing when you play so many matches on the bounce.

"This is the team's plan and it is important to stick with it. You can't be always in the playing XI because a lot

depends on the team combination," Shami said.

"If you are playing, well and good and if you are not in the playing XI, then you should be supportive of those, who are playing. I think there is no point feeling low and I am ready to play the role the team gives me," Shami said as he steered clear of anything that could be remotely controversial.

He was also asked if he approves of this rotation policy where he has to sit out.

"What you are trying to know is beyond my comprehension but obviously when you build a team, (the) coach has a role to rotate players and, based on the situation, it is decided," Shami said with a wry smile.

He made it clear that rotation before a big event like the World Cup is a good thing.

"You have seen we have (had) got results due to rotation and I believe before the World

Cup, you shouldn't put too much workload in back-to-back games, and its going well and we are getting good results."

Shami had taken a break after the World Test Championship final and he didn't travel to the West Indies for the two Tests and three ODIs.

"It was important to take that break because I had played back-to-back games continuously for 7-8 months. At the back of my head, I felt I needed a break for a series.

"I discussed with coach (Rahul Dravid) and captain (Rohit Sharma) and took a break (from the West Indies series). But my break never seemed like a break for me because I have an elaborate training set-up at home (Sahaspur in UP's Amroha) and I end up training more at home than when I am with the Indian team," he stated.

He was asked if he did anything special to dismiss Steve Smith, but his answer was in the negative.

"Just tried to do my basics right and hit the top of off-stump and wait for the batters to make a mistake."

The conditions were humid and Shami was used in small spells. Could it be a template going into the World Cup?

"It depends on the situation. How a partnership (is) going and how well you are bowling at that time. Sometimes, you end up bowling a six-over spell as well while sometimes you bowl only three overs."

He admitted that heat does a play role.

"The heat does play a part and we are also human beings. It takes a toll on our bodies and on stamina. But when you have played international cricket for so long, it will not affect your fitness but it depends how much effort we are putting in," he concluded.



Pakistan awaits India visa for World Cup travel

PTI ■ INDORE

Players and team officials of Pakistan's World Cup-bound contingent are yet to get visas for their scheduled travel to India on September 27, two days before their opening warm-up fixture.

The Pakistan squad was supposed to reach Hyderabad via Dubai where a two-day team bonding exercise was planned before travelling to India on September 27.

The Babar Azam-led side is scheduled to play its first warm-up game against New Zealand on September 29.

PCB sources told PTI that the team bonding trip to Dubai has been cancelled as players await their visas from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad. Sources also confirmed that the PCB has raised

the matter with the International Cricket Council (ICC).

Pakistan last visited India for the T20 World Cup in 2016. The arch-rivals only play each other in Asia Cup and ICC tournaments due to the tense relations between the two countries. "PCB had sent its officials to Islamabad for passport collection yesterday but the visas are still in process. That has forced the board to cancel the team bonding trip in Dubai. If the visas come through, the team will reach Hyderabad on September 27 via Dubai," said a source.

Another source privy to the matter added: "the visas will come through after due vetting process. When it comes to issuing an Indian visa to a Pakistan passport holder, clearances need to come from three

ministries — home, external affairs and sports. That process takes time but it will happen."

A total of 33 members of the Pakistan contingent, including players, three travelling reserves and team officials, are awaiting their visas. Tournament host BCCI could not be reached for a comment.

Pakistan's second warm-up will be against Australia on October 3, also in Hyderabad. They will remain in the city for their opening two World Cup games against Netherlands and Sri Lanka on October 6 and 10 respectively before flying to Ahmedabad for the big game against hosts India on October 14. Only two members from the current Pakistan squad have toured India for cricket - Mohammad Nawaz and Salman Agha.

India becomes top ranked team in all formats

PTI ■ DUBAI

India became the top-ranked side in all three formats of the game following their win against Australia in the series opener that elevated them to the number one spot in the ODI rankings. Following their five-wicket win over Australia on Friday, India (116 rating points) displaced arch-rivals Pakistan (115) at the top of the rankings.

Already leading the Test and T20 chart, India now reign supreme across all formats.

This is only the second time in men's cricketing history that a side has achieved the No.1 ranking across the formats. Prior to this, only South Africa had achieved the feat back in August 2012.

Australia (111) remain third in the ODI list despite dropping two points. India and Australia play the second of the three ODIs on Sunday.

PM lays foundation stone of international cricket stadium in Varanasi

PTI ■ VARANASI (UP)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday laid the foundation stone of an international cricket stadium in Varanasi and said that through the game, the world is "getting linked" with India.

Highlighting that the design of the stadium dedicated to Lord Mahadev has instilled a feeling of pride among the citizens of Kashi, he said the facility would witness great cricket matches while young athletes would get an opportunity to train at the international level.

Modi said recent sporting successes of India were due to a changed approach as now sports have been linked with fitness, employment and career of youths. Compared to nine years ago, this year's sports budget has been increased threefold, he said. "Through cricket, the world



is getting linked with India" and many new countries are playing cricket leading to a greater number of matches, he said, adding this stadium will cater to the rising demand for such facilities in the coming years.

To be built near the Ring Road in Rajatalab area here at a cost of about Rs 450 crores and spread across an area of more than 30 acres, the stadium is likely to be ready by December 2025. The Uttar Pradesh government said it has spent Rs 121 crore to acquire the

land for the stadium while the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will spend Rs 330 crore on its construction.

The spectators' gallery of the stadium would resemble the steps of the ghats of Varanasi. This will be Uttar Pradesh's third international cricket stadium after Kanpur and Lucknow.

Addressing the gathering, Modi said he is visiting Kashi exactly one month after India

reached the Shiv Shakti point on the moon where Chandrayaan landed. "One place of Shiv Shakti is on the moon, while the other one is here in Kashi," he said.

He also noted the significance of the venue which is at the intersection of the route to Mata Vindhyavasini and its proximity with the village Motikot, the place from which socialist leader Raj Narain hailed.

Modi underlined that the development of sports infrastructure of such scale not only has a positive effect on sports but also on the regional economy. He said such developments attract more visitors which greatly benefits sectors such as hotels, eateries, rickshaws and auto drivers as well as oarsmen in the region.

Gambhir Picks Babar As Best Player For World Cup

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former India cricketer Gautam Gambhir picks Pakistan captain Babar Azam over Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and David Warner for the upcoming ODI World Cup which will start from October 5 in India. LSG mentor also reckoned that Babar Azam has a different level of quality.

In the recent outing against India in the Asia Cup

2023 Super Four clash Babar Azam was unable to fire runs from his bat he just scored 10 runs and Pakistan lost that match by a huge margin of 228 runs.

