

OPINION 6
CANADA MUST REIN
IN EXTREMISTS

WORLD 8
NEPAL, CHINA SIGN
12 AGREEMENTS

MONEY 10
SENSEX, NIFTY END 4-DAY
LOSING STREAK

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11 SPORT

GOLD RUSH FOR INDIA AT ASIAN GAMES

TEAM INDIA HOISTS THE TIRANGA IN CHINA

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

In a stunning display of skill, the Indian women's cricket team secured victory over Sri Lanka, claiming the gold medal in Asian Games 2023 in Hangzhou in China on Monday. In another remarkable feat, India not only set a new world record but also secured the gold in the men's 10 air rifle team event on Day 2 of the Asian Games.

Rookie pacer Titas Sadhu singlehandedly earned a gold medal for the Indian women's cricket team in its maiden appearance as it defeated Sri Lanka by 19 runs in a low-scoring final of the Asian Games here on Monday.

On a pitch difficult for batting, the Indian women's team struggled to 116 for seven but it was just about par score.

However Titas, who is just four days shy of her 19th birthday, bowled a devastating first spell and finished with superb figures of 4-1-6-3 to play a big role in restricting Sri Lanka to 97 for eight in 20 overs.

She had an able ally in leg-spinner Devika Vaidya (4-0-15-1), who kept a tight leash on the islanders.

Left-arm spinner Rajeshwari Gayakwad (3-0-20-2) and off-spinner Deepti Sharma (4-0-25-1) started off

badly but were on target during the back-end as Indian women always looked in complete control.

This was one gold medal that India were expected to win, but the standard of cricket was pretty poor, and the nature of wicket didn't help matters.

Teenage pace sensation Sadhu on Monday said "staying calm" and "playing according to the plan" devised during mid-innings was key to winning the gold medal in their maiden Asian Games appearance, despite posting a below-par total on the board in the final here on Sunday.

"We all had a clear plan of what we had to do. Obviously, we got a good momentum in the first over itself. We had discussed during the innings break that we will keep calm and stick to what we had decided," said Sadhu, who returned with impressive figures of 3 for 6 from her four overs.

"The way we came back into the match showed exactly that," she added.

The 18-year-old right-arm medium pacer from Bengal was delighted to win the gold for the country in the continental showpiece.

"It was a great opportunity we got this time, and the fact that we were able to grab that



Indian players pose for photos after winning the gold medal in the women's cricket event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou in China on Monday

PTI

opportunity, I'm very glad and grateful," Sadhu said.

In shooting, Indian shooters made a telling statement at

the Asian Games, winning three medals, including a team gold, as the country's marksmen asserted their class by

grabbing five podium finishes in just two days of competition here.

A confident Indian 10m air

rifle team led by teenage world champion Rudranksh Patil gave the country its first gold medal at the continental

Games, securing the top place on the podium with a world record score on Monday.

Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar then earned the country an individual bronze — India's fourth in shooting so far — in the event after a keen duel with compatriot Rudranksh, who finished fourth.

The 25m rapid-fire team, comprising Adarsh Singh, Anish Bhanwala and Vijayveer Sidhu, took the third spot with an aggregate score of 1718 after a tie with Indonesia.

China took the gold with a score of 1765, while South Korea bagged silver, aggregating 1734.

The trio of Rudranksh, Olympian Divyansh Singh Panwar and Aishwary aggregated 1893.7 in the qualification round to beat back the challenge of the shooting powerhouse China and South Korea on way to the 10m air rifle team gold.

In one of the most dominating displays seen by Indian air rifle shooters in multi-discipline events, the 19-year-old Rudranksh shot a superb 632.5, Tomar 631.6 and Panwar 629.6 to aggregate the world record score as South Korea was pushed to second spot (1890.1), while the Chinese team was a distant third with an aggregate score of

1888.2.

Meanwhile, Naorem Roshibina Devi qualified for the semi-finals in the Women's 60 kg Wushu (Sanda) to assure India of another medal in the Asian Games, here on Monday.

She outplayed her opening opponent in the quarterfinal, Aiman Karshyga of Kazakhstan, convincingly through points difference.

Roshibina Devi had won the bronze medal at the last Asian Games in the same category. Notably, she was a gold medalist in the same category at the 2019 South Asian Games.

In the men's section, Surya Bhanu Partap Singh reached quarterfinals after winning his pre-quarters bout against Islombek Khaydarov of Uzbekistan in the 60kg category in Sanda.

His bout lasted three rounds as the Indian prevailed 2-1. Partap, also a bronze medalist from the previous edition of the Asian Games, has won a couple of medals of the same colour in the World Wushu Championships.

He also won the gold medal in the 2016 South Asian Games. In the final men's bout of the day in the 65 kg category, Vikrant Baliyan was knocked out in the pre-quarters by Samuel Marbun of Indonesia by a 1-2 margin.

Mahanga double murder

Trouble mounts for BJD MLA Pratap Jena

JMFC Court directs to continue case in BBSR

RAJESH BEHERA
■ KENDRAPADA

Trouble started for Mahanga BJD MLA Pratap Jena as the JMFC Salipur on Monday directed to continue the case against him in the 2021 double murder case.

While adjudging the case, the court passed the order after going through the case record, statements of complainant recorded under Section 202 CrPc and other available materials on record.

"It is found that the accused Pratap Kumar Jena is the MLA of Mahanga constituency. Hence, the case record be transferred to the court of Additional District and Ses-



sion Judge-cum-Special Court, Bhubaneswar for disposal in accordance to law," the JMFC Court in its order stated.

Notably, BJP leader Kulamani Baral, who was the block Chairman of Mahanga, and his associate Dibyasingha Baral were brutally killed on January 2, 2021 while they were returning home on a bike. Some miscreants attacked them with sharp-edged weap-

ons near Jankoti in Mahanga of Cuttack.

Later, the prime accused in the case, Prafulla Biswal, was found dead under mysterious circumstances near Govindpur area in Tangi of Cuttack district.

One Ranjit Kumar Baral, son of Kulamani Baral filed a ICC case at JMFC Court of Salipur.

The complainant's lawyer Prabin Kanungo said, "The court ordered that the case under IPC sections stands after going through various documents, police record, CDR, and other statements including that of the complainant and witnesses. The court has also transferred the case to Bhubaneswar court. As per the legal procedure, a notice will be served to the accused to appear before the court."

Drunken brawl in K'pada Youth stabbed to death by friends

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

A youth was stabbed to death by his friends on Monday at Dhumat Sasan under the Nikirai police station in Kendrapada district. The deceased was identified as Trilochan Malik (30) of Charigaon village. Trilochan was consuming liquor with five other friends when he had an altercation with a youth Munna. Losing his cool, Munna took out a knife and stabbed him.

Later, Munna and four others fled from the spot leaving Trilochan bleeding profusely.

Locals rushed Trilochan to the Indupur hospital but the doctor there declared him brought dead. The Nikirai police rushed to the spot and sent the body to the District Headquarters Hospital for postmortem. Police have registered a case and began a hunt to nab the absconding accused, said Pattamundai SDPO Khyamasagar Panda.

Tusker kills forest watcher in Sundargarh

MALAY RAY ■ SUNDARGARH

A forest watcher was killed by a tusker on wee hours of Monday in Bargaon forest range under Sundargarh forest division. The incident occurred just after about 24 hours of death of an elderly man and a woman was critically injured in a tusker attack in Sundargarh forest range.

According to sources, a tusker entered into Timna village under Bargaon forest range in Sundargarh forest division at around 2.30 am on Monday and marched towards a house of one Jato Toppo and tried to damage the house of Toppo. When Toppo heard the sound of tusker, he screamed and the family members of Toppo came out of the house.

Toppo's son Bipin Toppo (43), who works as a watcher in Timna Van Surakha



Samiti, started running to escape from tusker attack but the tusker picked him by its trunk, rolled him and threw him on the ground. Bipin sustained critical injuries. The tusker thereafter went towards Udaranga reserve forest.

The forest squad of Bargaon

forest range, who was driving away a 20-member elephant herd in other area, after coming to know about the tusker attack, reached the spot and called 108 ambulance and critically injured Bipin was taken to Bargaon community health centre, where he was declared

brought dead.

On Monday, the post mortem of the deceased was done and his body was handed over to his family. As per provision, the compensation amount will be given to family members of Bipin, after completion of necessary formalities.

No 'Ministers Vs officers' in Odisha: CM

Defends 5T Secretary's chopper visits for grievance hearing

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday asserted that there is no clash between the roles of Ministers and officers in the State.

He said the Chief Minister Grievance Cell is always handled by the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) and the Ministers are not required to attend the same in Bhubaneswar.

Making a statement in the State Assembly over the opposition criticism that the government is being run by officials, Patnaik said the CM Grievance Cell is handled by

the CMO; and as per the CM's directions, officers from the CMO conduct a decentralised grievances cell in all the districts.

He said once the petitions are received, they are sent to the concerned departments.

"Where is the issue of ministers versus officers in this? Ministers have played a major role as heads of the departments in resolving the petitions," Patnaik said.

He said that it's teamwork at the highest level professionally done in a democratic setting.

He said, "My government has always given top priority to peoples' grievance redressal."

The CM's statement came even as the Question Hour was

stalled as opposition BJP members created a ruckus alleging that democracy has been destroyed in the State. They claimed that Ministers are sidelined as bureaucrats dominate the administration.

"Before Covid-19 happened, the CMO used to hold grievance hearings in Bhubaneswar. People from all over the State used to come and submit their grievances and there was a robust system to solve them. It gave hope to the people to reach out to the highest office of the State," he said.

According to the CM, during Covid-19 the CM grievance cell was closed due to restrictions for almost two years. It was restarted after normalcy returned. However, post-



Covid-19 the average number of grievances and people coming to grievance cells had come down.

"I thought of reaching out to the people by taking the

CM Grievance Cell to the doorsteps of the people to cover all blocks and urban local bodies of the State in the shortest period possible," he informed.

"The CM Grievance Cell is handled by the CMO; and as per my directions, officers from the CMO conducted decentralised grievances cells in all the districts. This mammoth exercise was carried out in more than 190 locations over a period of six months. Every day, three to five venues were covered and in the process, 57,442 petitions were collected from the people; and as of date, 43,536 petitions have been resolved or disposed of," Patnaik elaborated.

"The entire exercise is transparent and technology-driven. All the petitions and the ac-

tion-taken reports and the stage of disposal are available in the Janasunani portal. Legacy issues have been resolved in follow-up meetings. Within the next two to three months, most of these historic issues pending for years together will be resolved," he added.

"The aim is to resolve people's grievances in the best possible manner. If all these 57,000 petitioners (most are community petitions) had to come to Bhubaneswar to attend CM Grievance Cell, how much money they would have had to spend on travel and stay, and how much wage loss they would have suffered? All this has been saved by the CM Grievance Cell travelling to the doorsteps of people," he said.

On the chopper issue raised by the Opposition, the CM said, "I would like to clarify that it would have taken one and a half years to do the same exercise by road vis-a-vis by chopper. Every day conducting three to five meetings in different locations is humanly impossible within a window of 10.00 am to 3.00 pm which is convenient to people. In the last three and a half years, we have spent about Rs 40 crore on chopper."

"On an average Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore is spent on chopper every month. In the past six months when chopper was used intensively to reach out to the people, the average expenditure was the same around Rs 1 crore to Rs 1.5 crore per month. It's com-

pletely false and misleading to say that excess expenditure has been made," he said.

"The Opposition members should be happy that so many grievances in their areas have also been resolved. I do not understand how someone can oppose the solving of people's grievances. Such Opposition is anti-people and people will give them a befitting reply for such attitude. After all, we are in public service and people's grievances are our topmost priority."

"People are happy... peoples' representatives are happy... Opposition members should not be unhappy because of political reasons," Patnaik maintained.

(Opposition's allegations Page 2)

‘Babudom is ruling Odisha’: Opp lashes out at BJD Govt

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Moments after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik made a statement in the State Assembly defending officers’ visit to the districts for grievance redressal, Opposition BJP and Congress lashed out at the government calling it a ‘Babudom’ regime.

Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra said the government was scared when questions were asked about the 5T Secretary.

“A Babudom government is ruling the State. Democracy is neither in Odisha nor at the Centre. Whoever is raising voice against it is facing the consequences. Action is being taken out of political vendetta. The governments have suppressed the voice of the media and taken away its freedom. The State Government has become so intolerant that it has crossed all limits,” Mishra told mediapersons.

On Naveen Patnaik’s praise for the NDA Government at Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mishra said, “We saw the CM rating the Modi Government an 8 out of 10. But today, his party is



raising NHAI issue in the Assembly. This indicates a mock fight outside the House to fool people.”

He said the government rejected the Opposition’s adjournment motion in the Assembly without any reason. When asked about 5T, the government is avoiding replying. The CM might be feeling helpless; so, he is sending his Secretary to cover all constituencies for election campaign.

“If such a large number of grievances have been redressed, why the protestors hit the streets in Bhubaneswar? Why did not the 5T Secretary redress their grievances in their constituencies? It indicates that he was not visiting the districts



for redressal of people’s grievances; rather, he was offering money to outfits to garner votes,” Mishra alleged.

BJP Chief Whip Mohan Charan Majhi condemned the way CM Patnaik made his statement in the House.

“The adjournment motion was scheduled in the House today. However, the Speaker rejected it. The CM made suo moto statement in the House. He could have replied to questions during the adjournment motion debate. Why did the government avoid the adjournment motion? During the period, we were to ask questions and he would have given replies. We had

not sought a statement in the House. He did it out of fear during ruckus in the House,” the BJP leader said.

“We had asked him the question whether a Secretary is powerful or a Minister. But what did he do? He told about expenses made for people’s grievance redressal exercises only to protect the Secretary. It was our right to know complete expenditure incurred during visit of the CMO officials to various districts, whether there was budgetary allocation for the expenses,” Majhi said.

When asked about the CM’s statement on the 5T Secretary’s complete expenditure during his visits in past three and half years, Majhi said, “Only one meeting costs Rs 20-25 crore. But the CM said Rs 40 crore has been spent during last three years. This is a joke. Around Rs 600 crore has been spent for the 5T Secretary’s visit, which is more than of the Chandrayaan project cost. Such huge expenditure never incurred during CM’s visit. The way the 5T Secretary was given permission to visit districts and spend huge amount was undemocratic,” he stated.

662-type colleges’ strike to continue



Even after Govt’s positive assurance

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

On the 225th day of its dharna at the Lower PMG here on Monday, the AONGLEA organised the sixth massive congregation of the employees by locking their colleges for two days.

Over two thousand employees from 662 category colleges participated in the rally and obstructed the Master Canteen-

PMG road in demand of their four-point charter of demands.

Later, the executive committee members were called by the Commissioner-cum-Secretary of Higher Education Arvind Aggarwal for a discussion and were told that their demands would be mitigated soon. However AONGLEA president Golak Nayak told this paper that though the discussion with the government was positive, the strike before the Assembly would continue till demands are actually fulfilled.

E-rickshaws in IIT BBS

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bhubaneswar officially flagged off its on-campus electric rickshaw service on Monday.

IIT Bhubaneswar Director Prof Shreepad Karmalkar launched the service in the presence of other officials of the institute to promote the motto of ‘A Step towards a Zero-Emission Campus’.

emphasised the collective commitment of the IIT community towards making the campus a model of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

Professor-in-Charge (Transport) Dr Satchidananda Rath said the launch of the on-campus E-rickshaw services is a significant milestone for IIT Bhubaneswar. It aligns perfectly with vision of a sustainable future and reinforces our commitment towards reducing adverse environmental impact.

In city Cops launch drive against drinking’ Khati

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate police on Sunday night conducted simultaneous raids in different parts of city and detained some youths for drinking liquor in public places and indulging in ‘Khati’.

At least six persons were detained and a fine of Rs 6,000 was collected during the raids. At least 60 teams of police personnel were part of the raids that were conducted in the Laxmi Sagar and Chandrasekharpur area at late night.

To ensure zero tolerance towards the open drinking and ‘Khati’ in residential areas, the

Commissionerate police have issued a WhatsApp number to provide information on those violating the law. Residents can click pictures or send videos if they find anyone drinking in the open or doing ‘Khati’ in some public/residential place.

The WhatsApp number for the complaint is 7077798111. The identity of the complainant would be kept secret, police said.

Besides, the cops have launched a hunt to nab 16 miscreants who were doing ‘Khati’ in a playground under the Capital police station. The raids were carried out under the ‘Safe City’ drive.

In city 102 bikes seized for wrong side driving

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Commissionerate Traffic police seized more than 100 two-wheelers on Sunday for driving on the wrong side of the road in different parts of the city.

During the drive, the traffic police focused on the vehicles going on wrong route of one-way roads. They detected drivers of 102 two-wheelers violating the norm. All the vehicles were seized and prosecution reports filed in the court.

The Commissionerate police have appealed to the vehicle drivers

to strictly follow the traffic regulations to prevent penalty and court cases. The enforcement drive on various norms would continue in future, the police said. Notably, wrong side driving or against the flow of traffic has been the second biggest cause of road deaths in the country after speeding, as per Government data. Nearly, 47,000 persons were killed in between 2017 to 2021 in the country in all categories of roads. But the menace is yet to be curbed and violators have gone scot-free due to poor enforcement, said road safety experts

Interview of the week

AI will have a key role in being of use in India



SUGYAN CHOUDHURY



DR DILIP MAHAPATRA

Dr Dilip Mahapatra is working as a Senior Consultant Physician in Dundalk, Ireland. Success dawned upon him with such stuffs in which dreams are made of. This Odisha-born doctor has scaled dizzy heights of glory by his unflinching zeal and unwavering determination in medical profession, being a forerunner in the fields of coeliac disease and osteoporosis. He is attached to two hospitals and runs a clinic of his own namely Elmwood Clinic at Dundalk. He is committed to his research in coeliac disease and its complications. He holds two intercollegiate memberships from the Royal College of Physician & Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland and a fellow membership from the Royal College of Physicians in London and Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Academy of Medicine in Ireland and Royal Society of Health in the UK. Currently, he is the Chairman of Confederation of Indian Communities in Ireland.

In an interview to *The Pioneer*, Dr Mahapatra spoke to Sugyan Choudhury while he was on his itinerary to Odisha.

How was your journey from Odisha to Ireland?

I had my MBBS from SCB Medical College, Cuttack in 1980. Subsequently, I was at the Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi as a Junior Resident Surgeon in Orthopaedics for three months. Then, I joined the AIIMS, New Delhi. It was from here that I appeared and luckily got through the entrance examination for a higher diploma course in UK. Finally, I got a senior house officers job in Dundalk, Ireland. One day, I had an invitation from the head of the general medical asking me to change my stream from surgery to general medical side; if so, I would be entrusted with the job of registrar of the medical. This opportunity dawned upon me as the noted physician and head of the general hospital was observing me keenly over my workmanship and offered me the chance. I stayed there for

one year. In those countries, you have to rotate from one hospital to another till you become a consultant. Meanwhile, I was trained in cardiology under a noted cardiologist. Subsequently, I joined Galway & National University of Ireland. That was the biggest breakthrough in my career as a few doctors get through it. I was chosen to pursue my MD PhD programme in Galway University in Gastroenterology. I was awarded with a fellowship of sixty thousand pounds, which was a huge grant for any junior doctor in those days. I was already a Professor when I had joined the National Medical University of Kazakhstan. We wanted to do something independently and so we have started a private hospital known as Elmwood Centre. I am also the medical director of St Mary’s Hospital, which is based under religious order and a voluntary organisation.

What is your opinion regarding the medical facilities available in India compared to the Western world?

The academic teaching and training are somehow or other the same. The students here have an advantage since they get human bodies to dissect. But the students there have to learn through 3D. However, one major difference is that the medical teaching faculties there are chosen from consultants and from clinical side and are assigned to work in universities. The process there is indeed interactive. Here, we have similar practices, but we have the system of NPA (Non-Practising Allowance). There, they have the rotation system after internship when a doctor undergoes through many specialist programmes till one chooses one specialisation and continues working till becoming a consultant. But what I find here, this system is conspicuous by its absence.

In a technology-driven world, how do you think artificial intelligence (AI) will be applicable in medical treatments? How it will be helpful in medical treatments in our country?

In a digitalised world, India is also emerging as a leader. I am sure AI will have a key role in being of use in our country. We may be able to produce many things through robotic mechanisms, but I have one grave doubt that AI will not be all and the end all in medical treatment. For example, AI shall be a stupendous failure in radiological intervention. Similarly, in the analytical medical research, it will be not self-sufficient to fairly and squarely rest on AI. In the clinical side in many tests, it has created many errors and issues which need a lot of time to be remedied. Of course, it works wonders in the field of biotechnology, IT and business and other daily activities, but it has its limitations in clinical treatment. AI has not enough of the truth relating to clinical fields.

