

OPINION 6

AIR POLLUTION RENDERS
ANTIBIOTICS INEFFECTIVE

WORLD 8

RAMASWAMY CALLS FOR ENDING
BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP IN US

MONEY 10

NET CLAIMS OF NON-RESIDENTS ON INDIA RISE
TO \$379.7 BILLION IN JUNE QUARTER: RBI

BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 2023; PAGES 12 ₹4



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



Published From
DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL BHUBANESWAR
RANCHI RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
DEHRADUN HYDERABAD VIJAYWADA

Late City Vol. 19 Issue 266
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

PAK TEAM
WEAKER THAN
INDIA: WAQAR
12 SPORT

SHOOTERS ADD TO GOLD HAUL

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The men's 10m air pistol team continued India's success story at the Asian Games here, winning gold but two of the marksmen, who made it to the individual finals on Thursday, missed a medal.

The team of Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Singh Cheema and Shiva Narwal narrowly beat the Chinese team to take the top podium and earn India its fourth gold medal from the shooting ranges.

With Thursday's success, Indian shooters have so far won four gold, four silver and five bronze medals.

The Indian trio's aggregate score of 1734 was just one better than the Chinese team, which settled for the silver medal, while Vietnam, with a score of 1730, bagged the bronze.

Sarabjot and Arjun also made it to the eight-shooter individual finals but finished fourth and eighth, respectively. Vietnam's Pham Quang Huy won gold with a score of 240.5, while South Korea's Lee Wonho (239.4) and Uzbekistan's Vladimir Svechnikov (219.9) took the silver and bronze, respectively.

Sarabjot, 21, finished fourth, scoring 199, while Arjun ended up eighth and last, exiting on the second elimination shot.

It was another fruitful day for Indian shooters, with Sarabjot, who will be celebrating his 22nd birthday on Saturday, giving himself an



Gold medal winning Indian team shooters Sarabjot Singh, Arjun Singh Cheema and Shiva Narwal during the presentation ceremony of the men's 10m air pistol event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou in China on Thursday

PTI

early birthday gift as he led the air pistol trio to team gold, scoring 580 in the qualification round, while Cheema shot 578 and Narwal amassed 576 to aggregate 1734.

In the qualification round, whose aggregate score decides the team medallists, Sarabjot shot cards of 95, 95, 97, 98, 97 and 98 to aggregate 580 and entered the finals at fifth place.

Team-mate Arjun Cheema shot series of 97, 96, 97, 97, 96 and 95 for his 578 to also make the eight-shooter finals, placed eighth.

Shiva Narwal, the younger

brother of 2020 Tokyo Paralympic gold medallist in mixed 50m pistol Manish, came out of his elder sibling's shadow as the third member of the gold-winning team here, but he could not make it to the individual finals, finishing 14th.

Narwal shot series of 92, 96, 97, 99, 97 and 95 for his 576. This was the third team gold at the shooting ranges here after the 10m air rifle top-podium finish and women's 25-metre pistol gold.

Sarabjot had won his first individual senior gold medal at the ISSF World Cup in Bhopal

earlier this year, and was gunning for more success today in the individual category after being placed fifth among the eight finalists at the end of the qualification round.

But a string of below-par scores in the finals, undid his efforts in the qualification round. He managed just 9.8 and 9.4 on the third and fourth shots in the finals and another rank bad shot of 8.9 on the seventh shot pegged him further back from where he could not recover.

Sarabjot, whose success story started in 2021 when he



won the junior air pistol team and mixed team gold at the ISSF World Championships at Lima, Peru in 2021, has been performing consistently ever since, bagging the mixed team gold at the recently-concluded World Championships in Baku, Azerbaijan.

He would now be aiming to seal a 2024 Paris Olympics quota place at the Asian Championships in Changwon (South Korea) later this year.

Meanwhile, Indian men's and women's teams assured themselves of medals at the Asian Games after progressing to the semifinals of the squash events here on Thursday.

While the men's team blanked Nepal 3-0 in its final pool tie, the women were handed a 0-3 loss by Malaysia in their last pool B fixture. Both teams sealed top two spots in their respective pools to make the semifinals which guarantees them at least a bronze.

The Indian women's team began the day with veteran Joshna Chinappa enduring a 6-11, 2-11, 8-11 defeat to Subramaniam Sivasangari in 21 minutes. In the second match, Tanvi Khanna squandered a 2-1 lead before going down to Commonwealth Games gold medallist Aifa Binti Azman 9-11, 11-1, 7-11, 13-11, 11-5.

MP Bidhuri faces Privileges Committee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has referred the complaints lodged by several MPs on the issue involving BJP member Ramesh Bidhuri's use of objectionable words against BSP's Danish Ali to the Privileges Committee, sources said on Thursday.

While Ali and several other Opposition MPs, including Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and DMK's Kanimozhi, wrote to the Speaker seeking action against Bidhuri, some BJP parliamentarians like Nishikant Dubey said the BSP member "incited" the South Delhi MP when he was speaking in the House and urged the Chair to look into this as well.

Sources said Birla has sent all these complaints to the Privileges Committee headed by BJP MP Sunil Kumar Singh.

Bidhuri had made certain derogatory remarks, later expunged from records, targeted at BSP member Danish Ali on September 22 when he was speaking in the Lok Sabha during a discussion on the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who was present in the House, expressed his regret at the ruling party MP's conduct.

As opposition parties rallied around Ali after a video of Bidhuri's remarks went viral triggering an outrage, the Lok

Sabha Speaker took "serious note" and warned him of "strict action" if such behaviour is repeated in the future.

The BJP also issued him a show-cause notice.

Ali wrote to the Speaker, seeking an enquiry by the Privileges Committee, describing Bidhuri's comments as "hate speech".

Almost all Opposition parties also wrote to Birla, seeking action against him.

However, a few BJP MPs, including Dubey, asserted that Ali incited Bidhuri with highly objectionable remarks against the Prime Minister.

While Dubey condemned Bidhuri's conduct, he urged the Speaker to look into Ali's behaviour as well. Other BJP MPs echoed the view.

In a post on X on Thursday, Dubey thanked the Speaker for referring the matter to the committee.

"It was possible because the BJP has a majority in Lok Sabha," he said, as he cited several previous incidents to assert that no committee was formed to probe these issues and nor was anyone punished.

In this context, Dubey alleged that the RJD-JD(U)-Congress members were engaged in a fight involving shoes and microphones in 2006, Sonia Gandhi was involved in an incident in 2012 besides the commotion and injuries to parliamentarians in

2014 during the creation of Telangana as a separate state.

Opposition leaders have slammed the BJP over Bidhuri being given poll responsibility by the party in Rajasthan's Tonk district.

In a post on X, Rajiya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal said the BJP has "rewarded" Bidhuri for attacking Ali with the "unspeakable words" in Parliament.

"BJP rewards 'hate' Bidhuri rewarded for attacking Danish Ali (BSP) for the unspeakable words he used in the Special Session of Parliament. Made BJP in-charge of Tonk District in Rajasthan."

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh, in a post on X last night, said, "Sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishwas" yeh sab hai inka bakwaas."

TMC MP Mahua Moitra also slammed the BJP and said Bidhuri had been "rewarded" for his remarks against a Muslim MP. "How does a showcased person be given a new role by BJP? Narendra Modi ji, is this your Sneha Yatra for minorities, your love outreach?" she said on X.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said, "So much for the #BhajaParty's show cause notice! The foul-mouthed MP is now in charge of Tonk, where no doubt he will have plenty of opportunities to polarise the electorate even further with his divisive rhetoric!"

Khalistanis at it again

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Operatives of Khalistani terrorist outfit Sikhs For Justice (SFJ) painted pro-Khalistan graffiti in North Delhi on Wednesday, a month after defacing several Delhi Metro stations with similar slogans.

According to the police, "Delhi banega Khalistan" and "Khalistan Zindabad SFJ" slogans were found painted on both sides of the Kashmiri Gate flyover connecting North Delhi and North East Delhi and at some other places. The Delhi Police removed the graffiti soon after they spotted it.

Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the US-based Khalistani terrorist and chief of the SFJ, claimed responsibility for the illegal act and threatened to storm the "Modi Stadium" in Ahmedabad on October 5.

"Khalistanis from Canada are in Delhi to avenge assassination of Nijjar," Pannun said in a statement.

"A case has been lodged under Section 153 of the IPC (Indian Penal Code) and the Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Public Property Act against unidentified miscreants and an investigation has been launched in this connection," an official said on the condition of anonymity.

In a statement, the Delhi Police said, "A video came to notice on September 27, where in certain visuals showed defacement through graffiti. According to the signage boards visible in the video, an extensive search was conducted in the North District area, and graffiti was discovered on Yudhister Setu flyover, heading from Seelampur towards Kashmere Gate.

"An FIR has been filed under the relevant sections of the IPC and Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Public Property Act, and it is currently under investigation."

It is being said the defacement of walls in the national Capital was in response to the raids conducted by the National Investigation Agency on Wednesday across Punjab, Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh in three separate cases linked to the terror-gangster-smuggler nexus.

The incident comes a month after similar pro-Khalistan slogans were sprayed on the walls of more than five Metro stations in the national Capital. "Delhi Banega Khalistan and Khalistan Zindabad" slogans were written on the walls.

Similar slogans were also

found on the walls of a Government school in Nangloi.

The crackdown on Khalistan elements came amid diplomatic tensions between India and Canada over the killing of Khalistan terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

Tensions escalated between India and Canada after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau made a serious allegation regarding the potential involvement of Indian agents in the murder of Nijjar, a Khalistani extremist, in British Columbia on June 18.

India had designated Nijjar as a terrorist in 2020. India has, however, strongly rejected Trudeau's allegations terming it as "absurd" and "motivated" and expelled a senior Canadian diplomat in a tit-for-tat move to Ottawa's expulsion of an Indian official over the case.



Devotees celebrate during the procession of Lalbaugha Raja idol of Lord Ganesha before its immersion in Mumbai on Thursday

PTI

State's law and order largely peaceful: CM

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday said in the State Assembly the overall law and order situation in the State has remained largely peaceful and under control.

"Communal harmony has been maintained. There was no significant law and order incident on the students, services, industrial, labour and agrarian front. The overall Maoist scenario has shown a remarkable improvement," said Patnaik while replying during the demand discussion of Home and General Administration Department.

He said this year, more than 5,000 candidates have been appointed in Odisha Police and the Prisons Organisation.



Further, clearance has been given to fill up more than 3,300 posts in police and almost a thousand in prisons and Fire Service, he informed.

Under the 5T charter, Odisha Police has launched a "Monitoring of Atrocity, National Commission Cases and Assistance to Victims"

(MANAV) portal in August 2023 to expedite the investigation cases under SC and ST Prevention of Atrocity Act and for timely delivery of compensation to the victims, the CM said.

"We have zero tolerance towards crime and particularly crime against women. We have ensured free, fair and impartial investigation," he claimed.

The CM also chose to attack the Opposition for allegedly politicising the crime.

"I am pained to see politicisation of very sensitive cases for narrow vested interests. This is an injustice to the victims of the case, to the committed police persons who work night and day and also to the people of Odisha. Even

a lady officer on duty was physically assaulted. This cannot be tolerated in a civilised society," he said.

Patnaik said Odisha is among the top-performing States in the country in terms of registration and disposal of corruption cases and conviction and dismissal of convicted public servants.

"With all humility and my experience in this House, I can say those who work for people return to this House and those who do politics over crime and stall development for political consideration have not been able to return to this august House. People are watching the conduct of the Opposition and how desperate they are to stall development works," he remarked.

2 BJP MLAs suspended from House

For throwing dal at Speaker's podium

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Two BJP MLAs were suspended from the State Assembly on Thursday for the rest of Monsoon Session for reportedly throwing pulses at the Speaker's podium.

Speaker Pramila Mallik suspended Opposition Chief Whip Mohan Charan Majhi and Mukesh Mahaling for throwing dal onto the Speaker's podium.

BJP MLAs were protesting at the Well of the House over BJD legislator Arun Sahoo's remarks against the Leader of Opposition. During the ruckus, the BJP legislators reportedly threw pulses at the Speaker's podium. The pulses were reportedly carried by the MLAs in polythene bags.

Notably, Mallik had resigned as Women and Child Development Minister in the wake of allegations of a Rs 700-crore scam in purchase of dal for midday meal scheme in the State in 2011.

Low pressure likely to head to State's coast

Heavy rains predicted from Oct 1

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A low-pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and head towards the north Odisha coast during next 24 hours, said the Regional Office of the Meteorological Department (IMD) here on Thursday.

"A cyclonic circulation lies over Myanmar and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal and extends up to 5.8 km above mean sea-level. Under its influence, a low pressure area is likely to form over east-central and adjoining northeast Bay of Bengal during next 24 hours. Thereafter, it is likely to become well-marked low pressure area and move northwestwards towards north Odisha and adjoining West Bengal coasts during subsequent 48 hours," said the IMD. Several districts of Odisha are likely to receive heavy rainfall from October 1, said the IMD issuing a Yellow warning.

On Friday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Malkangiri and Koraput.

On the day, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Khordha, Puri, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur.

On Saturday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Balangir.

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

In Assembly

Ruckus as Arun Sahoo remarks on Opp members' 'mental health'

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Opposition members in the Odisha Assembly on Thursday created a ruckus over the over a statement of ruling BJD MLA Arun Sahoo that the Opposition members should come to the House with good "mental health".

Speaker Pramila Mallik adjourned the House several times.

While the Question Hour passed peacefully, the trouble started during the Zero Hour when Arun Sahoo made some remarks on the mental health condition of the Opposition members.

Sahoo made the statement after Leader of Opposition Jayanarayan Mishra (BJP) and Congress Legislature Party Leader Narasingha Mishra raised some questions on the cross-State tour of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's Private Secretary-cum-5T Secretary and Chief Minister's suo motu statement in this regard in the House.

"Two Mishras have been criticising the 5T governance style of the State Government which is a concept. There has been overall development in all the constituencies including those of Opposition MLAs through the 5T concept.



I will quit politics if there is no development in Odisha," Sahoo said.

He said there seems to be some "mental health disorder" and requested all to come to

the House in a good mental health condition.

Opposing the words used by Sahoo, the BJP members trooped into the Well of the House and demanded immediate expunction of the words "mental health disorder" from Sahoo's statement.

The Speaker said she would examine the matter. She was forced to adjourn the House at 12:12 pm till 4 pm as the BJP members kept urging her to expunge Sahoo's remarks.

Annoyed over the Speaker's statement, the BJP members continued to stage protest even when Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik moved a

motion for the passing of the Home and General Administration Departments' supplementary expenditure for 2023-24

Even after the House assembled in the afternoon, both Congress and BJP members shouted slogans protesting Sahoo's statement, forcing the Speaker to adjourn it for several times.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Jayanarayan Mishra questioned about the transporting of college students to the meeting venue, providing them food and use of helicopter for personal use of the 5T

Secretary for attending social functions in Pallahara and Talcher.

Narasingha Mishra said various organisations like those of teachers, Ayush doctors, Sarpanches, Samiti Members, Anangawadi Workers are agitating on the streets of Bhubaneswar for the fulfilment of their demands.

He questioned why the 5T Secretary and the CMO are not meeting them.

He said the Chief Minister's statement has no consistency as he said the CMO had visited various places on his direction, but actually it was only one person who went everywhere.

Low pressure likely to head to State's coast

Heavy rains predicted from Oct 1

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

A low-pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and head towards the north Odisha coast during next 24 hours, said the Regional Office of the Meteorological Department (IMD) here on Thursday.

"A cyclonic circulation lies over Myanmar and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal and extends up to 5.8 km above mean sea-level. Under its influence, a low pressure area is likely to form over east-central and adjoining northeast Bay of Bengal during next 24 hours. Thereafter, it is likely to become well-marked low pressure area and move northwestwards towards north Odisha and adjoining West Bengal coasts during subsequent 48 hours," said the IMD.

Several districts of Odisha are likely to receive heavy rainfall from October 1, said the IMD issuing a Yellow

warning.

On Friday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely to occur at isolated places in the districts of Mayurbhanj, Baleswar, Malkangiri and Koraput.

On the day, thunderstorm with lightning is very likely to occur in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Khordha, Puri, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur.

On Saturday, heavy rainfall (7 to 11cm) is very likely in the districts of Baleswar, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Kendrapada, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Keonjhar, Mayurbhanj, Angul, Dhenkanal, Sambalpur, Subarnapur and Balangir.

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

At DSBM

Swearing-in for BBA, B.Com students

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The new admission batch 2023-2026 of BBA and B.Com streams of DAV School of Business Management (DSBM) here was a part of the swearing-in ceremony conducted in the campus on Wednesday.

Chief guest IPICOL Executive Director Kalyan Charan Mohanty presented a pragmatic approach by citing the case studies of reputed companies like OYO. He explained the students about the various startup policies and its present ecosystem of industrialisation in Odisha. He also advised the students to learn the technical aspects and adopt innovative approaches to get the benefits of

employment opportunities in different MNCs which are going to come up in Odisha in the near future.

The new batch of BBA and B.COM students took the oath to follow the quality education imparted with dedication, sincerity and integrity.

DSBM Chairman MM Panda spoke about acquiring knowledge and skills for the betterment of the society. He underlined the importance of a good citizen with an anecdote and pursue dream through hard work and perseverance. DSBM Principal Dr DN Mishra emphasised on self-motivation, positive attitude and maintaining the academic benchmark to have a successful career.

1,094 teaching posts vacant in public varsities in State

385 in Govt colleges, 1,065 in aided colleges

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 1,094 teaching posts are lying vacant in public universities under the Higher Education department in Odisha.

This was revealed by Higher Education Minister Atanu Sabyasachi Nayak in the Assembly on Wednesday.

The Minister made the revelation while replying to an unstarred question of Khandapada MLA Soumya Ranjan Patnaik.

In his question, the

Khandapada MLA sought to know details regarding the vacant posts of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor in the public universities, Government colleges and non-Government aided colleges in Odisha. He also sought to know about the timeline for recruitment to these sanctioned posts.

Altogether 1,094 teaching posts are lying vacant in public universities in Odisha. The number is 385 in Government colleges and 1,065 in aided colleges in the State, said the Higher Education Minister in his reply.

"The Higher Education Department is taking steps to fill the vacant teaching posts in public universities and Government colleges in the State through the Odisha Public Service Commission (OPSC). The vacant teaching posts in non-Government aided colleges will be filled through the State Selection Board," said the Minister.

Speaking to mediapersons outside the Assembly, the Minister, however, revealed that the process for requirement to the vacant posts in the public universities in Odisha was stalled due to a case in the Supreme Court. "The State Government is

taking steps for removal of the legal impediments in the recruitment process. As an interim measure, public universities have been allowed to recruit guest faculties," said the Minister.

The State Government has recruited around 700 lecturers for Government and aided colleges in the State recently.

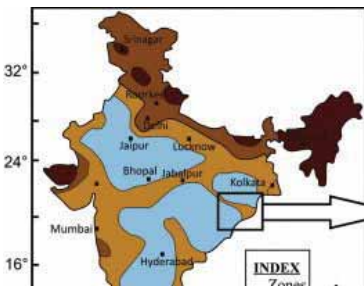
"The Government has issued advertisement for the recruitment of 1,065 lecturers in colleges a few days ago," he added. Notably, as many as 18 public universities are coming under the administrative control of the Higher Education Department in the State.

15 districts classified as earthquake zone

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

As many as 15 districts have been classified as the moderate earthquake zone in Odisha, Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Sudam Marndi informed the State Assembly on Thursday.

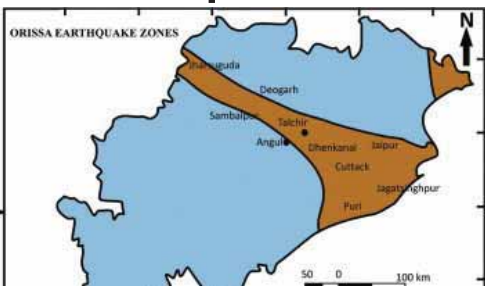
As per the Earthquake Hazard of Zoning Atlas of India (2016) report published by Centre's National Disaster Management Authority Building Materials & Technology Promotion Council under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, 15 districts in Odisha come under Zone-III (moderate-intensity zone) category, he stated.



The districts are Puri, Khordha, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Cuttack, Jajpur, Dhenkanal, Angul, Deogarh, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Jharsuguda, Sundargarh, Baleswar and Mayurbhanj.

The remaining 15 districts in the State have been identified as Earthquake Zone-II (low-damage-risk zone).

Replying to a question by



Jeyapore MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati on the initiatives taken by the government to deal with possible disasters in areas prone to earthquakes in Odisha, the Minister said public awareness programmes and several training sessions have been organised in schools under the Urban Earthquake Vulnerability Reduction Programme (UEVRP) in

different urban areas. Engineers of various departments and master masons have been given training on earthquake-resistant construction.

This apart, the students are being taught about earthquake in primary schools by including the subject in their curriculum, the Minister stated.