Gambhir reckons that Babar Azam will be the player to watch out in the upcoming tournament.

"Babar Azam. I mean Babar Azam has the quality that he can set this World Cup on fire. And I have seen very

few players who have so much time to bat. And I believe that Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, David Warner, Kane Williamson, Joe Root, but Babar Azam has a different level of quality" said Gambhir on Star Sports.

The first match of ODI World Cup 2023 will be played between defending champion England and New Zealand at Ahmedabad's Narendra Modi Stadium.

I Love To Put Myself In Challenging Situations: KL Rahul

PNS ■ MOHALI

India's stand-in captain KL Rahul believes it is always good to put himself in "challenging situations", especially after returning from a long injury lay-off.

Leading the side in the first two ODIs against Australia in absence of Rohit Sharma, Rahul struck an unbeaten 58 as India won by five wickets to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match dress rehearsal series before the World Cup.

"Not the first time, always happens with me. I'm used to it,

I love it," Rahul said about leading the side in place of regular skipper Rohit Sharma.

"I think the intensity in the afternoon was great, after Colombo this felt like heaven at the start but it was really hot and humid. It gets tough and physically challenging, but we've all worked on our fitness and that's showing on the field."

Rahul said it was imperative to build a partnership with Suryakumar Yadav (50) once set Shubman Gill (74) and Ruturaj Gaikwad (71) departed.

"After Shubman got out, it was a bit tricky with the set bat-

ter out. But managed to build a good partnership with Surya, need to put myself in such challenging situations.

"We kept talking about hitting good cricket shots, rotating the strike and this is something all our batters are working on. We didn't want to get bogged down, we were always on par so we wanted to take it deep," he said.

Man-of-the-match Mohammed Shami, who returned with brilliant 5 for 51, felt good after bowling his full quota of 10 overs on Friday in hot and humid conditions.


"It depends on the captain and the game situation, but despite the heat you feel like bowling 4-5 overs with the new ball," Shami said of bowling longer spells in the sultry conditions. "I enjoyed the wicket of Marsh, that's a different feeling when you get the outside edge, when you control your swing nicely. It was important to hit the right lengths on this wicket, either at full pace or go slow, but bowling the right lengths were key," he said.

Australia captain Pat Cummins said it was not an overall performance from his

injury-ridden side but hoped the series would help them to build a good rhythm in the run-up to the ODI World Cup starting in India next month.

"Personally, happy to be back. Good to get my first game in India. A few guys batted well, few guys bowled well but overall not good enough.

"(On injuries) They'd probably not be ready for the second game, maybe the third game. Maxi (Glenn Maxwell) has just arrived in India. (Steve) Smith's first hit as well, and Davey (David Warner) was brilliant," he said.



C-1473

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1. Bid reference No

2. Tender Call notice No

3. No of work

4. Bid Value

5. Class of Contractor

6. Period of completion

7. Date and time schedule

:BMC-EED-III-16 2023-24.Dt:-21 / 09 / 2023

:No.. 3174... Dt:- 21 / 09 / 2023

: 10 Nos

: Rs. 2,72,203.00 to Rs. 9,83,028.00

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: .15... Days

Start	End	Opening
11.00 A.M of 22 / 09 / 2023	5 P.M of 28 / 09 / 2023	11.00 A.M 30 / 09 / 2023

8. Name and address of officer inviting BID :Executive Engineer Div-III, (South East Zone)Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation,7R4Q+5Q9, Vivekananda Marg, near Kalpana Square, Bhubaneswar, OdishaPin:-751014.

9. Tender details: Can be seen for the procurement portal: <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>. BMC website <https://www.bmc.gov.in>

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"I just don't really believe in mistakes and worst choices. Everything I have done and not done has made me who I am"
— Elisabeth Moss



ENVIRONMENTAL AWAKENING GADGIL'S REVEALING MEMOIRS

Professor Gadgil's *A Walk Up the Hill* sheds light on the crisis in the Western Ghats, unveiling widespread illegal activities, and conflicts between the Church and political entities, writes **KUMAR CHELLAPPAN**

The memoir, “*A Walk Up the Hill*,” authored by Professor Madhav Gadgil, a distinguished environmental scientist who headed the government-appointed Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel (WGEEP), is poised to make a significant impact in India. The WGEEP was established by the Central Government through an order dated March 4, 2010.

The panel's mandate included assessing the current ecological status of the Western Ghats region, demarcating areas within the Western Ghats region in need of designation as ecologically sensitive, and recommending the notification of such areas as Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZs) under the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986. Additionally, the panel was tasked with making recommendations for the conservation, protection, and rejuvenation of the Western Ghats region, following a comprehensive consultation process involving the people and governments of all concerned states.

The report by the Gadgil committee was presented to then Union Minister for Environment and Forest Jairam Ramesh on August 30, 2011. This, in itself, was a rare event, as a committee usually submits its final report years after it was constituted, availing as many extensions as possible so that the head of the panel and members could continue receiving funds indefinitely.

Though Prof Gadgil was told that the WGEEP report would be made public on September 21, it was not to be. The Government had a change of heart, and the panel members were instructed not to discuss the contents with the public or the media. The Delhi High Court had to intervene to make the report public, and the Ministry for Environment and Forest uploaded it on its website.

The reasons behind the ministry's initial opposition to releasing the report were numerous. What the Gadgil committee members witnessed during their studies across the Western Ghats was shocking. A cabal of private industrialists, contractors, and elected representatives of the people were involved in

plundering the ecologically fragile Western Ghats, despite the resistance of both the local population and the local self-governments. Although the Constitution of India demands that no industrialisation or commercial exploitation of ecologically and environmentally sensitive regions should be undertaken without obtaining green clearance from the local population and the Gram Sabhas, these laws were blatantly violated by politicians, religious leaders, and contractors whose sole ambition was to make more money without making any investment.

“The Western Ghats, the mountain chain running parallel to the west coast of the Indian peninsula, covers an area of 1,60,000 sq km over a stretch of 1,600 km spanning across the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. All over the world, such mountains, endowed as they are with high levels of environmental heterogeneity, are treasure troves of natural diversity. In the Western Ghats, the annual rainfall ranges from as much as 8000 mm in the southwestern corner of upper Nilgiris to a mere 500 mm in the Moyar gorge just 30 km to its east.... The Western Ghats are no ordinary biome. They constitute the water tower of peninsular India, providing water to 245 million people and draining a large part of the country's land surface,” writes Gadgil.

