

OPINION 6
CHINA'S TREPIDATION
IS CONJECTURAL

WORLD 9
US MOVES TO ADVANCE
PRISONER SWAP DEAL WITH IRAN

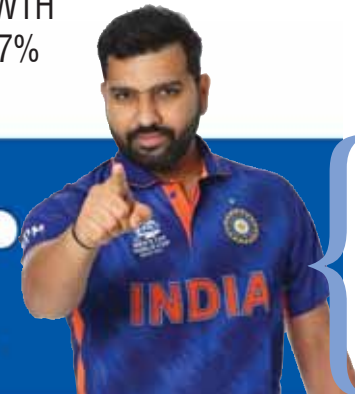
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Dharma Yuddh in INDIA bloc, BJP LAC infrastructure push to curb China footprints

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI/CHENNAI

The verbal war over the Sanatan Dharma row between the BJP and Opposition parties escalated on Tuesday, with Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat stating that anyone who speaks against Sanatan would have their tongue pulled out and eyes gouged out.

The BJP accused the Opposition alliance INDIA bloc of harbouring a hidden agenda to target Sanatan Dharma for its vote bank politics. Party president JP Nadda led a fresh charge and claimed that attacking the ancient faith is part of a well-thought-out strategy of the Congress and its leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi.

The ruling party at the Centre seized on DMK leader and Tamil Nadu Minister K Ponmudy's remarks that the INDIA bloc was forged as an "opposition to Sanatan ideology" to criticize the Opposition.

The Congress-led INDIA front suffered a setback on Tuesday again as Ponmudy said, "We, including the Congress and other constituents of the alliance, are unanimous in our conviction that Sanatana Dharma poses a serious threat to the country. Our intention is to liberate the country from this Dharma. The INDIA front is a step in the right direction."

Ponmudy is the third leader from the same party to speak against Sanatan Dharma, following State Minister



Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad addresses a press conference at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday
Ranjana Dimri | Pioneer

Udaynidhi Stalin and former Union Minister A Raja. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's son, Priyank Kharge, who is a Minister in the Congress-led Karnataka Government, also voiced opposition against Sanatan Dharma, aligning with their partners in the DMK.

Responding to the BJP's attacks on the Congress and the INDIA bloc over the row, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinate said her party believes in Sarva Dharma Sambhava (equal respect for all religions). "We do not need certificates from the BJP on nationalism, on Sanatan Dharma, and on the contribution to our freedom movement. Because, out of all these, their score is zero," she said at the AICC Press conference.

Nadda said, "The Congress and the INDIA alliance should make their views clear and tell if the Constitution gives the

right to make objectionable comments against any religion. Do INDIA alliance members not know the Constitutional provisions?"

The alliance, the Congress, Sonia, and Rahul should answer as to why "hate against Sanatan Dharma is being sold in the name of mohabbat ki dukan," he said. This mega mall of hate is only for power, divide and rule, he alleged.

Reacting to the recent comments made by Udhayanidhi against Sanatan Dharma, Shekhawat said, "We have to stand up to the challenge. We will pull out the tongue of anyone who speaks against Sanatan. We will also gouge out those eyes raised against Sanatan."

"We challenge that no person who speaks against Sanatan will be able to maintain a political position and power in this country. They try to attack our culture and history."

Shekhawat is said to be heard making the purported remarks that went viral on social media. He was speaking at a public rally in Barmer district of poll-bound Rajasthan last week during BJP's Parivartan yatra.

Addressing a press conference, BJP leader and former Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the country's culture and heritage are being daily insulted while senior Congress leaders like Sonia Gandhi are silent. Noting that Bihar Minister and RJD leader Chandra Shekhar and Samajwadi Party's Swami Prasad Maura have repeatedly criticised Hindu holy books like Ramcharitmanas, Prasad said the leadership of these parties have maintained silence.

Such silence is an indication of approval, he said, making it clear that the BJP will go to the people on the issue after the agenda has been set by the Opposition. "We will talk of vikas (development) as well as virasat," he said. India will not tolerate this insult to Sanatan, he said.

The more Sonia maintains silence over the matter, the clearer it will be that opposing Sanatan Dharma is part of the INDIA bloc's common minimum programme, he alleged. "Cat is out of the bag," he said, explaining that the attack by the Opposition on Sanatan Dharma has revealed their true aims.

While Opposition leaders from those in the DMK to some in parties like the RJD and Samajwadi Party have been

vocal in criticising Sanatan Dharma and holy books associated with Hinduism, can they summon the courage to criticise other faiths and their holy figures, he asked.

Asked about BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad's allegations that the country's culture and heritage are being insulted daily but senior Congress leaders like Sonia Gandhi are silent, Shrinate said, "We do not need any certificate from anyone and especially from hypocrites who talk like this. We believe in the equality of all religions. I will not say anything more than this."

But she refused to acknowledge BJP leader and Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat's remarks in a video circulating on social media that anyone who speaks against Sanatan Dharma would have their tongue pulled out and eyes gouged out.

"Equality of all religions is the foundation of our country and we are people who believe in it," she said.

AAP leader Raghav Chadha too condemned Stalin's remark but said statements made by some "small" leader from any party cannot be considered the official stand of the INDIA bloc.

"I am from Sanatan Dharma. I condemn and oppose such statements. Such kind of statements should not be made. One should stay away from making such remarks on any religion. We should respect all religions," Chadha told PTI in an interview.

Continued on Page 2

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

With freshly laid roads, bridges, tunnels, airfields, and helipads, India is gearing up to give an extra push to its strategically crucial infrastructure projects along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) to counter China's growing footprints in the region.

On Tuesday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated 90 infrastructure projects of the Border Roads Organisation, completed at a cost of ₹2,941 crore, in the Samba district of Jammu province.

The BRO projects include 22 roads, 63 bridges, one tunnel, two airstrips, and two helipads across 10 border States and Union Territories of northern and northeastern regions, constructed under challenging weather conditions, at most inhospitable terrain locations.

The Defence Minister also laid the e-foundation of Nyoma airfield in eastern Ladakh which will be developed at a cost of ₹218 crore for wide-ranging strategic air assets, a BRO spokesperson said.

The construction of this airfield will tremendously boost the air infrastructure in Ladakh and augment the IAF capability along the northern borders.

He said the surge in road and bridge construction by the BRO in the last three years has led to the completion of several critical and strategic projects which has bolstered the defence preparedness.

The BRO has also connect-



The newly-inaugurated Nepochu Tunnel constructed by Border Roads Organisation in West Kameng district on Tuesday
PTI

ed the farthest and most remote villages of the country like Huri in Arunachal Pradesh to the mainland. This connectivity has triggered reverse migration along the border villages.

In the last two years, the BRO has dedicated a record 205 infrastructure projects to the nation at a cost of ₹5,100 crore.

Last year, 103 BRO infrastructure projects were completed at a cost of ₹2,897 crore while in 2021, 102 BRO infrastructure projects were dedicated to the nation at a cost of ₹2,229 crore.

Work on these projects was completed expeditiously to facilitate the speedy induction of troops, heavy equipment, and mechanised vehicles to forward areas. These projects

will also boost the socio-economic development of the region.

Of the 89 projects inaugurated virtually, 36 are in Arunachal Pradesh, 25 in Ladakh, 11 are in Jammu & Kashmir, five in Mizoram, three in Himachal Pradesh, two each in Sikkim, Uttarakhand and West Bengal and one each in Nagaland, Rajasthan and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the spokesman of the BRO said in a statement.

During his day-long visit, Rajnath Singh also inaugurated the state-of-the-art 422.9 meter Devak bridge on the Bishnah-Kaulpur-Phulpur Road in the Samba district besides 89 other projects.

Continued on Page 2



INDIA MARCH INTO ASIA CUP FINAL: Ravindra Jadeja celebrates taking the wicket of Sri Lanka's Dhananjaya de Silva with teammates during the Asia Cup cricket match between Sri Lanka and India in Colombo on Tuesday. Indian bowlers produced a splendid collective effort to carry their team to a 41-run win over a spirited Sri Lanka in a Super 4 match, and into the Asia Cup final. Rohit Sharma's fifty (53 off 48 balls) was the cornerstone of India's sub-par 213 after Lankan spinners Dunieth Wellalage (5/40) and Charith Asalanka (4/18) bamboozled them. But India, guided by Kuldeep Yadav's 4 for 43, bowled out Sri Lanka for 172
PTI

G20 leaders treated to exquisite gifts

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

At the G20 summit, gift hampers containing Indian rosewood sandook (chest), pashmina shawls, Kashmiri saffron, Pekoe Darjeeling, Nilgiri Tea, Araku Coffee, Sundarbans honey, and Zighrana Ittar from Uttar Pradesh were presented to the heads of states, governments, and delegates.

According to officials, some of these products are the result of centuries-old traditions and are cherished worldwide for their unparalleled workmanship and quality.

Some products are the result of the unique biodiversity of our country.

Sundarbans mangrove honey originates from the world's largest mangrove forest located at the delta formed by the Ganga, the Brahmaputra, and the Meghna rivers in the Bay of Bengal. The honey is less viscous and mirrors the biodiversity of the area. It is a harmonious blend of nectar from mangrove blossoms, including Khalisha, Bani,



and Garan. Furthermore, Sundarbans honey is notably abundant in flavonoids, offering added nutritional benefits.

The Kashmiri pashmina shawl is made of wool from the world's most unique Cashmere goat found only at a height of 14,000 feet above sea level. The wool is collected by combing (and not shearing) the undercoat of the goat. Skilled artisans hand-spin, weave, and embroider their delicate fibers using age-old processes. Pashmina was once an indicator of rank and nobility and symbolised bestowing honour. Kashmiri saffron, which is also known as red gold, is the

world's most expensive spice valued for its culinary and medicinal value. Kashmiri saffron ("Zafran" in Persian, "Kesar" in Hindi) is the most exotic and expensive spice in the world.

Each strand of it comprises the stigma of "Saffron Crocus". The stigma's crimson hue holds the concentrated essence of sun-soaked days and cool nights. Kashmiri saffron stands as a true embodiment of exclusivity and exceptional quality. Its intense aromatic profile, vibrant color and unmatched potency sets it apart. "Sandook", Hindi word for a treasure chest, is a strong box

made of solid old wood or metal, with a lid on top and embellishments all over. This Sandook has been hand-crafted using Sheesham (Indian Rosewood), which is valued for its strength, durability, distinctive grain patterns and rich colour.

The brass patti (strip) is delicately etched and embedded onto the wood, transforming the piece into a masterpiece of visual delight and tactile splendor.

Aromatic Pekoe Darjeeling and Nilgiri Tea are two illustrious gems from Bharat's tea tapestry, epitomising the delicate art of tea cultivation and infusion. Pekoe Darjeeling is grown on the hills of West Bengal at 3,000-5,000 feet and Nilgiri Tea in the mountains of south India at an elevation of 1,000-3,000 feet.

Araku Coffee is the world's first terroir-mapped coffee grown on plantations in Andhra Pradesh without the use of machines or chemicals. The coffee is organic and the cultivation is sustainable.

Continued on Page 2

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Har Pal Aapke Saath

Army dog dies saving handler in terror fight

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU
Kent, a six-year-old female Labrador of 21 Army Dog Unit, Tuesday laid down its life while shielding its handler during a counter-terrorism operation in the frontier district of Rajouri.



So far, one terrorist was killed while an army jawan succumbed to his injuries, and three others including one police SPO and two army jawans were injured in the Narla area of Rajouri district.

Cow vigilante Monu held, sent to 14 days custody

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Bajrang Dal member and cow vigilante Mohit Yadav alias Monu Manesar was arrested by the Haryana Police on Tuesday for uploading “objectionable and inflammatory” posts under a fictitious name on social media. He was sent to 14 days in judicial custody by a Nuh court.



Tuesday after the later's social media team found evidence against Manesar for posting a fresh video related to the 'Shobha Yatra' organised on August 28 in Nuh. A case under relevant sections of the IT Act was registered against him earlier in August.

Bhiwani district. Based on this evidence, Mansar was apprehended, and a search of his person led to the discovery of a .45 caliber pistol and three live cartridges concealed in his pants.

ED grills TMC MP Nusrat for 6 hours in ₹24 cr scam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KOLKATA

The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday suffered yet another embarrassment with the Enforcement Directorate subjecting its MP Nusrat Jehan to six-hours intense questioning. Jehan, an actress-turned-politician, was questioned for her alleged role in a Rs 24-crore real estate scam. Jehan was the Director of a company when the scam took place.

sequently contacted BJP leader Sankudeb Panda who in turn wrote to the ED for seeking cognizance. “We had invested in company because an actress like Nusrat Jehan was a director there but we did not know that we would be cheated like this,” said one of the investors.