Primary teachers' stir: NHRC seeks ATR from Govt

PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday issued notice to the Odisha Chief Secretary and sought action-taken report (ATR) within four weeks on the ongoing primary teachers' strike in the State.

The NHRC passed the order acting on a petition filed by Supreme Court lawyer and human rights activist Radhakanta Tripathy. The petitioner stated that more than one lakh primary school teachers have been continuing their strike for more than two weeks. Lack of Government initiative to resolve the issue by mutual discussion and

logical conclusion is primarily responsible for the same.

The rights of education, a fundamental right of the primary school students have been violated. These students have been accustomed to mid-day meals. The same has not been served to them due to ongoing strike of the teachers. The inaction and failure of the Government in addressing the issue pose serious human right violations of the school going children, Tripathy pointed out. Tripathy sought intervention of the NHRC to address the grievances of the teachers and ensure uninterrupted education to the school students with mid-day meals and also with other child rights.

Sans Govt special plan

SCs/STs-dominated dists show higher poverty rate

The benefits of development have not trickled down to the people in backward areas, especially the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population of Odisha. The findings of two reports of NITI Ayog such as the Social Inclusion-2022 and the National Multidimensional Poverty Index - 2023 on Odisha provide a testimony to the statement based on data from NFHS of 2015-16 and 2019-21.

The Social Inclusion Report has reviewed the whole impact of TSP and SCSP on ST and SC. The National Multidimensional Poverty Index has identified the percentage of the people who are multidimensional poor in each district. It is found that the districts with more SC and ST population have more number of poor people. The districts such as Malkangiri, Rayagada, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Maurabhanj, Gajapati, Keonjhar, Kandhamal, Nuapada and Kalahandi are at the top of the list, having about 20 to 45 percent of the population who are multidimensional poor.

In order to achieve rapid poverty



MANAS JENA

eradication, the structural issues of social exclusion and discrimination against the people must be addressed. The approach of the Government of Odisha towards poverty eradication is mirrored in the Odisha State Budget and Odisha Economic Survey reports. It is found that it has not changed to adopt new approaches and banking upon traditional charity-based approaches, nurturing a subsistence economy without investing more in employment generation through distribution of productive assets to the poor.

While a lion's share of the budget is spent on salary, pension, loan and

interest repayment, a lesser portion of the budget is available for capital investment for long term gain in achieving higher growth and employment. It has been suggested by many that the plan must be made to make use of available natural and human resources of the State by attracting both public and private investment in agriculture, industry, mining and the service sector, but there has been no visible plan in the budget for such a purpose.

The State Government has less focus on long term capital investment in building public assets such as irrigation, connectivity, transport, health, education and such other productive infrastructure to support agriculture, industry and the service sector. There is also no visible plan to make use of modern science and technology in improving the production by changing the traditional mythology.

A number of studies have found that many of the Central Government schemes, especially targeted for poverty eradication

among the STs and SCs, are not economically viable to earn a decent living and are outdated to contemporary changing conditions. These schemes, mostly micro models and individual beneficiaries, are isolated from the local economy and do not aim to

SOCIAL CANVAS

bring any structural change. Experience shows the schemes for the last few decades since the eighties have proved to be unsuccessful in meeting their purposes. These schemes are more used for short term political gains rather than being useful for economic activities. As a result, States such as Odisha continue to be a supplier of chief labour forces to developed States and it has failed to generate viable local employment in spite of the availability of vast natural resources such as forest, water, sea coast and minerals.

These schemes are also sources

of huge corruption at different levels and are major causes of conflict in benefit sharing among the poor in rural areas. No accountability is fixed with the bureaucracy implementing such schemes and the selection of beneficiaries is more based on

political considerations and favouritism. In the whole chain of the process, from beneficiary selection to its final implementation, there is no transparency and accountability. The long continuing State charity has negatively impacted productive working culture in rural areas and contributed to a negative growth of the State economy.

The Government of Odisha must ensure availability of productive assets for the resource-less communities. But in spite of constitutional provisions, the State Government has not shared the productive assets with the traditional

poor whose deprivation is more linked to historic denial of productive assets such as land, education, skill, capital and other means of production. Though there have been provisions for TSP and SCSP, the ruling parties have not given importance to such provisions, rather they have set their eyes on short-term political gains.

Along with economic causes, religious, social and cultural issues are also equally important, which need to be addressed to bring radical cultural changes in the lives of the poor, but the social components in micro schemes have been missing. The poor people in Odisha are also socially marginalised and discriminated against because of their social identity. A majority of the marginalised section in rural areas has been facing hegemonic social conflicts, discrimination in access to market and in the use of public utilities available for production where the Government must ensure a fair share of the communities in owning the public assets and a discrimination-free environment in the production

and marketing by enforcing socially inclusive policies for facilitating economic activities.

The public institutions such as banks, cooperatives etc. which play a major role in facilitating economic activities in rural areas, are not free from hegemonic control of feudal forces controlling the local politics. They play a major role in selection of beneficiaries of the Government schemes. There is a need to democratise the access of poor people to public financial institutions. The schemes of the Government must be localised and fit into the needs of the targeted population while encouraging innovations rather than following a common model for all irrespective of social groups and geographical areas.

The PRIs must be given power to plan schemes for their areas. These schemes must be linked to long-term productive asset creation for income and employment generation and to change the continuing exploitative social structure and unequal power relations.

(manasbbsr15@gmail.com)

Dhenkanal: Stone quarry owner shot dead

Old enmity suspected

PNS ■ DHENKANAL

A stone quarry owner was shot dead by unidentified miscreants in Kamakhyanagar in Dhenkanal district on Thursday. The deceased was identified as Nirakar Sahu, a resident of Kantioput Sahi in Tumusinga.

Police recovered Sahu's body from a mango orchard at Souria along the Malabandha railway over-

bridge under the Kamakhyanagar police station. Apart from the bullet injuries on his body, his neck was severely wounded too.

As per reports, Nirakar had recently been released from jail on bail in connection with the murder case of Baruan Samiti Member Deepak Mohanty in 2021. After his return four months back, he had started the stone quarry business.

Though the exact motive behind the crime was yet to be ascertained it was suspected past enmity could have led to

the murder. Family members have alleged that Nirakar was killed by some people who were harbouring grudge against him due to his alleged involvement in the Mohanty murder case.

"My brother was murdered by some acquaintances of Deepak Mohanty who called him on the pretext of some fire mishap at the site and then killed him," alleged his brother Sarbeswar Sahu.

Meanwhile, police registered a case and started investigation.

Brahmapur SP meets Puja organisers

Discusses do's and don'ts

PNS ■ BRAHMAPUR

A meeting was conducted between police and Puja organizers in the office of SP Brahmapur on Tuesday evening for smooth and peaceful conduct of the upcoming Dussehra festival in and around the silk city. SP Dr Sarvana Vivek M addressed all the organisers present and requested them to follow the prescribed guidelines with ut-

most discipline and decorum in the interest of the public.

When erecting the Puja pandals, the organisers need to ensure that the pandals do not occupy the roads and block the traffic. Organisers should choose the location in such a way that the local public and the visitors/devotees should not incur any inconvenience, he added.

Similarly, the SP also advised the organisers and Puja Committees to install CCTV in pandals which will help the law and order authority to

keep a strict vigil on the mischief mongers. The organisers were also advised to strictly adhere to timing regarding playing of music and DJ as per the strict guidelines of the Supreme Court. No music or sound should be operated after 10 pm, he said.

The organisers have to take all safety measures while taking electric connection to pandals. More than 75 organisers from different parts of the city were present and promised to follow the guidelines in public interest.

R'kela SP orders probe into Asst Collector death

PNS ■ ROURKELA

The Rourkela SP on Thursday ordered an investigation into the death of Rourkela Assistant Collector Sushmita Minz. A DCP-rank officer Banita Majhi would carry out the probe, the SP said.

Members of the Sundargarh Adivasi Mach, a tribal outfit, had on Wednesday gheraoed the office of the Additional District Magistrate here demanding a CBI probe into the death.

Holding the Collector and the Rourkela ADM responsible for the death, the agitators demanded arrest of the two officials.

Notably, Sushmita was found dead in the pond of Sensory Park under Plant Site police limits in Rourkela on September 19. Post-mortem report has confirmed antemortem drowning and there is no evidence of homicide, said Plant Site police station IIC



JR Pati.

However, Sushmita's brother in his complaint lodged with police alleged that she was murdered. He said Sushmita was under depression due to work pressure.

The complainant blamed Sundargarh Collector, Rourkela ADM, Gurundia Block Development Officer, Gurundia Child Development Project Officer and a woman Sub-Inspector of Police for his sister's death.

Sushmita's family alleged that police in cahoots with the doctors have prepared a fake postmortem report to hide the real cause of her death.

K'pada: Fnance firm staff missing



PNS ■ KENDRAPADA

An employee of a private finance company went missing from the Babar-Badihi main road under the Tantiapala Marine police station in Kendrapada district from Tuesday evening.

Swagat Samal of Rajagada village was going for daily cash collection from deposit holders of Rajnagar market.

Swagat's motorbike was found parked on the road side and his bag, tab along with chappal was found near the spot. His family members and

office colleagues said that no contact can be made with him and there was no trace of him after extensive searches.

According to sources, Swagat had around Rs 2.65 lakh cash collection with him and there was no money in the bag.

Swagat's brother Sarthak has lodged a missing complaint with the Tantiapala Marine police. The family members suspected that Swagat might have been kidnapped. The police are investigating into the incident, said Kendrapada SDPO Debendra Mallick.

State gets Rs 8,406 cr CAMPA funds in 10 yrs

Afforestation undertaken in 468,174.39-ha land

TATHYA ■ BHUBANESWAR

The State Government has received a total fund of Rs 8,406.76 crore under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) in the past 10 years. Forest, Environment and Climate Change Minister Pradip Kumar Amat informed this in the State Assembly on Tuesday while replying to a question.

Amat said the State has received the amount for compensatory afforestation be-

tween the financial year (FY) 2013-14 and FY 2022-23. During the period, afforestation activities were undertaken over 468,174.39 hectares of land and new forest area has been created, he said.

As per the statement, the State has got the highest allocation of Rs 6,069.25 crore CAMPA fund in the year 2019-20, followed by Rs 511.82 crore in 2017-18, Rs 460 crore in 2015-16 and Rs 445.40 crore in 2016-17.

Similarly, the State got Rs 230.95 crore in 2013-14, Rs 342.07 crore in 2014-15 and Rs 347.27 crore in 2021-22. The State has not received a single pie from CAMPA in three financial years-2018-19,

2020-21 and 2022-23.

Apart from CAMPA, the State Government has got Rs 430.56 crore from 95 mining owners and industries for compensatory afforestation during 10 years (2013-22), informed the Minister. The amount was spent for activities like compensatory afforestation, forest protection, infrastructure development, wildlife management and community forestry.

The CAMPA was constituted by the Supreme Court of India in July 2009 to ensure proper utilisation of funds received from project proponents for diversion of forest land for developmental activities like erection of dams, min-

ing and construction of roads and industries. The amount collected under CAMPA differs from area to area. In Odisha, major forest areas of the State are being diverted for mining activities, construction of highways and industrial projects.

Besides afforestation activities, the State Government has utilised CAMPA funds for projects like Ama Jungle Yojana (AJY) that encourages community participation in forest management and improvement of livelihoods of forest dependent communities. CAMPA fund is also being used for projects like regional wildlife management plans for area specific forest division.

In Kendrapada

Woman stages dharna before hubby's house

Demands wife's status as man has a second wife

RAJESH BEHERA ■ KENDRAPADA

Sagarika Swain (31) staged a dharna in front of her bigamist husband's house at Santasahi demanding justice to her by accepting her as wife and monthly expenses.

Swain of Bhanjanagar area, at present staying in Khandagiri area, fell in love with Satyajit Das of Santasahi village under Kendrapada town police station limits, after both came in contact with each other from a matrimonial site. Later, they developed intimacy with each other through social media and by physically meeting each other several times.

Satyajit allegedly kept a physical relationship with her. When he came to know that she was impregnated, he slyly provided medicine and de-



stroyed her pregnancy. On April 11, both of them registered for marriage at a Bhubanewar court and later stayed together at Bhubaneswar.

Later, however, Swain came to know that her husband had married earlier and he had a wife at his house in Santasahi.

"I lodged a complaint with the Bharatpur police station over the matter. My husband gave an undertaking before the police to provide a sum of Rs 20,000 as monthly expenses and to accept me as his wife. But he did not provide the money and rather tortured and harassed me," alleged Swain.

She further alleged that Satyajit had taken a sum of Rs 1.50 lakh and gold ornaments from her. As the impasse persisted, Swain lodged a complaint on September 26 at the Mahila Police Station at Bhubaneswar and came to Santasahi to meet her husband and her in-laws. But she was not allowed to enter the house.

Educational tours for science-aspiring students

At NITR

PNS ■ ROURKELA

The Central Research Facility (CRF), NIT Rourkela organised its first educational excursions for school students. The excursions included an inspirational workshop on robotics, artificial intelligence techniques and scientific high-end equipment at CRF-NITR. 82 school students (Class 9-10) of Delhi Public School, Rourkela attended a one-day workshop to learn the basic concept of advanced machines and their mechanism.

Head of CRF and coordinator of the workshop Prof Dayal R Parhi gave the welcome speech. Through the educational excursions, the institute seeks to ignite the curiosity of aspiring young scientists, exposing them to the

wonders of the new edge technologies in robotics, AI, scientific laboratories, and experimental hands-on learning opportunities. From mechanical and physics to chemical, biomedical, electronic and many more, a diverse range of disciplines will be explored by these students, he said.

Inaugurating the workshop, Prof Chandan Kumar Sahoo (Director-in-Charge, NITR) said this is an exciting initiative aimed at fostering a passion for science and new-age machines among school students.

The tour included interactive laboratory experiments and students had the chance to conduct real scientific experiments under the guidance of experienced research scholars and faculties of NIT, Rourkela.

CUO celebrates first anniv of VC Tripathi's tenure



PNS ■ KORAPUT

On September 26, the Central University of Odisha celebrated the one-year anniversary of the tenure of its Vice-Chancellor, Prof Chakradhar Tripathi. The university organised an interactive evening on its campus, fostering an environment for the exchange of ideas, constructive feedback, and mutual learning.

Distinguished guests, including Prof NC Panda, Incharge Registrar and Finance Officer; Prof Vibhas Chandra Jha, Advisor-Aca-

demic and Administration; Prof Sharat Kumar Palita, Dean, School of Biodiversity and Conservation of Natural Resources; and Dr. Prashant Meshram, Controller of Examination were present on the dais to extend their heartfelt congratulations to Prof Tripathi for his successful first year as Vice-Chancellor.

Dr Kapila Khemundu, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Sociology, delivered the welcome address, emphasizing the significant strides made by the university under Prof Tripathi's visionary leadership. The progress in-

cluded faculty recruitment, introduction of new academic programmes and infrastructure development.

Prof Tripathi expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the university community for their unwavering contributions, active support, and dedicated efforts in propelling the university towards greater heights. He envisioned a future where the students can emerge as distinguished academic leaders on the global stage, guiding the world towards the shared goal of enhancing the quality of life worldwide.

Professor Tripathi offered sage advice, urging everyone to refrain from dwelling on others' mistakes and instead focus on appreciating the positive aspects of their work. The VC announced plans for the establishment of research boards, each consisting of eminent scholars, in every academic subject.

Dr Rudrani Mohanty, Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Odia Language and Literature, guided the proceedings, while Dr. Ramendra Kumar Parhi, Dean of Students' Welfare, delivered the vote of thanks.

'Instal night landing facility in R'kela Airport'

Union Civil Aviation Minister urged

AUROBINDA DAS ■ ROURKELA

Though the Rourkela Airport has been operational since January, still it lacks night landing facility due to unavailability of ILS (Instrument Landing System).

Similarly due to the poor facilities many times the only flight between Bhubaneswar and Rourkela gets cancelled during a little bad weather.

Consequently, it is increasingly demanded to upgrade Rourkela Airport soon.

President, Sachetan Nagarika Manch, Rourkela, Bimal Bisi in a letter to the Union Civil Aviation Minister has mentioned that Rourkela has a great contribution to the industries, mining and infrastructure development of Odisha as well as the nation. The first PSU steel plant of the country is situated at Rourkela. Besides, over



the past several years, Rourkela has contributed to growth in science and technology with the setting up of NIT, Rourkela and BPUT etc. There has also been a great development in the sports arena with the setting up of a world class Hockey Stadium. However, due to lack of proper air connectivity the growth of Rourkela city has not come up

to the desired level, he lamented.

"Though the construction works of Rourkela Airport was completed on a war footing basis, it is sorry to mention here that only one alliance air BBI-RRK-BBI has been flying. So far, there is no CCU flight flying between the two cities.

The Odisha Government has requested so many times

to send an AAI team to inspect Rourkela Airport for immediate installation of ILS but in vain," said Bisi.

He urged the Civil Aviation Minister to let the AAI take over the airport and take necessary action at an earliest. Bisi also sent a copy of the letter to the CM, Odisha, Principal Secretary, PM, MP Sundargarh and Secretary, Civil Aviation.

Tributes pour in for ‘father of Green Revolution’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The death of renowned agricultural scientist M.S. Swaminathan is a profound loss to the scientific community but his legacy endures and will continue to guide the world towards sustainable food security and pioneering agricultural innovations.

Dr Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan, the ‘Father of the Green Revolution’ who dedicated his life to revolutionising agriculture and ensuring food security for all, passed away in his Chennai home on Thursday at the age of 98.

“All of us have benefited immensely, directly or indirectly, from his vast contributions over the years. Without the Green Revolution in India, which he spearheaded, we

would not have achieved food security,” agriculturist Ranjitha Puskar, country representative for India and research at the Manila-headquartered International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), told a news agency.

She said his death was a tremendous loss to the scientific community in general and the agriculture fraternity in particular.

“He was the director general of IRRI and his legacy has guided the organisation and its researchers to this day... His mental agility and intellectual curiosity were as high as ever in the last few years and still pro-

vided great guidance, even though he was physically frail. Our deepest condolences to the agricultural sector worldwide on this loss!” Puskar said.

Food researcher Mamata Pradhan said Swaminathan was a visionary, an inspiration,



and a role model.

“I was really fortunate to have worked with him very closely from 2007 to 2014 when we formed a coalition for food and nutrition security...” Pradhan, research coordinator, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) South Asia region, told an agency.

“He truly revolutionised Indian agriculture, worked towards self-sufficiency in food production when India was grappling with the threat of food insecurity and transformed India from a net importer of food grains to being a lead exporter to the global food basket. He was always looking for

solutions for sustainable farming and improving the lives of the farmers,” Pradhan added.

Swaminathan was born in Kumbakonam on August 7, 1925.

His father’s involvement in the freedom movement and Mahatma Gandhi’s influence inspired his passion for agricultural science.

He worked closely with former Prime Ministers of India, playing a pivotal role in the success of the Green Revolution, catapulting India from being a net food importer to a leading exporter and ensuring a “Hunger-free India & World,” according to his foundation.

Describing him “the greatest agricultural scientist the world has ever seen”, J Justin Mohan, former secretary of the National Biodiversity Authority, said Swaminathan’s contribution to designing agricultural policies and schemes helped not only India but other countries as well.

“I had the opportunity to work with him during my tenure in Lanka after the end of the armed conflict to assist the farmers of Lanka and also had an opportunity to implement the Kuttanad Package, a wetland development project, in Kerala which was conceived by him,” Mohan, chief conservator of forests, Kerala, said.

Ranju one millionth US visa receiver

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

In a pointer to burgeoning people to people ties between the two countries, the US Mission to India on Thursday surpassed its goal to process one million non-immigrant visa applications this year with Ambassador Eric Garcetti personally handing over the one millionth visa to a couple.

They will be heading to the United States to attend their son’s graduation at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

Dr Ranju Singh, senior consultant, Lady Hardinge College was elated at receiving an email from the US Embassy about hers being the one millionth visa this year. Her husband Puneet Dargan, was granted the next visa. The couple will be travelling to the US in May, 2024.

Greeting the couple as “Mr and Mrs One million”, Ambassador Garcetti enquired about their travel plans to the US and made suggestions about what not to miss in the



country as a tourist.

“I couldn’t be happier today, happy for India, Indians and the United States. Prime Minister (Narendra) Modi and President (Joe) Biden had said lets do a better job in moving faster on the visas and so the Ministry of External Affairs here approved more bodies in

places like Hyderabad...More people who can work on these visas, we changed our systems, we worked harder and smarter and we hit a million visa applications processed this year,” the ambassador said.

“Our partnership with India is one of the United States’ most important bilater-

al relationships, and in fact one of the most important relationships in the world. The ties between our people are stronger than ever, and we will continue our record-setting volume of visa work in the coming months to give as many Indian applicants as possible the opportunity to travel

to the United States and experience the US-India friendship firsthand,” he added.