The studies conducted by Gadgil and other ecologists have confirmed the fact that Western Ghats have become an ecological hotspot. Only 7 per cent of the Ghat's primary vegetation has survived and it has 51 critically endangered species. Climate change will cause further stress. Observations and inferences made by Gadgil and others have proved to be true as the entire area that comes under the shadow of the Ghats experience unexpected torrential downpour, landslides and even dry spell lasting months.

The verdant forests and greenery of the region have given way to barren lands. Unabated felling of trees and uncontrolled mining and quarrying have taken its toll as the forest and mining mafia have taken control of the entire stretch. Readers may be remembering forest brigand



THE SHOCKING DISCLOSURES MADE BY THE ECOLOGIST ARE WHAT HE CAME ACROSS IN THE WESTERN GHATS. THE FORESTS, RIVERS, MOUNTAINS AND VALLEYS ARE ON DEATHBED AND ARE ON LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS. THE WESTERN GHATS HAVE BEEN EXPLOITED TO THE HILT BY THE MINING AND TIMBER MAFIA. THE REGION COULD NOT WITHSTAND ANY MORE INVASIONS ON ITS ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Veerappan kidnapping Kannada matinee idol Rajkumar to the Sathyamangalam forests in Tamil Nadu. The reason for the kidnapping was the turf war between various mafia groups engaged in looting the forest wealth, including exotic trees and mining of costly granites from the reserve forests in the Ghats, though Gadgil has steered clear from this part.

The shocking disclosures made by the ecologist are what he came across in the Western Ghats. The forests, rivers, mountains and valleys are on deathbed and are on life support systems. The Western Ghats have been exploited to the hilt by the mining and timber mafia. The region could not withstand any more invasions on its environment and ecology. The WGEEP committee, after a series of brainstorming sessions, suggested to the government that enough was enough and it was time to put a full stop to mining activities and tree felling. Some of the crucial recommendations made by Gadgil and his colleagues include no special economic zones, no new hill stations, rescheduling reservoir operations to improve downstream flows, participatory sand auditing and strict regulation of sand mining, rehabilitation of mined areas with special focus on reviving water resources, promoting organic agricultural practices and precision agricultural practices, strictly controlling use of dynamite and other explosives to kill fish, no mining in areas demarcated as Ecologically Sensitive Zones (ESZ1), where mining exists it should be phased out in five years, by 2016 illegal mining to be stopped immediately, etc. The report was submitted to then minister Jairam Ramesh.

The UPA governments began its hide and seek game with the Gadgil committee report and it refused to divulge the details of the same. The Delhi High Court intervention made the ministry upload the report on its

portal. But the report caused an earthquake in Kerala. The church reacted as if it had seen red despite the fact that it remained a closely guarded secret. Then Bishop of Idukki Mathew Aanikuzhikkattil issued a laity message with instruction to read the same on weekly congregations. He said in the message that the attempt has a diabolic nature and has been conceived to evict the population from the forests. The bishop also alleged that the report if implemented would make hundreds of thousands of people staying in the region homeless and destitute. The campaign was of the same style as we saw in the aftermath of the Citizen Amendment Bill getting legislated in Parliament. A campaign was unleashed across southern India alleging that the Bill was an attempt to get rid of a particular community from India.

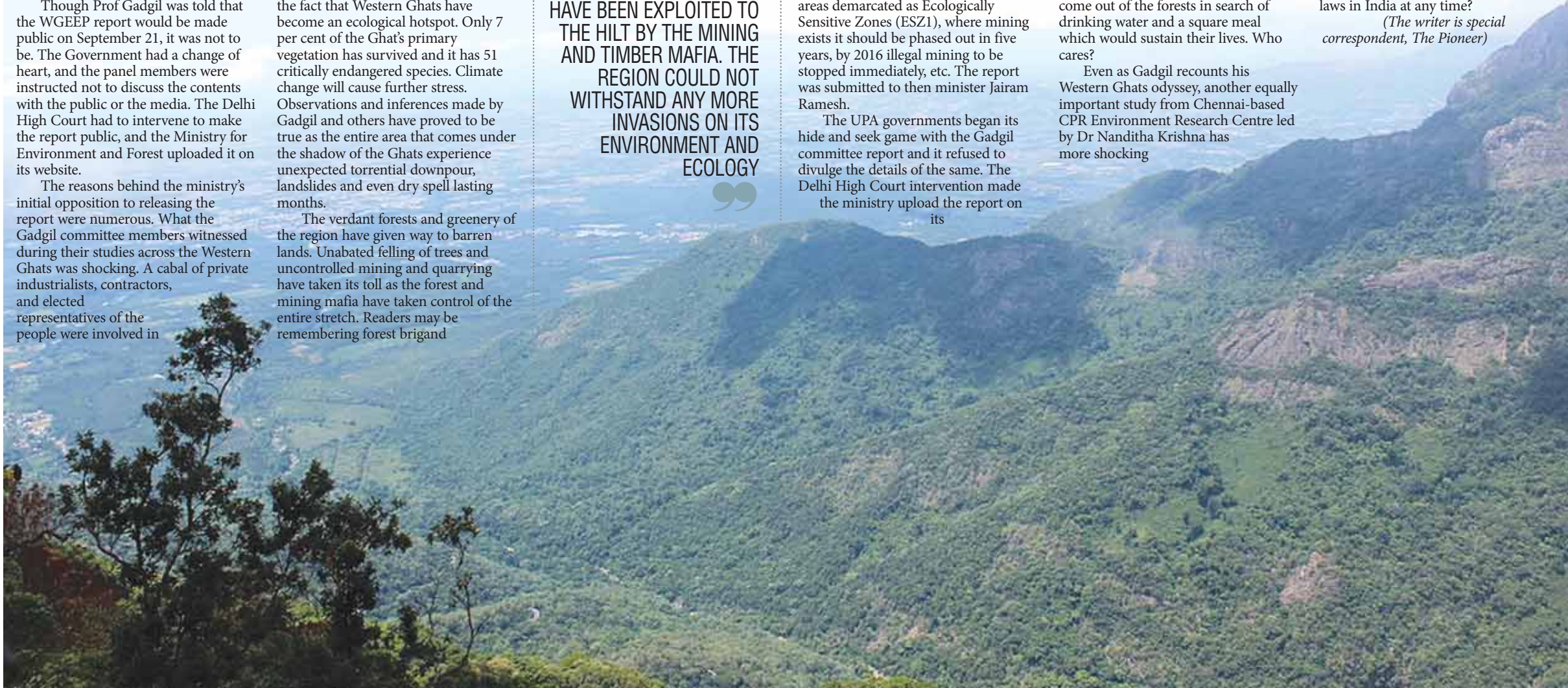
Jolted by the stance of the church, the then Kerala Government passed a resolution in the Assembly condemning the Gadgil committee report. Though Gadgil was a fellow traveller, his comrades in the State had no qualms in lambasting the report. The resentment by the church led the Centre to appoint a committee headed by space scientist Kasturirangan to study the viability and feasibility of the Gadgil report. Kasturirangan did what he was asked to do and the story ended there. The Western Ghats continue its downward slide without any interruption. The man-animal conflict has become a regular event in the region as elephants, leopards and tigers come out of the forests in search of drinking water and a square meal which would sustain their lives. Who cares?