TDP chief moves HC for bail

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA



After a local court in Vijayawada on Tuesday rejected a house custody petition filed by TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, his legal team moved two pleas in the High Court — one seeking quashing of the case and another a bail petition. They are likely to come up for hearing on Wednesday.

home under house custody. Further, the court said it could have given house custody if it was possible to successfully provide Z-plus security to Naidu. The court said jail is better for security reasons. The court had no objection to according house custody, provided Z-plus security was also being extended inside Naidu's residence.

Meanwhile, the 73-year-old former chief minister's wife Nara Bhuvaneshwari visited Naidu in prison on Tuesday and noted that she fears for Naidu's security in confinement. “I am apprehensive of his security. I have not seen any facilities. He had to bathe with cold water,” she said, saying her husband's arrest has put their family into “tough times”. However, the CID's legal team argued in the court that adher-

ing to orders, several steps were taken such as creating a separate and exclusive ward, special security cover, round-the-clock monitoring, video surveillance, medical team on standby and others. CID lawyers stressed that Naidu's ward has been separated from the main prison block to ensure a sanitised area, especially considering the special security requirements of the detainee.

Jhumpa's short stories ready for release in India

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

Renowned critics rate short stories as the most popular literary form and say more than novels, poems and plays, their contribution in spreading the culture and custom stands heads and shoulders above other literary works.

book wonder. Lahiri ia back in action and this time she is coming out with a collection of short stories written in the background of Italy. The work, which is expected to hit bookshelves across India is her first work after the publication of Unaccustomed Earth (2008).

Not discussing 'one nation one election' is undemocratic, says Dhankhar

Jaipur: Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said there can be agreement or disagreement on the 'one nation one election' proposal but it should be discussed in country. The Centre has formed a committee under the chairmanship of former president Ram Nath Kovind to explore feasibility of 'one nation one election'.

“You can agree or disagree with the issue of 'one nation one election', but saying that we will not discuss is undemocratic,” the vice president said at a programme organised by Bharatpur Bar Association in Bharatpur.

31 nations to participate in workshop on maritime issues

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 31 countries will take part in a workshop in Gurugram for a three-day meet starting September 14 to discuss all maritime issues in the context of the strategically important Indian Ocean.

Oceans are the lifeblood of humanity and maritime trade is the cornerstone of global commerce. The significance of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) extends far beyond its geographical boundaries; it serves as a hub of economic activities, a bridge between continents, and a stage for geopolitical dynamics.

ing programs, of which the Maritime Information Sharing Workshop (MISW) is the flagship event. The inaugural edition of MISW was conducted in 2019.

Dharma Yuddh in INDIA ...

From Page 1
“Some leader from some party makes such remarks... It doesn't mean it is the statement of the alliance. The alliance has been formed for raising big issues like price rise, unemployment facing the country.”

Parliamentarian A Raja for his purported remark that the “Hindu religion is a menace” and accused the ruling DMK of being the principal reason for creating caste divide and hatred among the people in the State.

Dharma to coronavirus, malaria, and dengue fever. “(Congress president) Mallikarjun Kharge says that if Modi wins, Sanatan will become powerful, hence there is a need to defeat him.”

many invaders tried to weaken Indian culture for 2,000 years. “Rulers like Alauddin Khilji and Aurangzeb tried but ancestors of yours and mine were capable and protected the culture.”

PUBLIC INFORMATION

It is to inform the public at large that my client namely Manish Joshi, S/o Late Yash Pal Joshi and mother Late Smt. Shashi Joshi, R/o Apex The Chrenmin, Flat No. 02/2004, Ground Floor, Tower F, Siddharth Vihar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010 has booked at flat in the name of him and his mother whose address is T AND T Infrazone (IT Homes) Flat No. 07/1-07/05, Block-A, Plot No. S-8-03, Sector 3, Siddharth Vihar, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201010.

Nothing new in CBI getting sanction to prosecute in land for jobs scam: Tejashwi

Patna: Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav on Tuesday asserted that there was “nothing new” in the CBI's submission before the court concerned that sanction has been obtained for prosecution in the 'land-for-jobs scam'.

The RJD leader responded to queries from journalists here, before leaving for Delhi, where he is scheduled to attend the first meeting of the coordination committee of opposition bloc INDIA.

Didi goes abroad to get investment

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Amid refrains of a steady flight of capital from Bengal in the past more than a decade of Trinamool Congress rule, Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday left for a 12-day tour of Spain and Dubai in order to seek investments.

LAC infrastructure push to curb China footprints

From Page 1

The BRO completed the critically strategic projects in record time and several of them were constructed in a single working season using state-of-the-art technology, the spokesperson said.

development of any country. Hence, capital investment in R&D becomes a necessity, he emphasised.

“India is passing through a transitional phase. There is nothing wrong in acquiring a technology through imitation or transfer, but we cannot become a developed nation on these grounds alone.”

We need to file our own patents, for which a lot of investment in R&D is needed. Capital investment in R&D may reduce today's profits, but it will prove to be beneficial to the industry and the country in the long term,” the Defence Minister said.

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कार्यालय नगर (सिविल)
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T.N. 989/023/024

G20 leaders treated...

From Page 1

Zighrana Ittar from Kannauj in Uttar Pradesh showcases a centuries-old tradition of perfume crafting.

ished across the world for their unparalleled workmanship and quality,” a senior official said. A khadi scarf and a coin box containing G20 commemorative coins were also gifted to visiting leaders by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Spouses of the world leaders were gifted items representing the culture of India by Modi, according to the officials. The summit was the biggest such gathering India hosted in four decades and marked the culmination of India's year-long presidency of the grouping of the world's largest economies.

Govt mulls artificial rain in winter to clean air



STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to mitigate air pollution in the national capital during winter, the Delhi Government is mulling over the use of cloud seeding technology to induce artificial rain. Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Tuesday the Government is preparing a separate action plan for each of the air pollution hotspots in the city.

Rai's announcement came after his meeting with 24 environmental experts to discuss the "Winter Action Plan" where scientists from IIT-Kanpur gave a presentation on inducing artificial rain in Delhi.

Cloud seeding is a process to induce rain in moisture-filled clouds by sprinkling the upper reaches of clouds with chemicals such as common salt or silver iodide, usually with the help of jets fixed to aeroplanes.

At this meeting, suggestions were also



taken from 24 members and researchers from the Council for Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW), Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), and Environmental Defense Fund, among others.

"The experts brainstormed ways to reduce vehicular pollution, dust pollution, biomass burning, and other kinds of pollution. Scientists from IIT-Kanpur gave a pre-

sentation on inducing artificial rain in Delhi and the costs involved. We have requested them to prepare a detailed presentation which will be shown to the chief minister. We will certainly consider this idea," Rai said.

Experts have, earlier as well, submitted similar proposals on artificial rain to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, he added.

According to experts, for cloud seeding to be successful in causing artificial rain, there should be availability of clouds. If there are no clouds, it does not work."

After years of dedicated efforts, IIT-Kanpur scientists at the institute have successfully conducted a test of artificial rain through cloud seeding.

The project, initiated by IIT Kanpur in 2017, faced multiple hurdles, including delays in obtaining necessary permissions. However, after meticulous preparations and thorough evaluations, the Directorate of Civil Aviation (DGCA) finally granted permission for the test flight. Using cloud seeding technology, the aircraft released chemical powder into the clouds, stimulating the formation of raindrops. Shortly after, rainfall was observed in the surrounding areas, validating the effectiveness of the artificial rain technique.

China, having developed this technology earlier, had withheld sharing it with India. The minister said the experts have also suggested preparing a separate winter action plan for the air pollution hotspots to deal with their respective pollution sources.

The pollution hotspots in Delhi are located at Anand Vihar, Wazirabad, Vivek Vihar, Wazirpur, Ashok Vihar, Dwarka, Jahangirpuri, Rohini, Bawana, Narela, Mundka, Punjabi Bagh, RK Puram and Okhla Phase 2.

Kejriwal meets 18-month-old boy suffering from rare genetic disease

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday visited Najafgarh to meet an 18-month-old boy suffering from a rare genetic disease. The infant's family raised funds for his treatment through crowdfunding.

The child, Kanav Janra, is suffering from a rare disease called SMA (Spinal Muscular Atrophy) type-1 and the treatment is an injection named Zolgensma.

Without treatment, the progressive muscles develop weakness and eventually restrict any muscular movement including digestion, the beating of the heart muscle and lungs, and even the movement of limbs.

The treatment for SMA is an injection that costs Rs 17.5 crore, according to Kejriwal. "It's a rare genetic disorder and there are just nine such cases in the country. This is the first case of the disease in Delhi. Kanav's parents contacted AAP MP Sanjiv Arora, who started crowdfunding for the treatment of the child," Kejriwal told reporters.

He said Rs 10.5 crore was raised through crowdfunding and the drug was brought from the US. After the treatment, Kanav's situation has improved and he can sit and move his limbs. Now, Kanav is starting to use his hands and showing improvement in his legs. Many



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal meets Kanav, a child suffering from spinal muscular atrophy (SMA), in New Delhi on Tuesday

thanks to all the celebrities, leaders, and media organizations who contributed to this noble cause.

The Chief Minister thanked all those who donated money, including some celebrities and MPs, for the costly injection.

He also thanked the US-based drug manufacturer, saying it agreed to sell the medicine for Rs 10.5 crore. Kanav's parents, Amit and Garima, belong to a lower middle-class family and cannot afford the costly treatment. They are seeking help to

save their son's life.

AAP MP Sanjeev Arora facilitated all possible help. Members of Parliament (MPs) Raghav Chadha, Hans Raj Hans, Sanjay Singh, Vivek Tankha, Sanjeev Arora, Ramchander Janra, Priyanka Chaturvedi, Raveet Singh Bittu, Sant Balbir Singh Seechewal, Pravesh Verma, Ashok Mittal and Manish Tewari were among the contributors for Kanav's cause.

Among the celebrities who were supporting Kanav's cause were Sonu Sood, Farha Khan,

Vidya Balan, Chunkey Pandey, Rajpal Yadav, Vishal Daddani, Kapil Sharma, Ali Asgar, Bharti Singh, Pankaj Tripathi, Shakti Kapoor and Kiku Sharda.

Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) Type 1 is a rare genetic disease that destroys the nerves responsible for controlling most of the human body movements. It affects nerves and muscles, causing muscles to become increasingly weak.

It mostly affects infants and children but can also develop in adults.



BSES manages uninterrupted power supply during G20

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The BSES pulled out all the stops to ensure a reliable and seamless power supply at the G20 venue amidst an already high-demand in the city due to summer-like heat last month and in the first week of September, discom officials said on Tuesday.

The BSES discom enhanced the power supply at the main venue Bharat Mandapam at Pragati Maidan and monitored the demand in real-time from its Supervisory Control and Data Access (SCADA) control room, they said.

"In the run-up to the G20 Summit held on September 9-10, Delhi's peak power demand was consistently high in comparison to the corresponding period last-year, and the BSES made the preparations to ensure reliable power supply in the city and at the G20 venues, including the Bharat Mandapam and the designated hotels in its areas," an official said.

Almost the entire August and much of September so far saw summer-like heat in Delhi. In fact, on September 4, 2023, Delhi recorded a maximum temperature of 40.1 degrees Celsius at Safdarjung, making it the hottest September day in the last 85 years.

During August 2023, barring one day (August 27), Delhi's peak power demand was higher on all the corresponding

days than that of August 2022, they said.

According to the State Load Dispatch Centre (SLDC) data, Delhi's peak power demand clocked the season's high of 7,438 MW on August 22, 2023. Since 2012, Delhi's peak power demand has always clocked the season's highest in June and July.

Moreover, Delhi's peak power demand has never crossed the 7,000 MW in August. This time, crossed the 7,000 MW on four occasions. According to the SLDC data, on August 21, 2023, BRPL and BYPL clocked this season's highest of 3,363 MW and 1,727 MW respectively, said the discom officials.

Similar trend continues in September 2023. In the first 6 days of the month, Delhi's peak power demand has been higher than the corresponding days of September 2022. The demand went down later due to rains, they said.

The BSES discoms (BRPL and BYPL) are ensuring reliable power supply to meet the power demand of nearly 49 lakh consumers and around 2 crore residents in South, West, East and Central Delhi. These arrangements include long-term power purchase agreements and banking arrangements with other states, said discom officials.

Over 1,500 MW of green power is also playing an important role in powering BSES areas in the city, they added.

CM to visit Punjab on 3-day tour

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Am Aadmi Party's national Convener and Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will visit Punjab on Wednesday for a three-day tour.

During this tour from September 13 to 15, Kejriwal will participate in several important programmes including inaugurating the first School of Eminence in Amritsar under the

education guarantee and addressing the issues of Punjab's industrialists through a town hall meeting.