The Mission has already surpassed the total number of cases processed in 2022 and is processing almost 20 per cent more applications than in pre-pandemic 2019.

“We got an email after we had finished our visa interviews that we are supposed to collect our visas, we were told that we were the one millionth...The Ambassador meeting us in person was a great moment for us. We are looking forward to going to the US, we will be there at MIT to celebrate our son’s proud day and then explore the country as tourists,” Dr Singh told PTI.

Dargan informed that their son is currently pursuing his Masters in Financial Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). “This will be our first trip to the US. We are really looking forward to it,” he said. Last year over 1.2 million Indians visited the United States. Indians now represent over 10 per cent of all visa applicants worldwide, includ-

ing 20 per cent of all student visa applicants and 65 per cent of all H&L-category (employment) visa applicants.

According to a statement by the US Embassy here, recognising the continued high demand for US visas, the United States continues to invest heavily in our operations in India. “In the past year, the Mission has expanded its staffing to facilitate more visa processing than ever before. The Mission has made significant capital improvements to existing facilities, such as the US Consulate in Chennai, and has inaugurated a new Consulate building in Hyderabad.

“The Mission has also implemented strategies to increase efficiency, extending interview waiver eligibility to new visa categories and utilising remote work to allow staff around the world to contribute to Indian visa processing. Early next year, the Mission plans to implement a pilot program that would allow domestic visa renewal for qualified H&L-category employment visa applicants,” it said.

Thane fake currency case: NIA files supplementary chargesheet against four

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday said it has filed a supplementary chargesheet against four persons, including a ‘designated terrorist’, in the Thane fake currency case.

Besides the designated terrorist Uncle alias Javed Chikna, those charge-sheeted under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act have been identified as Riyaz Shikilkar, Mohammad Fayaaz Shikilkar and Nasir Chaudhari, all residents of Mumbai.

One of the accused Fayaaz Shikilkar has also been charged under the Arms Act.

Three accused were chargesheeted earlier, in April last year, by the Thane police in the case, which was originally registered following the seizure of 149 high

quality counterfeit Indian currency notes of the denomination of ₹2,000 from accused Shikilkar.

Subsequently, NIA had taken over the case and, after investigations, had arrested Fayaaz in May 2023 for possession of illegal arms.

“Investigations also revealed that Fayaaz was in contact with ‘Uncle’ alias Javed Patel alias Javed Chikna through WhatsApp, and had conspired to carry out unlawful activities in India. He had also received funds sent by ‘uncle’, a designated individual terrorist, through his associate ‘bhai,” the NIA said in a statement.

‘Uncle’, a wanted accused, had committed acts of terror through his associates by possessing and circulating high-quality fake Indian currency notes (FICNs) with the aim of damaging the monetary stability of India, according to the NIA chargesheet.

Even 5 days of exposure to air pollution linked to increased risk of stroke: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Short-term exposure i.e. just five days exposure to air pollution may be linked to an increased risk of stroke, according to a study. Previous research has established a connection between long-term exposure to air pollution and an increased risk of stroke.

However, the correlation between short-term exposure to air pollution and stroke had been less clear.

For our study, instead of looking at weeks or months of exposure, we looked at just five days and found a link between short-term exposure to air pollution and an increased risk of stroke, said Ahmad Toubasi,



MD, study author, University of Jordan in Amman.

The meta-analysis that involved a review of 110 studies that included more than 18 million cases of stroke is published in the online issue of Neurology, the medical journal

of the American Academy of Neurology.

Researchers looked at pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide.

They also looked at different sizes of particulate matter, including PM1, which is air pollution that is less than 1 micron (?m) in diameter, as well as PM2.5 and PM10. PM2.5 or smaller includes inhalable particles from motor vehicle exhaust, the burning of fuels by power plants and other industries as well as forest and grass fires. PM10 includes dust from roads and construction sites.

People who had exposure to a higher concentration of various types of air pollution had an increased risk of stroke. Higher

concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were linked to a 28 per cent increased risk of stroke; higher ozone levels were linked to a 5 per cent increase; carbon monoxide had a 26 per cent increase; and sulfur dioxide had a 15 per cent increase.

A higher concentration of PM1 was linked to a 9 per cent increased risk of stroke, with PM2.5 at 15 per cent and PM10 at 14 per cent.

Higher levels of air pollution were also linked to higher risk of death from stroke. Higher concentrations of nitrogen dioxide were linked to a 33% increased risk of death from stroke, sulfur dioxide, a 60 per cent increase, PM2.5, a 9 per cent increase and PM10, a 2 per cent increase.

Kapil Dev moves HC for stricter laws against cruelty to animals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Legendary India cricketer Kapil Dev and his wife Romi Dev have approached the Delhi High Court challenging certain provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act that allow destruction of stray dogs in lethal chambers and extermination or destruction of any animal under the authority of any law.

The petition came up for hearing before a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sanjeev Narula which granted time to the petitioners’ counsel to place certain judgments on record.

The High Court listed the



petition for further hearing on October 13.

Petitioners Kapil Dev, his wife Romi Dev and animal rights activist Anjali Gopalan, said the petition was being filed on account of repeated instances of barbaric treatment meted out to animals showing the “most brutal and cruel face of humanity” and the “utter effete” response of law and the law enforcing agencies.

The plea challenged section 11 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, saying it was without deterrence and manifestly

arbitrary since it trivialises life and denies animals any meaningful existence by treating their mutilation and killing as petty and frivolous acts, mocking their death through imposition of punishment of less than ₹10.

Section 11 deals with treating animals cruelly and entails a fine which shall not be less than ₹10 but may extend to ₹50 in case of first offence.

For the second or subsequent offence committed within three years of the previous offence, the punishment involves fine which shall not be less than ₹25 but may extend to ₹100 or with imprisonment for a term of maximum of three months or both.

“Section 11 is further

unfair and unreasonable in so far as the exception under PCA Act which permits cruelty to animals for the purposes mentioned in Section 11(3) (b) (destruction of stray dogs in lethal chambers), Section 11(3) (c) (extermination or destruction of any animal under the authority of any law for the time being in force) ...,” the plea said.

It has also challenged sections 428 (Mischief by killing or maiming animal of the value of ten rupees) and 429 (mischief by killing or maiming cattle, etc., of any value or any animal of the value of fifty rupees) of the Indian Penal Code claiming that it is an instance of speciesism suggesting lack of moral worth or value in animals.



Policemen dance with devotees carrying Lord Ganesha idol for immersion on the conclusion of Ganesh Chaturthi festival, in Hyderabad, on Thursday

Govt has crushed hopes, dreams of youth: Congress

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday targeted the Narendra Modi Government over the issue of unemployment alleging that it has crushed the hopes and dreams of India’s youth, leading to rising suicides among them.

Congress chief spokesman Jairam Ramesh alleged that the government, instead of dealing with the crisis of demographic dividend turning into a demographic disaster, might want to “manipulate” the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data due for 2022 to hide the alarming suicide rate among the youth.

In a statement, he said unemployment in India remains a severe problem as well as the hidden underemployment.

Ramesh cited the interactions of Rahul Gandhi with porters at the Anand Vihar Terminal here where he had noted that large numbers of

educated youth, including those with engineering degrees, were unable to find formal employment and were forced into precarious informal jobs such as porters.

The Congress general secretary said the massive failure of the Modi Government to provide sufficient formal-sector employment has led to this situation.

Ramesh cited data from the Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for 2021-22 that shows that formal sector employment remains 5.3 per cent lower than it was in 2019-20. Further, the number of formal employers has declined by a massive 10.5 per cent from 2019-20 to 2021-22.

According to a report from Azim Premji University, the Congress leader said, 42 per cent of graduates under 25 were unemployed in 2021-22. Jobs in manufacturing dropped 31 per cent between 2016-17 and March 2023, according to Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) data.

CSIR lab producing affordable green innovative technology

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

From converting pathogenic biomedical waste into eco-friendly soil additives to manufacturing vegan leather from agricultural waste like mango peel and banana stem, the CSIR’s lab National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST), is busy churning out affordable green innovative technology.

These among others were displayed at the foundation day of the CSIR at Pragati Maidan here recently.

NIIST Director Dr C Anandharamakrishnan said that vegan leather has the potential to replace around 30-50 per cent of synthetic chemicals from the existing leather available in the market.

“Also, the developed leather sheet costs 50 per cent less than synthetic and animal leather and has a smaller carbon footprint as various agricultural residues such as mango peel, banana stem, pineapple waste, cactus, water hyacinth, corn husk, and rice-related waste are being used.

Vegan leather has a shelf



life of more than three years. It has also shown strong tensile strength, sleek finish, good water retention properties, temperature resistance, and stability compared to other existing synthetic and animal leather,” he emphasised.

Though still held out by the fashion industry as a luxury material, leather is a co-product of the meat industry, and it comes with many environmental downsides.

A leather jacket has a climate cost of 176 kilograms of CO2, for instance, and manufacturers also dump toxic chemical compounds like lead, arsenic, cadmium and chromium into the water as the leather is processed, on top of the millions of goats and other animals slaughtered each year in India for leather.

About the dual disinfection-solidification system for spontaneous and instantaneous disinfection of both liquid and solid biomedical waste, including urine, saliva and blood, bacterial broths, cotton, tissues, swabs, needles, and syringes, the NIIST Director said the innovative system converts degradable waste into soil additives while lab disposables are prepared for direct recycling.

Segregation, transportation and disposal of such disinfected medical waste are easier and safer with significant reduction in cost for a health-care facility and less expensive than red-bagging, a method currently in practice for containing medical waste, explained Anandharamakrishnan.

Make vegetable farming employable, says Mishra

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister (PM) Dr Pramod Kumar Mishra called upon the agricultural scientists to make vegetable farming employable and research on important topics like climate change, artificial intelligence, higher product value and processing is the need of the hour. He was speaking as the chief guest at the 33rd Foundation Day function of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-Indian Vegetable Research Institute (IVR) here on Thursday.

Dr Mishra praised the research work of the ICAR-IIVR (Varanasi) and said that the IIVR has played an important role in the vegetable production scenario of India. “The farmers can increase and double their income by diversifying agriculture through vegetables,” he said, expressing hope that planting material will be easily available to the farmers through hi-tech vegetable nurseries which will benefit lakhs of farmers of Uttar Pradesh.

Speaking as a special guest Uttarakhand government Dr Devesh Chaturvedi said in his address that UP is a leading state in vegetable production and farmers of Purvanchal (eastern UP) are now earning more income by exporting vegetables abroad. Deputy Director General (Crop Science



PS to PM Dr PK Mishra addressing Foundation Day function at IIVR in Varanasi on Thursday.

and Horticulture Science), ICAR, New Delhi, Dr Tilak Raj Sharma said that India is setting new dimensions every day in vegetable production and last year vegetables worth more than Rs 7,000 crore were exported.

The programme started with the inauguration of hi-tech vegetable nursery and plantation of trees in the institute campus. In his welcome address, IIVR Director Dr Tushar Kanti Behera highlighted the achievements of the institute so far and gave details of the action plan to double vegetable production by 2047.

On the occasion, various publications of the institute were released and for the best work after the year, Pradeep Karmakar in the scientific category, Sudhir Kumar in the technical category and Dr Manoj Kumar Pandey in the Agricultural Science Centre were given citations. The awards were also distributed to the school students. An agricultural exhibition was also organised on this occasion. In this ceremony, PMO officials, Divisional Commissioner (DC) Kaushal Raj Sharma, District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam, Director General, Uttar

Pradesh Agricultural Research Council, Lucknow, Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh, officers of agriculture and horticulture departments of the state, the scientists, technical and administrative officers, support staff, research students, and senior officers of the institute apart from a large number of farmers and school students were also present.

The programme was conducted by Dr Dhananjay Pratap Singh, while the vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Sudhakar Pandey, Assistant Director General (Horticulture), ICAR.

BHU tops among central varsities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Banaras Hindu University (BHU) has received the top position in the category of central universities in the 9th edition of ‘Clarivate India Research Excellence Citation Awards-2023’ for its excellent research work. This award is given to all the universities in the country. It is given for the excellent research work of one of the central universities, Dr Devendra Kumar Singh, Librarian of BHU, received the award in a function organised by Web of Science in New Delhi recently.

The Clarivate India Research Excellence Citation Awards-2023 is a unique award given to recognise excellence in education research in India. This award is organised once every two or three years and honours individuals and institutions who have made outstanding education research contributions in various categories and whose research



BHU Librarian Dr DK Singh receiving an award in New Delhi recently.

makes a significant impact in their chosen field.

In the direction of research excellence, the Central Library (BHU) is making available all

the important books and research journals of the world for the research work being done in the university, as a result of which this year the

Central Library of BHU was also given the Best Library Award by the Indian Library Association.

Varanasi first in UP in health ranking dashboard

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In the health ranking dashboard, Varanasi has once again secured the first position in the state by securing an 85 per cent score. The district has come first for the fifth time in the Health Ranking Dashboard. District Magistrate (DM) S Rajalingam and Chief Development Officer (CDO) Himanshu Nagpal praised the Health department for this achievement and encouraged them to provide quality services in future.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr Sandeep Chaudhary said that recently the ranking of all the districts has been displayed in the state's health ranking dashboard (August). By continuously working as per the guidelines given by the DM, the district has secured the first position in the state for the fifth consecutive time. The health facilities being provided in the district are being supervised by the CDO. He said that according to the monthly dashboard, the district has achieved first place in the state in achieving 100 per cent HIV testing in relation to expected pregnancies and 100 per cent achievement in complete vaccination of children (BCG, Penta first, second and third, measles-rubella).

“Along with this, it stood second in the state in temporary means of family planning (Antara, Chhaya, Copper-T,



Arazilines CHC best in Varanasi as per UP Health-Ranking Dashboard.

PPIUCD and IUCD), second in cesarean delivery in relation to delivery at Community Health Centres (CHCs) and fourth place in institutional delivery in relation to estimated delivery,” he said, adding that apart from this, it has performed better on 16 indicators including complete vaccination.

According to the CMO, this time Arazilines CHC has got the first position while Garhua PHC, Pindra PHC, Chiragaon PHC, Misirpur (Kashi Vidyapeeth) CHC, Baragaon PHC, Chhapra CHC and Sewapuri PHC secured from second to eighth places respectively and the district headquarters is at ninth position. The CMO congratulated the officers and health workers of the primary and community health centres (PHCs/CHCs) which were performing well and encouraged them to maintain the quality of services.

“Quality medical and health services of maternal-child health and family welfare programmes are being provided in all the government hospitals, CHC/ PHCs, Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) of the district,” he said, informing that for this, good performance has been achieved under the collaborative supervision of Additional Chief Medical Officer (RCH) Dr HC Maurya and District Programme Manager (DPM) of National Health Mission Santosh Kumar Singh. “ASHA workers and ANMs have an important role in improving the indicators. ASHA workers mobilise beneficiaries from the community and bring them to the medical units,” he said.

The CMO further said that the ranking of Varanasi is an honour to the front line workers. He directed all the health workers that the quality of

activities related to maternal health, child health, newborn health and nutrition should be maintained. The department is making continuous efforts to provide medical and health benefits to the last person of the community. This is the aim of the government and the department, he remarked.

Dr Chaudhary also said that the achievement of Varanasi should continue. “For this, all programme nodal officers, block programme managers, block community process managers, data operators, ANMs and other health workers have been directed to visit the regular blocks as well as VHSND, vaccination sessions, intervals and happy family days etc. Take people's feedback about the facilities provided there and ensure to improve it by taking appropriate action and ensuring 100 per cent data of all indicators on time,” he said.

Poster hints at Priyanka contesting Lok Sabha poll from Phulpur

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Congress in Prayagraj is known for ‘poster revolution’. Though demoralised the workers themselves, most of the times, issue posters to prove that they are still in the picture.

Now a new poster has been floated suggesting that Priyanka Gandhi will be contesting the Lok Sabha election from Phulpur in Prayagraj, the seat of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, which was later represented by several parties and politicians, including mafia don Atiq Ahmed.

The poster terms Priyanka as ‘aandhi’ (storm) and by the side of his picture a milestone is shown reading ‘Phulpur 0

km’.

It may be mentioned here that some overenthusiastic office-bearers of the Congress had been expelled from the office for issuing posters without the knowledge of the leaders, but it has become a part of their life, so posters are released by the local Congress leaders from time to time to let the leaders recognise them.

Phulpur of Nehru is not that Phulpur now. Earlier it was a rural constituency, but after delimitation of Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha constituencies, a huge urban area of Prayagraj city has become the part of Phulpur constituency.

Though nothing has been suggested by the party leaders, hundreds of posters of Priyanka Gandhi can be

seen, particularly in the urban areas of the Phulpur constituency, as if her name has been announced for this seat.

BEATEN TO DEATH: One person was beaten to death in a fight between two groups in a dispute over road in Jamua village of Meja. The family members took him to the hospital, where doctors declared him as brought dead. On getting information the police reached the spot and reviewed the situation.

A fight broke out between the two groups on Thursday afternoon. Lal Chandra Dubey, Bablu Dubey and a woman from one side were injured. However, Lalchandra was seriously injured. The family members took him to the hospital. But Lal Chandra (65) was

declared as brought dead there.

On information SHO Major Rajesh Upadhyay arrived with force and started investigation.

The women of the family of the deceased Lal Chandra said there was an altercation with neighbours Bunty Dubey, Bablu Dubey and Alok Dubey in connection with the dispute over road. The altercation turned into a fight and the opposite party allegedly thrashed Lal Chandra with bricks, stones and sticks killing him on the spot.

Police station in-charge Rajesh Upadhyay said the elderly man injured during the fight died. All the accused are still absconding. The body has been taken sent for the post-mortem examination.

New V-C of Dr Rajendra Prasad NLU takes charge

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Newly-appointed Vice-Chancellor of Dr Rajendra Prasad National Law University (NLU) Prof Usha Tandon took charge on Thursday. On the very first day she held a meeting with subordinates and discussed how academic and administrative activities could be started as soon as possible.

She said a registrar will also be appointed in the university soon. Chief Revenue Officer Kunwar Pankaj has been given the responsibility of special officer of the university.

Prof Tandon said “our aim is to produce world class law professionals from this city of justice. Such an academic environment can be created in which students can prepare themselves for global competition. There is a need for good and knowledgeable professionals in the field of law not only in India but also abroad. One can also earn good money



Prof Usha Tandon

abroad”.

The construction work of Law University campus is going on in Jhalwa here. Now it may take another 6 to 8 months. Till the completion of the construction, the university will operate from the BBS Engineering College campus. Right now

the V-C will sit there.

Prof Tandon, who is originally from Delhi, received her law education from Delhi University. She has over 30 years of academic experience in the field of law. She has written six books on various aspects of law related to environmental

protection and women's rights.

ARRESTED: A coaching operator sexually exploited a minor student for one and a half months in Dhoomanganj area and threatened to fail her if she opened her mouth. As a result the student remained silent. Seeing her daughter upset, when the mother asked her she narrated her ordeal. The police has arrested him and sent him to jail.

According to the police, the victim is a resident of Bamhrauli area and a student of class X. She had joined the class to study mathematics and science. When she returned from coaching on September 21, her mother became suspicious on seeing her condition. When the mother asked her forcefully, the daughter told her the reason.

The police have registered a case against the accused under POCSO Act and molestation. The accused has been arrested and sent to jail.

Ramlila to focus on creating lively experience for audience

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The authorities of Pajawa Ramlila Committee have decided to set up a two-storey stage for performing Ramlila. Interestingly, entry of a 20-feet Lord Hanuman and demon queen Surpanakha will be shown flying in different parts of Ramlila. Besides, the episode of ‘Sita haran’ (kidnapping of Goddess Sita) will also be staged using latest technology. The committee has also planned to showcase the flying of ‘Pushpak Viman’ during the

Ramlila episode. The fight between Lord Ram and demon king Ravan will be showcased with the help of laser technology.

The students pursuing management, graduation and post-graduation courses are being imparted training to do justice with their assigned roles. Pajawa Ramlila will begin from October 15 and culminate on October 22.

There will be eight light and sound based episodes for the entire Ramlila from birth of Lord Ram to victory over

Lanka.

Sachin Kumar Gupta, director and finance secretary of Pajawa Ramlila committee told mediapersons, “A special ropeway is being made to help different characters to move from one end to another. However, after introduction of light and sound system, majority of Ramlila episodes are being staged more precisely and lively.”

Management students here are taking on prominent roles such as Lord Ram, brother Laxman, and Goddess Sita in

the Pajawa Ramlila committee. This year's Ramlila will feature light and sound effects to enhance the storytelling, including scenes such as Sita Haran and Hanuman bringing Sanjivani.

Students from various colleges and universities will be playing the prime characters, while a team of technical experts will create visual effects. The Ramlila will run from October 15 to 22, with a focus on creating a more lively and impactful experience for the audience.