Even as Gadgil recounts his Western Ghats odyssey, another equally important study from Chennai-based CPR Environment Research Centre led by Dr Nanditha Krishna has more shocking

disclosures to make. Sacred groves across India, home to local flora and fauna and mini biosphere reserves have shrunk and most of them have disappeared altogether from the face of the earth. “Sacred groves represent an ancient Indian conservation tradition protected by local people out of reverence, respect and fear. These untouched patches of forest contain some endangered rare and threatened medicinal plant species. The rural folk conserve and preserve species diversity that are the last remnants of native vegetation,” explained Dr Nanditha Krishna, the first winner of Indira Gandhi Paryavaran Puraskaar for her relentless campaign against destruction of sacred groves which are known as Swami Shola, Koil Kadu in Tamil Nadu, Pavithra Vanam in Andhra Pradesh, Kavu in Kerala, Mawlong in Assam and Meghalaya, Mangaoon in Western Ghats, Dev Vana in MP and Karnataka.

This is a unique conservation style which makes use of religion and tradition to preserve ecology as a natural heritage. Wherever there are sacred groves, they are adored as spiritual retreat. Before concluding, let me draw readers attention to what SK Pottekat, the legendary travelogue writer, wrote in 1955 about his experience in Finland. “Pine trees are the main source of income for European countries. When one cuts down a pine tree, he has to convince the authorities that six pine saplings have been planted.” Did we have such laws in India at any time?

(The writer is special correspondent, The Pioneer)



‘LOW-INCOME NATIONS ILL-EQUIPPED FOR CVD FIGHT’

Even as cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) such as stroke, diabetes and hypertension are claiming millions of people prematurely every year, most healthcare facilities in many Low-and Middle-income Countries (LMICs) are unprepared to treat such patients, says a study. It comes as a wakeup call for India which is already facing burgeoning CVDs epidemic, reports ARCHANA JYOTI

Globally, nearly 18 million premature deaths in 2019 were due to CVD, of which 75 per cent were in LMICs, where they are leading causes of death and Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) in adults. Diabetes and hypertension are key risk factors for CVD and amongst the top three risk factors for deaths and disability, globally.

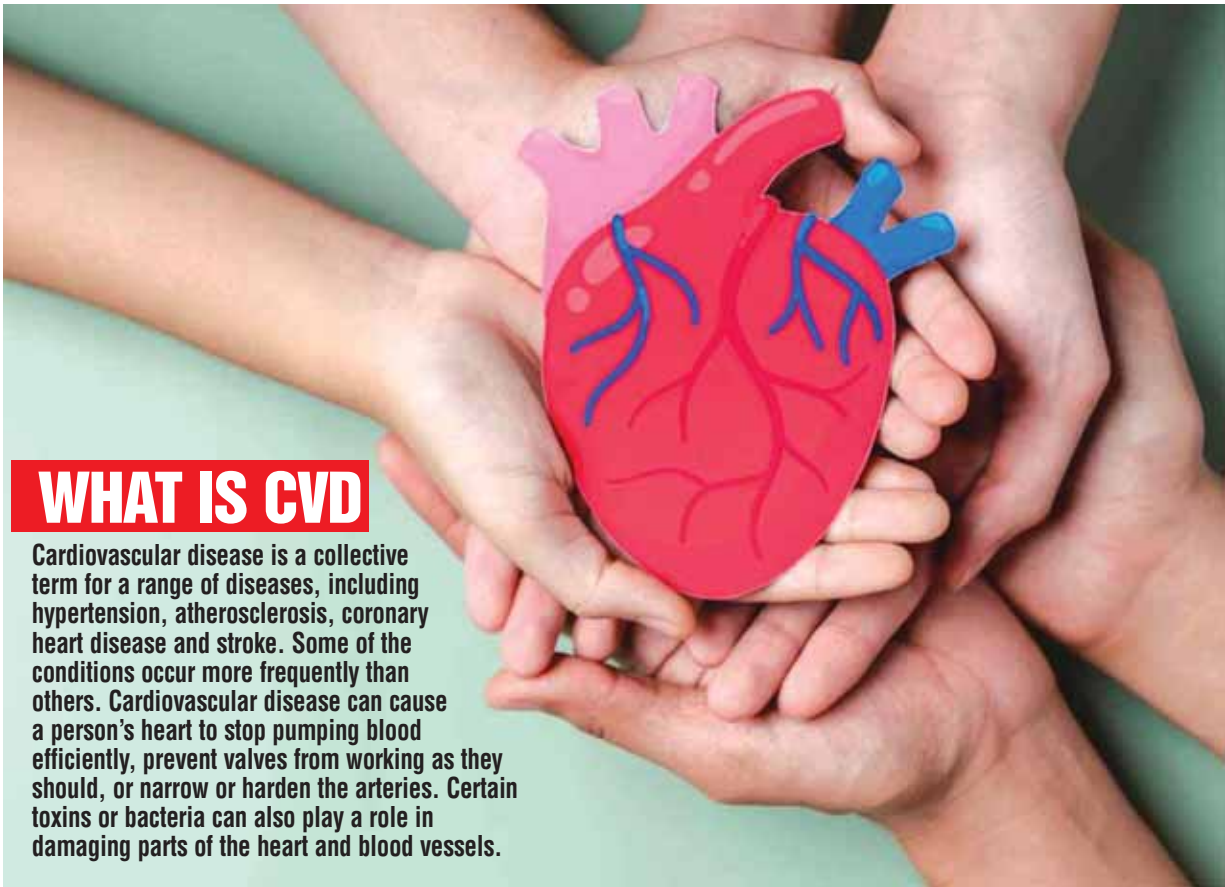
Publishing their findings recently in PLOS Global Public Health, an international team of researchers led by the University of Birmingham, looked at readiness to provide care for HIV or CVD in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Haiti, Malawi, Nepal, Senegal, and Tanzania.

They discovered that most facilities are unprepared to deliver services to treat or manage cardiovascular disease risk factors (CVDRF) such as diabetes and hypertension.