As a son of the soil, do you have some plans for opening medical institutions here in Odisha?

Yes, of course. I have been working on such a project over the last four years, but it has been delayed owing to the Covid intervention. I have discussed the plans with some top bureaucrats but to no avail as yet. It has become very difficult to get an ideal patch of government land for such a plan. I plan opening a medical college with focus on regenerative medicine that will be of immense help to poor, middleclass people as they spend 25 to 26 lakh outside Odisha. My proposed centre shall provide them treatment for 5 to 6 lakh only. Treatment of cancer, bone marrow transplantation shall be made available at a cheaper cost in our State.

As President of Confederation of Indian Communities in Ireland, what are the problems you confront?

It pains me to relate that there are 26 to 27 organisations like the Tamil, Telugu, Bengali and the like. I have requested them to form an umbrella organisation in the name of our country without forming State-wise organisations. We should remain Indians at heart. Besides, we all have passports in the name of our country but not in the name of our States.

You are going to form a party called National Democratic Party (NDP). What are your plans behind such a party?

We have landed on the moon, but still we have problems of acute unemployment, devaluation of our currencies and a lot many such problems. I believe that NDP, when registered with the Election Commission of India, will field candidates for Assembly and Parliamentary segments of our State with the motto of serving the State’s people. This would be a party with a difference.

Assembly witnesses ruckus all the day

BJP protests rejection of adjournment motion

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The second day of the Monsoon Session of the State Assembly on Monday witnessed pandemonium as the members of opposition BJP and the treasury benches accused each other and shouted slogans over different issues.

The House witnessed several adjournments as the BJP created ruckus throughout the day.

As the House assembled for the day to take up the Question Hour, the BJP members led by party Chief

Whip Mohan Majhi rushed into the Well and shouted slogans against the government. They protested against the rejection of their notice by Speaker Pramila Mallick for a debate on the admissibility of an adjournment motion without assigning any reason.

The BJP members also demanded a clarification from the Chief Minister as to who is superior, a Minister or a Secretary?

The BJD members, on the other hand, protested by raising the non-completion of National Highway construction works in the State. Following the pandemonium, the proceedings of the House were first adjourned till 11:30 am.

There was no change in the situation when the House reassembled. The BJP members again rushed to the Well and shouted slogans when the Speaker called the Chief Minister to make a statement.

Amidst the chaotic situation, the CM read out a statement.

The House soon plunged into a chaotic situation forcing the Speaker to adjourn it at 11:50 am till 4 pm.

In the second half also, the chaotic situation prevailed. Speaker Mallick called an all-party meeting to pacify the Opposition. However, the BJP continued to create ruckus.

‘Nari Vandan’ a false move by Modi Govt

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Nari Vandan Adhiniyam brought by the Narendra Modi Government to provide 33% reservation for women in Lok Sabha and Assemblies is meaningless, said Congress spokesperson and MP Ranjit Ranjan.

“We had heard about postdated cheque but never heard about postdated Bill, which the Prime Minister has kept before the people. Though the Women Reservation Bill would become a law after approval of the President of India, it cannot be implemented before 2026. It would be only implemented after the population census and the delimitation of Lok Sabha an Assembly seats,” Ranjan pointed out. In 1989, Rajiv Gandhi had amended the Constitution and



passed a Bill for 33% reservation for women in panchayati raj

institutions. But unfortunately, the Bill was defeated in Rajya Sabha by

six votes and could not be turned into a law, she added.

Bid to shift RHTC: Resentment brewing in JSpur

Host of bodies set for agitation

KAHNU NANDA ■ JAGATSINGHPUR

The Health and Family Welfare Department's decision to shift the Rural Health Training Center (RHTC) from Jagatsinghpur District Headquarters Hospital premises has been vehemently opposed by residents, intellectuals, civil society members, lawyers and citizens here.

A widespread resentment is brewing among the residents and several organisations are planning to launch an agitation protesting the move soon, said reports.

The reports informed that



the RHTC had started functioning in Jagatsinghpur in 1955 catering to needs of medical training to doctors, house surgeons, nurses, paramedical staff, and health workers of SCB Medical College and Hospital. After Jagatsinghpur was bifurcated from Cuttack district in 1993, the RHTC was not relocated immediately, but in the year 1995 efforts were made to shift

the RHTC to the Tirtol area, 20 km from here. However, due to severe protests then, the shifting bid was cancelled.

Official sources informed that the works of the RHTC at Jagatsinghpur have been praised by the Medical Council of India and the Union Health Ministry several times earlier. Its training facilities, besides abundant infrastructure available for new medical

interns and health staff, have received wide acclaim.

Meanwhile, a State-level health committee has decided the shifting of the RHTC to the Bentkar CHC or Tangi CHC in Cuttack district and instructed the Collector, Jagatsinghpur to identify the suitable land for the purpose. The present building of the RHTC will be utilised by the DHH Jagatsinghpur, according to a State Health Department letter dated September 5.

The letter cited that as per NMC norms an RHTC connected with a medical college shall be within 30 km distance from the college. The SCB Medical College and Hospital attached to the Jagatsinghpur RHTC is at a distance of 45 km.

In Cuttack dist 3 injured in bombing during group clash

PNS ■ CUTTACK

Two groups clashed in Vishnupur village under the Tigiria police station in Cuttack district late on Sunday night, leaving three persons critically injured. The injured were identified as Shrinavas Shamal (34), Nilia Rout (28), and Sagar Majhi (29).

According to reports, Khudurukuni Puja celebrations were going on in the village for which DJ music was played loudly and crackers were burst. When one group asked to stop the

celebrations, the other group refused and an heated altercation ensued.. It soon too, a violent s turn and bombs were hurled by both the sides.

As a result of the bomb attack, three persons sustained critical injuries.

Later, the victims were rushed to Tigiria Hospital and as their condition deteriorated, they were shifted to the SCB Medical College Hospital in Cuttack. Getting information, the Tigiria police reached the village, pacified the villagers and began a hunt to nab the accused involved in the bombing.

Woman looted, killed at home in B'swar

PNS ■ BALESWAR

A woman was allegedly murdered by unknown looters in Sarsida village under Jaleswar police station limits on Sunday.

The local Jaleswar police besides sending the body for postmortem began investigation into the incident.

According to reports, the deceased identified as Harpriya Das was robbed and killed when there was no one

at home. The husband of the deceased Aditya Das said when he returned home, he found his wife lying face down. He immediately rescued her and admitted to the Jaleswar Hospital and doctors declared her dead.

Aditya alleged that jewellery worth lakhs of rupees was looted from the house.

This incident left the locals in a state of shock and they have demanded prompt police action in this matter.

Poet Nial gifts Prez 'Mahuri' magazine

Containing feature on Murmu

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

Internationally-acclaimed poet D Bhawani Shankar Nial met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhawan, New Delhi, recently. Dr Nial presented a copy of the celebrated magazine, "Mahuri ", edited by him to the President.

This apart, he gifted the first citizen a copy of 'A Tapestry



of Words', an international review of his anthology of poems, 'Lockdown' rendered in English by Greek author, Prof

Iren Dora-Kavadia and published by Prof Preeth Padmanabhan Nambiar through Writers International Edition Publishing House, Athens.

It would be worth mentioning here that a feature on Murmu under the category 'Mass leader' with a cover story was published in the magazine Mahuri beforehand. During the meeting, Dr Nial had praised the President of many important issues of Kalahandi. "Lockdown" by Dr Nial, translated into English by Prof

Bankim Mund, has drawn attention of literary realms globally.

"The poems manifesting death consciousness and artistic excellence have turned out to be very popular among the readers and critics across the world," said Prof Mund and further informed that the poems have already been translated into more than twenty different languages of the world. Nial has been conferred with many national and international awards and honour for his accomplishments.

Khariar SDH service hit by vacant posts

AJIT PANDA ■ NUAPADA

When daily turnout of patients in the Sub-Divisional Hospital (SDH) at Khariar has crossed over 500, the vacancy in the posts of specialists and a Medical Superintendent here has become a cause of concern for everyone. Most patients suffer from communicable diseases like fever and cough and they are thronging the SDH for treatments despite free health camps organised in rural areas.

"There is a need to increase



the number of mobile health camps in villages during this peak time to provide treatment to people at doorstep and to make them aware about such diseases," says Tapan Dash of Khariar.

"In addition, I draw attention of the district administration and the government to fill up the vacant posts of

gynaecologist and surgery specialist and the post of Medical Superintendent in the SDH," he adds. A retired gynaecologist has been placed in the obstetrics department at present who is unable to deal with increasing number of institutional delivery cases due to his growing age. Earlier, the hospital used to take care of

an average of 10 to 12 delivery cases every day, but now many women are being referred to the District Headquarters Hospital located 70 km far.

However, it is noticed that most prefer a private hospital at Khariar instead of going there, which causes hardship as well as worry about the cost. Furthermore, as the Medicine Specialist of the SDH is in charge of the post of Medical Superintendent, it is not possible for him to give time to the increasing number of patients.

'Expedite probe into fake certificates'

Demands tribals' body in Balangir

PNS ■ BALANGIR

Members of the District Zilla Adivasi Kalyan Sangha led by its president Shyam Sundar Bhoi held a rally in Balangir town on Monday and submitted a ten-point charter of demands addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik through the district Collector.

"The pace of inquiry by the Northern Division Revenue Divisional Commissioner (RDC) into the fake tribal certificate case is very slow and we demand it to be completed in a time-bound manner," said Bhoi.

Bhoi also demanded better connectivity in tribal areas, opening of more Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in the district and withdrawal of 18-per cent GST levied on Kendu leaves by the Central Government.

K'jhar: RWSS JE found hanging from tree

PNS ■ KEONJHAR

A body of a Government employee was found hanging from a tree in Champua block of Keonjhar district on Monday. The deceased was identified as Ramakrishna Singh, a Junior Engineer of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) Division here. He was a native of Jayantinapur village in the block.

While the exact cause of death was yet to be ascertained, sources said Singh had gone out on Sunday morning from his Government residential quarters in Champua and

did not return home.

Family members launched a frantic search but could not trace his whereabouts as he had left his mobile phone at home. He was later found hanging from a tree on the banks of Baitarani river. His motorbike and helmet were seen lying nearby. Locals spotted the body and informed police who arrived at the spot.

Police said the cause of death would be established after the postmortem report arrives. An UD case has been registered and further investigation was ongoing.

In Deogarh Abduction accused flees from police custody

PNS ■ DEOGARH

A man accused of abducting a minor girl escaped from police custody in front of the Special Sub-Jail in Deogarh district on Sunday.

According to reports, Suman Behera (22) of Aaunli village under Kundheigola police station in the district was arrested for allegedly kidnapping a minor girl of the locality. Family members of the girl had lodged a complaint, on the basis of which a case was registered.

The accused was produced in a local court, where his bail petition was rejected. He was then remanded to judicial custody.

As policemen reached near the jail along with the accused, he managed to flee from the spot allegedly due to negligence on the part of the cops.

Police have registered a case against the accused on the basis of a complaint filed by a Constable. Raids were undergoing at various places to nab him.

Science outreach prog IISER-B to hold 2-day talk from Nov 16

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

The Institutes of Higher Education and Research, Government of India-IISER, Brahmapur is going to organise a two-day seminar on the theme "Science in the Community: Advancing Science Popularization in Odisha" on November 16-17 as a part of Amrit Kaal- Vimarsh.

The institute urged upon the students to get inspired by engaging with renowned scientists and technocrats. The IISER has extended free invitations to around 200 students

and teachers from different schools and colleges. The event is considered as a pivotal milestone in IISER's continuous endeavour to foster scientific curiosity and to promote science education and state of the art research, said an academican.

An Organising Committee has been constituted with its Director Prof Ashoak Kumar Ganguli as its chairperson. Among others, Dr Nihar Kumar Patra, Dr Vyas Akondi, Dr Natasha Sharma and Dr Rahul Sharma are the members.

INBRIEF

UCDA HOLDS PHARMACIST DAY

Bhubaneswar: The Utkal Chemists' and Druggists' Association (UCDA), the Odisha Pharmacy College Association (OPCA) and the Micro Lab celebrated the World Pharmacist Day here on Monday. Pharmacists went in a procession from the UCDA office Atal Bhawan to Ram Mandir Square. The



motive of the Padayatra was to inform public about the pharmacists' contribution to the society, said UCDA and OPCA chairman P Satyanaryan. Odisha Drugs Controller Ashok Patra said that without pharmacists, healthcare is impossible. The contribution of pharmacists is incomparable, said UCDA general secretary Prashant Mohapatra.

355 PROF, ASSOCIATE PROF, ASST PROF POSTS VACANT

Bhubaneswar: As many as 355 Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor posts are currently lying vacant in government medical colleges in Odisha, said Health and Family Welfare Minister Niranjan Pujari in the Assembly on Monday while replying to a question by Khandapada MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik. As per the information provided by the Minister, the total sanctioned strength for Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors in government medical colleges in the State is 1,656.

CHIDANANDA MAHARAJ'S BIRTH ANNIV HELD

Bhubaneswar: The 107th birthday of Swami Chidananda Saraswati Maharaj was celebrated at the Sivananda Centenary Boys' School in Khandagiri in the city on Sunday. He was the



first president of the school. In the morning, the students, teachers and inmates of the school chanted the name of Gurumaharaj and toured various places and discussed his wisdom. School Secretary Swami Jagannathanand, Prof Bishwamohan Patnaik and Santanu Rath spoke about the Swamiji's contributions. School Principal Jagannath Behera offered a vote of thanks. The programmes were coordinated by school teacher Ashok Kumar Routray.

SHOWCASE ODISHA AWARDS HONOURS FOUR ODIAS

Bhubaneswar: The much-anticipated 9th Edition of Showcase Odisha Awards unfolded at the Park Hyatt in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad on Sunday. The event, conceptualised and man-



aged by Prelude, celebrates the exceptional talents and contributions of Odias on both national and international platforms. Distinguished individuals from various fields were honoured. The awardees included Aswini Kumar Acharya, a renowned athlete and Dr Reena Das, an accomplished doctor.

VEDANTA CONDUCTS FIRE MOCK DRILL AT SCHOOL

Bhubaneswar: The Vedanta Aluminium recently conducted a fire mock drill at the DAV School, Jharsuguda to enhance the



school's fire emergency response capabilities and familiarise community members with fire mitigation methods towards effectively managing fire-related emergencies. The event drew participation from over 1,000 students in addition to teachers and school administrators.

Rising suicides in Kota: Blame wrong career choice

Rajasthan's coaching hub for engineering and medicine, Kota has already witnessed 23 suicides this year. The suicidal trend and mindsets among the teenagers reflect their deteriorating mental health conditions and the neglect of life-skill training which can help them to face the challenges of life.

The students put their feet in Kota city with the hope of getting better coaching facilities and a competitive environment which are the prerequisites of different competitive examinations. However, when it comes to reality, they are not well prepared to cope with the changing environment. Before coming here, generally, the parents and relatives impose their dreams and expectations on the minds of their children. Later, they confront peer pres-



SITAKANTA TRIPATHY

sure, hectic study schedule, time management, stress management and cut-throat competition to face all the challenges. The gaps between dreams and preparedness often plague students who leave their families, and sacrifice their comfort zones for the first time to take coaching classes in the city.

The young minds also have to deal with issues like loneliness, lack of support system, and emotional disturbances that come because of problems with friends, family and romantic interests. Not equipped with proper life skills to deal with at the tender age of adolescence, these students might adopt unhealthy coping mechanisms like inappropriate use of medicines, intoxication and substance abuse and quick learning methods which further increases the damage to their mental well-being. The loss of friendships, consideration of friends as competitors, and online mode of problem solution mechanisms make the students lonelier and more isolated. The students from different corners of the country throng in one place for coaching which creates the problems

of acculturation as well as cultural lags among them. In earlier days, students were accustomed to different games and sports besides prayers which were the ventilators of feelings and emotions

It is high time for parents to watch the choice of their children minutely and make a comparison between the attitude and aptitude of their children and their own expectations, rather than following career trends blindly. Provisions for vocational and career counselling should be provided by the schools to help students identify an appropriate career choice for themselves based on their interest and aptitude. The parents should try to hear the inner voice of their children and spend time with them. They might have their own dreams to fulfil. Comparisons being

made with other children must be avoided rather the child must be encouraged to accept themselves, identify the areas where they need to improve, set goals for improvement and work on them in a way that they compete with themselves.

With the increasing social media use, it is important to check the behavioural changes found among children and find ways to deal with such changes and nip them in the bud. Strategies must be constructed for students to help them use the internet and social media in a constructive way. Awareness of social media and gaming addiction needs to be developed among children. Seminars and discussions should be held to help the young generation to guard against the 'virtual lifestyle trap' of social media and develop a realistic orienta-

tion about life. Besides, the students must be encouraged to improve interpersonal relationships with family and peers as they provide a strong support system.

Educational institutions should provide provisions for counsellors and life coaches to help the students keep their morale up, learn necessary life skills and resolve day-to-day mental agonies. Whenever the students feel that they are under depression or going to be depressed or have any other negative thoughts they should be trained to express their feelings and emotions to parents, relatives or counsellors. The institution should also be well-equipped to identify students at risk and have a fully functioning suicide prevention helpline.

Society at large needs to re-

move the stigma attached to mental illnesses and suicide as it prevents identifying people at risk. Due to the stigma attached to suicide, they don't open up about suicidal thoughts as they fear being judged and stigmatized by society. Preventive steps can include limiting access to the means of suicide, early identification and treatment of people at risk, and bringing in alcohol and drug-related policies.

It is important to understand that students who develop suicidal tendencies have difficulties in problem-solving, stress management and emotional regulation. Under situations of acute stress, the suicidal thoughts amplify and suicide seems to be the only way out. Thus, it's crucial to identify these students and provide them with psychological sup-

port. People at risk of suicide also have extremely low self-esteem; thus, some strategies need to be taken to boost their self-esteem and inculcate a positive self-concept. This can include helping these students identify and emphasise on their positive life experiences and their positive qualities; providing scope for vocational skills and social skills training, establishing trustful and non-judgement communication and helping them set realistic goals and follow an action plan which helps them in achieving those goals.

The motivations for effective and meaningful use of time would be helpful for the improvement of the mental health of the children and controlling the suicides. (Mob: 9778764394; Email: tripathysk1947@gmail.com)

C-295 transport aircraft inducted

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI/GHAZIABAD

The IAF on Monday formally inducted the first C-295 medium tactical transport aircraft in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at the Hindan airbase in Ghaziabad.

He exuded confidence that the latest induction will bolster medium lift tactical capability of the IAF. He termed the defence and aerospace sectors as the two important pillars for making India self-reliant in the coming years.

Rajnath also inaugurated Bharat Drone Shakti 2023, a first-of-its-kind two-day drone exhibition cum display was inaugurated at the airbase.

The expo has been jointly organised by IAF and Drone Federation of India (DFI). The event features over 75 drone start-ups from across the country. As regards the C-295 plane, the induction ceremony saw Rajnath taking part in a 'Sarva Dharma Pooja' that was performed in the hangar to mark the occasion. IAF chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhary along with senior officials of the IAF as well as of Airbus attended the induction ceremony.

The first C-295 aircraft was inducted into Squadron No. 11 of the IAF. It is one of the oldest squadrons of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and is currently based at Vadodra Air Force Station.



The aircraft was unveiled at the hangar after two sliding screens, bearing '11 SQN: Pioneers of C-295 MW', 'Rhinos: The Trailblazers of C-295 MW', and image of the newly-inducted aircraft, moved sideways. One-horned rhino is the emblem of Sqn. No. 11.

The IAF chief had on September 13 received the first of the 56 C-295 transport aircraft two years after India sealed a ₹21,935-crore deal with Airbus Defence and Space to procure the jets to replace its ageing Avro-748 fleet.

The aircraft had landed in Vadodra on September 20, days after it was handed over to the IAF in the southern Spanish city of Seville. Airbus will deliver the first 16 aircraft in fly-away condition from its final assembly line in Seville by 2025 and the subsequent 40 aircraft will be manufactured and assembled by Tata Advanced Systems (TASL) in India as part of an industrial partnership between the two companies.

The production of components of these aircraft has already started in the Main Constituent Assembly facility in Hyderabad.

These parts will be shipped to the Final Assembly Line in Vadodra which is expected to be operational by November 2024. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone of the manufacturing facility for C-295 planes in Vadodra in October last year. It will be the first military aircraft to be manufactured in India by a private consortium.

The IAF is procuring the C-295 aircraft to replace its fleet of ageing Avro-748 planes that entered the service over six decades ago.