Man’s body found hanging from tree

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The body of one person was found hanging from a tree in the jungle under the Rajgarh police station on Thursday. Giving details, Circle Officer (CO)/ Operation Anil Kumar Pandey said after the Rajgarh police was informed that the body was hanging in the jungle near Raikara village he and the police team reached the spot. According to the police the deceased was later identified as Mahendra alias Rannu (37) of Perh village under Ghorawal police station, Sonbhadra. After taking the body into possession the police is busy in completing the legal formalities, the CO added.

INSPECTED: District Magistrate Priyanka Niranjana has decided to recover fine if anyone was found spitting in the Parikrama area of Vindhychal. Such decision was taken by her while inspecting the ongoing construction works under Vindhya Corridor project at Vindhychal along with MLA city Ratnakar Mishra on Wednesday. She has warned shopkeepers to maintain the area as no-tobacco zone and directed the police as well as other officials to follow the direction in view of the sanctity of the area.

The official concerned was taken to task for not comply-



ing with the direction of the earlier meeting in which the clear direction had been given to set up a borewell. She directed the EE Power Corporation to complete the work of underground cable within this month. The working agency concerned was warned to complete the work within stipulated time otherwise action will be taken because Navratra Mela was to start in a few days.

The working agencies were directed to complete roads, streets along with other works timely and cover drains. Later the DM inspected the repair work at Shastri Bridge and directed the working agency to complete the work till October 15. During the inspection she was accompanied by City Magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh and others.

REVIEWED: Divisional Commissioner (DC) Dr Muthukumarasamy Bhas while reviewing the progress in division's works costing more than Rs 50 lakh on Wednesday

directed the officials to complete them within the stipulated time and with quality.

Reviewing the works of Sonbhadra, especially under DMD Trust the DC became aware about the ongoing works, including roads and bridges. On the road from Babhanahva Tola to ITI school the working agency was directed to examine the quality of the entire work. Reviewing progress in other works, including roads and canals, the DC asked the working agencies to complete them within the stipulated time. The EO Nagar Palika Parishad Bhadohi was directed to maintain roads of the area along with other works maintaining the quality.

Reviewing the ongoing works under AMRUT project the DC was apprised by the working agency that most of the works, including laying of pipeline for potable water, overhead tanks, connection of water pipeline to the houses etc had been completed. About sewage

system the authority concerned stated that the work had been divided into different zones and most of the works, including laying of sewage pipeline and chambers for houses were at the verge of the completion. The DC said proper repair of roads which have become dilapidated due to the pipeline work was the responsibility of the working agency. The meeting was conducted by Joint Development Commissioner Suresh Chandra Mishra and was attended by Additional District Magistrate (ADM/Finance and Revenue) Shiv Pratap Shukla, Additional Commissioner Abhay Pandey, EO NPP Mirzapur Angad Gupta and other officials concerned.

ARRESTED: The Jigna police arrested an accused of illegal mining on Wednesday. During the inspection of sand mining sites the then mines officer had found illegal mining in Khaira village under Jigna police station. The officer had filed a case on April 8, 2022. During investigation the name of Dinesh Kumar Yadav of Saray Rahchanda village under Mungarabadshahpur police station, Jaunpur, had come to light but he was still at large. Station Officer of Jigna handed over the case to sub-inspector Abhay Narain Tiwari and the accused was nabbed from his residence.

Big guns roll out

The BJP leadership is taking no chances in Madhya Pradesh, fielding 3 Union Ministers in Assembly polls

With elections to five Assemblies scheduled by this year end, political temperature is already on the rise. However, as the situation persists today, the battleground of Madhya Pradesh has taken the lead in evoking competition and wonderment more fierce than in the other four States. As the X factor in these elections for the BJP is the party's decision to bring back to fight the Assembly polls three Ministers from the Union Government, at least four sitting MPs representing the State and other senior party office bearers holding influence across castes, religion and region. The ruling party has come up with its second list of 39 candidates for Madhya Pradesh. This move comes as the party faces tough competition from the Congress. The BJP has made a bold move by fielding heavyweights, including Union Ministers, to maintain its stronghold in the State. Union Ministers Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Patel and Faggan Singh Kulaste, along with party MPs Rakesh Singh, Ganesh Singh, Reeti Pathak and Uday Pratap Singh, as well as general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, will now contest the Madhya Pradesh Assembly elections. The inclusion of these prominent leaders as candidates has also opened up the field for chief ministership aspirants; Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Patel and Kailash Vijayvargiya are now considered strong contenders.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan has held the CM's post for nearly 20 years, with a brief interruption after the 2018 elections. The BJP is concerned about fatigue setting in regarding Chouhan. During a recent rally, Prime Minister Modi did not mention Chouhan even once. Meanwhile, Congress is emerging as a formidable contender under former CM Kamal Nath's leadership. This election promises to be a riveting showdown, with significant implications for Chouhan, besides the State's political future. Though Chouhan has served as the Chief Minister for multiple terms and is widely credited as a popular leader, his reputation and political future are now closely tied to this poll's outcome. If the BJP manages to secure a comfortable majority, it will consolidate his position within the party and strengthen his leadership in the State. On the other hand, a loss could raise questions about his ability to win elections and govern effectively. Kamal Nath, a seasoned politician, is working to consolidate the party's base and capitalise on anti-incumbency sentiments. The Congress' performance in recent byelections has been promising, boosting its confidence. The party is banking on issues such as unemployment, rural distress. Its campaign is centred on the promise of "change and improved governance". Meanwhile, the BJP's decision to field its stalwarts is an ominous sign for Chouhan and shows the party's dwindling faith in his leadership. Anti-incumbency and a number of unsavoury incidents have led to the erosion of his reputation which could cost the party an important State in the Hindi heartland. The BJP would not like that to happen just ahead of the 2024 general elections.

PICTALK



ISRO chief S. Somnath with others at Aadi Jyotirlinga Shree Somnath Mahadev Temple in Saurashtra on Thursday PTI

Impact of menopause on sleep can be debilitating

It is imperative that both individuals and society recognise the significance of addressing sleep issues during menopause

Menopause is a phase that marks the cessation of menstruation and reproductive function. Beyond the widely known physical changes, menopause brings a range of challenges, and one often underrated area of impact is sleep. Sleep becomes elusive for many women during this phase.

Menopause and sleep Menopause typically occurs between the ages of 45 and 55, with the average age being around 46 for Indian women. As the ovaries cease producing estrogen and progesterone, various physiological changes occur, giving rise to a multitude of symptoms. One of the most common complaints is sleep disturbances. According to the National Sleep Foundation, about 61% of women going through menopause report experiencing sleep problems. The hormonal changes that accompany menopause have a direct impact on sleep. Estrogen, known to regulate the sleep cycle, decreases during menopause, disrupting the body's internal clock. This can lead to difficulties falling asleep and staying



asleep through the night. Hot flashes and night sweats, affecting up to 75% of menopausal women, further exacerbate sleep. These sudden surges in body temperature can awaken women from deep sleep, leaving them fatigued and irritable during the day.

Sleep efficiency: Studies show that sleep efficiency—the percentage of time spent asleep while in bed—drops significantly during menopause. The postmenopausal women often see this number drop to 70% or lower.

Insomnia: Insomnia becomes a prevalent issue during menopause. According to the National Sleep Foundation, the risk of insomnia doubles during this phase, and about 40% of menopausal women experi-

ence insomnia symptoms.

Sleep duration: Menopause can lead to shorter sleep durations. On average, women in their 40s and 50s sleep about 30 to 60 minutes less.

Daytime fatigue: The ripple effects of disrupted sleep patterns are felt during the day. Women undergoing menopause often report increased daytime fatigue, leading to reduced productivity and a diminished quality of life.

Strategies for improved sleep Despite the challenges, there are effective strategies that can help women improve their sleep quality during menopause.

- Create a sleep-conducive environment by keeping the bedroom dark, quiet, and comfortably cool. Invest in a comfortable mattress and pillows. Make sure to avoid any screen time for at least an hour or two before sleeping.
- Establish a regular sleep schedule by going to bed and waking up at the same time every day, even on weekends. This helps regulate the body's internal clock.
- Practices like medita-

tion, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation can help reduce stress and promote better sleep.

- Engage in regular physical activity but avoid vigorous exercise close to bedtime. Limit caffeine and alcohol intake, especially in the evening.
- Consult a healthcare professional if sleep disturbances become severe.

Menopause is a natural phase of life, and while sleep disturbances may seem inevitable, they are not insurmountable. By understanding the science behind these disruptions and embracing strategies to mitigate them, women can embark on a journey toward restful nights and energized days. From healthcare providers offering tailored guidance to workplaces providing flexibility to accommodate sleep-related challenges, collective efforts can foster an environment where women can navigate this transitional phase in a better manner.

(The writer is Co-Founder and Head of Health Outcomes and Programs, Elda Health; views are personal)



AMEYA KULKARNI

tem. The Lancet study compared and analysed the PM 2.5 levels with levels of antibiotic resistance and made a disturbing discovery that the higher the pollutant level, the greater the antibiotic resistance. PM 2.5 are smaller than human hair and contains antibiotic resistance elements.

As these pollutants travel through the ambient air, they disperse antibiotic resistance elements, which can then be inhaled by humans which in turn sets in motion the resistance. The concerning aspect is that antibiotic-resistant bacteria can withstand antibiotic treatments, rendering the drugs ineffective against them. Antibiotics are primarily used to eliminate microorganisms, especially bacteria, but resistant bacteria are impervious to their effects.

The data for this research was collated from 116 countries utilising sources like ResistanceMap, the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control Surveillance Atlas, and the PLISA Health Information Platform. Overall, nine pathogens and 43 drugs were analysed. It was observed that the surge in antibiotic resistance among bacteria is largely attributed to the indiscriminate use of antibiotics. Repeated and widespread



antibiotic usage can empower bacteria to develop resistance over time, often facilitated by Antibiotic Resistance Genes (ARGs). Pathogenic bacteria, responsible for infections and diseases, can acquire antibiotic resistance through ARGs in a process known as horizontal gene transfer.

The Lancet health report concluded that the need of the hour is to address the PM2.5 levels. Without this, antibiotic resistance may increase by approximately 17%, with related deaths rising by 56% globally by 2050. Conversely, adhering to the World Health Organization's recommended PM 2.5 level of 5 µg/m³ could lead to a 17% reduction in antibiotic resistance and a 23% decrease in deaths. But this is easier said than done. Of the world's 30 cities with the worst air pollution, 21 are in India. Capital New Delhi is the worst with PM 2.5 being nearly 10 times higher than the World Health Organisation levels.

According to the CleanAir organisation India sees 2 million early deaths and a loss of 95 billion to the economy due to PM 2.5. Given these bleak conditions, India needs to cover a lot of ground to rein in PM 2.5 levels while there is still time. The National Clean Air Program (NCAP) is a deter-

SOME MAJOR STEPS ARE THE NEED OF THE HOUR FOR INDIA. FIRSTLY, IMMEDIATE CURBS ON AMMONIA RELEASE IN FARMS ARE ESSENTIAL, THIS MUST BE FOLLOWED BY A FULL BAN ON REFUSE BURNING

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS

Sir — The 22nd Law Commission of India is poised to submit a report on the feasibility of conducting simultaneous elections in the country and is likely to recommend it for the 2029 elections. The Commission, led by Justice Ritu Raj Awasthi, has diligently worked on this final report since February 2023. The report, destined for submission to the Law Ministry, currently headed by Arjun Meghwal, arrives at a pivotal juncture. It coincides with the government's formation of a high-level committee, under the leadership of former President Ram Nath Kovind, tasked with examining and providing recommendations for simultaneous elections to the Lok Sabha, state assemblies, municipalities, and panchayats, all in the name of 'national interest'. According to reports, there's a possibility that the government may forward the Law Commission's report to the Kovind-led committee for their consideration. The Law Commission is likely to propose synchronized elections within the next five years, with the goal of implementing simultaneous elections by 2029.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

IS BJP ANTICIPATING THE INEVITABLE?

Sir — Is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) sensing the inevitable? If not, then why does the BJP's recent move in Madhya Pradesh (MP) signal the party's intention to contest the elections under collective leadership, with prominent figures from different regions in the fray? In a surprising development that has set political circles abuzz, the BJP has announced its decision to field seven Lok Sabha members, including three union ministers—Narendra Singh Tomar, Prahlad Singh Patel, and Faggan Singh Kulaste, as well as its national general secretary, Kailash Vijayvargiya. One can't help but wonder whether this move signifies that the BJP lacks strong candidates in MP, necessitating the deployment of Lok Sabha members, many of whom owe their electoral success to the Modi wave.

By fielding these seven sitting MPs, the

Dada Saheb Phalke Award for Waheeda



Congratulations to the versatile actor, Waheeda, who, at the age of 85, has earned the prestigious Dada Saheb Phalke (lifetime achievement) award for 2023. Her illustrious acting career spanning five decades, from 1955 to 1991 and then from 2002 to the present, not only showcases her exceptional acting skills but also highlights her endearing, friendly, and controversy-free persona. Beyond her acting prowess, she is a multifaceted personality—a generous philanthropist, a passionate advocate for education, and a dedicated worker for poverty eradication through the Rangade organization. Her cinematic journey has embraced various languages, including Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, and English. Her latest endeavor, "Skater Girl" (2021), is a bilingual

film in Hindi and English, leaving us eagerly anticipating her next project in 2023-2024.

Waheeda has been rightfully honored by the Government of India with prestigious civilian awards such as the Padmashree (1972) and the Padma Bhushan (2011). Her contributions have been multidimensional, collaborating with two generations of iconic families in the film industry, including Raj Kapoor, Amitabh Bachchan, Sunil Dutt, Dharmendra, and many more. One might ask, with which distinguished actor or director did she not collaborate?

She has worked alongside all major heroes and directors of her time, such as Gurudutt ("Pyasa," "Kagaz Ke Phool"), Manoj Kumar ("Aadmi"), Rajendra Kumar ("Kaala Bazaar"), Devanand ("CID," "Guide"), Dilip Kumar ("Ram Aur Shyam"), Dharmendra and Rajesh Khanna ("Khamoshi"), Sunil Dutt and Amitabh Bachchan ("Reshma Aur Shera"). Notably, she even took on a double role in "Man Mandir" (1971). We wish Waheeda, now 85 years old, a life filled with happiness, excellent health, peace, prosperity, and continued progress, along with her family. We eagerly await news of her next movie.

PV Srinivas Sreelekha | Secunderabad

INDIA-CANADA TIES

Sir — The recent discussions by Canada's Defence Minister regarding bolstering ties with India underscore the importance of nurturing strong international partnerships. In a world grappling with numerous challenges, collaboration among nations assumes increasing significance.

Canada and India share democratic values and common interests, making this relationship particularly noteworthy. Enhancing diplomatic, economic, and defense ties between these two nations can yield mutual benefits and contribute to global stability.

Md Maimul Safui | West Bengal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

RESPECT INDIA’S SOVEREIGNTY

Canada must not allow its soil to be used for anti-India activities



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A story of agents executing transnational operations, intelligence agencies sharing crucial information, backchannel diplomatic conversations, political instability and every chapter from a racy spy thriller is playing out for the world audience, with Canada and India in the lead for the past few weeks. In a hurried and perhaps half-baked allegation Canadian PM Justine Trudeau blamed Indian agents for carrying out extra-territorial executions of Canadian citizens.

India was quick to retort with a terse statement, which instead pointed out the long-standing issue of concern between the two countries in the form of Canada allowing Indian separatist groups to operate out of their country. The Indian statement said unequivocally “We have seen and reject the statement of the Canadian Prime Minister in their Parliament, as also the statement by their Foreign Minister. Allegations of the Government of India’s involvement in any act of violence in Canada are absurd and motivated. Similar allegations were made by the Canadian Prime Minister to our Prime Minister and were completely rejected. Such unsubstantiated allegations seek to shift the focus from Khalistan terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. We reject any attempts to connect the Government of India to such developments. We urge the Government of Canada to take prompt and effective legal action against all anti-India elements operating from their soil.”

What is happening in the bilateral relationship is not a recent development but has been brewing for decades. Nearly forty years back India had demanded the extradition of a terrorist from Canada, responsible for one of the worst plane bombings in history, killing everyone on board an Air India flight. The several convicts responsible for the act of terror were never convicted by Canada, despite repeated inputs from India abandoning victims’ families chasing long winding court cases for decades.

The reason Canada allows or even nurtures these anti-India forces on its soil leads through the corridors of domestic politics. Millions of Indians particularly from Punjab make a substantial chunk of the Canadian demography. While most of them earn an honest living and are peace-loving, some notorious elements have managed to sneak into Canada, working through well-oiled semi-government machinery. Over some time, these criminals and terrorists wanted by India, have managed to control important real estate through the Gurudwaras committees. These mafia-controlled gurudwaras also serve as a conduit for fulfilling the immigration dream of thousands of Punjab youth, working with their India handlers across Punjab and several other states of north India. The modus operandi for getting ground force for staging anti-India acts from Canadian soil starts with a letter issued by Indian handlers, about the youth facing discrimination, and persecution due to his religion, in India. This sets the ball rolling for the youth to get an easy Canadian citizenship, on mercy grounds and feeds into domestic political narratives. In the present case too, the trigger was PM Trudeau’s falling political popularity. A few months back he accused China of meddling with domestic politics even as he was trying to warm up the India bilateral, through a trade deal.

Canada understands the rising importance of India in the new global order, especially with China and Russia facing flak. It understands that a powerful, resilient, democratic India is important for a prosperous Indo-Pacific region, which indirectly translates to bringing more prosperity to its citizens. However, the domestic political concerns rise above geopolitics, and retaining the chair as PM seems more important for Trudeau at the moment. It may be argued that several news reports have pointed to US intelligence aid in Canadian allegations against India, however, the US knows which way the wind is blowing.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views are personal)

Regulatory boost to self-sufficiency in energy



UTTAM GUPTA

Modi Government is giving considerable policy support for the exploration of hydrocarbons so that investors can earn assured return on their investments

Delivering the 75th Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set the country a target to achieve self-reliance in energy production by boosting the gas-based economy (besides giving a push to electric mobility and hydrogen production). Modi wants the share of natural gas (NG) in the total energy mix to go up from the current around 6 per cent to 15 per cent.

Currently, India imports 50 per cent of its NG requirement. This is because domestic production is hovering around a low of 28.6 - 34 billion cubic metres (bcm) in 2020-21 to 2021-22 (down from a peak of 52 bcm in 2010-11). There is a dire need to give a massive push to domestic output to meet the target. India has 26 sedimentary basins (SBs) covering an area of 3.4 million sq km that could be searched for hydrocarbon resources. Only six of the SBs are under commercial exploitation; these too are sub-optimally utilized.

Hydrocarbon exploration is a highly capital-intensive and technology-intensive business involving a long-gestation period. It is risk-prone especially when it comes to drilling in deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature (D/UD/HP/HT) fields in offshore areas such as the Krishna-Godavari (KG) basin. However, these areas offer maximum promise in terms of reserves.

Multinational companies (MNCs) such as ExxonMobil, Chevron Total etc. which have the technology and resources can be enthused to take long-term bets in the Indian hydrocarbon sector provided the government offers them an opportunity to earn an attractive return on their investment in a ‘sustained’ basis. This in turn, requires that their efforts in the discovery and development of NG fields don’t face regulatory hurdles leading to the commencement of production within a reasonable time frame and that they can sell the gas ‘freely’ at a ‘remunerative’ price. In all three areas, the MNCs faced impediments in the past. In recent years, the Modi – government has made significant progress in removing these though, a lot more ground remains to be covered. Let us look at the regulatory landscape.

Nearly 50 percent of SB area or 1.73 million sq km lies offshore. Out of this, until recently 0.69 million sq km lay in the prohibited zone (fondly referred to as ‘No go’ area) due to security reasons. Now, the incumbent government has released a 0.67 million sq km sedimentary basin lying offshore. This should give a big boost to exploration and production (E&P) activity.

Until hitherto, E&P firms were getting lease rights for short tenure though extendable by 10 years for gas/oil & gas fields and by five years for oil fields. They had to go to the bureaucrats to seek approval for an extension of the lease which came in the way of undertaking long-term investment commitment.

Now, the government has granted E&P rights over the entire economic life of the allotted fields (this could extend up to 30 years, even beyond depending on the available reserves and the pace of their exploitation) instead of the extant system of allowing extensions. This will enthrone global firms to undertake long-term investment bets as they know for sure in



advance that they will get to operate the field for their entire economic life

The government has passed the Forest (Conservation) Amendment Bill, which says that seismic surveys (it is done in the initial stage to determine evidence of economically viable hydrocarbon resources below the ground) won’t be treated as a non-forest activity. This implies that explorers would be granted prompt access to forest areas, thereby saving time spent on seeking permits.

Under the Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP), also known as the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) launched in 2017, E&P firms are allowed to pick up a block of their choice unlike the earlier New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) (launched in 1999) wherein they had to accept what the government offered. Besides, under OALP, an operator gets a composite license to search for hydrocarbon in whatever form; for instance, if it is ‘shale gas’, she won’t need a separate license for extracting it.