However, the increased investment in facilities to treat HIV – received as part of the drive to meet UN Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets – may form part of a solution to tackle CVDRFs, which have been relatively neglected in terms of receiving global funding and attention. The study authors found that if facilities are able to provide HIV care, they are much more able to supply care for CVDRFs.

They found that despite UN targets to reduce CVDRF, facilities were significantly less ready to provide CVDRF care than HIV care, even though despite years of investment in HIV, facilities were often not ready to fully provide care for HIV.

Lead author Professor Justine Davies, from the University of Birmingham, commented: “We’ve had global targets to reduce burden of CVDRFs since 2011, but tackling the problem requires healthcare services to have all the ingredients to care for patients



WHAT IS CVD

Cardiovascular disease is a collective term for a range of diseases, including hypertension, atherosclerosis, coronary heart disease and stroke. Some of the conditions occur more frequently than others. Cardiovascular disease can cause a person's heart to stop pumping blood efficiently, prevent valves from working as they should, or narrow or harden the arteries. Certain toxins or bacteria can also play a role in damaging parts of the heart and blood vessels.

– including staff, facilities, medicines, or equipment.

“Given the long-term financial investment and advocacy for HIV, we looked to see what readiness to provide care could be achieved with good long-term investment. We then compared readiness for CVD care with that of HIV care. We found that, despite years of investment in HIV, facilities were often not ready to fully provide care. But we found that the situation for CVD was far worse.”

Neil Cockburn, another lead author on the paper from the University of Birmingham, commented: “There needs to be a large scale up of investment to ensure facilities are ready to provide healthcare for people with

CVDRF if global targets are to be met.

“Our findings provide policy makers, funders, and researchers evidence of where there are gaps in service provision which need to be filled to enable achievement of current global health goals.”

The researchers found that in individual countries, readiness across all healthcare facilities to handle CVDRF was generally lower than for HIV. There were consistently weaknesses in information, staffing and medicines. Lack of readiness of facilities to provide CVDRF care in rural and primary care facilities threatens SDG 3.8 to provide high quality universal healthcare for all.

According to health experts,

high blood pressure, air pollution, tobacco use, and elevated LDL cholesterol are among the leading contributors to CVD deaths.

Yet another study published in PLOS One, has called for a multifaceted approach to prevention that includes fiscal, inter-sectoral, public health and health-service level interventions at all—primordial, primary, secondary as well as tertiary—levels.

“Several interventions have already been tested in various low-to-middle income countries and have shown to improve the CVD burden in a cost-effective manner. For example, the Disease Control Priorities report of the World Bank enlists an essential package of interven-

tions that can prove beneficial,” say the authors.

“Some of the interventions enlisted include taxation on tobacco and sugar-sweetened beverages, regulations on processed and salt-rich food, ban on trans-fatty acids, improvements in built environment and introduction of school health programs to encourage physical activity, task-sharing or task shifting in cardiac care, improving screening activities and better use of combination therapy.”

In India too, the situation is grim. The Asian Pacific Society of Cardiology (APSC) recently published a report revealing that heart failure alone leads to 1.8 million hospitalisations each year in India.

Experts have been calling to tighten the noose around the companies marketing highly processed food which are mostly responsible for a spike in CVD with kids also being impacted.

For instance, a report, titled ‘THE JUNK PUSH: Rising Ultra-processed Food Consumption in India — Policy, Politics and Reality’, has recommended stronger policies to protect children from the harmful impact of food marketing.

Most of the products analysed as part of the study are widely consumed brands mainly targeted at children. These included packaged products high in fat, sugar and salt (HFSS) or ultra-processed foods (UPF), such as chips, cookies, sweets, soft beverages, instant noodles, sugary cereals, frozen meals, ice cream, bakery items, and chocolates.

According to the document, their advertisements were found to be in violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, with some of them even violating the Food Standard and Safety Act, 2006, as they hid crucial information related to nutrients of concern.

“None of the legal frameworks or guidelines in India has the potential to stop most of the misleading advertisements of prepackaged junk or HFSS foods, or to ban misleading claims or warn people about the risks to health,” said Dr Arun Gupta from Delhi-based nutrition think tank Nutrition Advocacy in Public Interest (NAPI) which has prepared the report.

He said that cardiovascular disease risk factors starting in childhood have important implications for health, quality of life, health care costs and societal costs across the whole life course. Facing challenges with resources, it is time to work on prevention rather than waiting to be cured, Dr Gupta said matter-of-factly.

DECODED: How toxic proteins accumulate in Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s?

When Tau protein -- part of the brain’s infrastructure -- gets knotted up into tangles, it turns toxic to injure brain tissue, causing tauopathies, a group of neurodegenerative brain diseases such as Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s and other brain diseases, researchers have found. The HEALTH PIONEER shares the findings published in the journal Molecular Psychiatry

Under normal circumstances, tau protein is part of the brain’s infrastructure, important for stabilizing neurons into their proper shapes. But sometimes tau gets knotted up into tangles and turns toxic, injuring brain tissue and causing tauopathies, a group of brain diseases characterized by problems with learning, memory and movement. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common tauopathy, but the group also includes Parkinson’s disease, chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) and several rare genetic conditions.

In search of ways to prevent these destructive tau tangles, researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis have identified a key step in their development. Intervening at this step potentially could forestall the destructive cascade of events that results in brain damage, the researchers said. The findings are published in the journal Molecular Psychiatry.

“Tauopathies are devastating diseases that have limited treatment options right now, and they all have this feature of tau aggregation,” said senior author Celeste Karch, PhD, a

professor of psychiatry. “We’ve been thinking for a long time about whether there are factors that impact that common process of tau aggregation and if so, whether we could target those factors as a novel approach to treatment. These findings move us one step closer to finding a way to intervene and stop the process of tau aggregation that leads to dementia.”

First author Reshma Bhagat, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher, came up with the idea of looking for such factors among a group of RNA molecules known as long noncoding RNAs (lncRNAs) that are not translated into proteins. Historically, RNA has not been considered an active element in biological processes, and most disease research has not focused on them. Only in the past decade have scientists recognized that these RNA molecules can play critical roles in disease processes. Bhagat became interested in lncRNAs because they are involved in regulating diverse cellular processes and have been implicated in cancers.

To investigate the role of lncRNAs in tauopathies, the researchers started with skin



cells from three people with a genetic tauopathy, each of whom carried a different mutation in the tau gene. Using molecular techniques, the researchers converted the skin cells into brain neurons that carry each of the three mutations. For comparison, they used a molecular technique known as CRISPR to correct the mutations in some of the skin cells before converting them into neurons. In this way, they were able to obtain human brain cells with and without tau mutations, which didn’t require using human brain tissue.