The C-295 is known to be a superior aircraft used for tactical transport of up to 71 troops or 50 paratroopers and for logistic operations to locations that are not accessible to current heavier aircraft.

The aircraft can airdrop paratroops and loads, and also be used for casualty or medical evacuation. The aircraft is capable of performing special missions as well as disaster response and maritime patrol duties. Meanwhile, the drones featured during the exhibition can be employed for a variety of military and civil applications. By showcasing their capabilities through a series of aerial and static demonstrations, the IAF and DFI seek to bolster the Government's initiative to make India a major drone hub by 2030.

Institutions likely to face problems in NEP implementation: Panel

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Taking note of the multiple entry and exit system in the academic career as cited in the National Education Policy, a Parliamentary panel has noted that Indian institutions are likely to face issues in implementation. While the panel observed that the system is carried effectively in western educational institutions, it noted that uneven geographical distribution of higher education institutions would create hurdles in managing MEME in several areas, mostly countryside in India.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, headed by Rajya Sabha MP Vivek Thakur, said in its report tabled in the Rajya Sabha that the institutions have not thought very clearly about this problem and how they will resolve it when it is at their doorstep.

"NEP proposes multi-entry and multi-exit options for the students. While it looks like a flexible system, which is being operated by western education institutions quite effectively,



Indian institutions are likely to face several issues in implementing this system. Due to high population, the estimated intake of students in higher education every year is quite high.

"If institutions allow MEME (multiple entry and multiple exit), it would be very difficult for the institutions to predict how many students would exit and how many would join midway. Since institutions would not know the in- and out-traffic, it will certainly disturb the Pupil-Teacher Ratio," the report said.

According to the "Guidelines for Multiple Entry and Exit in Academic Programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions" issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC), flexible learning is important to choose one's academic pathway leading to the award of certificate, diploma, and degree.

Attached land worth ₹125.06 crore in money laundering probe: ED

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday said it has provisionally attached land worth ₹125.06 crore belonging to Unitech Infopark Limited in connection with a money laundering probe linked to allegations of complaints from home buyers of the Unitech group.

The ED has provisionally attached 39.83 percent share of 4.79 acres of land that forms part of the Uniworld City township at Nallambakkam in Chennai.

"The value of the land attached is ₹125.06 crore. The said land is owned by Unitech Infopark Limited in which 39.83 per cent shares are held by Narnil Infosolutions Private Limited (a benami company of the Chandras, the promoters of Unitech Group)," the ED said in a statement.

The action is part of an investigation undertaken by the ED based on cases registered by the Delhi Police and CBI on the complaints from home buyers against Unitech Group, its promoters and others, it said. In its investigation, ED detected that the Chandras of Unitech had allegedly invested the 'proceeds of crime' to the tune of USD 1.50 crore (present



value ₹125.06 crore) through Narnil Infosolutions Private Limited into Unitech Infopark Limited in 2009-10 by acquiring 39.83 per cent shares of the said company, the agency said.

The agency probe revealed that Narnil Infosolutions Private Limited is beneficially owned by the Chandras and was being controlled through their associates.

"During the course of investigation, ED had arrested five individuals namely Sanjay Chandra, Ajay Chandra, Ramesh Chandra, Preeti Chandra and Rajesh Malik. Till now, two prosecution complaints have been filed by the ED and cognisance of the same have been taken by the PMLA Court," it said.

So far, the ED has provisionally attached domestic and overseas assets worth ₹1,257.61 crore.

'Southwest monsoon withdrawing from India'

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced on Monday the southwest monsoon has started withdrawing from India, eight days after the normal date of September 17.

The late retreat of the monsoon this year is the 13th consecutive delayed withdrawal. India is divided into 717 meteorological districts, of them 221 have received deficit rainfall while 492 received normal or excess rainfall so far.

India received 796.3 mm rainfall as against the normal of 843.2 mm, deficit of 46.8 mm amounting to 6 percent. Nearly 2 per cent of rainfall needs to be offset in the remaining 6 days of the month, for the monsoon season to turn 'normal'.

Rainfall between 94 per cent and 106 per cent of the long-period average (LPA) is considered normal. Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Kerala, East Uttar Pradesh, Mahe, South Karnataka and Lakshadweep among the states which received less monsoon rain this year.



Typically, the southwest monsoon makes its onset over Kerala by June 1 and covers the entire country by July 8. It starts retreating from northwest India around September 17, withdrawing entirely by October 15. "(The) southwest monsoon has withdrawn from parts of southwest Rajasthan today, September 25, 2023, against its normal date of withdrawal from southwest Rajasthan of September 17," IMD said in a statement.

For withdrawal of monsoon, the IMD considers certain conditions to be fulfilled, including dry weather over an area for five consecutive days,

a considerable reduction in moisture content as inferred from satellite water vapour imageries and tephigrams and an anticyclone in the lower levels of the atmosphere. Normally, the country receives an average of 870 mm of precipitation during the four-month monsoon season (June to September).

Withdrawal of the monsoon from northwest India marks the beginning of its retreat from the Indian subcontinent. Any delay in the monsoon's retreat means a longer rainy season, which can significantly impact agricultural production, particularly for northwest India where

monsoon rainfall plays a crucial role in the Rabi crop production.

The onset month of June remained 10% below the normal. This shortfall was made up in July when the month accumulated a surplus of 13% rainfall. The monsoon rainfall was 105 per cent of LPA at the halfway mark of the season. And then, there was a collapse. With prolonged break-monsoon conditions, the core monsoon month of August slumped miserably to be the lowest on record since the time record-keeping began.

35 per cent shortfall in August nearly dragged the season to the brink of a drought. However, against all hopes, remarkable recovery commenced in September and the season could be freed from the scare of yet another drought.

The Indian monsoon refers to inherent fluctuations and changes that occur over time due to various natural factors. This is called natural variability. However, research shows climate change is making monsoon more variable. Increased variability means more extreme weather and dry spells.

As far as Delhi is concerned, till September 25, the

national capital should have received 118.2mm of monthly rainfall, making it a deficit of 30% so far.

Overall, in the month of September, Delhi averages 123.4mm of rainfall, meaning if no rain is recorded for the remainder of the month, Delhi will end with a deficit of 33 per cent this month.

August too was on similar lines, with only 91.8mm of rainfall being received throughout the month — a deficit of 61% as compared to the monthly normal mark of 233.1mm for August. This was the second lowest monthly rainfall total for August in Delhi in at least 14 years.

The Ministry of Agriculture data showed Kharif sowing has exceeded the levels of last year led by a surge in paddy and sugarcane, while pulses, oilseeds and cotton fell, at a time the erratic south-west monsoon has cast a shadow over this year's sowing and harvest. According to data released by the agriculture ministry on Friday, total kharif planting until 22 September was up 3.7 per cent from the previous year to touch 110.2 million hectares (mh).

Ensure Aadhaar to Manipuris displaced due to conflict, SC directs UIDAI, Govt

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Unique Identification Authority of India and the Manipur Government to take steps to ensure that Aadhaar cards are provided to people displaced due to the ethnic conflict in the State whose records are already available with the UIDAI.

Observing that it does not propose to run the administration in Manipur, the apex court said necessary verifications shall be carried out before issuing the Aadhaar cards expeditiously. A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud clarified that UIDAI, which would have the biometric details of people to whom Aadhaar cards were already issued, will match the claims of those displaced about the loss of their cards.

The bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, directed the secretary of Manipur's finance department to issue appropriate instructions to all banks in the affected parts of the state to make available the details of bank accounts to those who have lost the documents.



private instructions to all banks in the affected parts of the state to make available the details of bank accounts to those who have lost the documents.

The apex court directed that Secretary of Manipur's Health Department shall take all expeditious steps for issuing disability certificates/duplicates of disability certificates to specially-abled persons in relief camps. The bench issued the directions while it was considering the reports filed by the apex court-appointed all-woman committee of former high court judges headed by Justice (ret'd) Gita Mittal. The panel also includes Justices (ret'd) Shalini P Joshi and Asha Menon.

In the reports filed in the apex court, the committee had sought certain directions on issues including lost personal documents of those displaced.

During the hearing on a batch of pleas, including those seeking court-monitored probe into cases of violence, besides measures for relief and rehabilitation, the bench observed that for issuing Aadhaar cards, the authority will have to verify whether these are genuine residents or citizens.

"What if somebody is an illegal entrant?" it asked and added "We will say the authorities will verify whether the person is genuine."

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the Manipur government, said several of these issues can be sorted out if the committee discusses them with the authorities.

"Let the committee be aware of its remit," he said. The bench said the committee has not pressed for several of the directions mentioned in its reports.

Uplifting marginalised should be article of faith for IAS officers: Murmu

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

President Droupadi Murmu on Monday said a compassionate civil servant whose heartbeats for the poor and the underprivileged is a true civil servant as distinct from merely a career bureaucrat.

Addressing a group of Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers, she said uplifting the marginalised sections of society should be an article of faith for them. "You should make efforts to understand the link between 'file to field' and also between 'field to file'. This people-centric alertness and sensitivity will make you engage with the files in a far more meaningful manner," Murmu said.

The President asked the officers to always visualise the people who are going to be impacted by the files "you deal with".

A group of 182 IAS officers of 2021 batch, currently posted as assistant secretaries in various Union ministries and departments, had called on Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhavan Cultural Centre here.

"I have seen from close quarters the difficulties and problems faced by the people living in backward areas and belonging to the deprived segments of our society. I have also seen some sensitive civil servants who went the extra mile to help such people," she said.

A compassionate civil servant whose heart beats for the poor and the underprivileged



is a true civil servant as distinct from merely a career bureaucrat, the President said.

She said an inclusive, progressive and sensitive society allows greater space to women in all walks of life.

The nation is on the path of women empowerment and women-led development. I am very happy that the historic 'Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam' has been passed by both the Houses of Parliament.

"Women are breaking stereotypes and the glass ceiling. They are playing increasingly larger roles in all aspects of growth and development," Murmu said.

She expressed happiness over increase in percentage of women IAS officers in the past four years.

"I have been told that in the batches from 2019 to 2022, the

percentage of women IAS officers had ranged between 28 per cent to 34 per cent. I am very happy to note that the percentage of women IAS officers has gone as high as 42 per cent for the batch 2023.

"Also, out of the top 25 ranks, 14 positions have been occupied by women. These are fresh winds of positive changes. "All of you have to further strengthen this trend and make our society more and more inclusive," Murmu said.

She said their training component include "Bharat Darshan and not Bharat Bhraman" and that they have learnt a lot from it.

"You should build upon the glimpses of our great nation seen by you and make your awareness deeper and wider through continuous learning," the President said.

Ministry mulling to provide tablets to divyangjan

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a move aimed to help deaf students get access to good education, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is mulling to provide the tablets — loaded with digital video to such students.

"Our department is planning to provide tablets to deaf students to enable them to access educational videos in sign languages," Rajesh Aggarwal, Secretary, DEPwD said recently at an event here recently.

Sources in the Ministry said that nitty-gritties are being worked out in this direction to identify the beneficiaries and details on financial provisions. The move follows concern that only 5 per cent hearing impaired children get basic schooling and 1 per cent of the total deaf population has access to quality education in the country. Of these just 2-5 per cent of students with impaired hearing in the country have access to university education.

The cohort is too small given that India is home to the highest number of children with hearing impairment in the world. At least 1.57 million children are hearing disabled in the educational age group 0-19 years.

The experts in the sector say that more need to be done as most of the children face difficulties in understanding concepts on a daily basis in schools because education and infor-



mation are not accessible in Indian languages.

In fact, Director at the Gurugram centre of Haryana Welfare Society for Persons with Speech and Hearing Impairment, Dr Seema had recently pointed out that there is little or no emphasis on sign language and 98 per cent of the special educators in the country have limited or no sign language skill.

"As a result, despite years of schooling, students with hearing impairment remain language and education deprived. More than 90% of such children are born to parents who don't have the required information and resources to provide early communication skills," she said, according to reports. The experts also rued that most policies for hearing impaired students are framed by people who can hear and only few deaf researchers are involved in decision-making, resulting in substandard teacher training courses for such students.

Doing its bit, Solunus Inc., a leading provider of Salesforce

Need to pull out all stops to tackle anaemia, suggests NITI Aayog

PIONEER NEW SERVICES ■ NEW DELHI

With a vast majority of children and women still anemic despite concerted efforts of the Government, there is a need to pull out all stops for tackling the menace as has been done by Singapore to transform itself from a water-starved country to a water-resilient leader, a senior official from NITI Aayog, the country's top think tank, has suggested.

"India should also use a similar strategy (as adopted by Singapore) to tackle Anaemia to improve the public health system," Yugal Kishore Joshi, Director Mission Life, Niti Aayog said as he noted that the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-5 indicate 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.

Today, Singapore is leading the way in innovative and resilient water infrastructure, harnessing the power of digital technologies to deliver this vital resource to the population, said Joshi while speaking at a 2-day conference on anemia menace held here recently. It was attended by 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.

Responding to the reason for lack of funds for longer duration health and nutrition interventions, Meera Satpathy, Founder and Chairperson, Sukarya, a non-profit 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.

Dr Kirk Tickell (Faculty at the University of Washington's Department of Global Health) dwelled on maternal and child health services in Kenya, sharing that how it's important to include men in families and sensitise 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.

World-class cruise terminal to be constructed in Varanasi: Sonowal

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In a concerted effort to drive cooperative and sustainable growth in the maritime sector, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways (MoPSW) organised a roadshow for the upcoming Global Maritime India Summit (GMIS)-2023 at the Trade Facilitation Centre (TFC) here on Monday. Led by Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal, the event also saw the presence of key figures, including representatives from governments of UP and Nepal.

Speaking on occasion, Sonowal announced plans to construct a world-class cruise terminal in Varanasi for expansion of river cruise tourism via waterways in the city. He further alluded to facilitation of the movement of goods to and from Nepal via waterways. "In the heart of Varanasi, the cradle of our civilisation, we embarked on a transformative journey to shape India's destiny. Under the dynamic and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is poised to become the third largest economy in the world. Waterways and logistics are the bedrock of our economic growth, and the GMIS-2023 is the catalyst for partnership and realising the shared vision of generating investment of ₹10 lakh crore and creating more than 15 lakh employment avenues for the youth of this nation," said the Union Minister. He elaborated on the government's commitment to create a sustainable and modern ecosystem by stating, "the Jal Marg Vikas Project and Arth Ganga initiative are tangible testaments to our dedication. Our multi-modal terminals, innovative Ganga river transport and modernisation of 60 community jetties are bolstering industries and preserving our cultural heritage. We're fostering regional cooperation



Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways and AYUSH Sarbananda Sonowal inaugurating an event at TFC in Varanasi on Monday.

with neighbouring countries and offering exciting cruises on the Ganga. This transformation is green and sustainable and aligns with our environmental stewardship commitment. The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is constructing an Inter Modal Terminal at Kalughat, Bihar. The terminal is slated for completion by December 2023 and is set to revolutionise freight movement by connecting Nepal to Kalughat through road and Kalughat to Haldia via waterways." He further added, "India is also pioneering in the tourism sector with MV Ganga Vilas completing world's longest river cruise. We are creating a viable ecosystem and modernising all ports across the country be it for cargo movement, transportation of goods or reduction of costs. Under the visionary guidance of the PM, we have made significant progress in the inland waterways, coastal shipping and seaways through multiple projects across the country.

With the PM Gati Shakti initiative, we have achieved a groundbreaking milestone in waterways-centric transport, doubling the multimodal freight share to 12 per cent and reducing logistics costs. We are confident of attaining the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' mission and 'Net-zero' goals by 2047 and leading India towards a resilient and self-reliant future." Anchored by the IWAI, the roadshow served as a precursor to the highly anticipated 3rd GMIS-2023 slated to occur between October 17 and 19 at MMRDA Ground, BKC, Mumbai. The summit, organised in partnership with FICCI, strives to foster connections, advance collaborative endeavours and spark innovation, all encapsulated under the overarching theme of 'Connect, Collaborate & Create'.

During his welcome address, IWAI Chairman Sanjay Bandopadhyay said, "We celebrate IWAI's remarkable achievements: ₹1,517 crore to ₹ 5,210.81 crore in nine

years, 16 per cent (pc) growth in cargo movement (315 pc increase since 2014-15), river cruise tourism flourishes, international cooperation with Bangladesh, Myanmar, Bhutan." The IWAI has facilitated development of two private terminals at Maia, West Bengal for transport of cargo using river Ganga/Padma up to Sultanganj and Godagari (in Bangladesh). Maia has been declared as Customs Port under Section-7 of Indian Customs Act which has divertible potential of cargo of about 2.6 million metric tonnes, mainly stone chips. The transportation on this route shall be commenced shortly in consultation with Bangladesh. On the occasion an agreement was signed between IWAI and Government of Uttar Pradesh for operation of electric catamarans at Varanasi, Ayodhya and Mathura. Also, recently, the IWAI initiated operationalisation of NWs through PPP mode in the state of

Maharashtra since 13 rivers has been declared as NWs vide the National Waterways Act. 2016. IWAI is working towards executing coal transportation projects using inland water transport across the Brahmani and Mahanadi rivers to facilitate the efficient movement of coal, minerals and commodities from Talcher mines to Paradip and Dhamra ports in collaboration with Inland Waterways Consortium of Odisha Limited (IWCOL) with Coal India Ltd, Govt of Odisha and Paradip Port Authority. Speaking at the roadshow, Bipin Rajbhandari, Registrar, Nepal Panijahaj Karyalaya (Nepal Shipping Office), Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Nepal said, "Nepal is the centre of all maritime activities, especially with India. Our aim is to propel the sector towards excellence in the future and have already announced multiple initiatives for navigation purposes in the travel, tourism and trade segment." He also expressed his gratitude towards the Government of India for signing a special trade agreement with Nepal, aimed at faster and easier movement of goods via waterways. He added, "This agreement will not only create greater collaboration opportunities for both the nations in the trade and tourism sectors but also help in capacity building and training of the existing workforce for further expansion of the maritime sectors across geographies. The Kalughat Terminal, situated at the North banks of the river Ganga (NW-1), has a budget of ₹82.48 crore and can handle 77,000 TEUs." The roadshow was also graced by dignitaries including UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' and Joint Secretary (IWT), MoPSW, R Lakshmanan, JS (IWT), MoPSW, amongst others.

Elderly man found murdered

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Panic gripped Danpur Chakia, Karma and adjoining villages under Ghurpur police station for hours after an elderly man was found murdered in a field.

According to a report received here, the deceased was identified as Ram Vishun Bharatiya (76), a resident of Karma village. A team of senior police officials, forensic experts rushed to the spot for investigations. The police recovered a blood stained rod a few metres from the site. The family members have lodged a named first information report (FIR) on the basis of which the police arrested a man identified as Arvind (32), a resident of Karma village. The Ghurpur police said Arvind was released on bail four months back from the Naini Central Jail.

"Arvind had been behind bars on charges of murder," said Ghurpur SSI. "Police are interrogating the accused to know the motive behind the murder," he added.

DENGUE CASES: City's urban and semi-urban areas have turned into hotspots for dengue cases. With fresh six cases of dengue, the total number of cases has gone up to 107 as per the UDSP (Unified Disease Surveillance Portal).

Out of six new cases, four of them are from urban pockets including Transport Nagar, Mundera Chungi, Preetam Nagar and Jhunsai. While rest of the two cases were from Kaurihar and Chaka. District Malaria Officer (Prayagraj) AK Singh told reporters that 83 out of total 91 patients have already recovered and there are only eight active cases in the city. He, however, said, "Out of eight active cases, six patients are being treated at different hospitals while two patients are being treated at home". Moreover, out of total 91 verified dengue cases reported in the district so far, 74 cases were reported in urban pockets, while 34 in

trans-Ganga and trans-Yamuna areas. Officials of the health department, however, claimed, there is no need to panic as fogging and anti-larve spray exercise has been extensively carried out across the district. Officials also added, urban pockets are witnessing an increasing trend in dengue cases since past 15 days, but effective measures are being initiated to check the vector-borne disease.

Officials also claimed that city pockets have undoubtedly more dengue cases, particularly in semi urban pockets, and all the hotspots are under scanner. An anti-larvae spraying drive has been intensified in these areas, including Ashok Nagar, Rajapur, Teliyarganj, Govindpur, and old city localities. City residents have, however, been urged to take preventive measures to check the spread of dengue, said a senior health official, adding, health teams are appealing people to use mosquito nets and repellents.