Kejriwal will inaugurate the 'School of Eminence' on September 13 in the presence of CM Bhagwant Mann in Amritsar under the 'Education Guarantee' to provide quality education to children.

This will be the first 'School of Eminence' in Punjab. In the

coming days, the AAP Government will open 117 such schools in the State.

The inauguration will be followed by Kejriwal and Mann addressing the gathering.

Kejriwal and Mann will hold a town hall meeting with entrepreneurs on September 14 in Amritsar and Jalandhar and on September 15 in Ludhiana and Mohali, where the issues of entrepreneurs will be discussed.



Lt Governor VK Saxena and Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora pose for a group photo with the 'Team Delhi' that worked to make the city the perfect host for the G20 Summit in New Delhi on Tuesday

Ashoka University's political data centre board dissolves itself

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The scientific board of Trivedi Centre for Political Data at the Ashoka University has announced that it is dissolving itself alleging that its founder and director Gilles Verniers was "forced to leave". The university, however, said Verniers's departure is due to him not meeting the stringent criteria on continuation of service.

The members of the scientific board included former CEC SY Quraishi; Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's College London Christophe Jaffrelet; Professor of Political Science, University of Oslo, Francesca Jensenius; Senior Fellow and Director of the South Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Milan Vaishnav; Mukulika Banerjee (London School of Economics and Political Science); Susan Ostermann (University of Notre Dame) and Tariq Thachil (University of Pennsylvania).



After having left Ashoka, where he was an Assistant Professor of Political Science, Verniers is now Karl Loewenstein Visiting Fellow at Amherst College in Massachusetts.

"TCPD's vibrant and important agenda, under the leadership of founding Director Professor Gilles Verniers, is what attracted each of us to serve on its Scientific Board, and contribute to its intellectual mission. We now write to state our regret that the Centre's founder and director was forced to leave, and that the university did not inform the Centre's scientific board about decisions that affect not only the lead-

ership of the Centre but also its future as an institution," the scientific board said in an Open letter.

The university also said some of its centres and offices are planned to be integrated with the newly established Centre for Data Sciences and Analytics (CDSA) in an effort to enhance its data-driven capabilities and fostering a readily accessible collection of data sets.

"The Trivedi Centre for Political Data (TCPD) is among them, and TCPD's proposed integration with the new Centre has been communicated to the TCPD Scientific Board recently," it said. The letter comes weeks after a controversy at the university following resignation of Assistant Professor Sabyasachi Das after a controversy over his research paper which argued that the BJP won a disproportionate share of closely contested parliamentary seats in 2019 Lok Sabha polls, especially in states where it was the ruling party at the time.



Review meeting to beautify national Capital, says Atishi

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Public Works Department (PWD) Minister Atishi on Tuesday said officials of various departments are on the ground to take stock of the work needed in areas that did not receive a facelift as part of the G20 beautification drive.

Atishi inspected Press Enclave road in south Delhi on Tuesday morning. "Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal promised the people of Delhi that we will beautify the entire national Capital the way we did with several areas during G20. We held a review meeting and debriefing with all the departments yesterday. Today, all the departments are on the ground and making efforts to achieve the goal," she added.

Atishi on Monday said the Delhi government will extend its beautification efforts to all parts of the national capital after G20 designated parts of the city witnessed a facelift for the international summit. In alignment with the redesigning of G20-designated areas, the government has embarked on a project to revamp, beautify, and maintain cleanliness in various other parts of the city as well, she said. On this occasion, the PWD

Minister directed officials to pay attention to all the details in the process of making roads better and take every necessary step to enhance their beauty. She also instructed that the beautification work related to the G-20 summit should be regularly maintained to ensure its quality.

Atishi said that the government will ensure that all roads of Delhi become aesthetically appealing with the presence of greenery, lights, and sculptures on the footpaths. We want to provide the people of Delhi with a world-class road experience so that they can have a splendid experience while traveling on the roads, she added.

Some of the directives included blacktopping of roads mandatory, road to be redesigned as per the need and central verges be made more beautiful while street furniture should be installed according to design and location. The PWD Minister stated that during the G-20 summit, everyone witnessed the beauty of Delhi, and now we will take that beauty to every corner of Delhi, be it from Narela to Tughlaqabad or from Najafgarh to Shahdara; the Delhi Government will transform the roads of every nook and corner of Delhi into world-class ones.

HC nod to CBI to freeze bank accounts of absconding preacher

STAFF REPORTER ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted nod to the CBI for freezing the bank accounts of absconding self-styled spiritual preacher Virender Dev Dixit.

The court perused the status report filed by the CBI with regard to the steps it has taken to arrest Dixit, who is facing rape cases and has been absconding for several years, and noted the existence of certain bank accounts that were operated by him.

The court said it was "satisfied with the attempts and progress made by CBI in the matter" and asked the agency to continue with its efforts.

"The CBI shall certainly be free to freeze the bank accounts by taking steps

in accordance with law," said a bench of Chief Justice Satish Chandra Sharma and Justice Sanjeev Narula, while granting the federal agency six weeks to take further steps.

The court observed the CBI has "done the needful and are still doing the needful" in the matter and directed it to continue the search and seize and freeze all bank accounts linked to Dixit.

The High Court was hearing a 2017 petition filed by NGO Foundation for Social Empowerment, represented by lawyer Sravan Kumar, alleging several minor girls and women were illegally confined at the "spiritual university" run by Dev and not allowed to meet their parents.

On a plea by the parents of one of



the women living in the ashram for meeting her, the court Tuesday observed the daughter was a "grooming" and did not want to live with them.

On May 31, the court had directed the CBI to take steps for arresting Dixit after it was brought to its notice that he or his followers were uploading videos on at least six YouTube channels and social media handles and that a

large number of them were being uploaded since March 2018.

The high court had earlier asked the CBI to trace Dixit and directed the agency to probe the accusation about illegal confinement of girls and women in the ashram where it was claimed they were kept in "animal-like" conditions behind metal doors in a "fortress" surrounded by barbed wire.

The agency has announced a reward of Rs 5 lakh to anyone who gives credible information about his whereabouts leading to his arrest, but he continues to elude the dragnet.

The high court had earlier sought the assistance of retired IPS officer Kiran Bedi over the welfare of women living in Dixit's ashram — Adhyatik Vishwa Vidhyalaya, Rohini and consti-

Congress slams BJP over reports of 'lotus' on Parliament staff uniform

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday accused the BJP of making the "Parliament a one-sided partisan thing" amid reports that the ruling party's poll symbol "Lotus" is being printed on the new uniform for Parliament staff.

The party alongwith other Opposition parties also opposed the lowering of import duty on American apples, claiming it would prove detrimental to apple growers of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir.

They demanded an immediate withdrawal of the reported order to reduce import duty on American apples, saying it would destroy the economy of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Congress whip in Lok Sabha Manickam Tagore questioned why the 'Lotus' was being added and not a tiger or a peacock, the national animal and the national bird respectively.



"Why is the government not ready to put Tiger in the Parliament staff's dress, because Tiger is the national animal. Why are they not ready to put the Peacock, which is the national bird, in the dress? But they chose to put the Lotus in the dress code of the Parliamentary staff, because the BJP's symbol is the Lotus," Tagore said in a statement.

"How cheap they are. They did it in G20 also. Now also they are doing it and saying it is the national flower.

This kind of pettiness is not right. Hope the BJP grows up and not make the Parliament a one-sided partisan thing," he alleged. Tagore said the Parliament is becoming a part of a party's symbol.

The opposition party alleged that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was giving a "gift" to the United States by

reducing the import duty while doing injustice to farmers of the country engaged in apple cultivation.

"What happened to the slogan of 'vocal for local'? Why is the prime minister trying to please the Americans by offering concessions?" Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete said at a press conference at the AICC headquarters.

According to reports, days before US President Joe Biden's bilateral with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi ahead of the G20 Summit, the Centre announced the removal of additional duties on about half a dozen US products, including apples, walnuts, almonds and lentils.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti also appealed to the Centre to reconsider its decision to remove the additional duty on apples, walnuts and almonds imported from the US.

Sanction to prosecute Lalu obtained in land-for-job scam: CBI to court

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI informed a Delhi court on Tuesday that the requisite sanctions to prosecute former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad in a case related to an alleged land-for-job scam has been received from authorities concerned. The agency told Special Judge Geetanjali Goel that the sanction with respect to the three other accused was still awaited.

The judge noted the submissions and posted the matter for further hearing on September 21. The CBI had on July 3 filed a chargesheet against the 75-year-old RJD chief and his other family members. He is out on bail in this case as well as in fodder scam cases.

"It is submitted that sanction has been received qua accused Lalu Prasad Yadav and the same has been placed on record. However, sanction in respect of three other per-



sons i.e. Maheep Kapur, Manoj Pande and Dr PL Bankar is awaited and it is submitted that the same is likely to be received within one week. Put up for same on September 21, 2023," the judge said on Tuesday. Special Judge Geetanjali Goel granted the CBI time after the central probe agency made a prayer to that effect.

The July 3 charge sheet was against Lalu Prasad, his wife and former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi, and their son and the State's Deputy Chief Minister Tejashwi Yadav in connection with the alleged scam. It was the second charge sheet filed by the CBI in the

case but the first in which Tejashwi Yadav has been named as an accused. Besides the three members of the Yadav family, the CBI also named 14 individuals and entities in the charge sheet.

The accused have been charged under Indian Penal Code sections related to criminal conspiracy, cheating and others in addition to provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The case pertains to Group-D appointments made in Western Central Zone based in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh during Lalu Prasad's tenure as the railway minister from 2004 to 2009 in return for land parcels gifted or transferred by the recruits in the name of RJD supreme family or associates, according to officials.

The agency registered the case on May 18, 2022 against Lalu Prasad and 15 others including his wife, two daughters, and unidentified public servants and private persons.

Petition against sedition law sent to 5-judge Bench

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday referred a batch of pleas challenging the constitutional validity of sedition charges (IPC 124A) to 5-judge Constitution Bench.

A bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud declined the Centre's request to defer the issue of reference to a larger bench as Parliament is in the process of re-enacting the provisions of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and the Bill has now been placed before a standing committee.

"We are not inclined to accept the request for deferring the consideration of constitutional challenge in these batch of matters for more than one reason," said the bench, also comprising Justices JB Pardiwalla and Manoj Misra.

The bench observed that Section 124A (sedition) of IPC continues to remain on statute book, and even if new Bill becomes a law, there is a presumption that any new law in the penal statute will have prospective and not retrospective effect. **PNS**

SFJ threatens Modi, Shah, Jaishankar

PNS/AGENCIES ■ NEW DELHI/TORONTO

At a gathering in Canada on Sunday, Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, the chief of the banned US-based Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) terror outfit, issued threats against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar and other top leaders of the country.

"This is a message to those who assassinated Hardeep Singh Nijjar. We are calling for your critical death...Modi, Jaishankar, (Ajit) Doyal, (Amit) Shah, we are coming for you," Pannun is purportedly heard saying in a video.

Khalistani terrorist Hardeep Singh Nijjar, wanted by the Indian government, was killed in a targeted shooting in

Canada's Surrey in June this year. A Khalistani referendum was organised in Surrey, Vancouver at the Guru Nanak Singh Gurudwara. The so-called referendum coincided with the concluding session of the G20 summit held in New Delhi and Pannun's video was played at the event.

At the event attended reportedly by an estimated 5,000 to 7,000 people, Pannun gave a provocative speech against India and spoke of "Balkanising" the nation. Pannun's radical exhortation came on a day Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised concern over anti-India activities in Canada with his Canadian counterpart Justin Trudeau who was on the weekend for the G20 summit.

In his recent talks with Canada Prime Minister Justin

Trudeau on the sidelines of the G20 Summit, PM Narendra Modi had raised concerns about anti-India activities of extremist elements in that country. "PM Modi conveyed our strong concerns about continuing anti-India activities of extremist elements in Canada. They are promoting secessionism and inciting violence against Indian diplomats, damaging diplomatic premises, and threatening the Indian community in Canada and their places of worship," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Meanwhile, when asked about extremist activities in Canada, Justin Trudeau said that his country will always defend freedom of peaceful protest, but at the same time asserted that it will always prevent violence and push back against hatred.

Ministry notifies change in rules to check postal ballots misuse

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to check the potential misuse of postal ballot facility extended to voters on poll duty, the Ministry of Law and Justice has issued a notification changing Conduct of Electoral Rules, allowing people to cast their vote at designated facilitation centres only and do not keep the ballot papers with them for a long time.

With the amendment coming into force on August 23, voters on poll duty in upcoming assembly elections in Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana will now vote at the facilitation centres. As per notification, a new section 18A

has been added in the rules. It states that "Notwithstanding anything in this Part, a voter on election duty shall receive his postal ballot, record his vote thereon in accordance with this Part and return the same at the facilitation centre as specified, in writing, by the returning officer."