For long, E&P efforts were hamstrung by cumbersome procedures, multiple approvals and bureaucratic red tape. Approvals were needed at every stage viz. preparation of field development plans (FDP) including its revision, and extension of the contract, drilling wells, conducting tests to determine the commercial viability of the field, annual work program (AWP), laying the pipeline, reviewing production and so on. As many as 37 processes and procedures were required to be followed by a firm-awarded block under NELP.

Team Modi has substantially liberalised and de-bureaucratized the approvals. It has identified 22 processes for which self-certification of documents by contractors is accepted. Besides, it has provided for pre-approved clearance of blocks which will substantially cut the time lost in taking approvals. The government is also keen to opt for globally recognised and accepted dispute resolution mechanisms and play-based exploration.

Moreover, the ‘revenue sharing’ model under the OALP (currently in vogue) allows the operator to share an agreed percentage of the revenue with the Government of India (GOI) unlike the production sharing contracts (PSC) under erstwhile NELP wherein she could fully recover the cost incurred in exploration and development of the field before sharing profits with the GOI. The former does away with an additional layer of approval which was intrinsic to the latter wherein the costs incurred at every stage were subject to official scrutiny.


Coming to the selling of NG and realisation therefrom, in respect of gas from fields given under HELP/OALP, the operators are allowed freedom of pricing and marketing. This is a big positive for E&P firms that are being allotted fields under this policy. Furthermore, supplies from the so-called marginal fields (there are a total of 149) previously with the central PSUs viz. ONGC and OIL auctioned to private entities during 2020/21 are also eligible for freedom of pricing.

However, supplies from the so-called Legacy fields which account for the bulk of the current gas supply are subject to government control over price as well as the marketing of the produce. The Legacy staff includes fields given to ONGC/OIL on a ‘nomination’ basis, those given under NELP and pre-NELP blocks. There are two price ceilings.

One, call it ‘normal’ price. Based on the recommendations of the Kirit Parikh committee and in force from April 1, 2023, this price expressed on a per million British thermal units (Btu) basis is arrived at by taking 10 per cent of the monthly average of the Indian crude basket in the preceding month and notified every month. The price thus calculated is subject to a price band of US\$4-6.50 per Btu.

Second, there is a ‘premium’ price applicable to the difficult fields. These are deep/ultra-deep and high-pressure/high-temperature fields (the high-profile KG-D6 operated by Reliance Industries and neighbouring KG-DWN-98/2 operated by ONGC fall in this category). Technically though the price of NG flowing from these fields is market-determined, this is subject to a ceiling linked to the prices of alternate fuels, viz., fuel oil, naphtha and imported LNG.

Even as the committee has recommended de-regulation of difficult gas fields’ price by January 1, 2026, and that of normal price by January 1, 2027, the government is silent on this. Having substantially liberalized the regulatory space, besides removing the remaining hurdles, Modi needs to take the next logical step of unshackling marketing and pricing for supplies from the Legacy fields.



TEAM MODI HAS IDENTIFIED 22 PROCESSES FOR WHICH SELF-CERTIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS BY CONTRACTORS IS ACCEPTED

(The writer is a Policy Analyst, views are personal)

Save that beating heart with positive vibes

Cardiovascular disease (CVD) is one of the major causes of mortality. On this World Heart Day let us resolve to correct our lifestyle, and adopt positivity to be from heart ailments

Roughly more than 17 Million people die each year from cardiovascular diseases, an estimated 32% of all deaths worldwide. Heart Attack is rising rather steeply in our country especially among young people in their 20s & 30s. To a very large extent, heart attack is self-inflicted by our faulty lifestyle, which we adopt right from childhood. Genetics definitely play a role but it can be modified by lifestyle optimisation.

The prevalence of Coronary Artery Disease in adults in India in the urban population is 14 per cent, while in the rural population, it is 8 per cent. One should not have a heart attack, especially when he or she is in their prime years. In fact, we are the cause and we are the cure of



HK CHOPRA

(The writer is chief cardiologist, Medanta Moolchand heart Institute, New Delhi; views are personal)

this malady of a premature heart attack at a young age. A healthy heart is an expression of our own perceptions, thoughts, interpretations and choice-making. Enhancing awareness about prevention and timely prediction and treatment of heart attack is the only solution to reducing the rising menace of heart attack in our country. Women are fortunate to have a lower prevalence of coronary artery disease before the age of 45 i.e. menopause. After menopause, the prevalence of CAD is the same as in men. Over 25 million people die of Heart Attacks in our country every year. Out of these, 16 lakh die within an hour of a Heart Attack before even medical aid is available.

While the mortality rate from cardiovascular disease (CVD) has decreased by 60% in Japan and Finland, 50% in the USA, Canada and Australia and 25% in Europe, according to WHO projections, there will be a significant rise in mortality from CVD in India. The female population is at greater risk because metabolic syndrome The risk is significantly high in India.

Prevention of coronary artery disease must begin earlier especially at a young age before being victimised by a faulty lifestyle including erratic eating habits, drinking, smoking, high levels of stressful life with lack of sleep and burning both ends of the candle at the same time, coupled with a sedentary lifestyle, uncontrolled hypertension, dyslipidemia and diabetes

which harden the arteries of the heart with increase tendency for clotting all of which establish the bedrock of heart disease.

The theme of World Heart Day this year is:

- Use your Heart to Beat CVD (Cardiovascular Disease)
- Work with your Heart, Know your risk factors
- Have Coordinated Efforts to improve your own Lifestyle and Diet
- Motivate yourself and others to reduce CVD Risks
- One Heart, One Home, One World
- Use your Heart to “Make Perfect Choices for a Healthy Heart for ourselves, our family, our community, our corporate, our society, our nation and the

world

The four sutras for an optimal Healthy Heart are love, compassion, peace and harmony” to make perfect choices for a healthy heart and beat CVD. These sutras (Suture or stitch) are possible through the regular practice of yoga, meditation and perfect lifestyle optimization, they connect the heart with the consciousness through a network of nerve fibres of the autonomic nervous system (Heart Plexuses) which are chemically mediated, nurtured with human values release natural opiates: endorphins, serotonin, dopamine acetylcholine, oxytocin and nitric oxide which preserve the endothelial functions, thereby maintaining the patency of coronary arteries and the har-

monious friendly biochemical environment within the blood vessel the heart thus remains healthy.

If kindness, compassion, love, peace and harmony are missing with cynical behaviour and hostility, then the heart is undernourished and stressed and the physiology changes to pathology. Fear, jealousy, hatred, anger, greed, lurking grief, vengeance, vindictiveness, bigotry, arrogance, greed, lust, ego and other negative emotions release jittery molecules (Chemicals) which comprise epinephrine, norepinephrine and cortisol which produce coronary artery diseases, alter the endothelial functions, agitate the platelets, oxidise Low-Density Lipoproteins (LDL). They may enhance the tendency of a vulnerable

plaque in the coronary artery to rupture, erode and ulcerate, thereby enhancing aggregation of platelets and enhancing thrombus (clot) formation thus leading to angina, acute Coronary Syndrome, Heart Attack, and even sudden Cardiac Death and Brain Attack. Just one fit of anger or negative stress can produce a massive heart attack

Emotions of love, compassion, peace and harmony are the most powerful sutras to have a healthy heart and may help in the prevention, regression and reversal of coronary artery diseases. This is possible by practicing perfect choices, and regular practice of meditation and yoga. Thus, the “Health of the Heart” is a matter of your own choice, and not a matter of chance.

4 graft cases against Nawaz Sharif set to be reopened

PTI ■ LAHORE

Pakistan's anti-graft body is reopening at least four corruption cases against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif as he is scheduled to return to the country next month, ending four years of self-exile in the United Kingdom, an official said on Thursday.

The 73-year-old Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supremo is scheduled to return to Pakistan from London on October 21 to lead the party's election campaign. Nawaz left the country in November 2019 on medical grounds after the Lahore High Court granted him bail for four weeks. He was serving a seven-year imprisonment in the Al-Azizia Mills corruption case at Kot Lakhpat Jail Lahore.

On arrival in Lahore, his party says he will address a rally at Minar-i-Pakistan where he will give a road map to steer the country out of the economic crisis, governance problems and other issues the country is facing today. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the light of a Supreme Court

ruling which struck down amendments made to the accountability laws by the previous Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) government led by Nawaz's younger brother Shehbaz Sharif, is reopening the four pending probes against Nawaz. The cases are related to illegal plots and land allotment, dubious transfer of shares of his sugar mills and Toshakhana (national treasury gifts).

"Nawaz Sharif being chief minister of Punjab province in 1986 had allotted plots in Lahore to several people by misusing his authority. He is accused of illegal construction of several kilometres of road to his house in Jati Umra Raiwind, Lahore, in 1998 when he was prime minister in violation of rules. "The third case is related to the transfer of shares in 'illegal' manners in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case which is owned by Nawaz Sharif and his family members. In this case, his daughter Maryam Nawaz is also accused of being a major beneficiary," an official privy to the development told PTI on Thursday.

The fourth is related to the



Toshakhana case in which he is accused of taking luxurious vehicles from the national treasury in violation of rules, he said. Besides these cases, Nawaz will have to face the case related to his conviction.

Meanwhile, Nawaz's close aide and senior PML-N leader Mian Javed Latif said the party has stopped "demanding accountability of former army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa and former ISI head Gen Faiz Hameed" for conspiring against Nawaz to topple his government in 2017.

"The PML-N doesn't want accountability of Gen Bajwa and Gen Hameed but only those characters and facilitators involved in May 9 events and

mutiny against the head (Army Chief Gen Asim Munir) of the institution," he said.

Latif was referring to attacks on military installations following the arrest of Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) chief Imran Khan in May.

On September 18, Nawaz demanded "strict accountability" of Gen Bajwa, Gen Hameed and chief justices — Asif Khosa and Saqib Nisar — while addressing the party's ticket holders in Lahore via video link from London.

He had hinted at trying them under treason charges if his party returned to power in the upcoming elections, scheduled early next year.

Nawaz's demand for strict accountability left many in the party in a precarious position as the leaders became wary of a possible backlash from the military establishment if he continued with such statements. Sources told PTI that Nawaz backtracked from demanding accountability of army generals after a "strong message" was conveyed to him through his younger brother Shehbaz Sharif.

SL to focus on IMF recommendations to secure second tranche of bailout package

Colombo (PTI): With the IMF saying that Sri Lanka's full economic recovery is not yet assured, the government on Thursday said it will focus on the recommendations of the global lender and will continue discussions with it to reach a staff-level agreement for the second tranche of the bailout package.

In March this year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved a 48-month, USD 2.9 billion extended arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to support Sri Lanka's economic policies and reforms.

"We have to take note of points made on tax administration, granting of tax relief and eliminating tax evasion," said State Minister of Finance, Ranjith Siyambalapitiya.

We are working with a contracted economy and a population hit by economic hardships," Siyambalapitiya said. Sri Lanka was hit by its worst economic crisis in history when its foreign exchange reserves fell to a critical low and the public came out on the streets to protest the shortage of fuel, fertilisers and essential commodities. On Wednesday, it emerged that Lanka's second tranche of the bailout package will likely be delayed given the inconclusive nature of the cash-strapped nation's external debt restructuring.

The debt-ridden nation was banking on the release of the second tranche of around USD 330 million at the end of the review as stated by Siyambalapitiya last week.

However, the IMF in the review said more discussions were needed to reach the next staff-level agreement on the external debt restructuring. The Washington-based global lender, while noting Sri Lanka's commendable progress in implementing difficult reforms, said "the full recovery of the economy was not yet assured." It stressed the need to strengthen tax administration, remove tax exemptions, and actively eliminate tax evasion.

The IMF had originally set a September deadline for Sri Lanka to restructure its external debt. The completion of negotiations with external creditors was to culminate with the first review.

American soldier who crossed into N Korea returns to US

AP ■ SAN ANTONIO

The American soldier who sprinted into North Korea across the heavily fortified border between the Koreas more than two months ago arrived back in the US early Thursday, video appeared to show.

North Korea abruptly announced Wednesday that it would expel Pvt Travis King. His return was organised with the help of ally Sweden and rival China, according to the White House.

While officials have said King, 23, is in good health and the immediate focus will be on caring for him and reintegrating him into US society, his troubles are likely far from over. King, who had served in South Korea, ran into the North while on a civilian tour of a border village on July 18, becoming the first American confirmed to be detained in the isolated country in nearly five years. At the time, he was supposed to be heading to Fort Bliss, Texas, following his release from prison in South Korea on an assault conviction.

He has been declared AWOL from the Army. In

many cases, someone who is AWOL for more than a month can automatically be considered a deserter.

Punishment for going AWOL or desertion can vary, and it depends in part on whether the service member voluntarily returned or was apprehended. King's handover by the North Koreans makes that more complicated.

Video aired Thursday by a Texas news station appeared to show King walking off a plane in San Antonio. Dressed in a dark top and pants, he could be seen speaking briefly with people waiting on the tarmac. He shook hands with one before being led into a building.

Emails seeking comment were sent to Lackland Air Force Base in Texas, the Air Force and the Army.

Officials earlier said he would be taken to Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston. He is expected to undergo psychological assessments and debriefings, and he will also get a chance to meet with family.

He will be in military custody throughout the process since his legal situation is complicated.

Many questions remain about King's case, including why he fled in the first place and why the North — which has tense relations with Washington over Pyongyang's nuclear programme, support for Russia's war in Ukraine and other issues — agreed to turn him over.

The White House has not addressed North Korean state media reports that King fled because of his dismay about racial discrimination and inequality in the military and US society.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported that King made such complaints but verifying that is impossible. On Wednesday, Swedish officials took King to the Chinese border, where he was met by US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns, the Swedish ambassador to China, and at least one US Defence Department official.

He was then flown to a US military base in South Korea before heading to the US.

His detention was relatively short by North Korean standards.

Pakistan CJ: If Faizabad verdict was implemented, serious incidents would not have happened later

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa Thursday said if his verdict against a radical Islamist group and others for involvement in the Faizabad sit-in was implemented, the serious incidents could have been prevented, as he adjourned the hearing on a set of pleas challenging the judgment in the case till November 1.

A three-member bench led by Chief Justice Isa and comprising Justices Aminuddin Khan and Athar Minallah was hearing a set of pleas challenging the Supreme Court's verdict in the Faizabad sit-in case, wherein intelligence agencies were directed not to exceed their constitutional mandates.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and others had heavily criticized the judgment and subsequently review pleas were filed against the verdict by

the PTI, the Ministry of Defence, the Intelligence Bureau, the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority, the Election Commission of Pakistan, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement party, ex-interior minister Sheikh Rashid and Ijazul Haq, son of former military dictator Zia-ul Haq.

Isa, who was a member of the three-member bench that issued the 2019 verdict, expressed annoyance after multiple petitioners seeking a review of the apex court's 2019 verdict against the Faizabad sit-in decided to withdraw their pleas.

The chief justice observed that the challengers in their pleas had stated that the verdict was full of flaws, wondering why they were withdrawing pleas, and asked "why is everyone so afraid to speak the truth?"

Attorney-General Mansoor

Usman Awan, who was representing the federal government, assured the court that the decisions of the Faizabad judgement would be implemented but the chief justice was not amused.

"If this verdict was implemented at that time, then serious incidents would not have taken place later," the chief justice said, in an apparent reference to the Jaranwala incident where a mob of radical Islamists vandalised 22 churches and set scores of Christian houses on fire over allegations of blasphemy. There were no casualties but it was one of the most destructive attacks on Christians in the Muslim-majority country.

Apparently, unable to satisfy the queries by the bench, Sheikh Rashid's counsel urged the court to adjourn the hearing, which was accepted and the case adjourned till

November 1. However, the court directed the respondents' counsels to submit a written response by October 27.

The original judgement was authored by Justice Isa, instructing the defence ministry and the tri-services chiefs to penalise personnel under their command who were found to have violated their oath. It had also directed the federal government to monitor those advocating hate, extremism and terrorism and prosecute them in accordance with the law.

The TLP sit-it went for about 20 days and had paralysed life in both Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The government and the powerful establishment were so angry due to the decision that a case of alleged corruption was launched against Justice Isa and effort were made to remove him from office.

The Chinese government has given no reason for his removal, or why both he and Li suddenly stopped making public appearances. There is no indication, at least so far, that their disappearances signal a change in China's foreign or defence policies.

The disappearance of officials and other people without explanation is not uncommon in China and often followed months later by the announcement of criminal charges against the person. The disappearance of two sitting ministers in rapid succession, though, is unusual.

The American ambassador to Japan, Rahm Emanuel, tweeted earlier this month that Chinese President Xi Jinping's Cabinet lineup "is now resembling Agatha Christie's novel And Then There Were None".

Wu, the defence ministry spokesperson, played down concerns expressed by US officials that the two countries don't have clear military-to-

China's defence min missing in action for a month

AP ■ BEIJING

A Chinese Defence Ministry spokesperson said Thursday that he was "not aware of the situation" in the ministry's first public comments on the disappearance of the defence minister from public view about one month ago.

Senior Col Wu Qian, the director of the ministry's information office, gave only a one-sentence response when asked at a monthly news conference whether Li Shangfu is under investigation for corruption and if he is still the defense minister. "I'm not aware of the situation you mentioned," Wu said in response to a question from a foreign news outlet.

Li, who became defence minister when a new Cabinet was named in March, hasn't been seen since giving a speech on August 29. He is the second senior official to disappear this year, following former Foreign Minister Qin Gang, who was removed from office in July.

Taiwan launches its first domestically made submarine for testing

AP ■ KAOHSIUNG

Taiwan's president launched the island's first domestically made submarine for testing Thursday at a port in Kaohsiung.

The submarine, if successful in its tests, will be a major breakthrough for Taiwan in shipbuilding and design.

"In the past, a domestic-made submarine was considered impossible, but today a submarine designed and built by our countrymen is in front of you," President Tsai Ing-wen said at the launch ceremony.

"Building a submarine is the concrete realization of our resolution to protect our country. Submarines are an important piece of equipment for the Taiwan navy to develop asymmetric combat power in terms of strategy and tactics," she said. The US has been pushing Taiwan to develop asymmetric warfare strategies by investing

in smaller and lighter weapons such as the reduced-size submarine. The process was "torturous," said Cheng Wen-lon, head of Taiwan's CSBC Corp, which led the construction of the submarine. "Although we have worked quietly during the past several years, it doesn't mean the process was very smooth," he said at the ceremony held in CSBC's shipyard.

After seven years of design and construction, the prototype will begin tests in the harbour before heading to the ocean. The submarine is named Hai Kun after a fish in Chinese mythology called kun with legendary proportions.

It will only be handed over to the military after passing both its harbour and ocean-faring tests. Taiwan plans to build another submarine if successful, with both to be deployed by 2027, according to the semi-official Central News Agency.

N Korean leader urges greater nuclear weapons production in response to a 'new Cold War'

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un called for an exponential increase in production of nuclear weapons and for his country to play a larger role in a coalition of nations confronting the United States in a "new Cold War," state media said Thursday.

The Korean Central News Agency said Kim made the comments during a two-day session of the country's rubber-stamp parliament which amended the constitution to include his policy of expanding the country's nuclear weapons programme. The Supreme People's Assembly's session on Tuesday and Wednesday came after Kim travelled to Russia's Far East this month to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin and visit military and technology sites.

The trip sparked Western concerns about a possible arms alliance in which North Korea

would supply Putin with badly needed munitions to fuel his war on Ukraine in exchange for economic aid and advanced Russian technologies to enhance North Korea's nuclear and missile systems.

As North Korea slowly ends its pandemic lockdown, Kim has been actively boosting his partnerships with Moscow and Beijing as he attempts to break out of diplomatic isolation and join a united front against Washington. He has described the world as entering a "new Cold War" and that North Korea should advance its nuclear capabilities in response.

KCNA's reports on Kim's comments came a day after North Korea confirmed the release of US Army Pvt Travis King, who is now being flown back to America, two months after he sprinted across the heavily fortified border into the North. King's relatively swift expulsion defied speculation that North Korea might drag

out his detention to squeeze concessions from the United States, and possibly reflected the North's disinterest in diplomacy with Washington.

KCNA said members of the assembly gave unanimous approval to a new clause in the constitution to "ensure the country's right to existence and development, deter war and protect regional and global peace by rapidly developing nuclear weapons to a higher level."

North Korea's "nuclear force-building policy has been made permanent as the basic law of the state, which no one is allowed to flout with anything," Kim said in a speech at the assembly. He stressed the need to "push ahead with the work for exponentially boosting the production of nuclear weapons and diversifying the nuclear strike means," KCNA said. Kim pointed to what he described as a growing threat posed by a hostile United States and its expanding mili-

tary cooperation with South Korea and Japan, accusing them of creating the "Asian version of NATO, the root cause of war and aggression."