Spl lecture organised to mark Deendayal Upadhyaya Jayanti

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A special lecture was conducted by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Chair, Faculty of Social Sciences, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on the occasion of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Jayanti on Monday at the Sambodhi Sabhagar on varsity campus here. Prof Tej Pratap Singh, coordinator of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Chair inaugurated the programme by welcoming the dignitaries. In his welcoming address, Prof Singh explained the rising significance of 'soft power' in influencing external relations. Key speaker Dr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President of the Indian Council for Cultural



Relations (ICCR), former Member of the Parliament of India and a researcher delivered his special lecture on the topic 'Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay: Cultural Nationalism and India's Soft Power'. The chair for the session, Prof Binda Paranjape, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, talked about

the significance as well as challenges of maintaining cultural solidarity in a multicultural nation like India.

Prof Singh proposed the vote of thanks. Prof Amarnath Mohanti, Prof Abhinav Sharma and students from various departments were present on the occasion.

IRRI Philippines team visits BHU



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A team of scientists from International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Philippines led by Dr Amelia Henry and members Mignon Natividad and Caesar Arloo Centeno visited the IRRI-funded Rice Breeding Project running at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) under leadership of Prof Shrawan Kumar Singh. The objectives of the project are to develop high-yielding rice varieties coupled with different specific genes to address the biotic and abiotic stresses and nutritional qualities like high zinc, iron, protein and low glycemic index rice. The team expressed happiness over the progress made by the BHU centre. Many advanced breeding lines are in the pipeline to meet the global food

demand. Prof Singh said rice is important food crop of the world population and India is the top rice exporter country. Hence, enhancing India's rice production is very important for world food and nutritional security and in balancing global inflation. The BHU is continuously joining hands with IRRI in the development of high-yielding rice varieties to meet global challenges and food security, Prof Singh added.

APPOINTED: Venugopal Badaravada, an activist of Varanasi working for preserving and promoting of Zebu Cattle Breeds, has been appointed by the Union Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare and the President of ICAR Society Narendra Singh Tomar as a member of the general body and governing body of the

ICAR Society, for the key role in Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).

Venugopal who attended the prestigious international events like PM Natendra Modi's programmes at Madison Square Garden in New York, Howdy Modi in Houston, USA, and Namaste Trump in Ahmedabad, has been appointed as a member of the general body and governing body of the ICAR Society, for three-year term. Venugopal has so far travelled to 21 countries across five continents and his main focus is on Zebu cattle, livestock and agricultural research. He also enjoys privilege of honorary citizenship in Canada and Brazilian city Uberaba, world capital for Zebu cattle, underscoring his global recognition for outstanding contributions to agriculture. Venugopal serves as the Central Advisory Member for the Rashtriya Gokul Mission and is an ex-member of the National Livestock Mission under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.

Swamishri to arrive in Kashi on October 6

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

After completing his 'Chaturmas' stay at Paramhansi Ganga Ashram in Madhya Pradesh, the Shankaracharya of Jyotishspeeth Swami Avimukteshwarananda Saraswati, popularly known as Swamishri, will arrive in this holy city via Seoni on October 6. Giving this information here on Monday, his media in-charge Sanjay Pandey said during his stay in the city where Swamishri was born and brought up till his appointment as the Shankaracharya, religious rituals will be held for the people who died during the corona pandemic period. Besides, Swamishri will also deliver his religious discourses on Shrimad Bhagwat Katha.

He said that the Chaturmas stay of Swamishri will be completed in Barheta district (MP) on Bhadrapada Purnima. Later, after participating in various religious events in the Seoni area for three days, he will reach Kashi on October 6. Sometime ago, Swamishri had announced that religious rituals will be organised in Kashi during Pitru Paksha for the peace of the souls and salvation of those who died in the country and abroad during the corona pandemic period and those whose last rites could not be performed as per the rituals. The path of Shrimad Bhagwat Mahapurana will be organised apart from religious rituals like tarpan etc by the Vedic scholars in this direction, Pandey added.

NSS DAY: The motto of National Service Scheme (NSS) "Not Me But You" reflects the essence of democratic living. Its ideological concept is inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi in which welfare of the people and the society lies and these underline that the welfare of the individual ultimately depends on the welfare of the society. These words were expressed by the Head of Comparative Theology Department, Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (SSU) Prof Hari Prasad Adhikari while speaking in a programme organised by NSS Unit of the university on NSS Day on Sunday.

Passengers to get sleeping pod facility at Chheoki railway stn

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Now passengers will get the facility of sleeping pods at Chheoki railway station here. A few days ago the tender process for making sleeping pods at the Prayagraj Junction had started. A Pune-based company will manufacture sleeping pods here. The company has also started the construction process on the building containing the old booking counter and reservation counter located on the Civil Lines side of the junction. Passengers will be able to get this facility at Prayagraj Junction possibly in October or November. Railway passengers will be able to rest here. Passengers will be able to book couple and single sleeping pods. Along with Chheoki, sleeping pods will be prepared at Kanpur Central, Aligarh Junction, Etawah and Mirzapur railway stations. It may be pointed out here that for the first time in North India a

sleeping pod is being prepared at Prayagraj Junction.

Senior DCM of Prayagraj Division Himanshu Shukla said that such pods are to be made at Prayagraj Junction as well as other railway stations. In view of Mahakumbh 2025, there will be a large number of passenger traffic here. Keeping this in mind sleeping pods are to be made at Prayagraj Junction, Chheoki Junction etc.

MAHAKUMBH: With around 40 crore devotees and tourists expected to converge at Prayagraj during Mahakumbh-2025, the state government has laid special emphasis on widening and constructing new roads leading to the mela area.

To expedite this work, the state government has approved the budget of ₹23.48 crore for the widening of 12 roads leading to the fair area. Of this, first tranche of ₹17.43 crore has been released. The work of road widening will be done by the Cantonment Board and

funds released by public works department (PWD). Apart from widening roads, new ones will also be constructed to decongest the mammoth gathering of devotees. Among this, a link road will be constructed, connecting old GT Road to Kali Marg near Patel Sansthan. For this, ₹1.52 crore has been released. Likewise, a new road will be constructed from Alopibagh flyover to Kali Marg via PWD store for which ₹1.91 crore has been given. Apart from this, an amount of ₹1.75 crore for widening of road from Harshvardhan intersection to Jawahar Lal Nehru Road, ₹60.51 lakh for interlocking at VIP Ghat, ₹69.51 lakh for construction of Yamuna Patti interlocking route (from Akshayvat Marg), ₹1.58 crore for interlocking on Lal sadak (road) and interlocking and widening on Sangam return route have also been released. Also, ₹1.82 crore has been released for inter-

locking and widening of Jagdish ramp. Along with this, funds have been released for construction of three ghats. The government has approved ₹34.55 crore for acquiring 11,754 sqm of land for pucca ghats. These will come up at Dashhashwamedh Ghat in Daraganj, Nehru Ghat near Saraswati Ghat and a 30m long ghat behind ECC for which ₹1.48 crore has been released for acquiring 504 sqm land.

Funds have also been released for several other works related, including interlocking of road near Talab Naval Rai, new road near Triveni Ghat stretching from Jagannath temple to Bangar Dharamshala.

"Now that funds are being approved and released, work for construction of new roads and widening of existing ones will be expedited," said MahaKumbh Mela Adhikari, Vijay Kiran Anand.

Commerce Faculty wins volleyball championship

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Commerce Faculty won the Inter-Faculty Volleyball Championship (Men) 2023-24 defeating Arts Faculty in the final match played on Monday. The championship was organised by the University Sports Board (USB), Banaras Hindu University (BHU) on varsity sports ground here.

The final match of the Inter-Faculty Volleyball Championship (Men) 2023-24 was played between Arts Faculty and Commerce Faculty and the latter won the final match and championship as well by defeating the former by 25-18, 25-10, 25-14. Earlier the semi-final matches were also played. In the first semi-final, the Arts Faculty became the winner by defeating the Institute of Science in four sets 25-21, 25-23, 22-25, 25-18. In the second semi-final match, the Commerce Faculty became



The team of Commerce Faculty which won the Inter-Faculty Volleyball Championship (Men) 2023-24 organised by the USB, BHU.

the winner by defeating Institute of Agricultural Science in three straight sets by 25-17, 25-17 and 25-10. In the match played for third place, the Institute of Science emerged victorious by defeating Institute of Agricultural Science in two straight sets by 25-12 and 25-4. The chief guest of the final match was chief proctor of the university Professor Abhimanyu Singh and the special guest was vice-

president of USB Professor SBS Raju. The guests distributed trophies and medals among the winning players. The organising secretary Robin Kumar Singh, secretaries of USB Dr Rajeev Singh and Professor Archana Singh, teachers from various institutes, faculties and colleges of the university and all the assistant directors of the USB were present besides all officers and employees of the USB.

‘Clean Food Day’ observed

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Along with the entire Indian Railways, the eighth 'Swachhata Pakhwada' (Cleanliness Fortnight) is being run on the theme of 'Swachhata Hi Seva' from September 16 to October 2 in different stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER). In the same sequence, 'Clean Food Day' was observed on Sunday and during the day, a thorough inspection of the cleanliness of the catering facilities available at the food stalls of the stations and in the pantry cars of the trains was carried out. On the instructions of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava, the nominated officers checked food stalls, mobile vendors and pantry cars of trains at different stations of Varanasi Division of NER. Under the leadership of Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer (EnHM) Apoorna Swarnkar, food stalls were inspected at Prayagraj Rambagh station along with Shramdaan, tree plantation



and public awareness. A cleanliness rally was also taken out. The quality of food and beverages available at Jan Aahar units, canteens, food stalls, food plazas and local vendors was also checked at Banaras, Varanasi City, Ballia, Ghazipur City, Azamgarh, Mau, Bhatni, Siwan and Chhapra stations. During the day, pamphlets were distributed among the passengers on the harm caused by filth in stations and railway premises. With a view to promote self-motivation and

awareness nearby the general public was made aware through audio/video messages at the stations.

Earlier, 'Clean Premises (Railway Accommodation and Colonies) Day' was observed in which all the wards and premises of Railway hospitals and health units were cleaned under the guidance of designated officers. High level cleanliness was ensured and plaster and electrical fittings of Railway colonies, rest houses, retiring rooms, waiting rooms

and dormitories were also checked. During the day the cleanliness campaign was launched in Varanasi Divisional Officers' Residential Colony, Vasundhara Railway Colony, Divisional Hospital premises apart from Varanasi City, Ghazipur City, Banaras, Prayagraj Rambagh, Ballia, Azamgarh, Mau, Belthara Road, Deoria Sadar, Kaptanganj, Aunrihar, Bhatni, Chhapra Junction railway stations. The railway colonies of Chhapra Kacheri and Siwan stations were thoroughly made clean, trees planted for beautification and garbage disposed of from different places. The cleanliness campaign was also launched by the railway officers and employees in the coaching depots, diesel lobbies, divisional hospital, primary schools, goods depots, diesel lobbies, Ghazipur and Banaras training centres and circulating areas of small and big stations of all categories. With a view to spreading awareness about the responsibility of cleanliness, the general public was also

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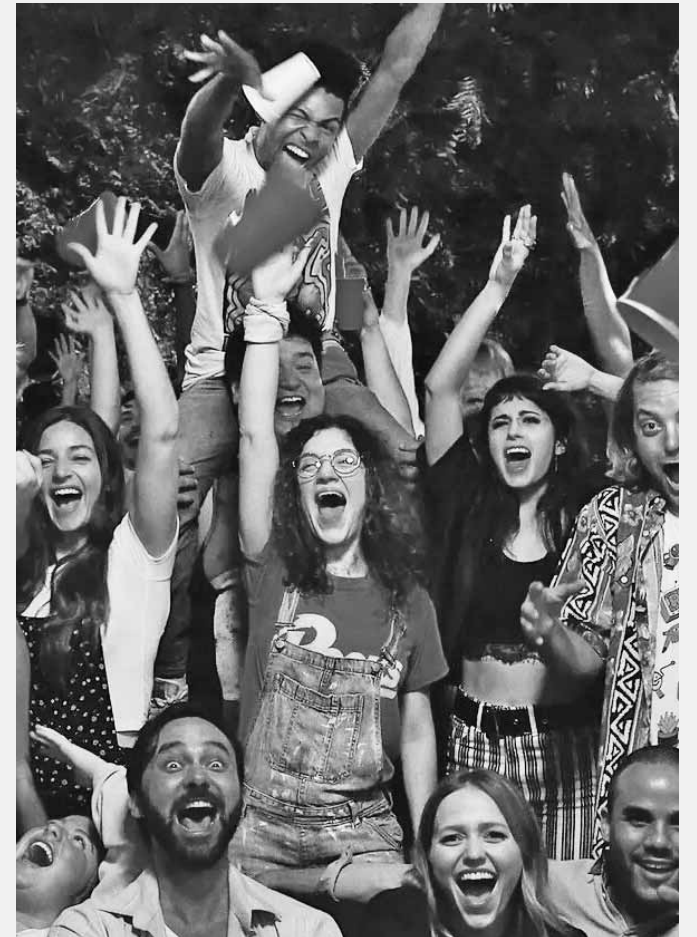
SAKSHI **SETHI**

Our heart is wide enough to embrace the world and hands are long enough to encompass the world.” Life can be a beautifully complex tapestry, where on the surface, everything seems picture perfect -the marriage, the career, the health and the loving family all paint a pretty picture. But in quiet moments, when the thoughts drift and one finds yearning for something more or something different, then it’s time to listen to that inner voice. It’s not about dissatisfaction, rather it’s about growth.

In a world that often tells everyone to stick with the status quo, this is the permission slip to break free from those chains and chase dreams. In a world often defined by expectations and conformity, embracing the authentic self is a superpower that can propel an individual to move forward.

As a younger self, everyone had a sense of naivety that allowed them to approach the world with curiosity and fearlessness. With time and growth, the brains get wired to keep themselves safe which in turn leads to making to resist change. But if tapped into that childlike sense of wonder, one can embrace change with excitement and enthusiasm. One needs to trust the process and keep moving forward. One shouldn’t be afraid to take risks and try new things. With a bit of naivety, an individual can approach change with a fresh perspective and an open mind.

To make a change, one needs to determine the value of the change. As a human being, one doesn’t do things simply for the sake of doing them, rather one needs to have a purpose, value or benefit.



Stepping out of your comfort zone can be scary but it’s where the opportunities and growth lie. Moving to a new frequency may crumble some aspects of life, but at the same time will also make room for new opportunities and experiences. There is no denying the fact that change can be scary but everyone must face it. It’s the words and perceptions of an individual that matter and make an impact on the behaviour and actions. Reframing the way an individual thinks about change is very valuable in whether one worries about it or embraces it. One needs to stop thinking about embracing change as the big bad wolf—“scary,” “uncertain” and “negative” and start thinking about it as an adventure and a fun experience where they learn, grow and have fun in the process.

Remember, there is no better time than autumn to begin forgetting the things that trouble us, allowing them to fall away like dried leaves.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Digital medium and new economic paradigm

Attaining the balance between business and social values in the digital realm is the need of the hour

Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon has rightly argued, “There is no alternative to digital transformation. Visionary companies will carve out new strategic options for themselves those that don’t adapt, will fail.”

Attention economy is the latest lexicon in the landscape of business and digital communication. There is hardly any space that digital media has not reached and influenced, whether it is for good or bad. Technology and digital connectivity have evolved a new paradigm in the sphere of economy, the attention economy, which is doing around all across. This new model has redefined the very rudiments of the economic paradigm and there have been shifts in Ferments, foundations and the future of the economy on a global scale. The confluence of economy and interactive digital communication emanating from the economy has wider implications on the genesis and praxis of economy and digital communication. It has caused concerns about privacy, manipulation, and the toll it takes on mental health which need to be amicably addressed.

No wonder, the attention economy has transformed the way we live, work, and interact, and it’s time we take a closer look at its impact and the challenges it presents. Such a form of new economic model has emerged in the digital age. It’s a framework that recognizes that attention has become a finite resource in an information-rich world. In the traditional economic model, goods and services are exchanged for money. In the attention economy, however, the currency is not dollars or euros; it’s our precious time and cognitive resources.

The attention economy revolves around capturing and holding the attention of individuals to monetize it. This is principally achieved through advertising, content consumption, and social media. Social media platforms have played a pivotal role in the rise of the attention economy. They have created a digital landscape where individuals willingly share their personal information, preferences, and behaviours, providing an invaluable resource for advertisers and content creators. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have mastered the art of keeping users engaged and scrolling for hours on end.

One of the key features of social media is the algorithm-driven feed, designed to show users content that will keep them on the platform as long as possible. These algorithms analyze user behaviour, preferences, and interactions to curate a personalized feed that maximizes the chances of holding the user’s attention. Whether it’s endless scrolling on Instagram or watching recommended videos on YouTube, these algorithms are designed to capture and retain our attention.

Companies and platforms vie for our attention because they know that the more of it they can capture, the more advertising revenue they can generate. In this light, social media has not spared any space whether it is personal or professional. Numerous social media platforms have played a pivotal role in the rise of the attention economy. They have inevitably created a niche digital landscape where individuals willingly share their personal information, preferences, and behaviours, providing an invaluable resource for advertisers and content creators. It is startling but true. Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok have mastered the art of keeping users engaged and scrolling for hours



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(Chakraborty is HoD, Digital Marketing & Associate Professor, Presidency University, Bengaluru and Biswal is Associate Professor & Head, Journalism and Mass Communication, Rama Devi Women’s University, Bhubaneswar; views are personal)

on end. Moreover, artificial intelligence and machine learning are the new entrants that have started positioning curated and personalized content which have larger implications for the economy by capturing the users’ attention. Whether it’s never-ending scrolling on Instagram or watching recommended videos on YouTube, these algorithms are designed to capture and retain attention.

The attention economy is not all free from flaws. Social media platforms and advertisers are constantly refining their techniques to keep us hooked. These models of business activities can foster the spread of misinformation and echo chambers. Algorithms often prioritize content that aligns with a user’s existing beliefs and preferences. This can lead to the reinforcement of biases and a lack of exposure to diverse perspectives, ultimately contributing to polarization and the spread of fake news. The attention economy’s impact on mental health is a growing concern. Every notification, every “like,” every comment is a small reward that keeps us coming back for more. Take control of your social media feed by unfollowing accounts that don’t add value or contribute to negativity. Curate a feed that inspires and educates rather than drains your energy. This can lead to addictive behaviour and compulsive checking of social media, negatively impacting our mental health and productivity.

The constant barrage of content also makes it challenging for individuals to focus and engage in deep, meaningful activities. Continuous

partial attention (CPA) is an automatic process that allows people to pay attention to multiple sources of information at the same time while searching for relevant information. This allows people to move from a superficial focus on a lot of information to focus on highly relevant information within a short attention span. CPA has been used to describe our tendency to be constantly distracted by notifications and the fear of missing out (FOMO).

Fear of missing out (FOMO) is a feeling of anxiety about not being aware of or missing out on information, events, experiences, or life decisions that could improve one’s life. It is characterized by the desire to constantly stay in touch with what others are doing. FOMO has increased recently due to technological advancements. Social networking sites create many opportunities for FOMO. While it provides opportunities for social engagement, it provides a view of the myriad of activities in which one does not participate. Psychological dependence on social networks can lead to FOMO or even pathological use of the Internet. This hampers our ability to concentrate, which is essential for tasks that require sustained attention and critical thinking.

Research has shown that excessive use of social media and digital devices can lead to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety. The constant comparison with others, the pressure to curate a perfect online persona, and the fear of missing out on social events can take a toll on our well-being. The relentless stream of information and sen-

sationalized news can contribute to information overload and heightened stress levels.

There is little doubt that the attention economy enjoys a coveted space in digital marketing and business strategy. However, in a view to mitigate the ill effects of excessive digital media consumption, sanity in terms of focused work, leisure, resetting your mental state, algorithmic accountability and minimizing mindless scrolling is highly warranted. Periodically disconnect from digital devices and social media. A digital detox can help reset your mental state and reduce dependency on technology. Allocate time for focused work, leisure, and social media, and try to minimize mindless scrolling.


The attention economy is a double-edged sword. On one hand, it has revolutionized the way we access information, connect with others, and do business. On the other hand, it has raised significant concerns about privacy, manipulation, and the toll it takes on our mental health.

Finding a balance between benefiting from the opportunities of the attention economy while safeguarding our well-being is a complex challenge. It requires a combination of individual responsibility, societal awareness, and ethical practices from tech companies.

Finding a balance between benefiting from the opportunities of the attention economy while safeguarding our well-being is a complex challenge. It requires a combination of individual responsibility, societal awareness, and ethical practices from tech companies.