Using these cells, the researchers identified 15 lncRNAs that were significantly increased or decreased in brain cells with tau mutations compared to their genetically matched controls. One lncRNA in particular stood out: SNHG8, which was low not only in the three human brain cells with tau mutations but also in mice with a tau mutation and in brain samples from people who had died of any of three different tauopathies: Alzheimer’s disease, frontotemporal lobar degeneration with tau pathology, or progressive supranuclear palsy. In other

words, SNHG8 levels were down in tauopathies regardless of mutation, species or disease — all signs that point to its role in a common pathological process.

Further investigation revealed that neurons with low SNHG8 levels also had high levels of stress granules, RNA-protein complexes that form to help cells survive stressful situations such as excessive heat or low oxygen and disintegrate once the threat passes. Stress granules are rich in tau, and therein lies the danger. If too many stress granules form or if they con-

tain mutated tau particularly prone to tangling — as is the case in genetic tauopathies — stress granules can kickstart the aggregation process by concentrating tau.

“If we could somehow target this stress-induced protein-aggregation pathway, maybe we can inhibit the development of tau pathology,” Bhagat said.

Bhagat went back to the human neurons with tau mutations, the ones she had developed out of skin cells from tauopathy patients. These cells exhibited persistently low levels of SNHG8 and high levels of stress granules. By replacing the missing SNHG8, she was able to bring down the levels of stress granules in such cells.

“That’s really the killer experiment,” Karch said. “That shows that lncRNAs are impacting stress granule formation and that this pathway can be targeted to treat, potentially, a variety of tauopathies.”

Bhagat, Karch and colleagues are working on identifying compounds that can shore up SNHG8 levels and looking at the effects of such compounds in animal models of tau aggregation and tauopathy.

HEALTH BRIEFS

CADILA PHARMA PHASE I CLINICAL TRIAL FOR CHICKEN POX SHOT: SEC RECOMMENDS NOD FOR TRIAL

The Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on vaccines, which reviews proposals and advises the Drugs Controller General (India) in matters for biologicals and post approval change proposals, has recommended granting nod to Gujarat-based Cadila Pharmaceuticals to conduct phase I clinical trial for its chicken pox vaccine.

The decision was taken in a recent meeting last month of the SEC after the company submitted a revised phase I clinical trial protocol for grant of permission to conduct the trial for Varicella-Zoster Virus (VZV) vaccine.

The pharma firm had earlier submitted its proposal for grant of permission to conduct Phase I clinical trial of its Varicella-Zoster virus (VZV) vaccine along with preclinical data and it was considered in a SEC meeting held on May 16.

The SEC, during then, after detailed deliberation

recommended that the company should submit single dose toxicity data as per the provisions of the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019.

Further, it recommended, the firm should revise the phase I clinical trial protocol with some changes such as the volume of blood to be withdrawn for analysis should be reduced.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) Varicella (chickenpox) is an acute, highly contagious disease caused by varicella-zoster virus (VZV), a member of the herpesvirus family.

“Only one serotype of VZV is known, and humans are the only reservoir. Following infection, the virus remains latent in neural ganglia and in about 10-20% of cases it is reactivated to cause herpes zoster, or shingles, generally in persons over 50 years of age or immunocompromised individuals,” it said.

THIS ROBOT CAN NAVIGATE LIVING LUNG TISSUE TO DETECT TUMOR

Scientists from the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill and Vanderbilt University in the US have developed a robot that can autonomously traverse human lungs, enabling physicians to reach tumours that are extremely small and hide deep within tissues.

The robot with an autonomous steerable needle can go from "Point A" to "Point B" while avoiding important structures, such as tiny airways and blood vessels, in a living laboratory model.

"This technology allows us to reach targets we can't otherwise reach with a standard or even robotic bron-

choscope," said Jason Akulian, from the UNC Department of Medicine. "It gives you that extra few centimeters or a few millimeters even, which would help immensely with pursuing small targets in the lungs," he added.

The robot, detailed in the journal Science Robotics, is made of several separate components. A mechanical control provides controlled thrust of the needle to go forward and backward and the needle design allows for steering along curved paths. The needle is made from a nickel-titanium alloy and has been laser etched to increase its flexibility.

QCI CALLS FOR HEALTHCARE QUALITY INTERVENTIONS IN RURAL AREAS

The Quality Council of India (QCI) has highlighted the importance of initiating healthcare quality interventions in rural areas and tier 2 and tier 3 cities with the launch of Digital Health Accreditation Standards for Hospitals among others.

In order to achieve the goal of patient safety, the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) has recently released new standards including 1st Edition of Digital Health Accreditation Standards for Hospitals, Entry Level Certification Standards for Dental Clinics, Care Home Accreditation Standards and 3rd Edition of Accreditation Standards for Dental Service Providers among others to ensure patient safety at the grassroots level.

The NABH is a constituent board of QCI, set up to establish and operate accreditation programmes for healthcare organisations.

Jaxay Shah, chairperson, QCI, said, “We believe that quality change begins at the very foundation of our healthcare system, not limited to only metropolitan cities but also in the rural and tier 2 and tier 3 cities of India.”

Dr RP Singh, secretary general, QCI said, “Recognizing the profound significance of quality and well-being of patients, a robust quality ecosystem in healthcare is not only crucial for elevating our healthcare industry but also for positioning it firmly on the global map.”

Dr. Atul Mohan Kochhar, CEO, NABH emphasized on the intricate link between technology and patient safety.

NEUBERG DIAGNOSTIC STRENGTHENS ITS POSITION IN SECTOR

Neuberg Diagnostics Private Limited, a prominent player in the diagnostics sector with a global presence, has announced the successful merger of Neuberg Supratech Reference Laboratory, Ahmedabad, and Neuberg Anand Reference Laboratory, Bangalore, into Neuberg Diagnostics Private Limited. This merger has been facilitated through an NCLT court-based process, further solidifying Neuberg

Diagnostics' position as a frontrunner in the diagnostic industry.

Dr GSK Velu, chairman and managing director of Neuberg Diagnostics said, “The merger marks a significant step forward in our journey to provide unparalleled healthcare solutions. By integrating these renowned laboratories, we reinforce our commitment to delivering excellence in diagnostics and patient care.”