The Election Commission (EC) had in September last year recommended to the Union law ministry to tweak the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961 to ensure that voters on poll duty cast their vote at voter facilitation centre located where they are deployed. The EC was of the view that if a postal ballot remains with a voter for a long time, the person could be highly susceptible to undue

influence, threats, bribery and other unethical means by candidates or political parties.

Official sources had earlier said the poll panel had observed in the previous elections that the voters on election duty who are provided postal ballot do not cast their vote at voter facilitation centres but take their postal ballot with them since they have time to cast postal ballot till 8 am of the counting day according to election law and relevant rules.

The standard policy of Commission provides that voters on election duty are deployed to a constituency other than their home constituency to manage and supervise polling at the allotted polling stations.

306 MPs have criminal cases, says ADR report

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

A report released by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) disclosed that among the 763 Members of Parliament (MPs) examined, at least 306 (at least 40 per cent) of them have criminal cases registered against them.

Additionally, the report revealed that 194 (25 per cent) sitting MPs have declared serious criminal cases including murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, crimes against women on their self-sworn affidavits.

The ADR conducted this analysis by studying the affidavits submitted by these MPs before participating in their last elections and any subsequent bye-elections.

These findings pertain to a total of 776 seats in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha across the nation. Among the members of both Houses, 23 (79 per cent) out of 29 MPs from Kerala, 41 (73 per cent) out of 56 MPs from Bihar, 37 (57 per cent) out of 65 MPs from Maharashtra, 13(54 per cent) out of 24 MPs from Telangana and 5 (50 per cent) out of 10 MPs from Delhi have declared criminal cases against themselves in their self-sworn affidavits, the ADR said.

Furthermore, the report pointed out that the BJP had the highest number of MPs with criminal cases against them. About 28 (50 per cent) out of 56 MPs from Bihar, nine (38 per cent) out of 24 MPs from Telangana, 10 (34 per cent) out of 29 MPs from Kerala, 22(34 per cent) out of 65 MPs from Maharashtra and 37 (34 per cent) out of 108 MPs from Uttar Pradesh have declared serious criminal cases in their self-sworn affidavits.

About 139(36 per cent) out of 385 MPs from BJP, 43 (53 per cent) out of 81 MPs from Congress, 14 (39 per cent) out of 36 MPs from

TMC, 5(83 per cent) out of 6 MPs from RJD, 6(75 per cent) out of 8 MPs from CPI(M), 3(27 per cent) out of 11 MPs from AAP, 13(42 per cent) out of 31 MPs from YSRCP and 3(38 per cent) out of 8 MPs from NCP have declared criminal cases against themselves in their affidavits.

About 98 (25 per cent) out of 385 MPs from BJP, 26 (32 per cent) out of 81 MPs from Congress, 7 (19 per cent) out of 36 MPs from TMC, 3(50 per cent) out of 6 MPs from RJD, 2(25 per cent) out of 8 MPs from CPI(M), 1 (9 per cent) out of 11 MPs from AAP, 11(35 per cent) out of 31 MPs from YSRCP and 2(25 per cent) out of 8 MPs from NCP have declared serious criminal cases in their affidavits.

Eleven sitting MPs have declared cases related to murder (Indian Penal Code Section-302), 32 sitting MPs have declared cases of attempt to murder (IPC Section-307), while 21 sitting MPs have declared cases related to crimes against women.

Out of these 21 MPs, four MPs have declared cases related to rape (IPC Section-376). The average worth of assets per MP from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha is ₹38.33 crore and 53 (seven per cent) are billionaires, the ADR said.

The state with the highest average assets per MP is Telangana (24 MPs) with average assets of ₹262.26 crore, followed by Andhra Pradesh (36 MPs) with average assets of ₹150.76 crore and Punjab (20 MPs) with average assets of ₹88.94 crores.

The state with the lowest average assets of MPs is Lakshadweep (1 MP) with average assets of ₹9.38 lakh, followed by Tripura (3 MPs) with average assets of ₹1.09 crores and Manipur (3 MPs) with average assets of ₹1.12 crore.

Among the major parties, the average assets per MP for 385 BJP MPs analysed is ₹18.31 crore, 81 Congress MPs have average assets of ₹39.12 crore,

CBI chief visits 51 out of 58 branch offices in 108 days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a record of sorts, CBI Director Praveen Sood has visited 51 out of 58 branches of the agency across the country within 108 days of taking charge, with the remaining seven likely to be covered in the next one month.

Sood took over as the CBI Chief on May 25 and he embarked on a mission to gain a first hand understanding of the agency's operations at the unit level by visiting the branches, officials said.

Sood's visits included personal interactions with all staff members, listening to their concerns and seeking ideas besides even breaking bread with them.

These sessions have been fruitful in terms of identification of "ground realities" about the CBI's functioning across the country and the attitudinal state of mind of the personnel, the officials said. They said the agency boss was apprised of

the issues like servicing of summons, gathering intelligence, handling complainants, conducting traps and shortage of staff, during these sessions. Even the lowest rung officials were given the opportunity to interact with him.

Dismissive of the "top-down approach", the Director banks on the first-hand information about the issues faced by the agency at ground level.

Sood, a former Director of Police of Karnataka, who has not previously served on Central deputation, has made it a point to visit each of the 58 branches of the CBI by October 15, they said.

These visits in the initial months of taking charge could act as a catalyst in formulation of policies and bringing administrative reforms within the agency during his tenure at the agency to maximize the professional efficiency of the premiere anti-corruption body.

2 die due to Nipah, Centre rushes team

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Confirming that the two deaths in Kerala's Kozhikode have been caused by Nipah virus, the Centre on Tuesday rushed a team the Southern State to take stock of situation, assist the state govt in virus management.

The samples of the patients were sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune soon after the State Health authorities suspected that the death were "unnatural" reported due to fever in Kozhikode.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said that the deaths reported from Kerala's Kozhikode district were caused by Nipah virus.

A central team of experts has been sent to Kerala to take stock of situation and assist state government in management of the Nipah virus infection." According to official sources, samples of four more people from Kerala have been sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune to test for the deadly virus.

Smoking causes 90% lung cancer deaths, speeds up ageing: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Smoking not only causes about 90 per cent of all lung cancer deaths, but can also expedite the ageing process, according to a study of nearly 500,000 people which was presented at the European Respiratory Society International Congress in Milan, Italy recently.

It showed that smoking shortens the end fragments of chromosomes in the white blood cells of our immune systems. "The length of these end fragments, called telomeres, is an indicator of how quickly we age and our cells' ability to repair and regenerate. "Our study shows that smoking status and cigarette quantity can result in the shortening of leukocyte telomere length, which is an indicator of tissue self-repair, regeneration and ageing.

In other words, smoking can accelerate the process of ageing, while quitting may considerably decrease the related risk," said Siyu Dai, Assistant Professor in the School of Clinical Medicine at Hangzhou Normal University in China. Telomeres are lengths of repetitive DNA sequences that protect the ends of chromosomes. "Each time a cell divides, the telomeres become slightly shorter, eventually becoming so short that the cell can no longer divide successfully, and it dies.

This is part of the ageing process. "Telomere length in white blood cells (called leukocytes) has been linked previously to smoking, but, until now, there has been little research into whether smoking status and the quantity of cigarettes smoked actually caused the shortening in telomere length," said Dai.



The researchers used genomic data from 472,174 UK Biobank participants, related to current smokers, those who never smoked, and for people who had smoked previously. They found that current smoking status was statistically significantly associated with shorter leukocyte telomere length, whereas previous smokers and people who had never smoked didn't show significantly shorter leukocyte telomere length.

Among people who used to smoke, there was a trend towards shorter telomere length, but this was not statistically significant. People who smoked the greater number of cigarettes had significantly shorter leukocyte telomere length.

"In summary, smoking may cause shortening of leukocyte telomere length, and more cigarettes smoked, the stronger the shortening effect," said Dai.

Orchid Pharma inks pact with WHO to develop Cefiderocol to treat drug resistant infections

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a move that aims to address the unmet needs of patients across low-and middle-income countries where antimicrobial resistance is spreading fast, India based drug manufacturer, Orchid Pharma Ltd has inked a pact with the WHO-constituted Global Antibiotic Research & Development Partnership (GARDP) to manufacture cefiderocol, an antibiotic to treat certain Gram-negative infections.

Gram-negative bacteria cause infections including pneumonia, bloodstream infections, wound or surgical site infections, and meningitis in healthcare settings. Gram-negative bacteria are resistant to multiple drugs and are increas-

ingly resistant to most available antibiotics. To tackle these growing threats, Cefiderocol was approved by the US Food and Drug Administration in 2019 and the European Medicines Agency in 2020, and it is on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines. GARDP was created by the WHO and Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) in 2016 to ensure developing new treatments for drug-resistant infections that pose the greatest threat to health.

The agreement is a critical step in an ambitious project by Shionogi & Co. Ltd. (Shionogi), GARDP, and the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) that aims to provide cefiderocol available in 135 countries (about 70% of countries world-

wide, including those with the highest antimicrobial resistance -AMR burden), none of which currently has access. Based on these agreements, CHAI will facilitate the technology transfer process between Shionogi and Orchid Pharma. Shionogi will convey essential information for the manufacture of cefiderocol to Orchid Pharma. "Manish Dhanuka, Managing Director of Orchid Pharma, one of the world's leading manufacturers of cephalosporin antibiotics said that this will ensure manufacturing affordable and quality-assured cefiderocol. "Access is one of the least talked about issues in the global AMR crisis. This is not just a global market failure but also a public health failure," added Manica

Balasegaram, Executive Director of GARDP, according to a statement here.

"We can effectively offset the burden of antibiotic resistance by reducing the access gap between high- and lower-income countries so that the right antibiotics are affordable and available for appropriate use..." Orchid was selected following a rigorous vetting process led by CHAI with GARDP. The manufacturing sublicense agreement has important, and stewardship provisions, including cost-plus pricing, with a commitment to lower the costs based on volumes to help keep the product affordable for patients and health systems in low-resource settings.

'Climate change can spur deadly infections'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Increasing climate change conditions may spur infectious diseases that can prove deadly to humankind, finds an alarming study published in the scientific journal Ecography.

The study echoes concerns raised in a recently released G-20 outcome document, where, in India, also noted that climate change will continue to drive health emergencies, including the emergence and re-emergence of infectious diseases.

The new study detailed a Europe-wide investigation on the prevalence of protozoans, bacteria and viruses potentially pathogenic to humans and domestic animals in birds and bats in varying climatic conditions. The prevalence of many of these pathogens was associated with temperature or rain-



fall. It had compiled information on the occurrence of over 75 pathogenic microbes across Europe from almost 400 bird- and 40 bat species. Combining data on occurrence with climatic factors revealed that the occurrence of most pathogens was associated with temperature or rainfall.

"In general, the occurrence of pathogenic bacteria increased in areas with a warm and dry climate. On the other hand, pathogenic viruses prefer moist climates," said lead author Yanjie Xu from the Finnish Museum of Natural History, University of Helsinki

in Finland. The association between climatic factors and pathogens could be investigated on the 17 pathogen taxa with most data. The observed associations varied. "Temperature was positively associated with occurrence of avian flu virus, malaria parasite, and bacteria that cause chlamydia, salmonella, Q-fever and typhus in birds and bats," explains university lecturer Arto Pulliainen from the University of Turku Institute of Biomedicine in Finland.

Rainfall had both positive and negative associations with the occurrence of pathogens. For instance, increasing rainfall increased the probability for the occurrence of Usutu-, Sindbis- and avian flu viruses, as well as that of the occurrence of salmonella bacteria. "Usutu- and Sindbis- viruses are vectored by

mosquitoes, and rainfall can increase the occurrence of wetlands favoured by mosquitoes.

Similarly, avian flu and salmonella are prevalent particularly in waterfowl, for whom wetlands are also of importance," said academy research fellow Thomas Lilley from the Finnish Museum of Natural History. In fact, the WHO and partners are launching a global network to help protect people from infectious disease threats through the power of pathogen genomics.

The International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN) will provide a platform to connect countries and regions, improving systems for collecting and analyzing samples, using these data to drive public health decision-making, and sharing that information more broadly.

G20 domestic outreach event organised at BHU

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

A G20 domestic outreach event was organised on the theme 'G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group: Towards Strong, Sustainable, Balanced, and Inclusive growth (SSBIG)' at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) here on Tuesday on the eve of the 4th G20 Sustainable Finance Working Group (SFWG) Meeting in the city.