UTTAM **CHAKRABORTY**



SANTOSH **KUMAR**
BISWAL

Women’s reservation Bill: A pathbreaking achievement

It is a historical step and culmination of a series of progressive reforms that the Modi Government has undertaken for the welfare of women



VINEETA **HARIHARAN**

((The author is a public policy expert and spokesperson, BJP and State Vice President, BJP Women’s Wing; views are personal))

of the Swachh Bharat Mission which provided izzat ghars to more than 120 million women thus ensuring access to safe sanitation for women and girl children across rural and urban Bharat. Saving millions of women from chronic respiratory disorders by providing smoke-free kitchens through the widespread Ujjwala Yojana which provided gas cylinders to more than 96 million women was another significant life-changing provision for the women of our country. Apart from these, several important programmes were delivered for the betterment of the health and hygiene of our women.

Distribution of over 270 million sanitary pads priced at Re. 1 through Jan Aushadhi Kendras, providing 39 million

free antenatal check-ups under PM Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan; benefitting more than 30 million women through the PM Matru Vandana Yojana; increase in paid maternity leave period from 12 weeks to 26 weeks; were some of the significant health initiatives. As an outcome of these, we could achieve a decline in Maternal Mortality Rate from 130 in 2014 to 97 per lakh live births in 2018-20. Modi Government also facilitated holistic well-being development schemes such as Mission Poshan.

This was an integrated nutrition support programme to overcome the challenges of malnutrition in children, adolescent girls, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Poshan Abhiyan has reported benefi-

ciaries of more than 100 million which includes more than 5 million lactating and pregnant mothers and more than 4 million children below 6 months.

Apart from social welfare, this Government has also ensured economic empowerment through various interventions beginning with opening more than 270 million Jan Dhan accounts and providing more than INR 200 million to women entrepreneurs through the MUDRA Yojana. There has been a 28% increase in registration of women-owned MSMEs in just 3 years.

More than 45,000 DPIIT-recognised startups have at least one woman director. Mahila Samman Savings Certificate (MSSC) for girls and women which was anno-

unced by Finance Minister Nirmala Seetharaman ji in the Union Budget 23 -24, celebrates Nari Shakti by providing financial freedom and dignity for women and girl children. Apart from social and economic empowerment, this Government has also taken bold steps in bringing much-needed reforms for Muslim women. The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 declared the pronouncement of instantaneous and irrevocable triple talaq by a Muslim husband as illegal. The Women’s Reservation Bill is now the culminating transformation being introduced to ensure adequate women’s participation in the electoral canvas of Bharat. The chequered legislative history of the Women’s Reservation Bill

began 27 years ago when the H D Deve Gowda-led government introduced it in Parliament in September 1996.

Almost every government has since tried to push it through — the UPA government managed to get it passed in the Rajya Sabha in 2010 but later could not get it through in the Lok Sabha. The move has not come to fruition so far due to a lack of political will and consensus.

The bill will help to represent those who remain under-represented. The proportion of women MPs was just five per cent in the first Lok Sabha in 1952 reaching a figure of less than 15 per cent today. In Rajya Sabha too, women’s representation is about 14 per cent and below 10 per cent in many state assemblies. Bring-

ing in the 1/3 representation will enable many more women’s voices to be heard in the wells of the parliament houses. This will also ensure that women’s issues and challenges in the most backward areas are represented before the policy and lawmakers which will go a long way in not just keeping our women and girl children safe in the country but also empowering them to play a critical role in nation-building.

The Women’s Reservation Bill will be etched in the history of Modern Bharat and the Modi Government will always be known as the most progressive Government that provided 360-degree empowerment for the women of our country-social, economic and now electoral. A proud and jubilant moment in history for all of us.

Philippine removes barrier placed by China in disputed shoal

AP ■ MANILA

The Philippine coast guard said Monday it has complied with a presidential order to remove a floating barrier placed by China's coast guard to prevent Filipino fishing boats from entering a lagoon in a disputed shoal in the South China Sea. Philippine officials condemned the installation of the 300-metre (980-foot)-long barrier at the entrance to the lagoon at Scarborough Shoal as a violation of international law and their Southeast Asian nation's sovereignty.

The Philippine coast guard's report that it has removed the barrier underscores intensifying Philippine efforts to fight China's increasingly aggressive actions, against many odds, in one of the world's most hotly contested waters.

Chinese coast guard vessels laid the rope and net barrier, held up by buoys, last week as a Philippine government fisheries vessel approached and more than 50 Philippine fishing boats swarmed outside the shoal, the Philippine coast guard said.

The Philippine coast guard said in a statement Monday night that it has success-

fully removed the floating barrier in a "special operation" in compliance with the order of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. It did not provide other details like if the entire barrier was removed and when, and how Chinese coast guard ships, which have closely guarded the shoal for years, reacted.

The decisive action of the Philippine coast guard to remove the barrier aligns with international law and the Philippines' sovereignty over the shoal," the coast guard said. "The PCG remains committed to upholding international law, safeguarding the welfare of Filipino fisherfolk and protecting the rights of the Philippines in its territorial waters."

Video issued by the Philippine coast guard to journalists in Manila showed a diver cutting a part of what appears to be the barrier rope. A man onboard a motor boat tries to lift what appears to be a part of the barrier rope in another video released by the coast guard to the media.

Earlier Monday, Philippine National Security Adviser Eduardo Ano said that "the placement by the People's Republic of China of a barrier violates the traditional

fishing rights of our fishermen".

Ano said in a statement that the Philippines "will take all appropriate actions to cause the removal of the barriers and to protect the rights of our fishermen in the area". He did not elaborate.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said the shoal and its adjacent waters are "China's inherent territory," where Beijing "has indisputable sovereignty".

A Philippine government fisheries vessel "trespassed into the waters" without China's permission on Sept 22, Wang said, and "attempted to intrude into the lagoon" of the shoal. "China's coast guard took the necessary measures to stop and warn off the ship in accordance with the law, which was professional and with restraint," he added.

It's the latest flare-up in long-simmering territorial disputes in the busy and resource-rich waterway, most of which is claimed by China. The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan are involved with China in the conflicts, which have long been regarded as a potential Asian flashpoint and a delicate fault line in the US-China rivalry in the region.

Nepal, China sign 12 agreements

Nepal PM on China visit

PTI ■ BEIJING/KATHMANDU

China and Nepal on Monday signed 12 agreements, including seven MoUs, to enhance bilateral cooperation in sectors including trade, road connectivity, and information technology after Premier Li Qiang and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" held wide-ranging talks in Beijing. During the meeting, the two leaders comprehensively reviewed the bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction over the close and cordial ties subsisting between the two countries, according to a press release issued by the Nepal embassy in Beijing.

The two sides exchanged views on the ways to further strengthen and consolidate the mutual understanding and cooperation and give a new impetus in the front of econo-



my, trade and people-to-people contacts, it said, two days after Chinese President Xi Jinping held talks with Prachanda in Hangzhou on the sidelines of the Asian Games being held in the eastern Chinese city.

Prachanda, who politically distanced from the pro-China Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) headed by KP Oli after becoming Prime Minister in December last year, made his

maiden visit to China after visiting India and the US. Following the official bilateral talks, 12 agreements were signed between the two countries, the Nepalese embassy said.

The agreements include an MoU for Cooperation between The National Planning Commission of Nepal and China's National Development and Reform Commission; an MoU on enhancing digital

economy co-operation; an MoU related to cooperation on green and low-carbon development; and an MoU on cooperation in the field of agriculture, livestock and fisheries, the release said.

The two sides also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the establishment of a Joint Technical Working Group for the review and modification of the Nepal-China trade and payment agreement.

They also signed a protocol of phytosanitary requirements for the export of plant-derived medicinal materials for Chinese medicine from Nepal to China.

China and Nepal also signed MoUs on the Hilsa-Simkot Road Project and the Nepal-China Power Grid Interconnection Project (Chilime-Kerung). The other agreements include cooperation in the fields of science, technology and innovation; and in the field of Human Resources Development, the release said.

EU commissioner calls for more balanced trade with China

PTI ■ BEIJING

The European Union's trade commissioner called for a more balanced economic relationship with China on Monday, noting an EU trade deficit of nearly 400 billion euros (\$425 billion), while also warning that China's position on the war in Ukraine could endanger its relationship with Europe. Valdis Dombrovskis, in a speech at China's prestigious Tsinghua University, said that the EU and China face significant political and economic headwinds that could cause them to drift apart.

"The strongest, yet not the only, headwind is Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, and how China positions itself on this issue," he said.

Dombrovskis spoke before high-level economic and trade talks with Chinese Vice Premier He Lifeng.

EU leaders have expressed concern about the bloc's growing trade deficit with China, which reached 396 billion euros last year. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen recently announced an investigation into Chinese subsidies to electric vehicle makers, saying a flood of cheaper Chinese cars is distorting the European market.

The Chinese government has called the investigation a protectionist act aimed at distorting the supply chain. Dombrovskis, in his Tsinghua address, said the probe would follow well-established rules and be done in consultation with Chinese authorities and stakeholders.

The EU trade commissioner urged China to address the lack of reciprocity in the economic relationship, saying "the figures speak for themselves".

He said that China has created a more politicised business environment to protect its national security and development interests, resulting in less transparency, unequal access to procurement, and discrimina-



tory standards and security requirements.

Dombrovskis cited as examples a new foreign relations law and an updated espionage law that has European companies struggling to understand their compliance obligations.

"Their ambiguity allows too much room for interpretation," he said about the laws, adding they deter new investment in China.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said that China provides a market-oriented, law-based business environment for foreign companies.

"As long as the companies are operating in accordance with the law, they don't have to worry," he said.

Chinese officials have been trying to lure back foreign investment to help the economy emerge from a sluggishness that has persisted despite the lifting of pandemic restrictions last December.

The Chinese government has tried to remain neutral in the war in Ukraine rather than joining the United States and much of Europe in condemning the Russian invasion. Dombrovskis, who is Latvian, noted that territorial integrity has always been a key principle for China in international diplomacy.

"Russia's war is a blatant breach of this principle," he said. "So it's very difficult for us to understand China's stance on Russia's war against Ukraine, as it breaches China's own fundamental principles."

Poland accuses Germany of meddling in its affairs

Warsaw (AP): Poland's foreign minister accused Germany of trying to interfere in his country's internal affairs after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said Warsaw needs to clarify allegations that Polish consulates in Africa and Asia sold temporary work visas to migrants for thousands of dollars each.

Poland's right-wing ruling party, Law and Justice, is facing questions about the alleged scheme ahead of an Oct 15 national election in which it is seeking a third term in power.

Scholz, whose government is under pressure to do more to limit migration to Germany, called on neighbouring Poland on Saturday to provide clarification of what was happening.

"I don't want people to just be waved through from Poland and only for us to have a discussion about asylum policy afterward," Scholz said in comments reported by the German news agency dpa.

Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau retorted late Sunday on X, formerly Twitter, that Scholz's statement "violates the principles of the sovereign equality of states".

Rau said he appealed to Scholz "to respect Poland's sovereignty and refrain from statements that damage our mutual relations".

Rau himself is under political pressure at home because the alleged visa scheme operated out of the Foreign Ministry.

German Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said last week that Berlin was considering establishing short-term border checks with Poland and the Czech Republic to help curb the smuggling of people into Germany.

She added that the increased border checks would need to be combined with random police checks that are already being carried out. The government said Monday that she is in discussions with her Polish and Czech counterparts.

Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic belong to Europe's visa-free zone, commonly known as the Schengen Area.

Kosovo mourns slain police officer

AP ■ PRISTINA

Kosovo on Monday was observing a day of mourning for the Kosovar Albanian police officer killed by Serb gunmen who then barricaded themselves in an Orthodox monastery in an attack that left three assailants dead and further raised tensions between the two former wartime foes as they seek to normalise ties.

Flags were at half mast on all public buildings in the capital Pristina to mourn Afrim Bunjaku. In the north, where most of Kosovo's ethnic Serb minority lives in four municipalities around Mitrovica, police were patrolling in search of the armed assailants after they left the monastery.

About 30 gunmen dressed in combat uniforms were involved in the attack, but it is not clear who they are or who is supporting them. Pristina accuses Belgrade of backing the "terrorists," an accusation Serbia denies, saying they are Serbs from Kosovo protesting the government there. On

Sunday the masked gunmen opened fire on a police patrol at about 3 a.m. (01:00 GMT) in Banjska, a village located 55 kilometres north of Pristina, killing Bunjaku and injuring another officer.

They then used an armoured vehicle to break down the gates to the monastery in the village, where they remained in a stand-off with Kosovo police until evening.

The two sides exchanged gunfire sporadically until darkness fell, when the assailants escaped from the monastery on foot. Three of the attackers were killed and two injured. Another Kosovar police officer was injured in the confrontation near the monastery.

Two of the gunmen and four Serbs discovered nearby with communication equipment were arrested and are being investigated for terrorist acts.

Police seized vehicles used by the gunmen which contained an arsenal of firearms of different calibers, explosives,

ammunition and logistics capable of equipping hundreds of persons, according to Kosovo Interior Minister Xhelal Svecla.

"It's a terrorist, criminal, professional unit that had planned and prepared what they did and who are not a smuggling band but a mercenary structure which is politically, financially and logistically supported by official Belgrade," said Prime Minister Albin Kurti.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said the gunmen were local Kosovo Serbs "who no longer want to stand Kurti's terror." Vucic condemned the killing of the Kosovo policeman, but still said the clash was the result of "brutal" pressure on Kosovo Serbs by the Kosovo government.

He denied that Belgrade had anything to do with the attack.

Vucic also blasted the West and its "hypocrisy" over Kosovo. "You can kill us all. Serbia will never recognize the independence of Kosovo, that

8 officials jailed as part of investigation into dams' collapse

AP ■ CAIRO

Libya's chief prosecutor said Monday he ordered the detention of eight current and former officials pending his investigation into the collapse of two dams earlier this month, a disaster that sent a wall of water several metres high through the centre of a coastal city and left thousands of people dead.

The two dams outside the city of Derna broke up on Sep. 11 after they were overwhelmed by Storm Daniel, which caused heavy rain across eastern Libya. The failure of the structures inundated as much as a quarter of the city, officials have said, destroying entire neighbourhoods and sweeping people out to sea.

Government officials and aid agencies have given estimated death tolls ranging from more than 4,000 to over 11,000. The bodies of many of the people killed still are under rubble or in the Mediterranean,



according to search teams.

A statement by the office of General Prosecutor al-Sidiq al-Sour said prosecutors on Sunday questioned seven former and current officials with the Water Resources Authority and the Dams Management Authority over allegations that mismanagement, negligence and mistakes contributed to the disaster.

Derna Mayor Abdel-Moneim al-Ghaithi, who was sacked after the disaster, was also questioned, the statement said.

Prosecutors ordered the eight to be jailed pending the investigation, the statement added.

The dams were built by a Yugoslav construction company in the 1970s above Wadi

Derna, a river valley which divides the city. They were meant to protect the city from flash floods, which are not uncommon in the area. The dams were not maintained for decades, despite warnings by scientists that they may burst.

A report by a state-run audit agency in 2021 said the two dams hadn't been maintained despite the allocation of more than USD 2 million for that purpose in 2012 and 2013.

A Turkish firm was contracted in 2007 to carry out maintenance on the two dams and to build a third one in between them. The firm, Arsel Construction Company Ltd., said on its website that it completed its work in November 2012. It didn't respond to an email seeking further comment.

Two weeks on, local and international teams were still digging through mud and hollowed-out buildings, looking for bodies. They also combing the Mediterranean off Derna,

searching for boding swept away in the floods.

The floods have left as many as a third of Derna's housing and infrastructure damaged, according to the UN's Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA. Authorities have evacuated the most impacted part of the city, leaving only search and ambulance teams, OCHA said. The World Health Organization says more than 4,000 deaths have been registered dead, including foreigners, but a previous death toll given by the head of Libya's Red Crescent was at 11,300. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs says at least 9,000 people are still missing.

The storm hit other areas in eastern Libya, including the towns of Bayda, Susa, Marj and Shahatt. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced in the region and took shelter in schools and other government buildings.

'New poll shows Biden trailing behind Trump by 10 points'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

A new poll by the Washington Post and ABC News has shown President Joe Biden trailing behind his predecessor Donald Trump in a hypothetical November 2024 match. "Trump edges out Biden 51-42 in head-to-head matchup," the poll said. Trump is way ahead of his other Republican rivals in the party's presidential race. The GOP's formal nomination process will begin with the Iowa Caucus and the New Hampshire Primary in January.

While two of the Indian-American Republican presidential aspirants — former South Carolina governor Nikki Haley and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy — have gained



momentum in recent weeks, Trump is far ahead of his GOP rivals and political pundits believe that he is on his way to becoming the party's nominee.

The Washington Post-ABC News poll released on Sunday said that a record number of Americans say they have become worse off under his presidency. Three-quarters say he's too old for another term

and Donald Trump is looking better in retrospect — all severe challenges for Biden in his reelection campaign ahead, according to the poll results.

However, the Washington Post disagrees with the results of the poll. The prominent American daily reported that the poll showing Trump beating Biden by 10 points is likely an "outlier" as the two rivals are in a dead heat according to other polls.

"The Post-ABC poll shows Biden trailing Trump by 10 percentage points at this early stage in the election cycle, although the sizable margin of Trump's lead in this survey is significantly at odds with other public polls that show the general election contest a virtual dead heat.

Inquest opens into death of 2 Indian-origin teens

London (PTI): An inquest opened on Monday into the death of two Indian-origin teenagers who died when they got into difficulty while swimming in Northern Ireland. Reuven Simon and Joseph Sebastian, both 16 and belonging to the local Kerala community in County Derry, drowned while out swimming in the Enagh Lough, or Enagh Lake, in August last year.

According to local news reports, one of the boys was taken from the water and transferred to Altnagelvin Hospital, where he was later pronounced dead. The second boy was pronounced dead at the scene after being recovered from the water after searches by police divers. "We know both families and can only imagine the incalculable

pain they are feeling today," the North West Migrants Forum said in a statement at the time.

"Thanks must also go to emergency services who were on the scene. Our thoughts and prayers are with the entire Kerala community as they try to make sense of this awful tragedy. Remembered fondly," it said.

Both boys were pupils at St Columb's College in Derry, Northern Ireland. The school principal, Finbar Madden, expressed "shock and sadness" of the local community.

"No words can express the devastation that we feel as a school community, but first and foremost our thoughts and prayers are with both boys' families, community and friends," he said.

Trial opens over killing of police couple in France

AP ■ PARIS

It wasn't the deadliest attack in Europe linked to the Islamic State group, but it was among the most disturbing: One evening in 2016, an assailant killed two police officers in their family home, in front of their 3-year-old son. On Monday, a trial opens in a French counterterrorism court over the attack in the Paris suburb of Magnanville.

The attacker, Larossi Abballa, was shot to death by police. According to court documents, he told police negotiators that he was responding to an IS leader's call to "kill miscreants at home with their families."

A childhood friend of Abballa's, Mohamed Aberouz, is going on trial for complicity to terrorism-related murder,

complicity to kidnapping and terrorist conspiracy. He faces up to life in prison if convicted.

The killings came amid a wave of attacks in France linked to the Islamic State group and had a lasting effect on police officers around France.

Some moved, changed services or resigned to protect their loved ones after the Magnanville killings.

According to court documents, Abballa broke into the home of police officers Jessica Schneider and Jean-Baptiste Salvaing before they returned from work. When Schneider came home, Abballa slit her throat in the living room, with the child present. The father texted her from the office to say "I'm leaving," the documents say. There was no response.

He was stabbed upon arriv-

ing home.

Neighbours called police, and the attacker said he was holding the couple's 3-year-old hostage, according to the documents.

He told a negotiator from a special police unit that he acted because the French government was preventing the faithful from joining the caliphate, and stressed that he had not targeted civilians but representatives of the French state.

Police stormed the home and killed Abballa, and rescued the child. The boy has been raised by family members since.

After more than five years of investigation and multiple arrests, only Aberouz is facing trial. Charges were initially brought against two others but later dropped.

Imran Khan shifted to Adiala prison?

Jail admin denies

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Imran Khan's lawyer on Monday said he was shifted from the Attock jail to high-security Adiala prison in the garrison city of Rawalpindi following a high court order, but Adiala jail officials dismissed claims that the former prime minister has been relocated. In August, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party petitioned the Islamabad High Court (IHC) to transfer the deposed party chief to Adiala prison where A-class facilities are available, keeping in view 70-year-old Khan's affluent family background, social and political status.

During the hearing on Monday, IHC Chief Justice Aamer Farooq directed authorities to shift the deposed prime minister to Adiala jail. Chief Justice Farooq said that Khan is an under-trial prisoner in the

cipher case, which was registered in Islamabad. He objected to keeping "an under-trial prisoner" in Attock jail instead of Adiala jail.