TECHEAGLE, AIIM JODHPUR BID TO REACHOUT TO TRIBALS

TechEagle, India's leading drone delivery company, announces partnership with AIIMS Jodhpur to deliver healthcare essentials for the tribal population. Its state-of-the-art, hybrid e-VTOL Drone, Vertiplane X3 took off for its maiden flight from Sirahi carrying medicines to Waloriya, a location habited by the tribal population. AIIMS, Jodhpur is recognised as a “Centre of Excellence

(COE) for Tribal Health” by the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Vikram Singh Meena, founder & CEO of TechEagle said, “Time is the most crucial dimension when we talk about emergency healthcare as every second is important in such a scenario and by deploying innovative solutions such as drones a lot of time could be saved and in turn lives.”

Khalistan terror: Globalised 21st century challenge

The rise of Sikh ethno-nationalism in the 1980s posed a threat to India's territorial integrity. Since then, it has transcended the borders of India. The way the 21st-century Khalistan movement is shaped and propagated to its followers is markedly different from the violent upsurge of the 1980s. It is much more globalised now. While hardcore advocates like Amritpal Singh have followed in the footsteps of the Bhindranwale cult, the worldwide network of Khalistani sympathisers has provided the movement with an easier source of sustenance than in the past.

The history of Khalistan lies in the roots of Sikhism. The revered Sikh religion was founded by Guru Nanak in Punjab in the 15th century. It boasts more than 25 million followers worldwide, with Sikhs constituting a minority group in India, making up less than 2 per cent of the country's total population of 1.4 billion today. However, they are a majority in their home State of Punjab.

The word "Khalistan" signifies the establishment of an ethno-religious sovereign state for the Sikhs, referred to as the land of the Khalsa. This is defined as the "land of the pure." Additionally, Khalsa encompasses both a community of believers who consider Sikhism their faith and a group of initiated Sikhs. Devout orthodox Sikhs are ritually admitted to this community upon reaching puberty. The very concept of Khalsa was established by the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, in the year 1699.

However, the demand for the establishment of Khalistan is a relatively recent development, originating during the period of British colonialism in India. It primarily emerged in the Punjab region. Some proponents of Khalistan assert that their envisioned state encompasses the current Punjab State, while others advocate for the inclusion of the Punjab region in Pakistan, along with a demand to incorporate other significant neighbouring states such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and the Chandigarh region.

Furthermore, Shimla and Lahore are considered the two potential capitals of Khalistan. The original call for the formation of Khalistan was, in fact, a response to the Pakistan Resolution of 1940. This resolution, also known as the Lahore Resolution, was authored and prepared by Muhammad Zafarullah Khan and ratified by the All India



Muslim League on March 23, 1940. The term "Khalistan" was first coined by Dr VS Bhatti to signify an independent Sikh State in March 1940.

The primary objective behind the Khalistan demand was to secure better representation for Sikhs in political institutions and to establish a homeland for the community. After the partition of India in 1947, the Sikhs were deeply affected as Punjab was divided into two parts — one remained with India and the other with Pakistan. This further fueled the demand for a Sikh homeland.

The Canadian connection to the Khalistan movement is longstanding. The current controversy surrounding Khalistan has strained the relationship between India and Canada, particularly after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated in Canada's Parliament that there were credible allegations linking Indian Government agents to the June murder of the Sikh separatist leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar. The Indian Government promptly denied any involvement in Nijjar's killing. It is evident that Trudeau is attempting to avoid openly addressing the issue of

the growing Khalistan movement in Canada.

India has repeatedly accused Canada of continuously supporting the Khalistan movement, which is banned in India. However, this movement enjoys widespread popularity among a substantial section of Sikhs worldwide.

What Trudeau is doing today amounts to nothing more than resorting to vote bank politics in Canada. According to Indian estimates, nearly 8,000-9,000 Khalistani radicals exert influence over approximately 15 gurdwaras, using them as centres for fundraising and garnering support for political parties in Canada. Their primary sphere of influence lies in political mobilisation in Brampton, Ontario, as well as Vancouver and Surrey in British Columbia. Instead, Trudeau should have recognised the gravity of the situation and cooperated with the Indian Government in expelling all Khalistani activists from his country.

The day will come when they may pose a potential security threat to Trudeau's fellow citizens. There is an abundance of evidence pointing to

the growth of Sikh militancy in Canada. In June 2020, Indian intelligence agencies issued a warning that criminal gangs based in Canada, comprising Indian expatriates from Punjab, including Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), are directly providing funding to the Khalistanis. The infamous Dhaliwal and Grewal gangs, operating in the British Columbia Province and involved in a drug-trafficking network, have connections to Gurpatwant Singh Pannu of the SFJ. Additionally, another notorious syndicate called the Brother's Keepers of Vancouver has been linked to these gangs.

Furthermore, the SFJ is establishing close links with the Pakistani establishment and agencies in order to reignite the Khalistan movement. It is reported that the SFJ is diligently working to organise a referendum for self-determination on the issue of Khalistan. Canadian authorities must take note that SFJ activists in Punjab and the Tarai region of Uttar Pradesh are consistently receiving substantial funds from gangs based in that country.

Pannun has issued a threat to Indo-Canadian Hindus, urging them to leave Canada and

return to India. In a public video message, he stated, "Indo-Canadian Hindus, you have renounced your allegiance to Canada and the Canadian Constitution. Your destination is India. Leave Canada and go to India."

This has sparked another diplomatic dispute between India and Canada. This will result in significant economic losses for both nations. Moreover, the expulsion of diplomatic staff from both sides, along with visa restrictions, will only lead to a severe strain in their bilateral relations.

"While there is currently no active insurgency in Punjab, there has been ongoing support for the Khalistan movement in the State. Consequently, successive Central governments issued repeated warnings about Khalistanis attempting a resurgence and seeking to influence the youth of Punjab."

Moreover, Punjab's political instability, fueled by infighting within the Congress and the rise of the Aam Aadmi Party to power, has created an environment where neighbouring Pakistan, its state agencies, and Sikh extremist factions based in Canada have been relentless in their efforts

to destabilise Punjab in recent times.

The warning issued by Ganga Singh Dhillon was stark: "We are not seeking just a piece of land. We are looking for a territory where Sikhs can safeguard their women and children. Where a Sikh can determine his own destiny — where our religious shrines are not subject to being overrun by army tanks. You can call it an independent Punjab, a sovereign state, or Khalistan. What we are requesting is a homeland for the Sikh nation" ("Give us Khalistan and leave us in peace," *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, July 21, 1985).