The welcome address in the domestic outreach event was given by Dr Balu Kenchappa, Regional Director, Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Lucknow. The keynote address was delivered by Geetu Joshi, Adviser, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. In her keynote address, she highlighted the key outcomes of the G20 leaders' summit held in New Delhi recently, viz. achieving strong, sustainable, balanced, and inclusive growth, accelerating progress on sustainable development goals (SDGs), green development pact for a sustainable future, developing multilateral institutions for the 21st century, technological transformation and digital public infrastructure, and gender equality and empowering all women and girls. The G20 event had two sessions with session-I comprising experience sharing presentations on the theme 'Scaling up Social



G20 domestic outreach event being held at BHU in Varanasi on Tuesday.

Impact Investment in India'. The presentations were on social stock exchange by Abhishek Rozatkar, AGM, SEBI and on development impact bond by Vijaylakshmi Saxena, CFO, Educate Girls respectively. Session-II comprised a panel discussion on all the priority areas of the G20 SFWG. The panel discussion was moderated by Brij Raj, Chief General Manager, RBI. The panelists comprised Dr

Dhruba Purkayastha, India Director, CPI, Ashwini Kumar Tewari, MD, SBI and Roshika Singh, Senior Country Officer, India - IFC. The panelists offered rich insights from their vast experience on the topic and gave several useful suggestions on the priority areas of the G20 SFWG ie 'mechanisms for mobilisation of timely and adequate resources for climate finance', 'enabling finance for the SDGs' and 'capacity build-

CRS conducts safety inspection

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Commissioner of Railway Safety (CRS), NE Circle, Manoj Arora conducted the safety inspection of the third newly-constructed electrified line between Gorakhpur Cantt-Kusumbhi railway section of North Eastern Railway (NER), along with Chief Administrative Officer (Construction) of NER SC Srivastava, Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) of Varanasi Division (NER) Vineet Kumar Srivastava and other senior NER officers on Monday.

In order to upgrade the passenger facilities and expand the infrastructure for ease of operation on the route, Arora also completed speed trials by his special CRS train successfully, touching a maximum speed of 120 km per hour on this newly-constructed third electrified line. Later, the CRS inspected a major bridge (number 176) between Gorakhpur Junction and Gorakhpur Cantt stations.

In the beginning, Arora inspected the safety records, yard plan, station working rule, platform clearance, point crossing, signalling, fouling mark, panel interlocking, as per the standards of the third new electrified railway line at Gorakhpur Cantt railway station. Then he did a thorough inspection of the battery room, relay room, trailing point etc of the line connecting Gorakhpur Cantt and Kusumbhi railway stations and tested the efficiency of safety work by asking safety-related questions to the sta-



CRS Manoj Arora inspecting Kusumbhi railway station of Varanasi Division (NER) on Monday.

tion master. Thereafter, the CRS reached curvature numbers 3A and 3B by motor trolley and measured the centripetal acceleration at the indent and overhead traction of the curve. Then Arora reached bridge number 173 and bridge number 175 A and checked their foundations, pillars, approaches, girders, concrete blocks, fittings and maintenance etc. He also conducted a safety inspection of level crossing gate number 115C and tested the safety knowledge of the gate man.

Later, the CRS reached point number 202A of Kusumbhi railway station and did a gauge test of the point and microscopic inspection of coordination with other points. Along with this, he also

checked the connectivity of the new third line with the running and siding lines of Kusumbhi station and inspected the new yard plan, station working rule, station panel, points and crossings and newly installed signals. With the completion of this project, Gorakhpur Cantt station will be developed as a satellite station. The number of lines and platforms will increase and more trains will be able to run from the station. Construction of the third line will result in expansion of line capacity, which will result in movement of more trains, improvement in punctuality of trains and increase in passenger satisfaction. Along with this, there will also be a reduction in the movement time of goods trains

running on this railway section, which will prove useful for traders. Senior officers who were also present were ADRM (Infra) Rahul Srivastava, Chief Engineers (Construction) SK Kannaujiya and Akhilek Kumar Tripathi, Chief Electrical Design Engineer (Construction) Suresh Kumar, Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer (Construction) Neelabh Mahesh, Senior Divisional Engineer (Coordination) Rakesh Ranjan, Senior Divisional Operations Manager AP Singh, Senior Divisional Safety Officer Balendra Paul, Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer (Traction) RN Singh and Senior Divisional Signal and Telecommunication Engineer Yashveer Singh.

Preparations on to finalise electoral list

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Block Level Officer (BLO) will visit from home to home to improve the Electoral Population (EP) ratio and add to the voters aged 18-19 years in the electoral list. In view of the parliamentary election scheduled to be conducted next year, the district electoral office has started its preparations to finalise the electoral list.

Reviewing the revision work of the electoral list on Monday at the auditorium in the office of divisional commissioner here, the District Magistrate and District Electoral Officer (DM/DEO) S Rajalingam directed the Electoral Returning Officers (EROs) and Assistant EROs to focus on adding to the new voters aged 18-19 years in the electoral lists and also improve the EP ratio. This work should be completed at the earliest.

The BLO should visit from home to home and pay special attention on Form No-6&7, the DM directed, adding that the



DM/DEO S Rajalingam chairing a meeting to review the electoral list.

BLO should pay attention to improve the EP ratio and also add to the new voters in the voters' lists. The DM directed the EROs and AEROs to discharge the duty of adding to the names of new voters aged 18-19 years in

the voter's lists and deleting the replicate or displaced voters from the lists. The EP ratio should be from 60 to 65 per cent but when he asked the AERO of the assembly constituencies about this, the EP ratio of

maximum was found more than 70 per cent and the District Magistrate took a serious note of it and asked the Additional District Magistrate -E/Dy DEO to withhold their one day salary and seek clarification from them.

60-year-old man shot dead

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Three bike-borne assailants shot dead a 60-year-old retired roadways employee outside his house in Akaripur village of Pratapgarh allegedly over old enmity, police said.

Following the incident, an FIR has been lodged against Durgesh Pandey of Dhaurhara and two unknown persons at Aspur Devsara police station on the complaint of victim's son. The police said deceased Shyam Shankar Tiwari was returning home from a temple around 9:30 pm when three men on a bike, who arrived from Narangpur area, intercepted him near his residence and fired three bullets.

On hearing gunshots, family members of the victim, including his son Shubham

Kumar Tiwari alias Lalla, rushed to the spot. But by then, the assailants had managed to escape towards Dayalganj Bazar road. They took Tiwari to a hospital where the doctors declared him dead. The police have begun a probe though no arrests have been made so far.

JUDICIAL COMMITTEE: The Allahabad High Court clarified that president of Oudh Bar Association (OBA), Lucknow will also be a member of the judicial committee, constituted by the court in the wake of the ongoing agitation of lawyers to redress their grievances. Earlier in an order dated September 9, 2023, the high court had directed that the judicial committee will comprise three sitting judges of the Allahabad High Court —

Justice Manoj Kumar Gupta (chairman), Justice Rajan Roy and Justice Mohd Faiz Alam Khan. It also includes the advocate general of Uttar Pradesh or his nominee, chairman, Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh and president, High Court Bar Association.

The court had constituted this judicial committee to address the grievance of the lawyers regarding the police cane charge incident of Hapur.

The court also directed that it be informed about the actions taken on the first information report (FIR) lodged by the lawyers against the police personnel in respect of the incident. On September 11 a division bench comprising Chief Justice Pratikar Diwaker and Justice Mahesh Chandra

Tripathi said, "In order dated September 9, we had included president of Allahabad High Court Bar Association as its member, which included the president of Oudh Bar Association, Lucknow, as was our intent, however, to remove any scope for confusion in this regard, we explicitly provide that president of Oudh Bar Association, Lucknow would also be a member of the said committee." The police had allegedly lathicharged lawyers on August 29 at Hapur district court when they were protesting the registration of a case against a woman advocate and her father around a week ago. The lawyers across the state, on a call given by the Bar Council of Uttar Pradesh have been boycotting the judicial work since then.

Six children hurt in mishap

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

As many as six school children sustained minor injuries when the driver of the bus of a private school under Kokhraj police station of Kausambi drove the vehicle into a small pit with an attempt to stop it after the brakes failed. A total of 60 kids were on board the bus.

Upon being alerted, a team of Kokhraj police rushed to the spot on the road near Tarsaura village and carried out a rescue operation.

Additional SP (Kausambi) Samar Bahadur said: "Six children sustained minor injuries and were given first aid at a local hospital. Eyewitnesses have told the police that 60 children had a narrow escape after the bus driver drove the vehicle into a small pit to stop it after its brakes failed." The police said that the bus driver, identified as Ram

Lakhan, had picked up kids from Hisampur Paraskhi, Tadhra and Harsaura villages to take them to the school. As it reached near Tarsaura village, the driver noticed that brakes of the bus were not functioning and drove it in reverse gear towards a small pit with an objective to stop it. The driver's trick worked and the bus stopped after jerking. Half-a-dozen kids, including Janhnavi, Riya, Kalpana, Shivani, Shikha, and Shakshi, sustained minor injuries in the incident.

MAN DIES: A 28-year-old man who had gone to work from Bharatganj, nagar panchayat of Manda police station area here died in Gujarat due to sudden chest pain. When the body was brought to the native village by family members, there was mourning in the house.

Irfan Ahmed of Ward 5 Garopur Mohalla of Bharatganj Nagar Panchayat of Manda

police station area, used to work in a private company while living in Gandhidham, Gujarat. On Sunday morning when he reached his room from the company after night shift he suddenly started having chest pain. He was admitted to a nearby hospital for treatment by his friends. But Irfan died within a short while. The deceased was the youngest among five brothers.

In another incident, a man died after being hit by a train on the Delhi Via Howrah railway line in Manda police station area. On getting the information the police reached the spot and took possession of the body and sent it for the post-mortem.

According to information track man Shivshankar Patel saw the body of a young man on the down line of Delhi Howrah railway line near Garetha village of Manda police station area on night. He im-

mmediately sent this information along with a memo to Manda GRP. GRP incharge Bharat Bhushan Tiwari informed the Manda police about the incident.

On information Dighia outpost incharge Ashish Yadav reached the spot with the police team. The police identified the deceased as Sanjay Mishra (37), from the Aadhaar card found in his pocket and informed the family.

The body was brought to the police outpost there. After the panchama it was sent for post-mortem. The deceased was the younger of the two brothers and unmarried. According to family members, Sanjay had gone out to Dighia market for shopping in the afternoon. When he did not reach home at night, they started searching for him. The family members were shocked when the policemen informed about his death at night.

Students selected in UP PCS J felicitated

PRAYAGRAJ (PNS): The students selected in the UP PCS J 2022 examination were felicitated by the Law Academy here. The candidates selected in PCS J shared their experiences. The Law Academy students, Aishwarya Yadav, Satyabhama Kaushiki, Pawan Sharma, Preeti Shukla, Bushra Naz Ansari, Karishma Yadav, Srishiti Shukla, Khushboo Sharma, Shubuk Muskan etc were honoured with mementos by the chief guest, retired district judge RC Mishra, who said it



is a matter of joy that the Law Academy provides complete curriculum for the preparation of judicial services. On the occasion selected students of the institute, Ankit Bharawal, Shruti Singh Ratanjit Jaiswal,

Akshay Kumar, Vishnu Verma, Vijendra Swaroop, Anjali Singh Vivashan Prakash, S. Anand, Ashutosh Singh, Shubham Malviya, Fauzia Jahan, Satyendra Mishra etc were present. Director JP Pandey said a

total of 27 students of the institute have been selected in the UP PCS J examination. Pandey congratulated the students for their success and asked them to discharge their duty as good judicial officers. Deepali Singh conducted the function. Apart from the selected students who had come to the institute, their parents and Dr Amit Mishra, Dr Purnendu Mishra, Dr Lovelesh Singh, Srishti Yadav, Rishika Singh, Ashutosh Kumar and Vivek Sharma etc were also present.

Anurag Tripathi takes charge as PCPO, NCR



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Anurag Tripathi took charge as Principal Chief Personnel Officer (PCPO) North Central Railway (NCR), here on Monday. He is an IRPS officer and belongs to Civil Services 1997 examination batch.

Tripathi started his railway service as assistant personnel officer (APO), Jhansi, Central Railway. He attained his early education from Government Inter College, Faizabad, and thereafter obtained bachelor's degree from Allahabad University and master's degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Prior to joining as Principal Chief Personnel Officer Tripathi was working as secretary in the Central Board of Secondary Education. He has earlier served as senior divisional personnel officer (SDPO)/Bhopal, SDPO/New Delhi and Principal, Oak Grove School, Mussoorie.

Miscreants kill guard, flee with cash box

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

related to different departments.