"This is just the worst actual threat, not threatening rhetoric or an imaginary entity," he said. Kim urged his diplomats to "further promote solidarity with the nations standing against the US and the West's strategy for hegemony." South Korea's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, said the North Korean constitutional amendment confirms Kim's unwillingness to relinquish his nuclear weapons program and his unwavering commitment to advancing that arsenal.

It said in a statement that South Korea will continue to expand its military cooperation with the US and Japan and work closer with other international partners to increase pressure on North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions.



Living god Ganesh is carried on a chariot during Indra Jatra, a festival that marks the end of the rainy season, in Kathmandu, Nepal, Thursday, Sept. 28, 2023. According to a local myth, the god of rain Indra once disguised himself as a human to collect night jasmine for his mother but was captured by locals. In exchange for his release, it was agreed that the rain would be stopped and the souls of those departed in that year ascend to heaven.

AP/PTI

Israel SC hears challenge to law that makes it harder to remove Netanyahu

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's Supreme Court on Thursday was hearing a challenge to a law that makes it harder to remove a sitting prime minister, which critics say is designed to protect Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who has been working to reshape the justice system while he is on trial for alleged corruption.

The hearing is part of several pivotal court challenges against a proposed package of legislation and government steps meant to alter the country's justice system. It comes after months of turmoil in Israel over the plan and deepens a rift between Netanyahu's government and the judiciary, which

it wants to weaken despite unprecedented opposition.

Thursday's hearing on the law took place in front of an expanded 11-judge panel, underscoring the importance of the deliberations.

Netanyahu's governing coalition - Israel's most religious and nationalist ever - passed an amendment known as the "incapacitation law" in March which allows a prime minister to be deemed unfit to rule only for medical or mental health reasons. Under the amendment, only the prime minister or the government has the power to determine a leader's unfitness.

The previous version of the law was vague about both the circumstances in which a prime minister could be

deemed unfit, as well as who had the authority to declare it. But experts say the amendment expressly strips the attorney general, who historically wields the power to declare a prime minister unfit for office, of the ability to do so. Critics say the law protects Netanyahu from being deemed unfit for office over claims that he violated a conflict of interest agreement by dealing with the legal overhaul while on trial for corruption charges. They also say the law is tailor-made for Netanyahu and encourages corruption.

Based on those criticisms, Thursday's hearing is focusing on whether the law should come into effect after the next national elections and

not immediately, so that it isn't interpreted as a personalised law. A ruling is expected by January.

"We are trying to repeal the undemocratic and unconstitutional statute which allowed an unfit and improper prime minister to remain in his position. Actually, they built him a kind of a golden cage (so) that he will be protected from justice," said Eliad Shraga, chairman of the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, one of the groups that is challenging the amendment.

Ahead of the hearing, dozens of protesters gathered outside Netanyahu's private residence in Jerusalem, chanting "democracy," while his allies defended the law.

Simcha Rothman, a main driver of the overhaul, told Israeli Army Radio that the court's decision to hear the case was harmful to Israeli democracy and challenging the law was akin to throwing out the results of a legitimate election.

"The moment the court determines the laws, then it is also the legislative branch, the judiciary and the executive branch," he said. "This is an undemocratic reality."

The government wants to weaken the Supreme Court and limit judicial oversight on its decisions, saying it wants to return power to elected lawmakers and away from what it sees as a liberal-leaning, interventionist justice system. The first major piece

of the overhaul was passed in July and an unprecedented 15-judge panel began hearing arguments against it earlier this month.

The drive to reshape Israel's justice system comes as Netanyahu's trial for alleged corruption is ongoing. He is charged with fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases involving influential media moguls and wealthy associates. He denies wrongdoing, seeing the charges as part of a "witch-hunt" against him orchestrated by a hostile media and a biased justice system.

Experts and legal officials say a conflict of interest arrangement struck after Netanyahu was indicted is

meant to limit his involvement in judicial changes. After the incapacitation law was passed, Netanyahu said his hands were no longer tied and that he was taking a more active role in the legal changes underway.

That sparked a rebuke from Attorney General Gali Baharav-Miara, who said Netanyahu's remarks and any further actions were "completely illegal and in conflict of interest."

Critics say Netanyahu and his government are working to upend the country's delicate system of checks and balances and setting Israel on a path toward autocracy.

The overhaul has plunged Israel into one of its worst domestic crises, deepening

longstanding societal divisions between those who want Israel to be a Western-facing liberal democracy and those who want to emphasize the country's more conservative Jewish character.

Netanyahu has moved forward with the overhaul despite a wave of opposition from a broad swath of Israeli society. Top legal officials, leading economists and the country's booming tech sector have all spoken out against the judicial changes, which have sparked opposition from hundreds of military reservists, who have said they will not serve so long as the overhaul remains on the table. Tens of thousands of people have protested every Saturday for the last nine months.

Ramaswamy calls for ending birthright citizenship in US

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

Continuing his proposals of harsh policy changes, Indian-American presidential aspirant Vivek Ramaswamy, in his second Republican presidential debate, has said he would favour ending birthright citizenship for children of illegal immigrants in the US. The second Republican debate of the 2024 election cycle which was held at Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California on Wednesday, saw Ramaswamy sharing the stage with six other candidates including Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and former United Nations Ambassador Nikki Haley.

When asked “what legal premise” he would use to expel undocumented immigrants and their American-born children from the country, Ramaswamy, the son of Indian immigrants, resurrected a 2015 proposal of ending birthright citizenship from then-candidate Donald Trump, reported the Washington Post on Wednesday.

The first section of the citizenship clause of the US Constitution’s 14th Amendment says, “All persons born or naturalised in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

Although most agree with the long-held tradition that it grants citizenship to those born on US soil, some legal scholars argue that the phrase “and subject to the jurisdiction thereof” seems to give the government some leeway to restrict the right, just as other constitutional principles can be limited, the report said.

Because of this, he argued, children of undocumented immigrants born in the United States should not be granted citizenship, because their parents “broke the law” to be in the country.

Ramaswamy, 38, also supported his opponents onstage and acknowledged other mea-

asures such as militarisation of the southern border, defunding “sanctuary cities,” and an end to foreign aid to Mexico and Central America.

He said he would go a “step further” by ending “birthright citizenship for the kids of illegal immigrants in this country.”

A second-generation Indian-American, Ramaswamy, had earlier criticised the H-1B visa programme saying the current “lottery” system needs to be “gutted” and replaced with a “meritocratic” skill-based immigration scheme to match the needs of the US.

The H-1B visa, much sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

His stance on H-1B visas is also reminiscent of the 2016 Trump campaign, when then-candidate Donald Trump, who has also hired a number of foreign workers under H-1B visas for his businesses, took a headline stance on these foreign workers before later softening his rhetoric.

It is to be noted that Ramaswamy himself has used the H-1B visa programme 29 times.

According to Politico, from 2018 through 2023, US Citizenship and Immigration Services approved 29 applications for Ramaswamy’s former company, Roivant Sciences, to hire employees under H-1B visas.

Ramaswamy, who was addressed as “Trump’s heir apparent” by Time Magazine has garnered quite an attention after his maiden Republican presidential primary debate held on August 23.

The first poll after the debate said that 28 per cent of the 504 respondents said that Ramaswamy performed the best. Ramaswamy’s harsh proposals have helped him stand out in the crowded primary field, according to US media reports.

Haley slams Vivek



Washington (PTI): Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley has slammed her fellow Indian-American rival in the Republican primary race Vivek Ramaswamy for joining Chinese-owned TikTok, saying “every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber.”

Haley, the former two-term Governor from South Carolina and the former US Ambassador to the UN, was very critical of the 38-year-old biotech entrepreneur Ramaswamy and the two entered into a war of words during the second Republican presidential primary debate at Reagan Library in Simi Valley in California on Wednesday.

“Every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber. This is infuriating because TikTok is one of the most dangerous social media apps that we could have. And..honestly, every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber for what you say,” Haley said.

“One hundred and fifty million people are on TikTok. That means they can get your contacts, they can get your financial information, they can get your emails, they can get your text messages, they can get all of these things. China knows exactly what they’re doing,” she said.

In February, Haley said under her leadership, “Communist China will end up on the ash heap of history.”

“We can’t trust you. We can’t have TikTok in our kids’ lives,” Haley told Ramaswamy.

Ramaswamy fought back. “I think we will be better served as a Republican party if we are not sitting here hurling personal insults and actually have a legitimate debate about policy following Reagan’s example and in his honour,” he said.

Haley, 51, jumped in when Ramaswamy was responding to a question about him joining TikTok, a social media site that has been banned by many countries, including India.

Asked about his move to join the video-sharing app TikTok, despite it being banned on government-issued devices due to concerns about its parent company’s ties to the

Chinese government, Ramaswamy said, “Part of how we win elections is reaching the next generation of young Americans where we are.”

Kids under 16 should not be on “addictive social media,” Ramaswamy said, but “we’re only going to ever get to declaring independence from China, which I favour if we actually win.”

“This is infuriating because TikTok is one of the most dangerous social media apps that we could have. And..honestly, every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber for what you say,” Haley said.

“One hundred and fifty million people are on TikTok. That means they can get your contacts, they can get your financial information, they can get your emails, they can get your text messages, they can get all of these things. China knows exactly what they’re doing,” she said.

In February, Haley said under her leadership, “Communist China will end up on the ash heap of history.”

“We can’t trust you. We can’t have TikTok in our kids’ lives,” Haley told Ramaswamy.

Ramaswamy fought back. “I think we will be better served as a Republican party if we are not sitting here hurling personal insults and actually have a legitimate debate about policy following Reagan’s example and in his honour,” he said.

NATO’s secy-gen meets with Zelenskyy

AP ■ KYIV

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss the status of the war and needs of troops on Thursday, the day after Russia accused Ukraine’s Western allies of helping plan and conduct last week’s missile strike on the Black Sea Fleet’s headquarters on the annexed Crimean Peninsula.

Zelenskyy said Stoltenberg agreed to make efforts to get NATO members to help provide additional air defense systems to protect Ukraine’s power plants and energy infrastructure that were badly damaged in relentless and deadly attacks by Russia last winter. He also reminded the secretary-general of the persistent attacks that often strike civilian areas, including 40 drone attacks overnight. “In the face of such intense attacks against Ukrainians, against our cities, our ports, which are crucial for



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, left, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy talk during their meeting in Kyiv, Ukraine, Thursday.

global food security, we need a corresponding intensity of pressure on Russia and a strengthening of our air defense,” Zelenskyy said. “The world must see how Russia is losing dearly so that our shared values ultimately prevail.”

Stoltenberg said that NATO has contracts for 2.4 billion euros (\$2.5 billion) in

ammunition for Ukraine, including 155 mm Howitzer shells, anti-tank guided missiles and tank ammunition.

“The stronger Ukraine becomes, the closer we become to ending Russia’s aggression,” Stoltenberg said. “Russia could lay down arms and end its war today. Ukraine doesn’t have that option. Ukraine’s surren-

Half of Nagorno-Karabakh’s population has fled: Officials

AP ■ YEREVAN (ARMENIA)

The separatist government of Nagorno-Karabakh announced Thursday that it will dissolve itself and the unrecognized republic will cease to exist by the end of the year, and Armenian officials said more than half of the population has already fled.

That is after Azerbaijan carried out a lightning offensive to reclaim full control over its breakaway region and demanded that Armenian troops in Nagorno-Karabakh lay down their weapons and the separatist government dissolve itself.

A decree to that effect was signed by the region’s separatist President Samvel Shakhramanyan. The document cited an agreement reached last week to end the fighting under which Azerbaijan will allow the “free, voluntary and unhindered movement” of Nagorno-Karabakh residents and disarm troops in Armenia in exchange.

according to Armenian officials.

The massive exodus began on Sunday evening, and the only road linking Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia quickly filled up with cars that created an hourslong traffic jam.

On Monday night, a fuel reservoir exploded at a gas station where people seeking to leave were lining up for gas that due to the blockade had been in short supply. At least 68 people were killed and nearly 300 injured, with over 100 more still considered missing.

It isn’t immediately clear if any of the ethnic Armenians that have populated the region will remain there. Shakhramanyan’s decree on Thursday urged Nagorno-Karabakh’s population - including those who left - “to familiarize themselves with the conditions of reintegration offered by the Republic of Azerbaijan, in order to then make an individual decision about the possibility of staying in (or returning to) Nagorno-Karabakh.”

der would not mean peace. It would mean brutal Russian occupation. Peace at any price would be no peace at all.”

On Wednesday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova had said the attack on the Black Sea Fleet headquarters in Crimea had been coordinated with the help of US and UK security agencies, and that NATO satellites and reconnaissance planes also played a role.

Ukraine said without providing supporting evidence that the attack had killed 34 officers and wounded 105 others. But it also claimed to have killed the fleet’s commander, Adm Viktor Sokolov, who was shown on Russian state television on Wednesday speaking with reporters in the Black Sea city of Sevastopol.

Unconfirmed news reports said Storm Shadow missiles provided to Ukraine by the UK and France were used in the attack on the Russian navy installation.

‘Australian lawmakers being utilized by separatists’

Canberra (AP): China’s ambassador to Australia on Thursday criticised Australian politicians who visit Taiwan, saying they are being utilized by separatists on the self-governing island.

Ambassador Xiao Qian was commenting in Sydney after an Australian parliamentary delegation visited Taiwan this week, and as a former prime minister plans to deliver a speech in Taipei next month. China considers Taiwan to be part of its territory.

Xiao said Australian parliamentarians and former prime ministers who visit Taiwan “carry political significance.”

“It might be easily utilized by the political forces in Taiwan for their independent forces movement, for their secession movement, and I don’t want to see that happen,” Xiao told reporters.

“I hope they will stick to the one-China policy” in words and indeed, refrain from engaging with Taiwan in whichever form or capacity so that they will not be politically utilized by people in the island with political motives,” Xiao said. The “one-China policy” holds that the Communist Party is the government of China and Taiwan is a part of the country. The Chinese government on Wednesday accused Taiwan’s governing party of seeking independence, a day after President Tsai Ing-wen lobbied for Australia’s support in joining a regional trade pact during a meeting with six visiting Australian lawmakers. Former Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison plans to speak at the Yushan Forum in Taipei from Oct. 11 to 12, which focuses on Taiwan’s cooperation with neighboring countries.

Australia’s relationship with China plummeted under Morrison’s four-year rule, which ended when his conservative coalition government was defeated by the center-left Labor Party in elections last year.

Trudeau apologises for recognition of Nazi war veteran

Toronto (AP): Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologised Wednesday for Parliament’s recognition of a man who fought alongside the Nazis during last week’s address by Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Trudeau said the speaker of the House of Commons, who resigned Tuesday, was “solely responsible” for the invitation and recognition of the man but said it was a mistake that has deeply embarrassed Parliament and Canada. “All of us who were in the House on Friday regret deeply having stood and clapped, even though we did so unaware of the context,” Trudeau said before he entering the House of Commons. “It was a horrendous violation of the memory of the millions of people who died in the Holocaust, and was deeply, deeply painful for Jewish people.” Trudeau repeated the apology in Parliament.

Just after Zelenskyy delivered an address in the House of Commons on Friday, Canadian lawmakers gave 98-year-old Yaroslav Hunka a standing ovation when Speaker Anthony Rota drew attention to him. Rota introduced Hunka as a war hero who fought for the First Ukrainian Division.

Observers over the weekend began to publicize the fact that the First Ukrainian Division also was known as the Waffen-SS Galicia Division, or the SS 14th Waffen Division, a voluntary unit that was under the command of the Nazis.

“It is extremely troubling to think that this egregious error is being politicised by Russia, and its supporters, to provide false propaganda about what Ukraine is fighting for,” Trudeau said. In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier this week that the standing ovation for Hunka was “outrageous,” and he called it the result of a “sloppy attitude” toward remembering the Nazi regime. Russian President Vladimir Putin has painted his enemies in Ukraine as “neo-Nazis,” although Zelenskyy is Jewish and lost relatives in the Holocaust.

Violence continues in Sweden, 3 killed

Stockholm (AP): Three people were killed overnight in separate incidents in Sweden as deadly violence linked to a feud between criminal gangs escalated. Late Wednesday, an 18-year-old man was shot dead in a Stockholm suburb.

Hours later, a man was killed and another was wounded in a shooting in Jordbro, south of the Swedish capital. Early Thursday a woman in her 20s died in an explosion in Uppsala, west of Stockholm. The blast, which damaged five houses, is being treated by the police as a murder. Swedish media said the woman who died likely was not the target.

Swedish broadcaster SVT noted that the two fatal shootings brings the death toll from gun violence in September to

11, making it the deadliest month for shootings since police started keeping statistics in 2016.

It was not known whether the shootings or the blast were related to each other but Swedish media said at least two of the three events were somehow connected to a feud between criminal gangs, a growing problem in Sweden with drive-by shootings and bombings.

Two gangs — one led by a Swedish-Turkish dual national who lives in Turkey, the other by his former lieutenant — are reportedly fighting over drugs and weapons.

Three people have been detained, suspected of complicity in the fatal shooting in Jordbro.

Russia accuses US of promoting ties between Israel and Arabs

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

Russia accused the United States on Wednesday of promoting Israel’s normalisation of relations with Arab nations and circumventing the Arab Peace Initiative launched by Saudi Arabia in 2002, which calls for a settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before any diplomatic recognition of Israel.

The statement by Russia’s UN Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia at the UN Security Council’s monthly meeting on the Mideast also implicitly criticised Saudi Arabia — without naming it — for moving toward establishing diplomatic relations with Israel while taking “aggressive illegal actions”

including an “unprecedented” expansion of settlements on territory that is supposed to be part of an independent Palestinian state.

Nebenzia said US efforts to normalize Arab-Israeli relations at a time that the “de facto” international legal framework for an Israeli-Palestinian peace settlement is being dismantled not only circumvents the “logic” of the Arab Peace Initiative, but it stymies “any prospects for reviving direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis” to achieve peace and a long-sought two-state solution to their decades-old conflict.

The council meeting took place a day after Saudi Arabia’s newly appointed envoy to the Palestinian Authority, Nayef al-

Sudairi, made a first trip to the Israeli-occupied West Bank since the 1967 Mideast war. At the same time, Israel’s Tourism Minister Haim Katz led an Israeli delegation to the Saudi capital Riyadh to take part in a conference hosted by the U.N. World Tourism Organization.

Both visits were clearly linked to the recent American efforts to normalize ties between Saudi Arabia and Israel.

Al-Sudairi’s visit was widely seen as an attempt by the kingdom to address the key sticking point in the Saudi-Israeli normalization deal: Saudi Arabia’s stance toward Palestinians.

The Saudi government has said it will only normalize ties with Israel if there is major

progress toward the creation of a Palestinian state. Before presenting his credentials to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah, al-Sudairi sought to assure the Palestinians that Saudi Arabia was “working to establish a Palestinian state with east Jerusalem as its capital,” without elaborating.

Nebenzia and virtually all Security Council members — including the United States — reiterated support for a two-state solution where Israel and Palestine live side-by-side in peace.

US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield expressed continuing US support for efforts to normalize relations between Israel, its neighbors and other countries in the region.

‘Most Pakistanis fly to Saudi on Umrah visas only to indulge in begging’

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistani beggars travel to the Middle East under the guise of pilgrimage and indulge in begging-related activities, leading to complaints of prison overcrowding in countries like Saudi Arabia, an official has told lawmakers. “Pakistani beggars travel to the Middle East under the guise of ziarat (pilgrimage). Most people visit Saudi Arabia on Umrah visas and then indulge in begging-related activities,” Secretary Overseas Pakistanis, Zeeshan Khanzada told a meeting of the Senate’s standing committee for Overseas Pakistanis on Wednesday.

A majority of the pickpockets arrested from within Makkah’s grand mosque are Pakistani nationals, daily The International News quoted Khanzada as saying.

Pakistan is facing an unprecedented economic crisis with skyrocketing inflation

amid price rise on fuel and food fronts.

“Ambassadors of Iraq and Saudi Arabia complain to us that their prison facilities have been overrun (due to Pakistani beggars that enter the country via unauthorised channels), Khanzada was quoted as saying.

“This issue now befalls within the category of human trafficking,” he added.

There are 1.6 million and 2,00,000 Pakistanis residing in the UAE and Qatar respectively, the official said.

“People are ready to pay (as much as) Rs 5 million to go abroad in search of jobs,” he said.

The media report further quoted Rana Mahmoodul Hassan Kakar, who was the chair, as saying that only 200 Pakistanis travelled to Japan after the island country had floated a requirement of 3,40,000 skilled people.



ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ
ਨੋਟਿਸ

ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਕੌਮਾਂਤਰੀ ਵਿਖੇ ਵਰਗਿਕ ਸਟੈਂਡ (ਮੇਨ ਗੇਟ ਅਤੇ ਬੈਚ ਸਟੈਂਡ ਗੇਟ) ਦੀ ਆਲਟਮੇਟ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਬਿਨੈ-ਪੱਤਰ ਮਿਲੀ 16-10-2023 ਤੱਕ ਮੰਗੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਆਲਟਮੇਟ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਵੇਰਵਾ, Terms & Conditions ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵੈਬਸਾਈਟ www.gndu.ac.in—(Tenders) ਤੋਂ download ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਬਿਨੈ-ਪੱਤਰ ਜਨਰਲ ਆਫਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ।
ਰਜਿਸਟਰਾਰ

LOST AND FOUND

This is to inform public at large that Relinquishment Deed dated 16-12-2021 was executed by SMT. ARTI JAIN (DAUGHTER), SMT. POOJA JAIN (DAUGHTER) & SMT. PARVESH BHANDARI (WIFE) in favor of SH. DEEPAK BHANDARI, for relinquishing all their share of their father/husband (LT. SH. BHUSHAN BHANDARI), in Residential Unit No. C-2301, Tower 3(C), admeasuring area of 929.03 square meter (equivalent to 10000 square feet), on the Twenty Third Floor of Tower No. 3 (C) together with Three covered car parking space(s) in the residential scheme known as "Providence Estate", situated in Village Gwal Pahari, Sector-02, Tehsil Wazirabad, District Gurugram, Haryana, Duty Registered at SR-WAZIRABAD, Vide Registration no.13905, dated 16/12/2021.

This relinquishment deed was part of the chain documents of Residential Unit No. C-2301 sale deed between Mr. Deepak Bhandari & M/s. We Serve Prop Management LLP (Sellers) AND Mr. Mohd. Abdullah Masood & Mr. Kunal Seth (Buyers)

The aforesaid relinquishment deed got lost in transit and to ensure no misuse can be done of the aforesaid deed, the undersigned has lodged F.I.R vide Complaint No. 923336/2023 dated 22.09.2023 with E- Portal of P.S. Crime branch, Delhi, stating that the aforesaid deed has been lost. The public at large is advised that if they found they should return or have any interest, they may lodge their claim within 15 days from date given of this publication to "Mr. Rajiv Khurana, A-2/3, F.F., Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi-110029".

Sd/-
Rajiv Khurana
On behalf of Mr. Mohd. Abdullah Masood & Mr. Kunal Seth

Sensex, Nifty plunge nearly 1 per cent

On weak global cues; RIL, Infosys weigh

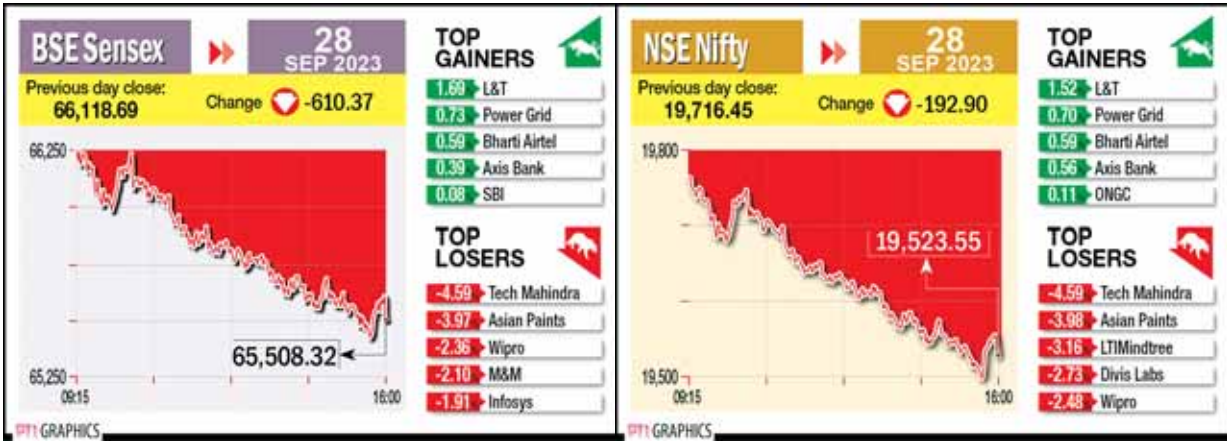
PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell by nearly 1 per cent on Thursday due to unabated foreign capital outflows amid a largely negative trend in global markets.

Besides, heavy selling pressure in index major Reliance Industries, Infosys and ITC also dented market sentiments, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex fell 610.37 points or 0.92 per cent to settle at 65,508.32. During the day, it plunged 695.3 points or 1.05 per cent to 65,423.39. The Nifty declined 192.90 points or 0.98 per cent to end at 19,523.55.

“The selling was broad-based, as investors are on alert given the rise of oil prices. If crude continues to stay above the USD 90 level, it will be a threat to inflation and boil the operational margins. Currently, the combination of higher interest rates and US bond yields are influencing FIIs to stay in the selling mode,” said Vinod Nair,



Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

Tech Mahindra was the biggest loser in the Sensex pack, slipping 4.59 per cent, followed by Asian Paints, Wipro, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Bajaj Finserv, Infosys, ITC, Mahindra & Mahindra, Hindustan Unilever, IndusInd Bank, Reliance Industries and JSW Steel.

In contrast, Larsen & Toubro, Bharti Airtel, Power Grid and Axis Bank were among the gainers. In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge declined 1.19 per cent and smallcap index fell 0.34 per cent.

“The prevailing weakness in heavyweights across sectors combined with feeble global

cues is weighing on the sentiment,” Ajit Mishra, SVP - Technical Research, Religare Broking Ltd, said. Among the indices, IT declined 1.84 per cent, FMCG fell 1.74 per cent, teck (1.49 per cent), consumer durables (1.29 per cent), auto (1.24 per cent), commodities (1.21 per cent), consumer discretionary (1.15 per cent), metal (1.05 per cent), realty (0.98 per cent) and services (0.89 per cent).

Telecommunication and capital goods were the gainers.

“World stocks were on track for their longest losing streak in two years on Thursday as the sight of oil prices heading for USD 100 a barrel compounded concerns about persistently high

global interest rates while persistent fears of higher US interest rates and concerns over China's beleaguered property market also dented sentiments,” said Deepak Jasani, Head of Retail Research, HDFC Securities.

In Asian markets, Shanghai ended in the green while Tokyo and Hong Kong settled lower. Trading was closed in South Korea for a holiday.

European markets were trading in the negative territory. The US markets ended on a mixed note on Wednesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude dipped 0.38 per cent to USD 96.18 a barrel. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs

354.35 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

“The selling was broad-based, as investors are on alert given the rise of oil prices. If crude continues to stay above the USD 90 level, it will be a threat to inflation and boil the operational margins. Currently, the combination of higher interest rates and US bond yields are influencing FIIs to stay in the selling mode,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

The BSE benchmark had climbed 173.22 points or 0.26 per cent to settle at 66,118.69 on Wednesday. The Nifty gained 51.75 points or 0.26 per cent to end at 19,716.45.



ONGC inks pact with NTPC Green for renewable energy projects

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has signed an initial agreement with NTPC Green Energy Ltd to explore setting up green hydrogen and offshore wind projects.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) “will primarily explore the feasibility and setting up of renewable energy projects in various domains,” ONGC said in a statement.

The MoU was signed by ONGC executive director Debudul Adhikari and NTPC Green Energy Ltd (NGEL) CEO Mohit Bhargava in the presence of ONGC chairman and CEO Arun Kumar Singh and NTPC chairman and managing director Gurdeep Singh.

“The MoU envisages collaboration of the two mega entities in renewable power projects in India and overseas through offshore wind projects and exploring opportunities in the storage, e-mobility, carbon credits and green credits, nuclear, green hydrogen business and its derivatives (green ammonia and green methanol),” it said.

ONGC is India's largest crude oil and natural gas producer while NGEL is a subsidiary of the country's largest power utility NTPC.

“Exploring and setting up renewable power assets in India and overseas, ONGC inked a trailblazing MoU with NTPC Green Energy Limited on September 27, 2023.

“Over a period of three years, the MoU will primarily explore the feasibility and setting up of offshore wind projects, green hydrogen and pumped/energy storage projects,” ONGC said in a separate post on X, formerly known as Twitter.

‘Show-cause notices to e-gaming firms as per legal provisions’

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-gaming companies have been issued show cause notices for alleged GST evasion as per legal provisions, the head of Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) Sanjay Kumar Agarwal said on Thursday, adding that the tax demanded is based on analysis of data.

He also said that the government is fully prepared to implement from October 1 the amended provisions for levying a 28 per cent tax on online gaming, casinos and horse racing along with mandatory registration of offshore online gaming platforms.

In its meetings in July and August, the GST Council had approved amendments in law to include online gaming, casinos and horse racing as taxable actionable claims, and clarified

that such supplies would attract 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax (GST) on full bet value.

Parliament last month passed amendments to the Central GST and Integrated GST laws to give effect to the Council's decision.

Since then, online gaming companies like Dream11 and casino operator Delta Corp have received show cause notices from taxmen for non-payment of GST at 28 per cent on the full face value of bets placed on their platform.

“The show cause notice which is going is as per legal provision... The department is taking a uniform stand in the interpretation of the law and accordingly show cause notices are being issued,” Agarwal told reporters here.

Asked about the quantum of taxes that are due from these e-gaming companies, Agarwal



said, “It is very difficult for me to say there are many companies. Data is being collected and wherever the data is received, the department has issued show cause notice”.

While maintaining that online gaming, casinos and horse racing was subject to 28 per cent tax since the inception of GST, the GST Council had

decided that the amended provision to classify these supplies as actionable claims and clarifying the taxation provisions would come into effect from October 1. A review of the implementation was proposed to be carried out after six months, which is April 2024.

Even though the amendments in CGST and IGST laws

have been passed by Parliament, the finance ministry is yet to notify the appointed date for implementation of these clarificatory amendments. Also, some states are yet to pass amendments in their state GST laws.

About a dozen states have passed the amendments in their assemblies, while a similar number of states are understood to have brought in an ordinance to pave the way for implementation of the changes from October 1.

“We are fully prepared to bring it (amended provision of online gaming) into effect from October 1. As per the decision taken in the last meeting of the GST council, the related notifications are under process. It is necessary for all states to pass the law or come out with an ordinance... By September 30,” the CBIC chief said.

Further, Agarwal said that the GST Council in its last

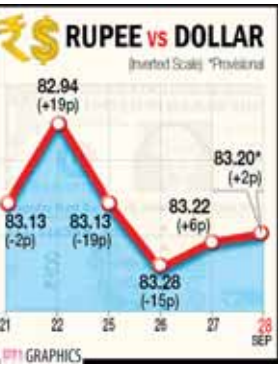
meeting had decided that the clarificatory amendments in GST laws with regard to online gaming would be implemented from October 1.

“If there is a requirement (for notification), it will be fulfilled,” Agarwal added.

The show cause notice slapped on Delta Corp last week was for alleged short payment of taxes worth Rs 16,800 crore.

In September last year, a similar show cause notice was served to online gaming company Gameskraft for recovery of Rs 21,000 crore GST. The company had approached the Karnataka High Court which had quashed the show cause notice.

Following this, the revenue department in July filed a Special Leave Petition in the Supreme Court on the Karnataka High Court ruling in the Gameskraft case. The next date of hearing is listed for October 10.



Rupee edges up 2 paise to 83.20 against \$

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee edged up 2 paise to settle at 83.20 (provisional) against the US currency in a restricted trade on Thursday, aided by a correction in crude oil prices and the greenback.

Foreign fund outflows and losses in local equities, however, restricted the rupee's gains, forex dealers said.

The rupee opened flat at 83.22 against the US dollar and later moved in a range of 83.25 to 83.13 in day trading.

The local unit settled at 83.20 against the US dollar, up by 2 paise over the previous close. The rupee had closed at 83.22 on Wednesday after a listless trade.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, declined by 0.27 per cent to 106.38 after touching a nearly 10-month high of 106.84 in overnight trade.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, also retreated 0.57 per cent to USD 96 per barrel. Analysts said the combination of higher interest rates and US bond yields are influencing FIIs to stay in the selling mode in Indian capital markets, which is weighing on the local currency.

On the domestic equity front, the 30-share BSE Sensex fell 610.37 points or 0.92 per cent to settle at 65,508.32. The broader Nifty declined 192.90 points or 0.98 per cent to end at 19,523.55. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) were net sellers in the capital market on Wednesday as they offloaded shares worth Rs 354.35 crore, according to exchange data.

SBI to encourage corporates to implement emission reduction tech

PTI ■ KOLKATA

State Bank of India, the country's largest lender will encourage corporates to implement emission reduction technologies and get better terms for availing finance, an official of the bank said on Thursday.

Ashwini Kumar Tewari, the managing director (risk, compliance and stressed assets resolution group), SBI, said that the bank will see how it can help corporates in this regard but at the moment does not ask them of their plans for net zero.

At present SBI gives 25 basis points concession on interest rates for electric vehicles. At a later stage, corporates with a



better ESG (environment, social and corporate governance) score will get better terms for getting finance from it, he said.

“We don't ask for net zero plan from the companies now. Ultimately, we will go to it. We will start conversation with the corporates and that process will start,” he said at the sidelines of

the banking conclave organised by CII here.

‘Net zero’ emissions refer to the acheiving of an overall balance between greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions produced and GHG emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

Earlier speaking at the conclave, Tewari said that banks still remain a major source of funding for the country though

The banking industry is facing competition with the growth of the equity market and NBFCs.

“The banking sector needs to be shepherded. Unlike the NBFCs which can reach the last mile, banks have high cost of operations,” he said.

Toyota looking to set up third manufacturing plant in India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese auto major Toyota is looking to set up a third manufacturing plant in India with its two facilities in the country running at almost full capacity, according to industry sources.

Bengaluru-based Toyota Kirloskar Motor, a joint venture between Toyota Motor Company and Kirloskar Group, currently operates two plants in the country with a total production capacity of around 3.42 lakh units per annum. With enhanced demand leading to long waiting periods on certain products, the automaker is now looking to set up a third plant in the country, sources said.

However, details about the production capacity, location and investment in the new plant

could not be immediately ascertained. When contacted, a TKM spokesperson said: “We would like to refrain from commenting on speculations and future plans.”

In May 2021 year, the company initiated a third shift at its Bidadi-based plant near Bengaluru to enhance production capacity by about 30 per cent as it looked to cut down waiting periods on some of its models.

TKM invested over Rs 90 crore to upgrade the existing infrastructure at the facility and added about 1,500 workforce for the third shift at the plant.

The automaker has two facilities within the Bidadi compound, which roll out different sets of products.

TKM's Plant 1 commenced production in December 1999



and currently rolls out Innova Hycross, Innova Crysta, Fortuner, and Legender. It has an installed production capacity of 1.32 lakh units per annum. The second plant at the same site, with an installed production capacity of 2.10 lakh units, rolls out products like Camry Hybrid, Urban Cruiser Hyryder and Hilux.

The facility commenced production in December 2010. The company also sells models like Glanza and Rumion which are sourced from Maruti Suzuki India as part of a global collaboration between Suzuki and Toyota. It also imports Vellfire and LC 300 as completely built up units (CBU). TKM has seen a robust increase in

demand for its models this year.

In the January-August period, its sales grew by 34 per cent to 1,47,192 units from 1,09,669 units in the same period of last year. With an increase in bookings, the waiting period for some of the company's products has crossed the one-year mark.

On September 23, the automaker announced to temporarily halt bookings of the E-CNG option of Rumion MPV to avoid customer inconvenience due to the long waiting period.

In April this year, TKM temporarily halted bookings of top trims of its multi-purpose vehicle Innova Hycross owing to supply challenges. Last year, it stopped taking orders for the diesel variant of Innova Crysta due to high demand and an increased waiting period.

MAN CITY OUT OF LEAGUE CUP

AP ■ NEWCASTLE

Manchester City crashed out of the League Cup with a 1-0 defeat at Newcastle on Wednesday as Arsenal, Chelsea and Liverpool booked their places in the last 16. Alexander Isak scored the only goal at St. James' Park in a clash between two much-changed sides.

City won the treble of Champions League, Premier League and FA Cup last season, but any dream of surpassing that feat with an unprecedented quadruple was swiftly brought to an end.

Erling Haaland was left on the bench by City coach Pep Guardiola for the full 90 minutes and his presence was missed in a toothless display.

Eddie Howe also rang the changes from an 8-0 thrashing of Sheffield United at the weekend.

But it was not until the Newcastle boss introduced Anthony Gordon and Bruno Guimaraes at half-time that the hosts took control.

Isak had the simple task of slotting home at the far post after a burst from Joelinton opened up the City defence.

"A win like this can elevate us," said Howe.

"First-half we tried to rotate the squad and keep our players fresh. Second-half we were better for sure, but when you bring

on players like Anthony Gordon and Bruno, they're high level players."

Newcastle's reward is a fourth-round trip to Manchester United in a repeat of last season's final.

CHelsea BOUNCE BACK

Chelsea prevented the crisis at Stamford Bridge deepening as Nicolas Jackson's goal beat Brighton 1-0.

The Senegalese's wastefulness in front of goal has been partly to blame for the Blues' return of one win in their opening six Premier League games under Mauricio Pochettino.

But Jackson coolly slotted home from the impressive Cole Palmer's pass on 50 minutes.

Chelsea will face Blackburn in the last 16.

Arsenal were also 1-0 winners at Brentford as Aaron Ramsdale responded to being controversially dropped by Mikel Arteta.

Reiss Nelson's eighth-minute goal separated the sides despite a Brentford onslaught after the break.

Arteta has preferred David Raya to Ramsdale in goal for the past three games.

But the England international was needed for the Gunners to progress as he produced a brilliant stop to deny Yoane Wissa an equaliser.

Arsenal will travel to West Ham in the next round after the



Hammers were 1-0 winners at third-tier Lincoln.

Liverpool trailed to Championship leaders Leicester after just three minutes before fighting back to win 3-1.

Kasey McAteer rounded off a rapid counter-attack to give the Foxes a flying start.

Jurgen Klopp's men laid seige to the visitors' goal but were made to wait until after the break to draw level.

The equaliser was made in the Netherlands as Ryan Gravenberch set up Cody Gakpo to find the far corner.

Klopp then turned to his bench to find a winner and found it through a stunning strike from Dominik Szoboszlai.

The Hungarian captain took aim from outside the box and smashed the ball into the top corner 20 minutes from time.

"Dom was a surprise with how fast he has fitted in, it was pretty much from the first minute," said Klopp on Szoboszlai's fast start to his Liverpool career.

"Top-class player with a lot of quality. He never stops."

Diogo Jota's backheel in off the far post then made the tie safe.

Klopp's men will travel to Bournemouth in round four.

Everton built on their first Premier League win of the season at Brentford on Saturday with an impressive 2-1 victory at Aston Villa.

Inter crash to first defeat

AP ■ MILAN

Inter Milan crashed to their first defeat of the Serie A season on Wednesday, going down 2-1 at home to Sassuolo as controversial striker Victor Osimhen starred for Napoli despite an apparent rift with the champions.

Inter went into the game with a perfect record of five wins in five and looked in control at 1-0 ahead thanks to a Denzel Dumfries goal on the stroke of half-time at the San Siro.

Sassuolo levelled in the 54th minute when Nedim Bajrami scored with a long-range effort which caught out goalkeeper Yann Sommer.

Domenico Berardi hit the winner 10 minutes later as Sassuolo claimed all three points to follow up last week's win over Juventus.

Inter remain top of the table on goal difference ahead of AC Milan who earlier defeated Cagliari 3-1.

"After a good first period where we should have scored more than one goal, but we lost our focus especially after the equaliser," said Inter coach Simone Inzaghi.

"Losing in front of our home crowd hurts us, we have to understand what happened, even if the schedule, with our next match on Saturday, doesn't really give us time to take a step back."

After a defeat and two draws, champions Napoli returned to winning ways with Osimhen playing a starring role in a 4-1 win over Udinese.

The Nigerian striker scored his fourth goal of the season after 39 minutes with



Khvicha Kvaratskhelia ending a long goal drought by finding the net in the second half.

Osimhen, top scorer in Serie A last season, had cut a controversial figure at the weekend when he showed his displeasure at being taken off by coach Rudy Garcia in the 0-0 draw with Bologna.

On Tuesday, his agent threatened Napoli with legal action for having published a video on the club's TikTok account, since deleted, mocking the striker for missing a penalty in that game.

Osimhen removed photos of himself in Napoli colours from his own social media, fuelling speculation that he will demand a move in the

next transfer window. "I have a very good relationship with Victor," insisted Garcia.

"I am happy for him because he scored tonight. After the match in Bologna, we were all frustrated, angry, Victor in particular, because he missed the penalty.

"On the sporting aspect and on other levels, especially on TikTok, there have been a lot of things to manage in recent days," smiled Garcia.

"But I can assure you that Victor loves this jersey and that he is invested in 100% in our project."

Napoli are now fifth in the table with 11 points, four points behind the two Milan clubs.

Real beat Las Palmas but Girona move top of La Liga

AP ■ MADRID

Real Madrid eased to a 2-0 win over Las Palmas on Wednesday to overtake Barcelona and move second, but Catalan minnows Girona are the surprise La Liga leaders after after a 2-1 win at Villarreal.