However, Harjot strongly contends that the emotional attachment with Punjab among Sikhs is relatively recent and does not trace back to the early days of the Sikh community as some Khalistan ideologues might assert today. It is the convergence of history and geography, discourse and space, territoriality and metacommentaries that has transformed Punjab into Khalistan. Both Punjab and Khalistan are human-made constructs, and there is nothing inherently natural about them (Harjot S Oberoi, "From Punjab to

Khalistan: Territoriality and Metacommentary, Pacific Affairs, Spring 1987)

Answers to these underlying currents are not very difficult to find in a globalised world. We are all part of a flat world where identities and cultural insignia are often overshadowed by economic desires, in contrast to what we experienced in a pre-globalised era. Migration has become a way of life. As more and more Sikhs migrated abroad, particularly to the US, the UK, and Canada for a better life, these extremist elements started relying on this extensive diaspora for their sustenance.

Back in India, all these groups are banned, and authorities are closely monitoring their activities and local connections. Consequently, they have found Canada to be a favourable ground for promoting and motivating many youths to support their agenda. For a long time, Khalistanis have been organising against India in Canada, and successive administrations in Ottawa are well aware of this.

Trudeau should not have aligned himself with one of the banned terror groups in India. He is well aware that he is on the wrong side. These Khalistanis have no allegiances; they simply want to keep their agenda alive so that their supporters and sympathisers remain intact for the long run.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi extended a helping hand to Trudeau, and he should have responded by taking decisive action to eradicate these criminal gangs from Canadian soil altogether.

We all must understand that terrorists recognise no religion or boundaries. They are enemies of civil society and universally recognised liberties of modern society. They stand against peace and humanity. As two democracies, India and Canada must join forces in the fight against Khalistanis. It is now time to prevent them from spreading their agenda and destabilising peace in both countries. The resurgence of the Khalistani movement is a warning signal for both Punjab and all of India. This must be addressed with a superior security and intelligence strategy and network. Undoubtedly, Delhi today possesses much stronger anti-terror infrastructure and more robust leadership than it did in the 1980s to deal with Bhindranwale-like symptoms.

(The writer is currently president of the Global Research Foundation)

The rise of Sikh ethno-nationalism in the 1980s threatened India's integrity. Today's Khalistan movement is more globalised, with a worldwide network of sympathisers. Khalistan movement has ties to Canada, straining India-Canada relations. Khalistanis aim to influence Sikh youth in Punjab. Addressing this threat requires a robust security and intelligence approach. It is imperative for India and Canada to collaborate against terrorism, transcending boundaries and religions.



MAKHAN SAINI

PERSPECTIVE

India's healthcare in uncertain times

Health insurance is vital, especially during unpredictable times like the Covid-19 pandemic. It helps cover medical expenses and provides financial security. India has made progress in healthcare accessibility through schemes like RSBY and AB-PMJAY, aiming to leave no one behind



DIPANSHU NIJJANANDI

Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, individuals experienced the unfortunate loss of their loved ones, and a significant portion of them also had the dual burden of losing both loved ones and financial resources while their hospitalisation for treatment. There exists a well-known adage that posits food, clothing, and shelter as the fundamental necessities of human existence.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge an additional element that is often overlooked by the majority of individuals: the acquisition of health insurance. The natural world displays a significant degree of unpredictability and predictability, which is mirrored in the fragility of human existence. Any form of misfortune has the potential to lead to varying degrees of harm, ranging from minor injuries to severe consequences, including loss of life. Sickness or disease does not give advance notice before affecting the human body.

While it is indeed accurate that money cannot purchase life itself, it can provide assistance in navigating challenging circumstances for both individuals

and their families. In contemporary society, possessing a robust health insurance coverage is imperative due to the prevailing uncertainties. It is a cornerstone of personal financial planning, encompassing an individual's comprehensive financial inflows and outflows.

A significant portion of the population lacks awareness regarding medical inflation, of medical inflation, which is the highest form of inflation. Specifically, it compounds at an annual rate of 15 per cent. This implies that a medical treatment currently priced at ₹10,00,000 will escalate to ₹40,00,000 over a period of ten years. Therefore, one may comprehend the significance of possessing a comprehensive health insurance policy.

Undoubtedly, India's healthcare infrastructure has shown significant progress in recent years. In order to provide universal access to healthcare services for all citizens inside the nation, the government has implemented various measures. The Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-



PMJAY) are India's two main public health insurance schemes. RSBY was established in 2008 to offer those living in poverty access to health insurance. The scheme has now been combined with the 2018-born AB-PMJAY. This programme was created to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and its overarching promise to "leave no one behind".

Aiming to cover 100 million households, or around 500 million individuals, nationwide with health insurance, is AB-PMJAY. As of April 2023, data from the National Health Authority shows that over 50 million hospitalisations under AB-PMJAY had been authorised, with a total cost exceeding ₹80,000 crore. Additionally, the programme has enrolled over 23,000 hos-

pitals nationwide, which offer beneficiaries a wide range of medical services.

As of March 2022, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) reported 62 non-life insurance companies in operation, with 29 offering health insurance products. In addition, the country possessed a total of six autonomous health insurance carriers.

According to data from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), the health insurance market in India has experienced significant growth over a period of time. As of March 2022, health insurance companies had accumulated a total of INR 64,230 crores in premiums, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 15.2 per cent. During the corresponding time period, a total of 7.69 crore policies were successfully sold, indicating a growth rate of 12.6 per cent compared to the previous year.

In today's era, it is crucial for individuals to protect their families by obtaining comprehensive health insurance coverage to guard against unforeseen medical emergencies.

There are some crucial factors to take into consideration before purchasing a health insurance policy:

- 1) The sum insured ideally should be 15 to 20 times of your annual income.
- 2) Purchase super top up policy along with base insurance policy to increase sum insured cover, once your base policy cover will exhaust then super top up will come into existence.
- 3) If you are a family person then go for family floater plans.
- 4) Claim settlement ratio should be above 95 per cent.
- 5) High number of network hospitals with cashless treatment facilities.
- 6) Pre and post hospitalisation expenses should be covered.
- 7) Less waiting period for named ailment and pre-existing diseases.
- 8) No claim bonus or cumulative bonus in case of claims also should be there.
- 9) No room rent capping should be there in the policy.
- 10) Policy should have day care; in-patient care treatment, ICU cover and ambulance cover up to sum insured with-

out any capping.

11) Automatic unlimited recharge or restoration benefits should be there for unrelated or the same illness without any waiting period.

12) Covid-19, Ayush treatments, domiciliary hospitalisation and organ donor cover should be there up to sum insured.

13) Ideally claim settlement should be done within 30 days of last document submission to the hospital or insured by the insurance company.

14) No Co-payment clause should be there.

Given the substantial cost of healthcare in India, the inclusion of health insurance is an essential element in individual financial strategising. Health insurance provides individuals and families with a sense of security by safeguarding them from the economic strain caused by medical emergencies. This is made possible by the availability of many insurance plans and the benefits offered by insurance providers.

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