RESHUFFLE: In a big reshuffle on Monday most of the police stations in the district got new incharges. Superintendent of Police (SP) Abhinandan posted Bal Mukund Mishra from Police Lines to SHO (City Kotwali), SHO (City Kotwali) Arvind Mishra was transferred as SHO (Vindhyachal Kotwali), SHO (Vindhyachal Kotwali) Arvind Pandey was transferred to the crime branch along with SHO (Dehat Kotwali) Brijesh Singh. SHO Madihan Shailesh Rai was sent to Dehat Kotwali as SHO and SO Jamalpur Veerendra Singh was transferred as SO Padari. Besides, SO Padari Aji Srivastava was transferred to Lalganj police station as SO and Arvind Saroj from crime branch to Chhill police station as SO. Ravindra Bhushan Maurya has been transferred as SO Kachhawaan from Police Lines and SO Kachhawaan Ram Swaroop Varma was sent to the crime branch. Raj Kumar Singh posted in the IGRS cell was made SO Adalhat while SHO Adalhat Vijay Kumar Chaurasiya was transferred to Madihan police station as SHO. SO Santnagar Ram Narain was made SO Jamalpur. SO Ahraura Kumud Shekhar was transferred to the crime branch and SO Chhill Samar Bahadur was made the SO Santnagar.

RECOVERED: Under an eight-day-long drive in view of festival of Krishna Janmashtami the range police nabbed 126 persons and recovered liquor worth more than Rs

6 lakh. In compliance with the order of the police headquarters the police under the range conducted the drive against storage, transportation, sale and manufacture of illegal liquor under the direction of DIG (Police) RP Singh and raided the possible spots. The police nabbed habitual criminals and recovered liquor on a large scale. DIG RP Singh directed the cops to keep continue action against illegal trade of liquor and ensure that no such activity should come to notice.

ARRESTED: In the joint operation of Kachhawaan police station and SOG the police arrested a criminal carrying a reward of Rs 25,000 on Monday. On being informed about the presence of a hardcore criminal in the area, the Kachhawan police took the help of the SOG and raided the place.

On seeing the police the criminal opened fire but in retaliation of the police he got injured and was caught. After arresting him the police admitted him to the hospital and is under medical treatment. As per the police the criminal is involved in the illegal trade of liquor and is an accused in several cases, including opening fire on the cops of Nokha police station, Rohtas district of Bihar.

After the arrest the police recovered a motorcycle, a countrymade gun and three empty cartridges. The accused was identified as Anil Chaudhary of Kuraich under Sasaram Town police station, Rohtas district, Bihar.

Master class

India showed its pedigree as it sank Pak in all departments in their Asia Cup match

It is never a simple cricket match when India and Pakistan play each other. It is a matter of pride, of humiliation, of life, of death, of copious tears of exhilaration and sorrow — basically everything that will be talked about forever in this world. In this Asia Cup, the first "rivalry" match was washed out; the second — spread over two days — teased and disappointed fans and spectators by turn but the world kept watching even the replays with bated breath, and emotions ran high. At the end of the epic battle — interestingly, in equal measure against the forces of nature as against the fabled Pakistan cricket's might — India's emphatic victory was a testament to the team's all-round performance, with each member contributing fully to it. In a game that smelled of team spirit right from the word go, both Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma complimented each other and scored over a half century each. While the senior opener was happy to keep the wickets secure, Shubman went all over the park like a naughty child in Disneyland. The openers' wickets fell in quick succession a little later, and Virat Kohli and KL Rahul had barely started their innings when rain played spoilsport and halted the day's play after 24.1 overs.



On the reserve day, Kohli's contribution to the team's win was nothing short of extraordinary. It was also marked by his becoming the fastest player in the history of the game to reach 13,000 runs in One-Day Internationals (ODIs). Kohli broke the record of his idol and maestro Sachin Tendulkar, which was set in 2004 in Rawalpindi against Pakistan. Kohli's ability to consistently score runs and anchor the innings is unparalleled and he showcased his genius again in the high-stakes match. He not only reached the milestone of 13,000 runs but did so with remarkable speed and panache, with a ton. At the other end, he was ably backed by KL Rahul, who was returning to the side after a six-month injury layoff and who scalped another century. Their innings were filled with elegant drives, deft flicks and powerful shots that sent the Pakistani bowlers scrambling. The 13,000-run milestone is not just a testament to Kohli's incredible talent but also to his unwavering commitment and consistency. The other notable thing was how the Indian bowlers fared: there were inswingers, outswingers, spin, pace, floaters, you name it! And those were bowled with such accuracy and stealth that the Pakistani batters, including the world's best Babar Azam, remained just tethered to their stumps and routinely took the walk back to the pavilion with bowed heads and hunched shoulders after being dismissed. However, the point to hit home is that if we have to fight Pakistan, let it be on a 22-yard pitch. Cricket binds us and has the power to unite us. Ultimately, the game won; the hawks stand defeated. So let us compete but not fight, win but without making the other feel small.

PICTALK



The Immersive zone: People throng to the 'G20 Digital Museum Exhibition' at Bharat Mandapam, in New Delhi

China's trepidation is conjectural



PRAFULL GORADIA

China sees India's march to prosperity as something to be afraid of and perceives its success in world affairs as a threat

The India-China spat about who requested a meeting between President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi during the BRICS meeting is unfortunate. We have still not understood China's mentality. As a people, the Chinese do not take religion seriously. It is said they have Taoism for breakfast, Confucianism for lunch and Buddhism for dinner and that too as good conduct for living and not channels of faith, far lesser as explanations of life. In times of anxiety, the Chinese have no divine to seek, unlike the Hindus who have karma. The Chinese civilization has not developed sufficiently to have a script for their language. They have thousands of pictographs, rather like when the humans began to learn to write in caves. Despite ideas in simple pictures; they have no alphabet. The Chinese therefore, in many areas are driven by emotions rather than reason. Pride matters more than facts; conceding that they requested a meeting with PM Modi means China's need is greater than India's, unacceptable when mentioned in public. The Chinese end of the scale must be higher than anyone else's.

One shouldn't bargain with a Chinese businessman or shopkeeper. At most, say that his property or item is beautiful, but I cannot afford it. That protects his pride; it conveys, that I am not rich enough. Such things are beyond Indians' imagination. Britain ruled Hong Kong until 1997. Till World War II, it dominated China's southern provinces around Canton (now Guangzhou). The rulers mostly preferred Indian Sikhs for their constabulary, who discovered the common Chinese dreaded a kick on their backsides. This discovery made constabulary effective for the enforcement of law and order. Those Chinese of the region who recollect the constabulary do not like Indians. India's image after the humiliating defeat of 1962 in the border war is still remembered by the Chinese. They believed they had "shown India its place." The Chinese are still unable to reconcile to the fact that India is no longer afraid of



them, or that they can no longer be dismissive or disrespectful towards us.

Look at how China began its economic rise. It picked on the building industry i.e., real estate, boosting its cement and steel industries, plus other building materials besides providing a great number of jobs. Build, build and build was China's mantra. Roads, highways, parks and buildings were the result of this government-driven construction boom. Their regime also resorted to building residential houses by the thousand.

In 2001, I travelled by car 300 kilometres from Shanghai on a magnificent highway and saw thousands of ten-storeyed residential buildings on my way back at nighttime. I was surprised to see very few lights in those buildings, indicating that most flats were unoccupied. Millions more apartments must have been constructed after 2001. It's a moot question how many have found buyers. Would Indians have the boldness to go on a construction spree of this scale without worrying about buyers?

China's industry has followed a similar path. Land and factories were leased at virtually no cost. Term loans were granted for acquiring machin-

CHINA PICKED ON THE BUILDING INDUSTRY WITH REAL ESTATE, BOOSTING ITS CEMENT AND STEEL INDUSTRIES, PLUS OTHER BUILDING MATERIALS BESIDES PROVIDING A GREAT NUMBER OF JOBS

ery at an interest rate of 1 or 2 per cent. The promoter(s) was assured of zero labour trouble, the only expectation from him was to export about 75 per cent of his production to earn hard currency. These were not exports but dumping. Yet, despite the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the world, including the USA, Europe and India imported these goods in the name of free trade.

India still imports about USD 100 billion worth of goods from China annually, comprising raw materials and consumer goods. Our exports to China are only about USD 30 billion. The Chinese cannot understand the contradiction between our treating them as both geopolitical adversaries and trading partners. My own experience in industry has taught me that there is no such thing as an indispensable supplier. If the alternative supplier charges a higher price, an efficient manufacturer can find a way of adjusting the cost of production, offsetting the higher cost in another area of production. One doesn't let oneself go out of business. Buying Chinese because it is cheaper is an escapist action for a lazy manufacturer.

On the consumer goods front, how many items are

indispensible? If we compare ourselves with the USA which is doing the same as what we are, this is simply incorrect. America has no geopolitical quarrel of the nature of a boundary dispute. Moreover, it is incomparably richer than us and can afford the luxury of this laziness. This conveys to the Chinese that trade is far more important than recovering territory. Jawaharlal Nehru even said in Parliament; "Not a blade of grass grows there (Aksai Chin) meaning, that territory is not vital to India.

Owing to their linear and rather one-track thinking, and the lack of understanding of the complexities of life, the Chinese cannot comprehend that the Hindu can both grasp and harmoniously co-exist with them. Given this insularity and absolute lack of freedom, it is no surprise that China sees India's recent success and march to prosperity as something to be afraid of, as the latter has amply demonstrated that a free and open society can deliver the designed outcomes. China's hostility towards us has to be seen in this light.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

COMMUNAL CLASHES

Sir — In the aftermath of violent Hindu-Muslim clashes in Pusesavali village of Khatav taluka, located approximately 50 km from Satara town, on Sunday, September 10th, the Satara district administration has suspended internet services. These clashes resulted in one person sustaining critical injuries, and multiple houses were set on fire by miscreants. Recently, the Satara and Sangli districts have faced immense pressure from the Sakal Hindu Samaj, who appear determined to use this region as a testing ground for divisive tactics that disrupt communal harmony.

Eyewitnesses reported that a violent mob, consisting of over a thousand people, went on a rampage, targeting houses, businesses, and handcarts in a specific area. This mob set fire to some houses and engaged in vandalism. The Satara police explained in a statement that the incident stemmed from the posting of an objectionable status message on social media on Sunday, September 10th. Citizens misunderstood the message, leading to a law-and-order situation on the ground. Unfortunately, the Maharashtra government failed to effectively control the situation and remained a passive observer.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

WOES OF CONTRACTUAL TEACHERS

Sir — Teachers in state-run schools in Bihar staged demonstrations in front of block offices across districts on Saturday, demanding employee status for all contractual educators who have dedicated several years to such educational institutions. These teachers have endured low salaries with the expectation of eventually attaining government employee status. However, instead of providing them with this rightful status, the government appears to be displaying ignorance.

Furthermore, teachers are often diverted into other activities, including election-related work, which hinders their ability to focus on teaching. Therefore, it is imperative that school teachers are immediate-

Defusing the use of plastic



Plastic bags pose a grave threat to the environment due to their slow decomposition, and animals that ingest them often suffer life-threatening illnesses. In a commendable step towards environmental preservation, shopkeep-

ers and vendors in Madhya Pradesh's Indore have abandoned the use of polythene bags. Additionally, dustbins have been strategically placed outside establishments to maintain cleanliness in the vicinity.

Indore has been recognized as the cleanest city in India for six consecutive years, and it aspires to maintain this status in 2023. Shopkeepers have noticed a significant change in customer behavior since the ban on single-use plastic in the city. Previously, customers would request plastic bags, but their habits have now shifted dramatically. This crucial initiative should be adopted in all cities to create a cleaner and healthier environment, benefiting both animals and nature.

Tauqueer Rahmani | Mumbai

ly relieved from engagement in non-teaching governmental activities. This will prevent them from having to resign from areas where they are currently obligated to perform non-teaching duties.

Mohammad Taufkir | Champaran

AFRICAN UNION IN THE G20

Sir — The inclusion of the African Union in the G20 is a commendable step that is poised to provide a significant boost to the African continent. This move grants the African Union, comprising 55 member states, a status on par with that of the European Union. Africa is blessed with abundant resources, but it has struggled with political stability, which has hindered human development.

With the support of the G20, we hope that the African Union, both collectively and individually within each member country, will strive to establish democratic governance and administrative stability. The African continent has witnessed a series of coups since 2020, affecting countries such as Gabon, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso. Each coup has been driven by unique local issues, but they all exploited the frustration of millions of Africans who perceived the military as a preferable

alternative to their failing governments. Many civilian leaders have clung to power through election rigging and the elimination of term limits, stifling opposition voices. The cost of living has soared due to various factors, including the Ukraine war, causing many Africans to lose faith in the democratic process. Consequently, there is a growing pro-military sentiment, which reflects the dissatisfaction with existing governments.

Studies of coups, both during the Cold War era and the post-Cold War era, reveal that military governments have performed poorly in both economic and political arenas. They have struggled to control terrorist organizations, particularly in the Sahel region. In light of the African Union's inclusion in the G20, the international community must play a pivotal role in promoting democratic values in Africa. Simultaneously, African nations will benefit from observing well-managed democracies and administrations within the majority of G-20 countries, offering them valuable learning experiences.