Barcelona started the week top of the league but a 2-2 draw at Real Mallorca on Tuesday left the door open for their rivals to overtake them.

Madrid produced a comfortable victory with goals from Brahim Diaz and Joselu, while Brazilian winger Vinicius Junior also made his return from injury as a second half substitute, following a month out.

Real coach Carlo Ancelotti rested Jude Bellingham, who has been Madrid's

best player so far, starting Diaz in attacking midfield in the England international's stead.

The Italian coach also swapped out both full-backs after the painful derby defeat by Atletico Madrid on Sunday, with Ferland Mendy and Nacho starting in place of Fran Garcia and Lucas Vazquez.

Real Madrid were on the front foot from the start against their promoted visitors from the Canary Islands, but lacked the killer finishing touch that Karim Benzema brought in recent years, and Bellingham has in recent weeks.

Vazquez replaced the injured David Alaba and the substitute played a part in the opening goal.

Valles stopped another Joselu drive before Diaz broke the deadlock, taking



a touch to control Vazquez's cross and then firing into the top corner with the aid of a slight deflection.

Joselu made amends for his first half profligacy to pounce early in the second with a well-placed header from Rodrygo's cross that this time left Valles no chance.

Vinicius made his return with over half an hour remaining as Ancelotti reverted to a 4-3-3 system, having begun with the midfield diamond he has favoured this season.

Aurelien Tchouameni came close with a long-range effort and Madrid saw out the game without incident to move one point ahead of Barcelona.

Michel's Girona came from behind to beat Villarreal, with on-loan Barcelona defender Eric Garcia netting the winner.

Ramkumar-Myneni pair one win away from gold

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

The Indian tennis camp had something to cheer on Thursday with Ramkumar Ramanathan and Saketh Myneni reaching the men's doubles gold medal round and the mixed doubles pair of Rohan Bopanna and Rutuja Bhosale assuring itself of a medal.

The second-seeded team of Ramkumar and Myneni downed the gutsy Korean pair of Seongchan Hong and Soonwoo Kwon 6-1, 6-7(8), 10-0 to move to the title clash.

Myneni will now gun for his second Asian Games gold, having won a mixed doubles yellow metal with Sania Mirza in the 2014 edition.

It will be a maiden Games medal for Ramkumar.

The Koreans fought back after losing the opening set in a rather sedate manner but Myneni and Ramkumar held their nerves to outplay their rivals in the Super Tie break.



The Indian team will now take on Chinese Taipei, that ousted Thailand, in the gold medal match on Friday.

India had won the men's doubles title in the last edition in Indonesia with Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan emerging victorious in the final.

The second-seeded Bopanna-Bhosale pair moved to the mixed doubles semifinals with a fluent 7-5, 6-3 win over Kazakhstan's Zhibek Kulambayeva and Grigoriy Lomakin.

The first set seemed going into a tie-break as Kulambayeva was serving at 40-0 in the 12th game but she lost her serve from that strong position.

There was hardly any fight in the second set.

Bopanna, who is playing his last Asian Games at 43, will not go without a medal.

He has already been ousted from the men's doubles with partner Yuki Bhambri.

Lingard training with Al Ettifaq

AP ■ MANCHESTER

Former Manchester United player Jesse Lingard could be the next Premier League star to join the Saudi Arabian league.

The England international, who is a free agent, is training with Saudi club Al-Ettifaq after leaving Nottingham Forest at the end of the last season.

Al-Ettifaq is coached by Liverpool great Steven Gerrard and signed England midfielder Jordan Henderson in the off-season. "I've watched him for many years, so I'm aware of the talent," Gerrard told Al Arabiya's sports program FilMarma.

Miami fall short without Messi

AP ■ FORT LAUDERDALE

The Houston Dynamo defeated Inter Miami 2-1 to win the US Open Cup on Wednesday with an injured Lionel Messi watching from the stands at DRV PNK Stadium.

Without Messi and his former Barcelona team-mate Jordi Alba, Miami struggled to compete with an enterprising Houston and could have little to complain about the outcome.

Miami co-owner David Beckham, who watched the game with his former Real Madrid team-mate Zinedine Zidane, had hoped for another night of celebration after the team's Leagues Cup triumph last month.

But Miami lacked intensity and ideas as they were given the runaround by Ben Olsen's impressive Houston team.

No clear explanation has been given for Messi's injury



with references to "muscle fatigue" followed by talk from coach Gerardo Martino of "scars" from an old injury.

With no Messi to worry about, Houston were on top from the outset, moving the ball around with confidence and purpose while Miami struggled to get a foothold.

Houston grabbed the lead in the 24th minute with a perfect counter-attack ending with Brazilian Artur feeding the overlapping Griffin Dorsey who blasted in at the near post.

Houston were utterly dominant, passing the ball with a swiftness that left Miami chasing shadows and it wasn't long before they had doubled their advantage.

Colombian winger Quinones cut into the box from the left flank and Miami right-back DeAndre Yedlin's desperate lunge brought him crashing to the ground. French forward Amine Bassi made no mistake from the spot to make it 2-0.

Men's & women's squash teams assure India of medals

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Indian men's and women's teams assured themselves of medals at the Asian Games after progressing to the semifinals of the squash events here on Thursday.

While the men's team blanked Nepal 3-0 in its final pool tie, the women were handed a 0-3 loss by Malaysia in their last pool B fixture.

Both teams sealed top two spots in their respective pools to make the semifinals which guarantees them at least a bronze. The Indian women's team began the day with veteran Joshua Chinappa enduring a 6-11, 2-11, 8-11 defeat to Subramanian Sivasangari in 21 minutes.

In the second match, Tanvi Khanna squandered a 2-1 lead before going down to Commonwealth Games gold medalist Aifa Binti Azman 9-11, 11-1, 7-11, 13-11, 11-5.

Manika, Sharath, Sathiyan storm into last 16

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

Star Indian paddlers Manika S Batra, Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyan dominated their opponents en route their pre-quarterfinals entry in the table tennis competition at the Asian Games here on Thursday.

Sharath, a team bronze winner in 2018 Asian Games, never gave a chance to Mohammed Shaffan Ismail, his opponent from Maldives before winning 11-9, 11-2, 11-7, 11-7.

Sathiyan, who had won a bronze medal in the team event in Jakarta Games 2018, too was equally overwhelming against Turki Lafi Almutairi of Saudi Arabia while registering a 11-5, 11-6, 11-9, 11-2 victory.

Manika, a 2018 Commonwealth Games gold medalist and a bronze winner in mixed doubles at the Jakarta Asian Games, blanked Nabita Shrestha of Nepal 4-0 (11-5, 11-4, 11-3, 11-2) in just 20 minutes to set up a clash with Thailand's



Suthasini Sawettabut.

However, Sreeja Akula faced a humiliating defeat to North Korea's Songgyong Pyon 0-4 (6-11, 4-11, 13-15, 9-11) to bow out of the competition.

India fared better in the women's doubles. Sreeja and Diya Chitale defeated Vietnam's Ngoc Tran Mai and Nga Nguyen Thi 3-0 (11-8, 15-13, 11-6).

Sutirtha Mukherjee teamed up with Aiyhika Mukherjee to seal their place in the pre-quarters after defeating Kazakhstan 3-0. Sutirtha and Aiyhika moved past Anastassiya Lavrova and

Zauresh Akasheva 11-7, 11-4, 11-7.

In the men's doubles, Indian duo of Manav Vikash Thakkar and Manush Utpalbhai Shah defeated Mohamed Shaffan Ismail and Moosa Munsif Ahmed of the Maldives 3-1 (11-8, 9-11, 11-6, 11-2) to enter the round of 16.

Another Indian pair Sathiyan and Sharath outplayed Mangolian combination of Ser-Od Gankhuyag and Manlaijargal Munkh-Ochir 3-0 (11-5, 11-3, 11-3) in just 13 minutes.

PLEASED PLAYERS RETURNING FROM INJURIES GOT ‘GAME-TIME’

PTI ■ RAJKOT

India coach Rahul Dravid is relieved that key players such as Jasprit Bumrah, KL Rahul and Shreyas Iyer, who are all coming back from injuries, could get enough miles in their legs ahead of the ODI World Cup, starting in a week's time.

Bumrah, who was troubled by a back issue that kept him out for long, bowled his full quota of overs in Mohali and Rajkot — the two matches he played against Australia — but was a bit expensive in the series-concluding third ODI. The fast bowler had made a comeback during the T20 series against Ireland last month and also competed in Asia Cup in Sri Lanka.

Iyer, who is expected to bat at number four, struck a hundred in Indore and also contributed 48 in Rajkot.

Rahul not only batted in an impressive fashion, scoring two half centuries, he also kept the wickets, allaying concerns around his fitness. "For all those guys game-time was important. The fact that they have been able to get that is I think something that we are much better off for it," Dravid said after the third ODI that India lost by 66 runs.

"Jassi has been able to play a couple of games and bowl his quota of 10 overs, Siraj (was) suffering from a little bit of bug but he got back and was able to bowl," he said.

"(For) Ashwin, it was really nice to see the way he bowled in the first two games. KL as well, the keeping right through the 50 overs, he is coming off after almost 6-7 months. "Shreyas has played a couple of really good knocks in the last couple of games. We know we have to keep improving but also hope that we carry this momentum into the World



Cup," the India coach added.

Off-spinner R Ashwin's inclusion in the squad for the Australia series had triggered speculation that he might be included in the final World Cup squad. However, David was non-committal.

All the teams are required to finalise their World Cup squads by Thursday.

"We have to wait for an official confirmation or a decision on that. The NCA is in touch with the selectors and Ajit

(Agarkar) so I will not make any comments on that. If there is any change you will get to hear about it officially, as of now there are no changes," Dravid said, hinting that Axar Patel will be retained in the 15-man squad.

The india coach expects India's full strength squad to assemble in Guwahati ahead of the first warm-up match against England on September 30.

India had only 13 players to pick their

final eleven against Australia here on Wednesday as some members Shardul Thakur, Hardik Pandya and Mohammed Shami returned home while Ishan Kishan missed the contest due to a bug going around in the group

"The two practice or warm-up games, generally people play 15 versus 15, it is tough to sometimes get the intensity in those games but as we have seen in these three games, in hot conditions there has been a lot of intensity as well," Dravid added.

"There was a bit of juggling we had to manage in this game but I am hoping that we have got about a week, we have got a few days. We should have the full strength squad, hopefully the bug around the group has cleared out as well. It will be nice if that happens," the coach said.

Talking about the big loss in the Rajkot ODI, Dravid blamed it on giving away too many runs in the first half of the Australian innings.

"In the overall scheme of things probably 350 was 30 (runs) too many. We should have been chasing 320 if we had bowled better in the first half," he said.

Rohit Sharma (81) and Virat Kohli (56) added 70 runs but the team lost the plot after their partnership was broken. Dravid, however, was pleased to see the two senior batters were among runs right after a break.

"We were on par when Virat and Rohit were batting. We needed one of the top three to get 130 or 140. In these chases you need these kinds of scores," he said.

"Unfortunately it did not happen, but a good thing from our perspective is that both of them batted really well — that is a positive. They are coming off not playing cricket for a week so it was nice to get straight into it and get runs for us," he said.



Pakistan is a weaker team than India at this moment: Waqar

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Legendary pacer Waqar Younis rated India a better side over Pakistan going into the World Cup while basing his observation on the better preparation of the Rohit Sharma-led team ahead of the quadrennial big bash.

India had recently won the Asia Cup and handed a massive 228-run defeat to their arch-rivals in a Super 4 match at Colombo.

In the World Cup, India will face Pakistan on October 14 in Ahmedabad, and Younis said pressure will be there on both the outfits but said Men in Blue just could have an edge.

"As we all know, it (India vs Pakistan) will be the biggest game, mother of all the games.

So, when you play in Ahmedabad, you will have to control your nerves, and not only Pakistan will be under pressure since it is a weaker team as compared to India. "But India will also be under pressure because the crowd in the stadium will create pressure on both the teams," Younis told Star Sports.

"However, if we judge purely based on the team's performance, India definitely will be a better team," he added. Younis was also mindful of the Pakistani's unstable form, and said the injury-enforced absence of pacer Naseem Shah could put them in a significant disadvantage.

"If I talk about Pakistan, they are a miss and hit this time. The absence of Naseem Shah will be a big disadvantage because

Naseem and Shaheen (Afridi) used to complement each other with new ball."

"Though Hasan Ali has been declared as his replacement; he has got a lot of experience and gave brilliant performances in the past, but I feel, to suddenly come and perform on this kind of big stage will not be an easy task for him," said Younis.

Analysing the Indian squad, Younis said the team has great spinners, while its bench strength is equally potent.

"If we only talk about ticking the boxes then we will see no other team can match India right now because they have good spinners, who are playing right now in the starting XI such as Kuldeep, Jadeja. But they also have strong bench strength."



We deserved to win gold in Asian Games: Harman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian women's cricket team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Thursday said they deserved to win the Asian Games gold medal, considering their domination over neighbouring teams, though she admitted that the expectations put a bit of pressure on the side.

Playing in their maiden Asian Games in Hangzhou, India fulfilled the expectations on them and clinched the yellow metal, beating Sri Lanka by 19 runs in the final.

"It was a great experience, we played really well. When we left for the Asian Games, we knew our team is pretty strong and we had in mind that we need to prepare like this for future tournaments. We deserved to win the gold," Harmanpreet said on the sidelines of a felicitation function organised by the Sports Ministry here.

"The team performed very well in Hangzhou and we managed to return with the gold. Before leaving we mentally knew that our team is very strong and

we can win the gold.

"We will approach future tournaments with the same mindset and prepare ourselves the same way we did before the Games," added the star cricketer.

Harmanpreet refused to compare the Commonwealth Games silver with the gold in Hangzhou, saying both the feelings were different.

"That moment was different because we could have won that match. Despite playing good cricket we got the silver. Here it was completely different because there was different sort of pressure on us as we have done well against the Asian teams.

"There was extra pressure on us because we have been dominating Asian cricket," she said.

Harmanpreet said the support provided by the government to the cricket teams in preparation for the Asian Games was very helpful.

"There are a lot of changes. As a sportsperson when you get so much support from all sides, it feels really motivating. This

year we witnessed a new thing and that is the government has given us money for preparation.

"These are the new things which never happened in cricket. As a sportsperson when you know there is not so much financial burden on you, you can play freely and that matters a lot," she said.

The skipper refused to compare rising pacer Titas Sadhu with legendary Jhulan Goswami but said the young Bengal bowler has a lot of promise.

"She (Titas) performed very well in Under-19 World Cup. She bowled really great there and whenever she gets a chance she is always ready to bowl for the team," Harmanpreet said.

"I can't compare her (Jhulan) with anyone but they are from the same state and I think Jhulan is working a lot on her; they keep on talking to each other."

During the ceremony, Sports Minister Anurag Thakur gave away cash awards to the shooting, rowing contingents besides the women cricketers, including Shafali Verma.

PTI ■ RAJKOT

All-rounder Glenn Maxwell will have a big role to play in the ODI World Cup for Australia as he brings a lot of balance to the side as the third spinner, said Mitchell Marsh.

Returning to top flight cricket after six months due to soreness to his ankle and birth of his son, Maxwell came up with career-best 4 for 40 to bowl Australia to a convincing 66-run win over India in the third and final ODI here on Wednesday night.

"It was a great spell. He came back after having not played much cricket for the last (few) months," Marsh said during the press-conference.

"It was great to see him back. It is the energy that Maxi brings to the team, his presence and the balance that he gives us.

"We obviously know that his batting is absolutely class but what he can do with the ball,

Mitchell Marsh backs Maxwell to play big role in World Cup campaign

and the options that he will give us with our all-rounders is vital for us going into the World Cup."

Talking about Maxwell's role in the World Cup, Marsh said, "There may be wickets where he's the third spinner through this World Cup.

"But just the ability for us to play the three quicks, a spinner and have Maxi who has the ability on the right wicket to bowl ten overs, think you see a lot of teams around the world have guys like Maxi; it gives you a lot of flexibility with the teams you can pick or the way you can structure your batting line-up."

Marsh, who struck a match-winning 96 in the first half, could not field in the second



innings as he was cramping up after batting in extreme heat and humidity.

"It was as tough as (anywhere) I have batted in. When I came off, I was absolutely exhausted, (had) full body cramp but obviously (it was) nice to contribute to a win like that. I thought we played outstanding (cricket)," he said.

"I wanted to (bowl), basically bowled a couple of balls (during warm up) but basically had cramps all the way up in my legs.

"It has been a big couple of weeks, I have played 10 out of a possible 11 games in the last three weeks so with what is to come, the staff said to cool my jets for the fielding innings," he said.

Shakib hints at retirement after 2025 Champions Trophy

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan wants to call time on his illustrious international career after the 2025 Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

He has also asserted that while he plans to retire from Tests following the forthcoming ICC Cricket World Cup in India starting next month, he is also likely to quit T20Is after the ICC T20 World Cup next year in West Indies and the United States of America.

Talking to T-Sports, as reported by ESPNcricinfo, Shakib said, "The 2025 Champions Trophy for ODIs and the 2024 T20 World Cup for T20Is. Tests may be sooner. Maybe (after the World Cup)."

"I will retire all at once,



but I will stop playing each format one by one. I will announce my retirement after the 2025 Champions Trophy." Shakib will be leading

It was his second stint as the unit's leader. Under him, the Tigers did make it to the Super 4 of the Asia Cup, but failed to make it to the final.

In the meantime, Shakib has confirmed that his outing in the upcoming World Cup will be his last as the skipper and will be quitting captaincy as a whole.

"Given the current reality, I am captain only till the World Cup. Not a day more."

"I resigned from the captaincy on the 17th [of September]. The reasons were the same when I didn't want to captain ahead of the Asia Cup."

"I don't think my captaincy is adding value at this stage of my career. I wanted to just bowl my 10 overs, give my best in fielding, and do my batting." "The easiest thing to do for me would have been

not to take the captaincy. At this age, I didn't want to take this pressure. I want to smile, enjoy my game, perform for Bangladesh," he added.

Bangladesh take on Afghanistan in its opening fixture of the World Cup on October 7 in Dharamsala.

CHANGE OF NAME

I, VEGI BINDUSREE W/O VEGI KISHOREKUMAR, Kasturi Nagar, 10th line, Rayagada, pin-765001, Odisha, india, Declare by this affidavit no 1183 dt 06-02-2023 that from now onwards I shall be known as BINDUSREE KANNAPPAN for all future purpose.

AFFIDAVIT

By virtue of an affidavit before Notary Public Chatrapur, I, E. Nageswar Rao, aged about 58 years, S/o: Late E. Savarayya, resident of Chatrapur, Po/ Ps: Chatrapur, Dist: Ganjam, Odisha having Aadhar card No. 6055 2239 3756,, my name in my Aadhar No. 6055 2239 3756 is shown as E. Nageswar Rao and in the 10th Certificate (CBSE) of my daughter E. Chanchal, my name is only shown and codified as E. Nageswar but not mentioned as Rao after the name. That, E. Nageswar Rao and E. Nageswar is one and same person as there is no other two distinct person in the locality both the names are for myself only. Hence this be treated as mention as one and same person. That, my name E. Nageswar Rao shall prevail or continue in all future correspondence of mine and my daughter's future prospectus.

We believe we can win ODI World Cup: Rabada



PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

South Africa pacer Kagiso Rabada believes the Proteas have what it takes to shed the chokers tag and win their maiden world title in the upcoming ICC ODI World Cup in India.

Despite having some star players, South Africa have never progressed behind the semi-final stage of any of the World Cups till date but Rabada said this time they have the arsenal at their disposal to create history.

"One thing we have never lacked as South Africans is belief, so going into the tournament we do believe we can win it," Rabada was he was quoted as saying by ICC.

"We've got the players to do so, so hopefully we can make our first final and win this competition. It's going to be hard, but it's going to be really enjoyable.

"It's exciting to have the best players in the world playing against each other, competing for one prize, and we are up for the challenge."

The Proteas failed to advance beyond the group stage four years ago but are yet to taste a series defeat in ODIs this year.

The four-time semi-finalists struggled in 2019 but have since risen to fourth in the men's ODI team rankings, and are full of confidence after a 3-2 series victory over Australia.

Bavuma returns home due to personal reasons

PTI ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

South Africa suffered a setback on Thursday with their ODI skipper Temba Bavuma returning home from India due to personal reasons ahead of the side's two warm-up games of the ICC Cricket World Cup.

The Proteas are scheduled to take on Afghanistan and New Zealand in their first and second warm-up games on here September 29 and October 2 respectively.

As per an update on South Africa cricket's social media handles, Bavuma has returned to South Africa due to personal reasons.

T20I captain Aiden Markram will be leading the side in



the two warm-up clashes in absence of Bavuma, who is likely to rejoin the team ahead of their opening game. South Africa opens their World Cup campaign against Sri Lanka in New Delhi on October 7.