"Shift the PTI chairman to Adiala jail," the judge said. He said Khan had been imprisoned at the Attock jail as per the sentence awarded in the Toshakhana case, which was suspended.

"IHC Chief Justice has ordered moving PTI chairman Imran Khan from Attock Prison to Adiala Prison in Rawalpindi," Khan's party said.

Talking to the media outside the IHC, Khan's lawyer Sher Afzal Marwat said they had "finally been granted justice from the IHC" on the matter of shifting Khan from Attock jail to Adiala jail. The lawyer said it was a "little bit of justice" but he was glad about it. Naeem Panjhota, who is the spokesperson of Khan on legal affairs, claimed that the ousted premier has been shifted to the prison in Adiala.

However, the Adiala jail administration refuted the claim, saying that Khan has not

yet been shifted there.

Later, in a post on platform X, Panjhuta said that he had been informed that Khan had been shifted to Adiala jail but "it is beyond understanding that Attock jail [authorities] are also saying that they have PTI chairman."

Khan has been kept in the Attock Jail since August 5 after his conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case. His sentence was suspended by the IHC on August 29, but he continues to remain in prison in the cipher (secret diplomatic cable) leakage case.

A special court, established under the Official Secrets Act, on September 13 extended the judicial remand of Khan till September 26 in the cipher case. Special court hearings in the cipher case against Khan have been taking place at the Attock jail, citing security reasons. The Islamabad trial court which had sentenced Khan to three years in jail had directed the authorities to lodge him at Adiala prison. However, after his arrest, he was shifted to Attock jail.

Thousands of Armenians flee Nagorno-Karabakh as Turkish president set to visit Azerbaijan

AP ■ YEREVAN

Thousands of Armenians streamed out of Nagorno-Karabakh after the Azerbaijani military reclaimed full control of the breakaway region while Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was set to visit Azerbaijan Monday in a show of support to its ally.

The Azerbaijani military routed Armenian forces in a 24-hour blitz last week, forcing the separatist authorities to agree to lay down weapons and start talks on Nagorno-Karabakh's "reintegration" into Azerbaijan after three decades of separatist rule. A second round of talks between Azerbaijani officials and separatist representatives began in Khojaly Tuesday following the opening meeting last week. While Azerbaijan pledged to respect the rights of ethnic Armenians in the region and restore supplies after a 10-month blockade, many local residents feared reprisals and said they were planning to leave for Armenia.

The Armenian government said that 4,850 Nagorno-Karabakh residents had fled to Armenia as of midday Monday. "It was a nightmare. There are no words to describe. The village was heavily shelled. Almost no one is left in the village," said one of the evacuees who spoke to The Associated Press in the Armenian city of Koridzor and refused to give her name for security reasons.

Moscow said that Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh were assisting the evacuation. Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry said Monday that two of its soldiers were killed a day earlier when a military truck hit a landmine. It didn't name the area where the explosion occurred.

In an address to the nation Sunday, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan said his government was working with international partners to protect the rights and security of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. "If these efforts do not produce concrete results, the government will welcome our sisters and brothers from Nagorno-Karabakh in the

Republic of Armenia with every care," he said.

Demonstrators demanding Pashinyan's resignation continued blocking the Armenian capital's main avenues Monday, engaging in occasional clashes with police that sought to disperse the protests. Nagorno-Karabakh came under the control of ethnic Armenian forces, backed by the Armenian military, in separatist fighting that ended in 1994. During a six-week war in 2020, Azerbaijan took back parts of Nagorno-Karabakh along with surrounding territory that Armenian forces had claimed during the earlier conflict. After a Russia-brokered armistice, a contingent of about 2,000 Russian peacekeepers was sent to the region to monitor it.

In December, Azerbaijan imposed a blockade of the only road connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia, alleging that the Armenian government was using the road for mineral extraction and illicit weapons shipments to the region's separatist forces.

Armenia charged that the closure denied basic food and fuel supplies to Nagorno-Karabakh's approximately 120,000 people. Azerbaijan rejected the accusation, arguing the region could receive supplies through the Azerbaijani city of Aghdam — a solution long resisted by Nagorno-Karabakh authorities, who called it a strategy for Azerbaijan to gain control of the region. On Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged support for Armenia and Armenians, saying that France will mobilise food and medical aid for the population of Nagorno-Karabakh, and keep working toward a 'sustainable peace' in the region.

France, which has a big Armenian diaspora, has for decades played a mediating role in Nagorno-Karabakh. A few hundred people rallied outside the French Foreign Ministry over the weekend, demanding sanctions against Azerbaijan and accusing Paris of not doing enough to protect Armenian interests in the region.

Home Secy orders review of UK police firearms regulations

PTI ■ LONDON

British Home Secretary Suella Braverman has launched a review into the legal protections for officers on firearms duties after a revolt within Scotland Yard ranks following a murder charge against a Metropolitan Police officer who had discharged his gun while on duty.

The UK's Ministry of Defence (MoD) is said to have offered soldiers as back up support for armed police in London after several officers turned in their weapon carrying permits since their colleague was charged last week.

The UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had authorised charges against the officer, granted legal anonymity, in connection with a shooting in September last year.

"We depend on our brave firearms officers to protect us from the most dangerous and violent in society. In the interest of public safety, they have to make split-second decisions under extraordinary pressures," Braverman said in a post on X on Sunday.

"They mustn't fear ending up in the dock for carrying out their duties. Officers risking their lives to keep us safe have my full backing and I will do everything in my power to support them. That's why I have launched a review to ensure they have the confidence to do their jobs while

protecting us all," she said.

The Met Police chief, Sir Mark Rowley, welcomed Braverman's review into the issue in an open letter on Monday and stressed that it was important to "let the police police".

"It is essential that we have a system which commands the confidence of officers and the communities they serve," writes Rowley.

"The system that judges officers' actions should be rooted in integrity and decisions should be reached swiftly, competently and without fear or favour. A review is needed to address accountability mechanisms, including the policies and practices of the Independent Office for Police Conduct and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), ideally with a focus on the threshold for investigating police use of force and involvement in pursuits," he said.

More than 100 officers are believed to have handed in permits allowing them to carry weapons after their colleague was charged over the shooting of Chris Kaba, 24, in south London.

"The CPS reminds all concerned that criminal proceedings against the officer are active and that he has the right to a fair trial. It is extremely important there should be no reporting, commentary or sharing of information online which could in any way prej-

udice these proceedings," said Rosemary Ainslie, head of the CPS Special Crime Division, last week.

The CPS Special Crime Division deals with the most complex and sensitive cases in England and Wales, including serious criminal allegations against police officers.

An estimated 2,595 officers are licensed as firearms officers in the Met Police, governed by a set of rules, procedures and accountability processes for being authorised to carry weapons.

"Many are worried about how the decision impacts on them, on their colleagues and on their families. They are concerned that it signals a shift in the way the decisions they take in the most challenging circumstances will be judged," the Met Police said in a statement.

"The Met has a significant firearms capability and we continue to have armed officers deployed in communities across London as well as at other sites including Parliament, diplomatic premises, airports etc... The Ministry of Defence has agreed to a request to provide the Met with counterterrorism support should it be needed. This is a contingency option that would only be used in specific circumstances and where an appropriate policing response was not available," it added.

Chairman of Hong Kong's leading journalist group found guilty of obstructing cop

Hong Kong (AP): The chairman of Hong Kong's leading journalist group was found guilty of obstructing a police officer on Monday in a court case that sparked concerns about the city's declining press freedom.

Ronson Chan, chairman of the Hong Kong Journalists Association and a journalist of online news outlet Channel C, was arrested last September while he was on his way to a reporting assignment. He was accused of refusing to show the plainclothes officer his identity card upon request.

Chan's arrest fuelled concerns about the erosion of media freedom in Hong Kong after Beijing imposed a national security law to crush dissent following the city's massive pro-democracy protests in 2019. The former British colony was promised to keep its Western-style civil liberties for 50 years when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

Magistrate Leung Ka-kie on Monday ruled that Chan had deliberately obstructed the officer from carrying out her duty and failed to take out

his identity card in a timely manner. He kept asking the officer questions "recklessly," she said. He will be sentenced later Monday and could face a maximum penalty of two years in prison. In the crackdown following the 2019 protests, two vocal media outlets — Apple Daily and Stand News — have been forced to shut down and some of their top managers have been prosecuted. Two former top editors at Stand News, where Chan used to work, were tried for sedition. A verdict is scheduled for November.

Russian strikes in Odesa damage port, grain silo, hotel

AP ■ KYIV

A Russian drone and missile strike near Odesa damaged infrastructure, a grain silo and an abandoned hotel and injured one person in the Black Sea port city as attacks elsewhere in Ukraine killed five civilians and wounded 13 in the past day, Ukrainian officials said Monday.

Ukraine's air force reported downing all Russian drones launched overnight, but one of 12 Kalibr missiles and two P-800 Oniks cruise missiles apparently made it past air defences the day after the war in Ukraine entered its 20th month. Russia has continuously targeted port and grain storage facilities in Odesa since pulling out of a wartime deal that allowed Ukrainian grain exports to countries facing the threat of hunger. The attacks have destroyed silos, warehouses, oil terminals and other infrastructure critical for storage and shipping.

The Russian Defence Ministry said long-range missiles and drones were used to strike facilities that it alleged had housed foreign mercenaries and trained saboteurs. The ministry didn't name locations or provide other specifics to support its claim. It also said it downed several Ukrainian drones. The attacks came as independent UN-backed human rights experts said they found new evidence of war crimes committed by Russian forces and as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the arrival of the first Abrams tanks sent by the US.

The UN Independent Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine said it found evidence of crimes committed by both sides in the war, but far more by Russians, including instances of torture, some of it fatal, and rape of women as old as 83. It said it was also looking into allegations that Russian

forces committed genocide. Zelenskyy thanked allies on Telegram for their support in announcing the anticipated arrival of the tanks. He didn't say how many tanks had arrived, but the US has said it was sending 31 tanks.

In other fighting, Russian forces also dropped bombs and launched six heavy artillery strikes on southern Ukraine's Kherson region, destroying a school and factory and damaging residential buildings. Three of the deaths reported by the Ukrainian president's office were in the region: two people were killed and two others were injured by bombs that hit the city of Beryslav. A man was killed in the neighbouring village of Lvove.

In eastern Ukraine, Russians attacked residential areas of 10 cities and villages in the Donetsk region, killing two people in the village of Zarichne, according to the presidential office. During fighting in southeast Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, the Russian army carried out five airstrikes on Orikhiv, a small city, and its surrounding area.

The Russian Defence Ministry said its air defences downed three Ukrainian drones over the Kursk region of Russia and three others over the Bryansk region early Monday. It also reported that three drones were shot down over the Belgorod region. Kursk Gov Roman Starovoit said a downed drone over the centre of the city of Kursk damaged the roof of an administrative building and several private houses and shattered windows in an apartment building. Starovoit said there were no injuries. A day earlier, a Ukrainian drone damaged the roof of an administrative building in Kursk that some Ukrainian and Russian media reported housed the offices of the Federal Security Service, Russia's main domestic security agency.



A recovery team member examines a capsule containing NASA's first asteroid samples before it is taken to a temporary clean room at Dugway Proving Ground in Utah on Sunday, September 24. The Osiris-Rex spacecraft released the capsule following a seven-year journey to asteroid Benu and back

AP/PTI

Tentative deal reached to end Hollywood writers' strike

AP ■ LOS ANGELES

Union leaders and Hollywood studios reached a tentative agreement Sunday to end a historic screenwriters strike after nearly five months, though no deal is yet in the works for striking actors. The Writers Guild of America announced the deal with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, the group that represents studios, streaming services and producers in negotiations.

"WGA has reached a tentative agreement with the AMPTP," said in an email to members. "This was made possible by the enduring solidarity of WGA members and extraordinary support of our union siblings who joined us on the picket lines for over 146 days." The three-year contract agreement — settled on after five marathon days of renewed

talks by negotiators WGA and the AMPTP — must be approved by the guild's board and members before the strike officially ends.

The terms of the deal were not immediately announced. The tentative deal to end the last writers strike, in 2008, was approved by more than 90 per cent of members.

The agreement comes just five days before the strike would've become the longest in the guild's history, and the longest Hollywood strike in decades. As a result of the agreement, nightly network shows including NBC's "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon" and ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!" could return to the air within days. But as writers prepare to potentially crack open their laptops again, it's far from back to business as usual in Hollywood, as talks have not yet resumed between studios and striking actors. Crew

members left with no work by the stoppage will remain unemployed for now.

The proposed solution to the writers strike comes after talks resumed on Wednesday or the first time in a month. Chief executives including Bob Iger of Disney, Ted Sarandos of Netflix, David Zaslav of Warner Bros. Discovery and Donna Langley of NBCUniversal reportedly took part in the negotiations directly. About 11,500 members of the Writers Guild of America walked off the job May 2 over issues of pay, the size of writing staffs on shows and the use of artificial intelligence in the creation of scripts. Actors, who joined the writers on strike in July, have their own issues but there have been no discussions about resuming negotiations with their union yet. The writers strike immediately sent late-night talk shows and "Saturday Night

Live" into hiatus, and has since sent dozens of scripted shows and other productions into limbo, including forthcoming seasons of Netflix's "Stranger Things," HBO's "The Last of Us," and ABC's "Abbott Elementary," and films including "Deadpool 3" and "Superman: Legacy." The Emmy Awards were also pushed from September to January.

More recently, writers had been targeting talk shows that were working around strike rules to return to air, including "The Drew Barrymore Show," "Real Time With Bill Maher" and "The Talk." All reversed course in the face of picketing and pressure, and are likely to quickly return now.

The combined strikes made for a pivotal moment in Hollywood as creative labour faced off against executives in a business transformed and torn by technology, from the

seismic shift to streaming in recent years to the potentially paradigm-shifting emergence of AI in the years to come.

Screenwriters had traditionally gone on strike more than any other segment of the industry, but had enjoyed a relatively long stretch of labour peace until spring negotiations for a new contract fell apart. The walkout was their first since 2007 and their longest since 1988.

On July 14, more than two months into the strike, the writers got a dose of solidarity and star power — along with a whole lot of new picketing partners — when they were joined by 65,000 striking film and television actors.

Egypt sets prez poll for December likely to stay in power until 2030

Cairo (AP): Egypt will hold a presidential election over three days in December, officials announced Monday, with President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi highly likely to remain in power until 2030. Waleed Hamza, the chairman of the National Election Authority, said the vote will take place on Dec 10-12, with a runoff on Jan 8-10 if no candidate secures more than 50% of the vote. Egyptian expatriates will vote on Dec 1-3, and in the runoff on Jan 5-7, he added.

A handful of politicians have already announced their bids to run for the country's highest post, but none poses a serious challenge to el-Sissi, who has been in power since 2014 and has faced criticism from the West over his country's human rights record.

El-Sissi, a former defence minister, led the military overthrow of an elected but divisive Islamist president in 2013 amid street protests against his one-year rule. Since then, authorities have launched a major crackdown on dissent. Thousands of government critics have been silenced or jailed, mainly Islamists but also many prominent secular activists, including many of those behind the 2011 uprising that toppled longtime autocrat Hosni Mubarak. El-Sissi has not announced his candidacy yet. He was first elected in 2014 and reelected in 2018 for a second four-year term. Constitutional amendments, passed in a referendum in 2019, added two years to his second term, and allowed him to run for a third, six-year term. In the 2018 vote, el-Sissi faced only a little-known politician who joined the race at the last minute to spare the government the embarrassment of a one-candidate election after several hopefuls were forced out or arrested.

Sensex, Nifty end 4-day losing streak

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed marginally up in highly volatile trade on Monday, snapping their four-day losing streak even as weak global trends and foreign fund outflows dented the investor sentiment.

After gyrating 461.6 points during the day, the 30-share BSE Sensex eked out a marginal gain of 14.54 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 66,023.69. During the day, it hit a high of 66,225.63 and a low of 65,764.03.

Snapping its four-day losing streak, the broader Nifty settled marginally up 0.30 points at 19,674.55 as 24 of its components advanced while 26 declined. Gains in financials, consumer durables, realty and banking shares were offset by losses in IT, oil & gas and pharma shares.

In the four sessions to Friday, the 50-issue barometer declined 3.37 per cent or 518 points while Sensex plunged



1,829 points or 3 per cent following a record 11-day rally. Analysts said a fresh uptick in US treasury yields is making investors jittery amid rising concerns over inflation and high interest rates while FIIs continue to offload shares in local equities.

Among the Sensex firms, Bajaj Finance jumped the most by 4.64 per cent. Bajaj Finserv, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, NTPC, JSW Steel and Tata Steel were among the

major gainers. Infosys, Mahindra & Mahindra, Wipro, Tata Consultancy Services, IndusInd Bank and HCL Technologies were the major losers.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said, “The day presented a mixed picture in the market, with sectors such as realty, banking, and consumer durables performing well while IT and pharma struggling. Investors were actively repositioning, shifting away from

stocks tied to the global economy and focusing on the domestic economy.”

Concerns loomed over a potential global economic slowdown due to the prolonged period of high-interest rates, Nair added.

Analysts also said that India's entry into JP Morgan's Emerging Markets Government Bond Index is benefiting the financial sector in anticipation of a reduction in funding cost.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge climbed 0.46

per cent and smallcap index advanced 0.12 per cent.

Among the indices, realty jumped 1.56 per cent, financial services climbed 0.46 per cent, consumer durables (0.43 per cent), bankex (0.29 per cent) and commodities (0.23 per cent).

Industrials, IT, telecommunication, auto, capital goods and tech were among the laggards.

In Asian markets, Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended in the negative territory while Tokyo settled in the green. European markets were trading lower. The US markets ended in negative territory on Friday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.39 per cent to USD 93.63 a barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 1,326.74 crore on Friday, according to exchange data. FIIs have pulled out over Rs 10,000 crore from Indian equities in the first three weeks of September.

India’s first green hydrogen-run bus that emits just water unveiled

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's top oil firm IOC on Monday unveiled the nation's first green hydrogen-powered bus that emits just water as it takes the lead in bringing out unrivaled tools to replace fossil fuels.

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) will produce close to 75 kg of hydrogen by splitting water using electricity from renewable sources. This hydrogen will be used to power two buses which will ply across the national capital region for trial runs.

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, flagging off the buses, said hydrogen will be India's transition fuel for moving away from fossil fuels.

IOC's R&D Centre at Faridabad is producing green hydrogen for the pilot run. Four cylinders with a capacity of 30 kg can run the buses for 350 km.

It takes 10-12 minutes for the four tanks to fill.

Hydrogen when burnt emits only water vapour as a by-product. With three times the energy density and the absence of harmful emissions, hydrogen shines as a cleaner, more efficient choice to meet the energy requirement.

As much as 50 units of renewable electricity and 9 kg of deionized water are needed for the production of one kilo of green hydrogen. Hydrogen can be used as a fuel for fuel cells.

Puri said by the end of 2023, IOC will scale up the number of buses to 15.

IOC will undertake opera-



Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri flags off 1st Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Bus at India Gate in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

tional trials of 15 fuel cell buses powered by green hydrogen on the identified routes in Delhi, Haryana, and UP. Under this programme, the first set of 2 fuel cell buses was launched on Monday.

“Our government has ambitious plans on clean and green energy. India has taken many steps towards low carbon development—through emerging fuels like hydrogen and bio-fuels and shall account for 25 per cent of global incremental energy demand growth over the next two decades,” Puri said.

Upon the launch of the two buses, a cumulative mileage of more than 3 lakh kilometers will be covered for long-term assessment of performance and durability of the new technology.

India has one of the largest synchronous grids in the world, capable of handling intermittent renewable energy and it has achieved ‘One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency’.

“With the low cost solar,

synchronous grid, large demand and engineering, India will be a global champion in production and exports of hydrogen and is set to emerge as the hub for green hydrogen,” he said. Puri said recently the world's first BS 6 (Stage II) Electrified Flex Fuel vehicle prototype was launched that encompasses both the flex fuel engine as well as an electric powertrain that offers higher use of ethanol combined with better fuel efficiencies.

Hydrogen is deemed as the fuel for the future with immense potential to help India meet its decarbonization targets. The global demand for hydrogen is expected to increase by four to seven times to 500-800 tonne by 2050.

Domestic demand is expected to increase by four times, from the current 6 tonne at present to 25-28 tonne by 2050.

Oil and gas PSUs shall produce around 1 million tonne per annum of green hydrogen by 2030.

RBI ‘not comfortable’ with NPAs in urban co-op banks

Asks lenders to focus on governance

PTI ■ MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Monday said the central bank is “not comfortable” with the gross non-performing assets ratio of 8.7 per cent in urban cooperative banks (UCBs) and asked them to work towards improving the same.