Arka Goswami | Durgapur

Back pain is debilitating but curable



NISHANT GEMINI

Physiotherapy and chiropractic care, both have their special techniques to help with muscle and joint health

Physiotherapists and chiropractors are skilled professionals who play a crucial role in supporting your musculoskeletal health. Though both techniques focus on managing pain, they differ in their approaches. While Chiropractors primarily target the musculoskeletal system through manual manipulation techniques, Physiotherapists address physical impairments and disabilities via exercises and manual therapy to enhance physical function.

The Unique Approach

Physiotherapists excel in optimising physical movement, employing tailored exercises and manual therapy to address impairments and disabilities. Their expertise extends beyond treating pain, encompassing various domains like cardiac rehabilitation, respiratory conditions, and elder care. On the other hand, chiropractors specialise in diagnosing and treating neuromuscular problems, primarily focusing on manual manipulation techniques to alleviate pain and correct misalignments.

Shared Objectives

Physiotherapy and chiro-



practic care have similar objectives: easing pain, enhancing movement, and boosting overall health. The decision between the two depends on your specific condition and treatment preferences. Physiotherapists offer tailored exercises to improve strength and flexibility

Postural Correction: Physiotherapy can address and correct poor posture, which is often a result of habits or imbalances. Through exercises and techniques, physiotherapists can help individuals improve their posture, relieving associated discomfort and preventing long-term musculoskeletal issues.

Recovery from Stroke: Physiotherapists also assist stroke patients in strengthening

ing affected body parts, enhancing balance, and refining movement to aid recovery

Manage Lifestyle Disorders: Targeted physiotherapy exercises and education can help manage lifestyle disorders, such as diabetes and osteoporosis besides helping prevent further complications. Chiropractic care also offers several advantages, such as:

Posture Correction: Chiropractic treatment may help correct poor posture, especially due to prolonged sitting

Spinal and Joint Manipulation: It helps correct misalignments and relieves pain through targeted adjustments.

Nervous System Enhancement: It promotes overall health by optimising nervous system function

Non-invasive Treatment: It is the safest non-surgical option for treating musculoskeletal conditions.

Those comfortable with manual manipulation may opt for chiropractic care, whereas individuals seeking a diverse range of treatment techniques may favour physiotherapy. When the chances of injuries are relatively less.

Physiotherapy and chiropractic care both have their special techniques to help with muscle and joint health. Whether you choose manual therapy or manual manipulation techniques, the ultimate goal remains the same. With the right knowledge, you can confidently embrace the therapy that resonates most with your needs, thus, unlocking the potential for a healthier and more vibrant life. Nowadays people do short courses and claim themselves chiropractic while should be discouraged.

(The writer is HOD-Physiotherapy, Primus Super Speciality Hospital, New Delhi)



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FIRST COLUMN

IN THE NAME OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

The media must adopt self-regulatory measures and avoid negativity



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

There has been a huge uproar across the country and also in some parts of the world over a derogatory remark made by a politician about religion followed by the majority population living in India. Immediately after his speech, there were millions of reactions on various social media platforms, TV channels and so on. Such scenes or shots have now become a staple food dished out in the sitcoms and serials aired by most of the TV channels in India. Just imagine the state of the minds that feed upon this sordid fare day in and day out. Most of the TV channels through their crime-based shows plant seeds of crime in the tender impressionable minds of youth by showing them various kinds of criminal and sinful activities explicitly. It is therefore not surprising when we read about real-life incidents of minors offending the honour of elderly women or rich kids resorting to various acts of crimes. The torrent of such prurient and violent images and messages on television has sounded the death knell on the crumbling body of our social and moral heritage that was once the pride of our existence.

The simple family values, the fear of God and sin, and the codes of conduct that once demarcated the line between sin and morality have been swept away forcefully by the strong winds of glamour, consumerism, pleasure and modernity which have been aggressively glorified by shows on television. As a result of this, today we have a generation of humans who have been desensitized towards immorality and corruption. Their sense and sensibilities have been numbed by excessive indulgence in vulgar and violent sights and sounds.

One can hence imagine as to what would be the output of the minds bred on such fetid fodder. So, who is accountable for this decadence? Parents? Teachers? Or Media? Usually, the media sidetracks the issue of moral accountability by saying that they are simply catering to the demands of the public and hence the supply is made to fulfil the demands. They also wave the banners of progressiveness, modernity, mirroring reality, upholding the freedom of expression and so on. Every country has a code of punishment for those who incite others towards crime.



But how to punish someone for directly or subtly inciting millions of viewers to imbibe negative behaviour traits and criminal tendencies? One wonders how would the makers of such programmes react if their reel-life episodes were to happen in their real life too. Earlier, sin and crime were limited to certain locations, which were normally out of bounds for youngsters and ordinary folks, but television & internet have changed all that by bringing the whole world at our fingertips in the privacy of our homes as a result of which all the limits of morality have been blown away. The young and old, girls and boys, the rich and the poor all are performing an orgy of sin at the altar of sensual pleasure, endlessly driven by materialism.

There is big money at stake for producers, advertisers, promoters, actors and broadcasters of mega shows that glorify glamour, sex and crime in the garb of entertainment and thrill. Therefore, it is high time that the media should wake up to its role of being an agent of positive change rather than just mirroring and glossing over the negative side of life. Realising its magnitude of influence over the masses, the media must adopt self-regulatory measures to curb the increasing use of sex and violence as means of entertainment and direct its resources to renew a culture based on the noble spiritual and social values that once marked our glorious civilization, for it is the only hope for society that can bring the real transformation.

(The writer is a spiritual educator and a popular columnist; views are personal)

LPG subsidy will hurt the exchequer



UTTAM GUPTA

The price cut especially for non-ujjwala beneficiaries was avoidable. It will serve no purpose and will be a drain on already strained oil companies



For several decades, it has been a common practice for governments to make decisions based on political expediency ignoring economic considerations. The incumbent Modi - dispensation has tried to change this practice but he too has fallen back to business as usual. One such area is the LPG subsidy.

On August 29, 2023, the Union Cabinet approved a reduction in the price of domestic cooking gas by Rs 200 per cylinder (14.2 kg) effective from August 30, 2023. De jure, the price of LPG is deregulated. How could the government decide on it? The reason is sale of LPG for household consumption is made by the three major oil marketing PSUs - Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) which are majority-owned and controlled by the Centre. So, the latter can give orders to the former.

The benefit of a price cut will be available to all the 330 million domestic consumers of LPG. They will now pay Rs 903 per cylinder (in Delhi) down from the existing Rs 1103 per cylinder.

Out of 330 million domestic HHs, 96 million are covered under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna or PMUY (under this scheme, the Centre provides free gas connection). They were already getting a subsidy of Rs 200 per cylinder for up to 12 refills per year. They will now pay Rs 400 less than the market/cost-based price or Rs 703 per cylinder in Delhi. Meanwhile, the government will provide an additional 7.5 million connections under PMJY, taking the total number of beneficiaries to 103.5 million. The Centre giving subsidies to all HHs (and more to Ujjwala Yojna beneficiaries) is out of sync with the policy signals it had started giving from January 2015.

Subsidy on LPG is the excess of its cost of supply - it is made up of the refinery-gate price or RGP (taken as import parity price or IPP and export parity price or EPP in the ratio of 80:20), freight, marketing costs, marketing margin, dealers' commission, and taxes and duties - over the price

paid by the beneficiary. It ought to be given only to those HHs who are poor and can't pay the cost-plus price. Moreover, it should be withdrawn when the beneficiaries stand on their own.

In the past, ignoring these cardinal principles, the subsidy was given to anyone who had an LPG connection. It went to all and sundry including the rich. The poor who alone should have got it sat at the bottom. According to the Economic Survey (2015-16), only 0.07 per cent of LPG subsidies in rural areas went to a fifth of the poorest households. In urban areas, the poorest fifth got only 8.2 per cent.

A lot of subsidies went to fake beneficiaries or the diversion of stocks (albeit subsidized) of LPG cylinders to hotels, restaurants, and other commercial users.

Despite lacking sound justification, sheer populism drove politicians to give subsidies. They found ways to give it without taking the burden on the Centre's balance sheet (BS). Initially, the subsidy on LPG (besides petrol, diesel, and kerosene) was cross-funded/subsidized by charging more on the sale of other products such as fuel oil, LSHS, naphtha, ATF, etc. Hence, no burden on the budget. In 2002-03, the Vajpayee-led NDA government ended the above system and decided to give subsidy on these products directly from the budget with an intent to eventually disband them. The UPA government which took charge in 2004, even while continuing with the subsidized sale, used disingenuous methods such as the issue of oil bonds to PSUs, and the sale of domestic crude by ONGC and OIL, etc. at a discounted price to IOCL/BPCL/HPCL to fund it.

In June 2010, petrol was decontrolled followed by diesel in November 2014. As for LPG, the

Kelkar Committee recommended the removal of 25 per cent of the subsidy in 2012-13 and 75 per cent in the following two years. Modi Government which took charge in May 2014, started acting on it but in a calibrated manner.

On January 1, 2015, it launched a direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy. Under DBT, oil PSUs deliver the cylinder to the beneficiaries at a full cost-based price and follow it up by depositing a subsidy in the beneficiary's account. In turn, they claim reimbursement of the subsidy amount from the Centre. This has helped in eliminating fake beneficiaries and curbing misuse that was inherent in the erstwhile system wherein subsidy was embedded in the price. In June 2020, the government stopped giving subsidies. Was this a conscious policy decision?

This wasn't the case or else it would not have made a provision for it in the budget for 2020-21 being Rs 36,000 crore. The reality is that in that year, there was a steep decline in international prices (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) leading to a fall in price to Rs 600 a cylinder even on a cost-plus basis; hence subsidy support wasn't required. The budget allocation was used largely to clear past dues of oil PSUs and provide free gas connections under PMUY.

During 2021-22 when the international price rose due to waning COVID and demand revival, the retail price of LPG zoomed to over Rs 900 per cylinder. This led the government to restore subsidies, but only for PMUY beneficiaries - a move that protected the poor while denying subsidies to the rest. It spent Rs 14,000 crore during that year. During 2022-23, it spent Rs 9,170 crore on those under PMUY. But, these numbers don't give the full picture.

From June 2020 to June 2022,

the government had asked the trio namely IOCL/BPCL/HPCL to sell LPG at a price below cost and gave them a one-time grant of Rs 22,000 crore to compensate for the losses incurred. This was nothing but subsidy (albeit 'hidden') given to all and sundry, and not just PMUY beneficiaries. This was a retrograde move and the retrogression is being continued during 2023-24.

In the Budget for 2023-24, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman kept the budget estimate (BE) for LPG subsidy at a mere Rs 2,257 crore. With the subsidy at Rs 200 per cylinder, that would be an average of 4 fills in a year per beneficiary comes to Rs 800. For 96 million PMUY beneficiaries, the subsidy requirement would be Rs 7,680 crore annually. The shortfall will have to be made up by seeking supplementary authorization from the Parliament.

But the real prick comes from the Cabinet's decision to reduce the price by Rs 200 per cylinder for all 330 million HHs. Taking 4 fills per HH, the annual burden comes to Rs 26,400 crore. Since the decision is effective from August 30, 2023, for the remaining seven months, the outgo would be Rs 15,300 crore.

The international price of crude is on the rise. Already, the price of the Indian crude import basket has increased from around US\$ 75 per barrel in June 2023 to US\$ 90 per barrel currently. This has led to a corresponding increase in LPG price as the two are linked. Given the cost-plus pricing beyond Rs 1103, there will be pressure to give more subsidies to keep the voters happy. The Centre could end up giving well more than Rs 25,000 crore during the current year! The price cut especially for non-Ujjwala beneficiaries was avoidable. But, thanks to competitive populism, even Modi has drifted.



IN THE PAST, A SUBSIDY WAS GIVEN TO ANYONE WHO HAD AN LPG CONNECTION. IT WENT TO ALL AND SUNDRY INCLUDING THE RICH

(The writer is a political analyst, views are personal)

The G20 agenda for bridging the gender digital gap

The lasting legacy of the G20 summit would be its attempt to mainstream a gender-responsive perspective

The just concluded G20 summit in India and its reiteration of gender empowerment through the implementation of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provides an apposite backdrop for examining the pace and progress of this empowerment in the host country, India. The 'G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs', released at the Varanasi Development Ministerial Meeting on 12 June 2023, stated, "...The G20 commits to promote collective, concrete and transformative actions on digital transformation; gender equality and empowerment of women...Further, the G20 should take actions to enhance gender equality and bridge the



ANUPMA MEHTA

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gender gap... and ensure the full, equal, meaningful and effective participation and leadership of women in decision-making at all levels."