Addressing directors of UCBs in the financial capital at an RBI-organised conference, Das urged that such lenders should improve the governance standards, avoid related-party transactions and focus on credit risks, among others.

It can be noted that the UCB sector has been fraught with multiple challenges and also witnessed difficult times in the recent past, like the implosion of the city-headquartered Punjab and Maharashtra Bank.

Das reminded the directors of the UCBs that banks run on depositors and added that protection of the hard-earned



money pooled in from the middle class, poor and retirees is far more sacred than going to a temple or a gurdwara.

While the overall picture at an aggregate level looks nice, the situation on GNPA and capital adequacy is “not at all satisfactory”, Das said.

He said the overall GNPA have improved to 8.7 per cent, which is “not a good number. It is not a comfortable number even at an aggregate level”.

Scheduled commercial banks' GNPA stood at a decadal best level of 3.9 per cent in March 2023 and are widely estimated to improve further.

To manage the scourge of NPAs better, Das suggested that

there should be a focus on credit risk management with better underwriting.

He said the RBI has come across instances of conflicts of interest or related party transactions, which need to be avoided.

Similarly, there have been instances of many of the top defaulters being individuals or businesses having the ability to pay, Das said.

The top 20 defaulters account for over 60 per cent of the loan overdue, and focusing on this segment can help improve the overall NPAs, he added.

On the capital adequacy front, he noted that there has been an improvement in the ratios to 16.6 per cent at the end of FY23 from 15.5 per cent a year ago.

Making it clear that he wants to share the RBI's concerns with the lenders, Das exhorted the UCBs to focus on the quality of governance by paying attention to compliance, risk management and internal audit.



Ban lentil import from Canada, traders’ body urges Centre

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi traders' body CTI on Monday urged the Central Government to ban import of lentil (masur) from Canada, over Ottawa's allegations relating to the killing of a Khalistani separatist on Canadian soil.

In a letter to Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal, the Chamber of Trade and Industry (CTI) said that there was a need to exert economic pressure on Canada. A growing dispute between India and Canada has erupted following allegations made by Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau over the killing of Khalistani separatist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Chairman of CTI, Brijesh Goyal, said that the development has sent ripples through the business world. Indian traders

have demanded that India should ban import of lentils from Canada, which is a major supplier.

“Canada is becoming a stronghold of Khalistanis and their anti-India sentiment was displayed by protests at the Indian embassy. However, Trudeau is making politically motivated statements in view of upcoming elections in Canada,” he said. India's annual pulse consumption is estimated at around 23 lakh tonnes of which 15-16 lakh tonnes is produced domestically and rest is imported from other countries. In the last financial year, India imported 4.85 lakh tonnes of lentil from Canada, Goyal said.

The Central government may contact other countries for pulses like Russia, Singapore, and Turkey, he added.

Dabur promoters makes ₹2,116 crore open offer for 26 per cent stake in Religare

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Entities belonging to the Burman family, the promoter of Dabur India, on Monday announced Rs 2,116 crore open offer to the shareholders of Religare Enterprises Limited (REL) to acquire up to 26 per cent stake in the company.

The open offer is made with the intention to increase the family's stake and take control of REL. Post offer the family's stake in the financial services firm is expected to increase from about 21 per cent at present to 51 per cent.

MB Finnart Private Ltd (Acquirer 1), Puran Associates Private Ltd (Acquirer 2), VIC

Enterprises Private Ltd (Acquirer 3), and Milky Investment & Trading Company (Acquirer 4) have announced an open offer for acquisition of up to 90,042,541 fully paid-up equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each from the public shareholders of the company representing 26 per cent of the expanded voting share capital of the firm, at a price of Rs 235 per unit, REL said in a regulatory filing.

The total consideration for the open offer is Rs 21,159,997,135 payable in cash, it said.

Shares of REL was trading at Rs 256.40, down 5.89 per cent, in the afternoon trade on the BSE.

The completion of the open offer is subject to receipt of statutory approvals required, to be set out in the detailed public statement and the letter of offer that are proposed to be issued in accordance with the SEBI (SAST) Regulations, Dabur said in a statement.

Speaking on the development, Anand C Burman, Chairman Emeritus, Dabur India Limited, said: “The proposed transaction is in line with our vision to create a leading financial services platform that encompasses lending, broking and health insurance services. We are convinced that REL is the right platform and positioned for sustained success.”

Demat accounts grow 26 per cent to 12.7 crore in August



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The number of demat accounts rose to 12.7 crore in August 2023, a surge of 26 per cent on a yearly basis, primarily due to attractive returns from equity markets, and ease of account opening process.

Also, the incremental additions of such accounts were higher in August in comparison to the preceding month. Further, this was higher than the average 21 lakh monthly additions in fiscal year FY23, according to an analysis by Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

The new account additions rose 4.1 per cent month-on-month to 31 lakh in August compared to 30 lakh additions in July. Going by the data, a total of 12.7 crore demat accounts were registered with the two depositories — NSDL and CDSL— at the end of August 2023 as compared to 10.1 crore a year earlier. The number of demat accounts was 12.3 crore at July-end.

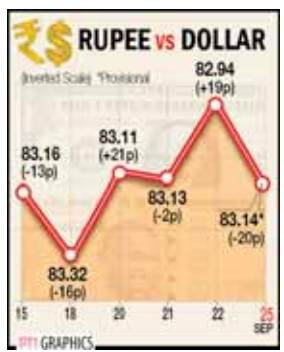
Of the 12.7 crore total, 3.3

crore, and 9.35 crore demat accounts were registered with NSDL and CDSL, respectively at the end of August, data from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) showed.

Market experts said additions in dematerialized (demat) accounts are driven by attractive returns from equity markets and the ease of account opening process offered by brokers to their clients.

Also, the increased financial literacy and the growing popularity of trading among youth have been some other major factors contributing to the rise, they added. The count of NSE active clients has been increasing for two consecutive months. The active user clients in the industry as a whole rose 2.5 per cent month-on-month to 3.27 crore in August.

The top five discount brokers — Zerodha, Angel One, Groww, ICICI Securities, and IIFL Securities — accounted for 60.8 per cent of overall NSE active clients last month, down from 61.2 per cent in July.



Rupee falls 20 paise to close at 83.14 against \$

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The rupee declined by 20 paise to settle at 83.14 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday due to rising crude oil prices and a strong American currency against major rivals overseas.

Subdued equity markets and withdrawal of foreign funds also weighed on the domestic currency, forex traders said.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened weak at 83.04 and traded between a high of 83.04 and a low of 83.15 against the greenback. It finally settled at 83.14 (provisional) against the dollar, registering a fall of 20 paise from the previous close.

On Friday, the rupee climbed 19 paise to close at 82.94 against the US dollar.



Member of Parliament NK Premachandran with CMD King's Infra Saji Bady John and other delegates during the launch of 'SISTA 360' at the India Habitat Centre in New Delhi on Monday

Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

IN BRIEF

90,000 STUDENTS FROM ACROSS INDIA PARTICIPATE IN FEST



New Delhi: Aarush 23, the four-day annual tech festival organised by the students of SRMIST at Kattankulathur near Chennai, turned out to be an impressive affair with the participation of over 90,000 students from educational institutions located across India. The fest was themed around Envisioning Futuristic Breakthroughs-Shifting Paradigm, Enriching WellBeing. The inaugural was held on 21 September in the presence of eminent scientist Dr Vipparthi Adimurthy, dean at IIST Thiruvananthapuram.

DMRC WINS MULTIPLE AWARDS

New Delhi: The Corporate Communication Department of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation headed by Anuj Dayal (Principal Executive Director) has been awarded three prestigious awards at the 17th Global Communication Conclave organized by the Public Relations Council of India in New Delhi on 21 and 22 September 2023. The DMRC won the Crystal award in the Crisis Management Communication category and two bronze awards in the Digital Newsletter and Best Use of Media Relations Categories

REPORT TO HELP ASIAN ECONOMIES PUBLISHED

New Delhi: The Asia Transition Finance (ATF) Study Group, where Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has been a core member since July, 2023, has published a report to help Asian economies achieve a just and orderly transition toward a more sustainable future. It is a private-led initiative whose core participants are financial institutions with operations in Asia.

IRCTC OFFER TO MARK 24TH FOUNDATION DAY

New Delhi: The IRCTC has special offers to mark the occasion of its 24th foundation day and World Tourism Day. They are: Zero convenience fee on booking flights tickets through www.airirctc.co.in. The offer is valid on the flight tickets booked on IRCTC website and mobile apps for air ticketing. It is valid on flight tickets booked from 25th to 27th September 2023.

CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

New Delhi: A bunch of youngsters who bravely fought cancer visited the Delhi Metro Museum. As part of the Childhood Cancer Awareness month in September, these enterprising boys and girls enacted a play at the Metro Museum to raise awareness about the disease.

LIFE INSURANCE PLAN

New Delhi: With the twin offering financial security and wealth creation, Bharti AXA Life Insurance has partnered with PolicyBazaar to launch Bharti AXA Life Wealth Maximizer, a Unit-linked, non-participating individual life insurance plan.

Investments in Indian agri-tech startups fell 45 per cent during 2022, '23: FSG

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Investments in Indian agri-tech startups fell by 45 per cent during 2021-22 and 2022-23 fiscal years, primarily due to a hike in global interest rates and heightened investor caution amid rising uncertainty, reveals consulting firm FSG's new report. Meanwhile, global agri-tech investments declined by 10 per cent during calendar years 2022 and 2023, it said.

Going forward, FSG expects the funding slump to continue into FY24 before springing back in FY25. It expects that startups will continue focusing on profitability to tide over the next financial year.

“Investors are likely to continue being cautious and direct their limited funding towards established business models, such as follow-on funding for companies in the mid-stream agri-tech category,” it said.

Godrej Properties sells flats worth ₹2,000 crore in Noida

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Godrej Properties Ltd on Monday said it has sold about 670 flats worth more than Rs 2000 crore in its new housing project at Noida on strong demands.

Godrej Properties purchased the land through an e-auction conducted by the Noida Authority in November last year.

In a regulatory filing, Godrej Properties informed that it has “sold 670 homes worth over Rs 2,000 crore in its project, Godrej Tropical Isle, located in Sector 146, Noida.” This is Godrej Properties' most successful ever launch in terms of the value and volume of sales achieved, the company said. The project was launched in August.

Gaurav Pandey, the MD and CEO of Godrej Properties said, “Noida is an extremely important market for Godrej Properties and we will look to further strengthen our presence in the years ahead.”

Godrej Properties, an arm



of business conglomerate Godrej Industries, is one of the leading real estate developers in the country. It mainly focuses on the Delhi-NCR, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Bengaluru and Pune markets for the development of residential projects.

The company expects 14 per cent growth in sale bookings this fiscal year to a record Rs 14,000 crore.

During the April-June quarter of the 2023-24 fiscal, Godrej Properties' sales book-

ings declined 11 per cent to Rs 2,254 crore from Rs 2,520 crore in the year-ago period.

On financial performance, Godrej Properties has posted a nearly three-fold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 124.94 crore in the June quarter as against Rs 45.55 crore in the year-ago period.

Total income during the first quarter of this fiscal rose to Rs 1,265.98 crore from Rs 426.40 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year.

Amazon investing up to \$4 billion in AI startup

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Amazon is investing up to USD 4 billion in Anthropic and taking a minority stake in the artificial intelligence startup, the two companies said on Monday.

The investment underscores how Big Tech companies are pouring money into AI as they race to capitalise on the opportunities that the latest generation of the technology is set to fuel.

Amazon and Anthropic said the deal is part of a broader collaboration to develop so-called foundation models, which underpin the generative AI systems that have captured global attention.

Foundation models, also known as large language models, are trained on vast pools of online information, like blog posts, digital books, scientific articles and pop songs to generate text, images and video that resemble human work.

Under the agreement,

Anthropic is making Amazon its primary cloud computing service and using the online retail giant's custom chips as part of work to train and deploy its generative AI systems.

San Francisco-based Anthropic was founded by former staffers from OpenAI, the maker of the ChatGPT AI chatbot that made a global splash with its ability to come up with answers mimicking human responses.

Anthropic has released its own ChatGPT rival, dubbed Claude.

The latest version, which is available in the US and UK, is capable of “sophisticated dialogue and creative content generation to complex reasoning and detailed instruction,” the company said.

Amazon is scrambling to catch up with rivals like Microsoft, which invested USD 1 billion in OpenAI in 2019, followed by another multibillion-dollar investment at the start of year.

REAL'S STREAK IS OVER

MORATA BRACE HELPS ATLETICO END REAL MADRID WINNING STREAK

AP ■ MADRID

Alvaro Morata struck twice for Atletico Madrid as they inflicted rivals Real Madrid's first defeat of the season, with a 3-1 derby triumph on Sunday in La Liga.

Champions Barcelona sit top of the league as Los Blancos lost their 100 percent record, with Antoine Griezmann also on target for Atletico, fifth, at their raucous Metropolitano stadium.

Real Madrid are third, a point behind Barcelona and high-flying Girona in second place, after they failed to match Atletico's level of intensity in an enthralling clash.

Morata netted an early header and Griezmann doubled Atletico's lead, before Toni Kroos pulled Madrid into the game with a stinging drive before half-time.

However, Morata headed home again at the start of the second half and Madrid could not find a way back against an Atletico side bouncing back from what coach Diego Simeone labelled their "weakest" performance of his long reign last weekend.

"It was a problem of defensive fragility, which we haven't seen in the first few games," Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters. "In just over 45 minutes they put three past us, it was not a good night ... the team was not compact, above all in the first half, Atletico took advantage of that."



Morata led the line well for Atletico and was rewarded with two goals, which he celebrated wildly.

"What I need is to feel important and this year, maybe I feel more important than in other years — I hope we keep winning because I really want to win a title with Atletico," Morata told DAZN.

"I'm very happy for all the fans, I said it the other day ... that the fans are going to have the

most important role, and that's how it was.

"(We're) all together, us on the pitch and them in the stands."

Ancelotti has given veteran midfielders Luka Modric and Kroos limited minutes this season but chose to start them both in the team's biggest game of the campaign to date, dropping Aurelien Tchouameni and striker Joselu.

The Italian pushed new

arrival Jude Bellingham even further into attack, alongside Rodrygo, instead of in the number 10 role he has starred in since his move from Borussia Dortmund in the summer, scoring six goals in his first six games before the derby.

Real Madrid were without star forward Vinicius Junior, who has recovered from his hamstring injury but suffered a stomach problem on Sunday morning, according to Spanish

reports. "The three goals were a photocopy," complained Ancelotti.

"Space opening between the centre-backs, we were not well positioned in the area — we were not compact on the three goals."

"The important thing is that the team got their spirit back, because if that has been recovered, it doesn't matter who the opponent is," the Atletico's coach Diego Simeone told DAZN.

Ramos then headed in the



PSG demolish Marseille

AP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain demolished Marseille in Ligue 1 on Sunday with summer signing Goncalo Ramos scoring twice in a 4-0 victory for the reigning champions, but Kylian Mbappe came off injured in the first half.

Mbappe appeared to hurt his ankle in winning the free-kick which saw Achraf Hakimi put PSG ahead in the eighth minute at the Parc des Princes.

The France superstar was eventually replaced just after the half-hour mark, but the home side went on to double their lead before the break through Randal Kolo Muani.

Ramos then headed in the

home side's third goal just after half-time and completed the rout late on as PSG followed up their 2-0 victory over Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League in mid-week.

The win leaves Luis Enrique's team in fourth place after six games, two points behind surprise leaders Brest, who beat Lyon 1-0 on Saturday.

Luis Enrique suggested after the game the injury suffered by his top scorer Mbappe was nothing serious.

"I think it was a knock. He tried to change the strapping on it and continue but the pain wouldn't go away," the coach said.

"I don't think it is anything

serious and I suppose he will be back soon, but it is better not to take risks when a player is not 100 percent."

The former Barcelona and Spain boss added: "I think this was without doubt the most complete performance in my time here and luckily for us it came against our biggest rivals."

Marseille had started the day unbeaten and were above PSG in the table, but they were outclassed here at the end of a turbulent week.

Their coach Marcelino Garcia Toral resigned on Wednesday after only seven games at the helm and following an angry meeting between club officials and fan representatives.



Chelsea need to 'grow up': Pochettino

AP ■ LONDON

Mauricio Pochettino admitted struggling Chelsea need to "grow up" after their troubled season hit a new low with a 1-0 defeat against Aston Villa on Sunday. Pochettino's side have won just once in six league games under Pochettino after Ollie Watkins' second-half goal sealed the points for Villa at Stamford Bridge.

The Blues are languishing in 14th place, just four points above the relegation zone, after failing to score in their last three games. Chelsea's latest flop was sparked by young defender Malo Gusto's dismissal after 58 minutes for a challenge on Lucas Digne.

After a pitchside VAR review, referee Jarrod Gillett upgraded the initial yellow card to a red for dangerous play. Adding to Pochettino's woes, Chelsea striker Nicolas Jackson, who has scored just once since his move from Villarreal, picked

up his fifth booking for attempting to block a Villa free-kick, earning a one-game ban.

Pochettino refused to criticise the officials and instead said he and his players must take the blame for Chelsea's woes.

"It's our responsibility and the players' responsibility. We can't blame the VAR or the referee," Pochettino said.

"The situation, we need to act different, in a different way. I'm not going to blame or say anything against Malo Gusto.

"Situations happen in football and they affect the game and the team in a negative way.

"We need to grow up like a team, not only in an individual way. A player like Nico (Jackson) that is so young, feeling the Premier League and he's learning, he needs time."

Despite spending over £350 million (\$428 million) on new signings since his arrival in July, Pochettino has been unable to improve a Chelsea side that struggled badly last term.

Messi-less Miami play 1-1 draw with Orlando

AP ■ MIAMI

Inter Miami, without Lionel Messi, Sergio Busquets and Jordi Alba, battled to a 1-1 draw at Orlando City in Major League Soccer on Sunday.

The result leaves Miami five points adrift of the last play-off spot with five games of their regular season campaign remaining.

Miami can win their second trophy of the Messi era on Wednesday when they look to add the U.S. Open Cup to the League Cup they won last month and with that goal in mind head coach Gerardo Martino took no risks with his line-up.

As well as Messi and Alba, both ruled out for fitness reasons, Martino opted to rest Spanish midfielder Busquets who had been ever-present since joining the club in July.

With homegrown youngsters Noah Allen and David Ruiz brought into the side, Miami fielded a line-up similar to the ones that had seen the team fall to the bottom of the Eastern Conference before Messi's arrival.

Orlando, second in the East and already assured of a playoff place, began the brighter and could have grabbed the lead in the 29th minute when striker Duncan McGuire found himself in space on the edge of the box but his shot was well saved by Drake Callender.

At the other end, in-form Ecuadorian striker Leonard Campana went close for Miami with a header from a corner which Orlando keeper Pedro Gallese got down well to.

Miami broke through in the 52nd minute when Campana fed Josef Martinez whose long shot was parried out but David



Ruiz slid in the loose ball.

Callender did well again to keep out a curling left-footed effort from Martin Ojeda and then Orlando wasted another chance when Ivan Angulo found himself clear on goal but poked his shot wide.

But the home side finally got their reward in the 66th minute when a deflected pass fell into the path of McGuire who drilled a first-time shot through the legs of Callender.

Miami tired badly in the final stages as they hung on for a point.

"They are a very competitive team just like us and we just try to fight through and get the get the win," said Ruiz.

"Sadly we didn't get the result, but it's just another point to give us a hope to go to play-offs," he added.

"Obviously we didn't have

players key players like Busi, Jordi and Messi, but we've been working every day hard to get a spot on the team and I mean you can see that in the game," he added. After Wednesday's U.S. Open Cup final against the Houston Dynamo, Miami face one of their direct rivals for the playoffs — New York City FC.

NYCFC moved above D.C. United into ninth place with a 3-0 win over Toronto FC on Sunday in a game re-arranged after Saturday's fixture was called off due to a broken water main at Red Bull Arena.

The win was crowned by a fine solo goal from Argentine forward Julian Fernandez.



Rapinoe makes triumphant US farewell

AP ■ CHICAGO

Megan Rapinoe was a winner in her farewell game for the United States on Sunday, setting up a goal with a corner kick in a 2-0 triumph over South Africa.

The iconic 38-year-old striker, celebrated for off-field activism as well as glories on the pitch, ended her epic US career with 63 goals in 203 caps over more than 17 years with a 54th-minute exit at Chicago's

Soldier Field.

"It makes me really proud to know we've been as successful on the field as we have, but also that we've helped make the world a little bit better of a place," Rapinoe said after the victory.

Rapinoe sparked the Americans to crowns at the 2015 and 2019 Women's World Cups and gold at the 2012 London Olympics, but was a champion for social causes as well.

Reyna set for USA return after Berhalter 'conversation'

AP ■ MIAMI

USA head coach Gregg Berhalter has held talks with midfielder Gio Reyna and the Borussia Dortmund player could return to the national side next month, US Soccer sporting director Matt Crocker said on Sunday.

Reyna and Berhalter were embroiled in an acrimonious bust-up during last year's World Cup in Qatar that led to Berhalter's

future as US national team coach being thrown into doubt.

The dispute spread to involve Reyna's parents and an investigation into a 1991 altercation between Berhalter and his wife, then his girlfriend.

Berhalter, who was cleared after the federation's probe, was eventually re-hired as USA coach in June.

The coach said last month that he had yet to talk with Reyna who was injured for

two US friendlies in September.

But Crocker, speaking to reporters, said the pair had now communicated.

"Of course we've had conversations with Gregg, Gregg has had conversations with Gio, and we're in a place where, as soon as Gio is fit, he'll be in the next camp and there's a way forward," Crocker said.

"I think both Gregg and Gio are in a good place to move forward. That's the best thing to say."

Lukaku on scoresheet again

AP ■ ROME

Romelu Lukaku struck again but Roma was held to a 1-1 draw at Torino and only has one win in five league matches.

Lukaku's goal - following a good team move in the 68th minute - was his third in four matches since his move from Chelsea. The Belgium forward was on loan at Inter last season.

Duván Zapata leveled for Torino with five minutes remaining when he headed in a free kick. Zapata almost joined Roma in the off-season from Atalanta.

Elsewhere, Rudi Garcia's job could be at risk only a few months into his tenure as Napoli coach.

Garcia took over in June after the resignation of Luciano Spalletti, who had just ended Napoli's 33-year wait for the Serie A title.

But Napoli is now winless in its past three league matches.

Victor Osimhen should have given Napoli the lead with



18 minutes remaining but he fired a penalty wide of the right post. The spot kick had been awarded after Bologna midfielder Riccardo Calafiori knocked the ball away with his wrist as he stumbled.

Osimhen had also hit the post early on.

Garcia was jeered by Napoli fans when he substituted

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and later Osimhen. There were also loud jeers at the end of the match.

Claudio Ranieri's Cagliari is still looking for its first win back in Serie A after it lost 2-0 at Atalanta.

Goals from Ademola Lookman and Mario Pašalić secured Atalanta its third win of the season.

AP ■ VANCOUVER

Team World won a second straight Laver Cup title on Sunday as Ben Shelton and Frances Tiafoe sealed a 13-2 victory over Team Europe with a 7-6 (7/4), 7-6 (7/5) doubles win over Hubert Hurkacz and Andrey Rublev.

Team World captain John McEnroe, who had endured four straight defeats in the event that began in 2017 before seeing his side rally for victory in London last year, was thrilled to celebrate a dominant triumph that began with a four-match sweep on Friday.

"It felt unbelievable to kick their ass, baby!" McEnroe crowed. "They kicked ours many times, OK. It was a battle to the end when we won last year."

This time around, with a blend of youth and experience, McEnroe said he "felt it from the word go" against a Team Europe side that was without fourth-ranked Holger Rune of Den-



mark and world number five Stefano Tsitsipas of Greece, who both withdrew from captain Bjorn Borg's side with injuries.

That left sixth-ranked Rublev and Norway's ninth-

ranked Casper Ruud as Europe's top players. Ruud nabbed the visitors' only points of the three-day event with his victory over Tommy Paul on Saturday.

Europe was unable to build

on that win, with Tiafoe downing Hurkacz in singles on Saturday night before Felix Auger-Aliassime and Shelton teamed up to beat Hurkacz and Gael Monfils in doubles and put

Team World one win away from victory heading into the final day.

"We stepped up, and I thought all the guys played great," said McEnroe, who also had singles wins from Americans Shelton and Taylor Fritz, Canada's Auger-Aliassime and Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo. Every World Team player contributed at least a point, with Paul gaining a win alongside Tiafoe in doubles on Friday.

"This was like a special year for us," McEnroe said. "I know they're going to come back strong, but I'll take two in a row any day. And I'm starting to think it is possible three in a row, Team World?"

Auger-Aliassime, who had two key wins on the final day as Team World rallied for victory last year, was thrilled to lift the trophy in front of his home fans in Canada.

"Amazing to win on home soil with the crowd behind us," he said.

BUMRAH BACK FOR THIRD ODI



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah will be available for the third ODI against Australia after being given a one-match break but all-rounder Axar Patel will be given a few more days to recover from his quadriceps tear ahead of the

World Cup, BCCI sources said on Monday.

While Ravichandran Ashwin has done decently in his two outings, the team management is still bullish about the fitness of Axar, the left-arm spin bowler all-rounder. "The team management wants to give Axar full chance of recovery. His forearm

and finger bruises have healed but may be in another few days, he would get fit for World Cup. India's first match is on September 8 and hence there is time.

"As far as Ashwin is concerned, we now know that he is match fit and in rhythm. If Axar can't make it, Ashwin walks in,"

a BCCI source privy to the development told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

The final squad announcement is on September 27 and it is understood that Axar still remains the team management's top choice for the reserve spinner's slot ahead of the Tamil Nadu veteran.

It is understood that young batting star Shubhman Gill and bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur have been given a few days rest ahead of the third ODI in Rajkot on Wednesday. "As per rotation policy of the team, Bumrah, who was given a couple of days off to freshen up is back along with skipper Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Hardik Pandya and Kuldeep Yadav. Gill, who has been playing continuously gets to cool his heels for 3-4 days along with Shardul Thakur," the source added.

Ruturaj, Mukesh released for Asian Games

India's Asian Games cricket team captain Ruturaj Gaikwad, who played the first two ODIs, have been released from the squad as he will link up with the Hangzhou-bound outfit. Also released is pacer Mukesh Kumar, who came as cover for Bumrah, who was given a break. It is understood that Washington Sundar is also supposed to leave on the evening of the game or day after.

While the Indian World Cup-bound team won't have any travelling net bowlers, Prasidh Krishna, Akash Deep, Arshdeep Singh and Mukesh Kumar will be summoned as and when required.

Jemimah urges Indian men's team to aim for gold in Asian Games cricket

PTI ■ HANGZHOU (CHINA)

India's Jemima Rodrigues on Monday urged the men's team to aim for the gold after the women's team created history in the final of the Asian Games.

India Women's side beat Sri Lanka by 19 runs in the final to clinch the gold medal here on their maiden appearance.

Batting first, India posted 116 for seven on a difficult batting track before the Titas Sadhul bowling attack restricted Sri Lanka to 97 for eight in 20 overs.

"We have spoken to the men's team. We have told them that we are bringing the gold; you guys also bring it," an elated Rodrigues told reporters here.

"(It) feels great. Just to win the gold is special, and being the first Indian cricket side to win the gold will make people go back in history and see that this was the team that actually won the first-ever gold in cricket in the Asian Games. It's an amazing feeling," she added.

Rodrigues said it was a proud feeling to add to India's medals tally at the Games.

"It is a very different experience, wearing this India jersey (a matter of) different pride. Also, we can add a medal to India as a sporting nation," she said.

Talking about the gold



medal contest on a challenging surface, Rodrigues said the contest had its own challenges.

"It wasn't easy as Sri Lanka gave us a good fight. Their bowlers bowled spot-on, and we really had to apply ourselves. Very proud of the girls, and the way we played today displays our character," she said.

"It was an important partnership between me and Smriti (Mandhana) because the Sri Lankan bowlers were at the top of their game.

"We are glad the way we played and built the partnership, along with the other girls

coming in and chipping in," said Rodrigues (42), who added 73 runs with Mandhana (46) for the second wicket in a low-scoring contest.

Rodrigues said the team had to adapt to different surfaces for every match. "We honestly did not know what to expect when we came over here," she said.

"We knew that we had to be ready for any condition, and in all three matches we had different kinds of wickets that we had to adapt to, which is the best part of our team's performance," Rodrigues added.

"It's been a great experience in general, the way everyone has welcomed us in China."

"It's not been easy since the communication has been a problem. But, they (the organisers) went out of their way to make us feel comfortable and make our stay easy," she added.

India coach and former international Hrishikesh Kanitkar too was delighted to have added to the country's tally.

"We rank this gold right up there because it adds to the country's tally of gold medals. So, I think it's very, very important that we directly contribute to the country," he said.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Notary Public Umerkote, I, Mohammed Ayaz Malkani, aged about 18 years, S/O: Mohammed Elias Malkani resident of Village: Puruna Bank Road, Umerkote, Dist: Nabarangpur, Pin-764073 do hereby solemnly affirm on oath and state that, my actual name is Mohammed Ayaz Malkani which is mentioned in my educational certificate no: TR 20075926 and Adhar no 603823338215 but in my passport vide No. S1102973 my name is written as Mohammed Ayaz instead of my actual name Mohammed Ayaz Malkani. That both the names MOHAMMED AYAZ MALKANI and MOHAMMED AYAZ are belongs to same and one person for all purposes.

Gold medal favourite Bopanna-Bhambri pair suffers shock exit

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

In a huge upset, gold medal favourites and top seeds Rohan Bopanna and Yuki Bhambri were knocked out of the Asian Games after being stunned by lower-ranked Sergey Fomin and Khumoyun Sultanov from Uzbekistan, here on Monday.

Bhambri struggled with his serve and strokes in the latter part of the match while the Uzbek players raised their game against their superior opponents to walk away with a 2-6 6-3 10-6 win in the second round.

The defeat will rankle the Indian pair all the more as Bopanna is a top-10 player in the doubles and Bhambri too is ranked among the top-100. The Uzbeks are not even in the top-300.



Serving at 3-4, 30-all in the second set, Bhambri served a double fault to go down by a break point. A wide backhand from Bhambri's racquet handed the Uzbeks the crucial break.

Sultanov made no mistake in serving out the set by consistently putting in his first serves.

In the super-tie breaker, the Uzbeks raced to a 3-0 lead and soon the Indians were down 5-1. The Uzbeks pulled off a stunning service return winner to make

it 6-1 on Bopanna's serve.

Fomin earned four match points with a backhand winner. The Indians saved the first but Sultanov found an inside-out forehand winner on the second to close the contest in their favour.

Bhambri could not support Bopanna enough

India coach Zeeshan Ali said that Bopanna did not get the required support from Bhambri in the match.

"At this level and being an experienced player, one cannot afford to make many errors at crucial moments of the match. You have to be able to grab any opportunity that presents itself," Zeeshan told PTI.

"Not taking anything away from the Uzbekistan players, they probably played

the best match of their lives, with nothing to lose. We had chances in the second set with a couple of break points at 3-all and, had we won that game, the outcome of the match would have been different."

The Indians could not convert 12 out of the 16 break-points they got in the match.

"Rohan played a good match but unfortunately did not get the required support needed to win today from his partner who otherwise has been having a very good doubles season," added Zeeshan.

Bopanna had ended his Davis Cup career last week, playing against Morocco in Lucknow. At 43, he is also playing his last Asian Games. He had won gold in the 2018 edition with Divij Sharan.

Zverev advances to Chengdu Open final

AP ■ CHENGDU (CHINA)

Top-seeded Alexander Zverev will play for a 21st career title after beating third-seeded Grigor Dimitrov 6-3, 7-6 (2) in the semifinals of the Chengdu Open on Monday.

The 26-year-old German will meet Roman Safiullin in Tuesday's final. The 55th-ranked Russian defeated second-seeded Lorenzo Musetti 6-3, 6-4.

Zverev hit 10 winners and four aces in the first set and his serve continued to be effective in the second set.

The 26-year-old Safiullin will be playing in his first career final in his eighth year on tour.

At the Zhuhai Championships, top-seeded Karen Khachanov defeated fourth-seeded

Sebastian Korda 7-5, 6-4 to move into the final in his second tournament since returning from injury. Khachanov will face Yoshihito Nishioka in Tuesday's final. The eighth-seeded Japanese player beat Aslan Karatsev 6-4, 6-4.

In a tight first set, Khachanov gained the crucial break in the 11th game when Korda found the net with a drop shot. The 15th-ranked Russian improved in the second set and dominated the baseline rallies to overpower the 23-year-old American.

On the first day of the Ningbo Open, Russian wildcard Vera Zvonareva upset seventh-seeded Katie Boulter 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (3) to advance to the second round. Zvonareva, a



two-time Grand Slam finalist, will next play Clara Tauson, who beat Elina Avanesyan 6-4, 6-1.

Yulia Putintseva, a semifinalist last week at the Guangzhou Open, defeated Daria Saville 6-4, 6-1. The Kazakh will play second-seeded Petra Kvitova, who beat Anna-Lena Friedsam 7-6 (2), 6-1.

Fourth-seeded Anna Blinkova beat Viktoria Hrunckova 6-3, 7-5 and eighth-seeded Lucia Bronzetti defeated Swiss qualifier Jil Teichmann 7-6 (6), 6-4.

Also, Linda Fruhvirtova beat Rebeka Masarova 1-6, 6-2, 1-0 (retired) and Kateryna Braidl defeated Yuan Yue 3-6, 6-4, 6-3.

Top-seeded Ons Jabeur and third-seeded Sorana Cirstea will play their first matches on Tuesday.

Asian Games 2023: Titas helps India to win gold



PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Titas Sadhu must be believing in pleasant coincidences. Else, how could she logically explain that two of the most defining spells in her short but eventful career read almost eerily similar.

It was 4-0-6-2 in the ICC U-19 World Cup final against England and on Monday, playing only her second senior international match, her figures were 4-0-6-3 against Sri Lanka. A three-over first spell that literally ensured the gold medal for Indian women's cricket team.

"We all had a clear plan of what we had to do. Obviously,

we got a good momentum in the first over itself. We had discussed during the innings break that we will keep calm and stick to what we had decided," said Titas, who hails from Hooghly district's suburban Chinsurah, where she had a sporty father Ranadeep, who encouraged her to take up every sport possible.

Father being a decent state-level athlete, Titas had taken the sport like fish to water and also at the same time making a splash at the pool.

She got 93 percent marks in her state class Xth board exams but cricketing commitments prevented her from appearing

for the plus two during the next two years.

Cricketer rather happened accidentally as she would keep scores for her ancestral club Rajendra Smriti Sangha, near Hooghly Mohsin College in Chinsurah.

One fine morning, when her club side fell short of a net bowler, they called up Titas. Since then, she has never looked back, even dropping out of school to pursue the sport.

The 18-year-old right-arm medium pacer from Bengal was delighted to win the gold for the country in the continental showpiece.

"It was a great opportunity

we got this time, and the fact that we were able to grab that opportunity, I'm very glad and grateful," Titas said.

On the day, the bounce that Titas extracted off the surface was there for everyone to see and it was something that his Bengal women's team coach Shib Shankar Paul realised.

"I remember one of my former Bengal teammates Priyanka Mukherjee called me few years back. He said, 'Maco (his nickname), there is girl I coach, she is nearly 5 feet 9 inch tall and is quick for a 16-year-old. Why don't you check her out for senior Bengal team,'" Paul recollected on the day.

"When I first saw her at the Bengal nets, I was surprised that she was way quicker for her age. Had a physique that you rarely find in a pace bowler from Bengal, Jhulan (Goswami) obviously was an exception. She bowled good outswing and had good grasping power. She was a good student and fared well in her 10th boards. I didn't waste time to convince erstwhile CAB secretaries Snehasish Ganguly and Debu Das to allow me to take her in senior Bengal team," said Paul, pride in his voice palpable.

So did he talk to Titas today after the final?

"Yes, she and Richa (Ghosh) both called up. Titas said, 'Thank You sir for all the support.'"

EAST COAST RAILWAY

(1) e-Tender Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-40-23

Description of Work: ELECTRIFICATION IN CONNECTION WITH RENOVATION OF 16 NOS. SUITES IN TRANSIT BLOCK-1&2 AT RAILKUNJ, CHANDRASEKHARPUR, BHUBANESWAR.

Approx Cost of the works: ₹ 25,11,263.10

(2) e-Tender Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-41-23

Description of Work: PROVISION OF ENERGY EFFICIENT DUCTABLE AIR CONDITIONER IN RELAY ROOMS AT DIFFERENT STATIONS OVER KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx Cost of the works: ₹ 1,78,45,574.43

(3) e-Tender Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-42-23

Description of Work: REPLACEMENT OF BELLOW DUCT WITH META-ARAMIDE FABRIC BELLOW DUCT IN 250 LHB AC COACHES FOR KHURDA ROAD DIVISION OF EAST COAST RAILWAY.

Approx Cost of the works: ₹ 5,71,37,725/-

(4) e-Tender Notice No.: e-Tender-Elect-G-43-23

Description of Work: ELECTRIFICATION WORK IN CONNECTION WITH IMPROVEMENT OF PLATFORM SURFACE AT CUTTACK GOODS SHED AND PLATFORM SHED AT DHANMANDAL GOODS SHED OF KHURDA ROAD DIVISION.

Approx Cost of the works: ₹ 11,63,000.46

EMD: ₹ 50,200/- (for SI. No. 1), ₹ 2,39,200/- (for SI. No. 2), ₹ 4,35,700/- (for SI. No. 3) & ₹ 23,300/- (for SI. No. 4).

Completion period: 3 months (for SI. No. 1 & 4), 6 months (for SI. No. 2) & 12 months (for SI. No. 3).

Tender closing date & time: at 1500 hrs. of 06.10.2023 (for all tenders).

No manual offers sent by Post/Courier/Fax or in person shall be accepted against such tenders even if these are submitted on firm's letter head and received in time. All such manual offers shall be considered invalid and shall be rejected summarily without any consideration.

Complete information including e-tender documents of the above e-tender is available in website <http://www.ireps.gov.in>

Note: The prospective tenderers are advised to visit the website 10 (Ten) days before the date of closing of tender to note any changes/corrigendum issued for this tender.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (G) Khurda Road PR-601/OI-23-24



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
RWS&S DIVISION, BARIPADA
Tel. No.06792-254029, Fax No.06792-259464, E-Mail: eerwss_bpd@rediffmail.com, eerwss_bpd@ori.nic.in
Quotation Call Letter No. 3366 // Date: 16.09.2023

The Executive Engineer, RWS&S division Baripada on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites sealed quotation from interested register manufacturers / Authorized dealer for the following items. The quotations should submit the quotations in the tender box kept in the office of the under signed on or before dt.27.09.2023 up to 01.00 PM & the same will be opened on dt.27.09.2023 at 4.30 PM in presence of the bidders or their authorised agents.

Sl. No.	Description of Items.	Quantity.		Unit
		In mtr	In M.T.	
1	ISI marked steel tubes used in water wells of type electric resistance welder (ERW) conforming to 4270/2001 with subsequent amendments if any having length of 3.05 mtrs cutting tolerance (-0.00mtr + 0.05mtr) and bothsides beveled. The angle of bevel shall be 15 in one end and 45 in other end. The fin must be removed through out inside the pipe. Nominal bore of 125mm dia with wal thickness 5.4mm			
5	(125 mm dia) ERW MS Pipe	4697.00	85.02	Each M.T.

Ch Head:- CFC& SFC of ZP Share/PS Share

Terms and condition

- The quotations should be submitted with the following documents failing which the quotation will be cancelled.
- EMD of 1% of the bid value (2% in case of outside the State bidder) in shape of NSC /KVP/ POTD/ FDR of any Nationalised Bank pledge in favour of Executive Engineer, RWS&S Divn, Baripada.
- Copy of PAN card & GST Registration Certificate.
- Registration of Manufacture/dealership certificate.
- Rate :- The rate should be FOR destination at RWS&S Divisional Store at Baripada but exclusive of GST
- which will be paid extra as applicable. The rate should be inclusive of transportation charges, packing, forwarding & transit insurance charges up to destination.
- The materials should be supplied at consignee's store at Baripada within 30 days from the date of issue of supply order.
- Statutory deduction as per Govt. norm will be made from the bill.
- The authority may increase or decrease the quantity as per the requirement.
- In the event of non supply or part supply of materials within the stipulated period liquidated damage @0.05% per week of the value of the quantum of materials involved in the delay subject to maximum of 2.5% shall be realised the bill of supplier.
- Jurisdiction in the event of dispute.
- In the event of dispute or differences arising from the contract, reference shall be made to the Govt, in PR & DW. Deptt. Odisha who shall settle the dispute.
- The Law Court at Baripada only shall have the jurisdiction & decide any dispute arising out of or in respect of this contract.
- The authority reserves the right to reject any or all the quotations or accept any quotation without assigning any reason therefor.

Executive Engineer, RWS&S Division, Baripada OIPR-25014/11/0008/2324