The overall 2023 G20 Action Plan further accords primacy to the gender agenda and imparts digital financial literacy to all women and girls. Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised the need for 'women-led development' when India took over the G20 presidency.

Let us rewind a bit to the Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting at the G20 meet in Salta, Argentina, in 2018. The highlight of this meeting was the presentation of the report by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) on "Bridging the Digital Gender Divide: Include, Upskill, Innovate".

This report stressed the need for digitisation strategies to enhance women's skills and narrow down the gender gap, to fuel economic growth and well-being in all the G20 countries. The answer is not too encouraging. A recent UNICEF report reveals that a whopping 90 per cent of the jobs globally today have a digital component but most of them are captured by men, especially in developing countries, where only 41 per cent of women have access to the Internet vis-à-vis 53 per cent of men.

The G20's focus on bridging the gender digital divide, and the advent of Women20, the G20's platform for prioritising gender equity, therefore, could not have come at a more opportune time for

the host country, especially with its aspiration to become a \$1 trillion digital economy by 2025. India is, in fact, already leading the international digital revolution, reportedly accounting for 40 per cent of the global digital space since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 49 billion digital transactions that took place in India in 2022 were largely driven by frontline workers using tablets and smartphones to feed data into management information systems and for the virtual implementation of public welfare schemes like the Janani Suraksha Yojana and Jan Dhan Yojana.

The red flags, however, cannot be ignored. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, for the first time, col-

lected data on Internet usage and mobile phone ownership in various States in the National Family Health Survey-5 (NFHS-5), conducted during 2019-21. The NFHS-5 found that only one in three women in India had ever used the Internet as compared to more than half the men. The India Human Development Survey (IHDS), a panel study conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER) in collaboration with the University of Maryland, in its second round in 2011-12, also found that at ten years of age, only 20 per cent of girls use mobile phones vis-à-vis 27 per cent of boys. This gap keeps widening dramatically through adolescence and adulthood. Another 2021

study by an IHDS user, Chen Jingjing, showed an association between mobile phone ownership and higher female empowerment as well as greater women's involvement in decision-making.

So, what are the takeaways from the gender agenda of the G20? Its focus on ushering in digital transformation and Sustainable Development through Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women needs to be mainstreamed across the cities and towns of the country, to ensure that nobody is left behind in the digital revolution. Meanwhile, small pockets of gender assertion offer limitless hope. A CSR initiative implemented by L&T Finance Holdings Limited in 2019-20, called the 'Digital Sakhi project', reached

out to more than 4.75 lakh community members through door-to-door dissemination of financial literacy modules. But one of the major achievements of the project is being manifested at the grassroots level, in the villages of Madhya Pradesh, for instance, where the local 'Digital Sakhis' are actively countering digital discrimination by educating women to use smartphones in their daily lives.

Thus, when the official G20 summit in India is done and dusted, what would hopefully remain as one of its lasting legacies would be its attempt to mainstream a gender-responsive perspective and policy focus to bridge the gender digital divide across all the G20 demographics and geographies.

Kim to meet Putin amid standoffs with West

AP ■ SEOUL

North Korea's Kim Jong Un rolled into Russia on an armoured train Tuesday to see President Vladimir Putin, a rare meeting between isolated leaders driven together by their need for support in escalating standoffs with the West. Kim is expected to seek economic aid and military technology for his impoverished country, and, in an unusual twist, appears to have something Putin desperately needs: munitions for Russia's gruelling war in Ukraine. This meeting is a chance for the North Korean leader to get around crippling UN sanctions and years of diplomatic isolation. For Putin, it's an opportunity to refill ammunition stores that the war has drained.

Any arms deal with North Korea would violate the sanctions, which Russia supported in the past.

North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency said Kim boarded his personal train bound for Russia on Sunday afternoon, accompanied by members of the ruling party, government and military. His final destination is



uncertain. Many had assumed Kim and Putin would meet in Vladivostok, a Russian city close to the border where the two leaders had their last meeting in 2019, and which Putin is visiting this week for an economic forum.

But Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed only that Kim has entered Russia, and state news agency RIA-Novosti later reported his train had headed north after crossing the Razdolnaya River, taking it away from Vladivostok. The South Korean news agency Yonhap later published

a photo that it said showed the train in Ussuriysk, a city about 60 kilometres north of Vladivostok that has a sizeable ethnic Korean population.

Some Russian news media speculate that he is headed for the Vostochny spaceport, which Putin is to visit soon. Putin declined during the forum to say what he intended to do there. The launching facility is about 900 km (550 miles) northwest of Ussuriysk, but the route there is circuitous and it is unclear how long Kim's slow-moving train would take to get there.

Peskov said Putin and Kim will meet after the Vladivostok forum, and that the meeting would include a lunch in Kim's honour. Officials identified in North Korean state media photos may hint at what Kim might seek from Putin and what he would be willing to give.

Kim is apparently accompanied by Jo Chun Ryong, a ruling party official in charge of munitions policies who joined the leader on recent tours of factories producing artillery shells and missiles, said South Korea's Unification Ministry. Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu will be part of the Russian delegation, according to Peskov.

North Korea may have tens of millions of aging artillery shells and rockets based on Soviet designs that could give a huge boost to the Russian army in Ukraine, analysts say.

Also identified in photos were Pak Thae Song, chairman of North Korea's space science and technology committee, and Navy Adm Kim Myong Sik, who are linked with North Korean efforts to acquire spy satellites and nuclear-capable ballistic missile submarines.

Experts say North Korea would struggle to acquire such capabilities without external help, although it's not clear if Russia would share such sensitive technologies.

Kim Jong Un may also seek badly needed energy and food supplies, analysts say. Deputy foreign minister Andrei Rudenko said Russia may discuss humanitarian aid with the North Korean delegation, according to Russian news agencies.

Kim's delegation also likely includes his foreign minister, Choe Sun Hui, and his top two military officials, Korean People's Army Marshals Ri Pyong Chol and Pak Jong Chon. Data from FlightRadar24.com, which tracks flights worldwide, showed an Air Koryo Antonov An-148 took off from Pyongyang on Tuesday and flew for about an hour to reach Vladivostok.

North Korea's national airline has only just resumed flying internationally after being grounded during the COVID-19 pandemic. There had been speculation that North Korea could use a plane to fly in support staff.

10,000 missing, thousands feared dead in Libya floods

AP ■ CAIRO

Emergency workers uncovered hundreds of bodies as they dug through the wreckage of Libya's eastern city of Derna on Tuesday, and 10,000 people were reported still missing after floodwaters broke through dams and smashed through the city, washing away entire neighbourhoods. At least 700 recovered bodies have been buried so far, the health minister for eastern Libya said. Derna's ambulance authority put the current death toll at 2,300.

But the toll is likely to be far higher, in the thousands, said Tamer Ramadan, Libya envoy for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. He told a UN briefing in Geneva via videoconference from Tunisia that at least 10,000 people were still missing.

The situation in Libya was "as devastating as the situation in Morocco," Ramadan said, referring to the deadly earthquake that hit near the city of Marrakesh on Friday night.

The destruction came to Derna and other parts of eastern Libya on Sunday night, when Mediterranean storm Daniel pounded the coast. Residents said they heard loud explosions and realised that dams outside the city had collapsed, unleashing flash floods down Wadi Derna, a river running through the city and into the sea.

The wall of water sweeping through Derna "erased everything in its way," said one resident, Ahmed Abdalla.

Videos posted online by residents showed large swaths of mud and wreckage where the raging waters had swept away the residential neighbourhoods on both banks of the river. Multi-story apartment buildings that once were well back from the river had facades ripped away and concrete floors collapsed. Cars lifted by the water were left dumped on top of each other.

Residents in the city of some 90,000 were on their own in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, with authorities in eastern Libya saying they were unable to reach Derna. On Tuesday, most of the eastern government had arrived in the city. Local emer-



gency responders, including troops, government workers, volunteers and residents were digging through rubble to recover the dead. They also used inflatable boats to retrieve bodies from the water. Footage showed dozens of bodies covered by blankets laid out in the yard of a hospital in Derna. Many bodies were believed trapped under rubble or had been washed out into the Mediterranean Sea, said eastern Libya's health minister, Othman Abdulljaleel.

"We were stunned by the amount of destruction ... the tragedy is very significant, and beyond the capacity of Derna and the government," Abdulljaleel told The Associated Press on the phone from Derna.

Red Crescent teams from other parts of Libya also arrived in Derna on Tuesday morning but extra excavators and other equipment had yet to get there, hampered in part by cutoff and destroyed roads.

Authorities said two dams on Wadi Derna had collapsed, underscoring the weakness of Libya's infrastructure after more than a decade of chaos. The oil-rich nation remains divided between two rival administrations: one in the east and one in the west, each backed by different militias and foreign governments.

Derna is controlled by the forces of military commander Khalifa Hifter, the strongman of the east Libya government, based in Benghazi.

Local authorities have neglected Derna for years, often discussing developing it but never acting, said Jalel Harchaoui, an associate fellow specialising in Libya at the London-based Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies.

"Even the maintenance aspect was simply absent.

Everything kept being delayed," he said.

Aid also began to come into a staging ground in Benghazi, 250 km (150 miles) west of Derna. Egyptian military officials arrived in Benghazi along with a rescue team and helicopters. The Tripoli-based government of western Libya sent a plane with 14 tons of medical supplies and health workers to Benghazi.

US Special Envoy for Libya Richard Norland said on X platform, formerly known as Twitter, that the United States is coordinating with the United Nations and local authorities to assess how best to target official US assistance. Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates also promised help for search and rescue efforts.

The storm hit other areas in eastern Libya, including the town of Bayda, where about 50 people were reported dead. The Medical Centre of Bayda, the main hospital, was flooded and patients had to be evacuated, according to footage shared by the centre on Facebook. Other towns that suffered, included Susa, Marj and Shahhat, according to the government. Hundreds of families were displaced and took shelter in schools and other government buildings in the city of Benghazi and elsewhere in eastern Libya.

Northeast Libya is one of the country's most fertile and green regions. The Jabal al-Akhdar area — where Bayda, Marj and Shahhat are located — has one of the country's highest average annual rainfalls, according to the World Bank.

Known for its white-painted houses and palm gardens, Derna was largely built by Italy when Libya was under Italian occupation in the first half of the 20th century.

Putin: US political system is 'rotten'

AP ■ VLADIVOSTOK

Russian President Vladimir Putin asserted Tuesday that the criminal cases against former US President Donald Trump are political revenge that show the fundamental corruption of the United States. "As for the prosecution of Trump, for us what is happening in today's conditions, in my opinion, is good because it shows the rotteness of the American political system, which cannot pretend to teach others democracy," Putin said at an Eastern Economic Forum gathering in Russia's Pacific Coast city of Vladivostok.

"Everything that is happening with Trump is the persecution of a political rival for political reasons. That's what it is. And this is being done in front of the public of the United States and the whole world," he said. Opinion polls indicate that Trump is by far the strongest contender to become the

Republican Party's candidate in the 2024 presidential election. During his four years in the White House, Trump repeatedly touted having good relations with Putin, while critics alleged he was submissive to the Russian leader. Trump has claimed he could resolve the conflict in Ukraine in a matter of days, if he regains the presidency. He has not provided details of his potential approach. "We hear that Mr. Trump says that he will solve pressing problems in a few days, including the Ukrainian crisis. Well, this cannot but bring happiness. This is good," Putin said. However, the Russian leader said his country's poor relations with the United States were unlikely to change significantly regardless of who becomes president. "What to expect from the future, no matter who the president is, it's hard for us to say, but it's unlikely that anything will change radically," Putin said.

Trump lawyers seek recusal of judge in DC presiding

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Lawyers for Donald Trump Leon Monday asked the federal judge presiding over his election subversion case in Washington to recuse herself, saying her past public statements about the former president and his connection to the January 6, 2021, riot at the US Capitol call into question whether she can be fair.

The recusal motion from Trump's lawyers takes aim at US District Judge Tanya Chutkan, a former assistant public defender who was nominated to the bench by President Barack Obama and has stood out as one of the toughest punishers of January 6 defendants. The request is a long shot given the high threshold for recusal and because the decision on whether to recuse belongs to Chutkan, who is unlikely to see cause to step aside from the case.

Even so, the request that



she give up the high-stakes trial marks the latest flashpoint in already delicate relations between the defence team and the judge, who has repeatedly cautioned against inflammatory public comments from Trump but has nonetheless been lambasted on social media by him.

Special counsel Jack Smith's team signalled its own concern about his comments, writing last week that Trump's daily statements — he has derided her as "highly partisan" — could taint a potential jury

pool. Chutkan ordered Smith's team to file any opposition to Trump's recusal bid by Thursday.

Chutkan last month scheduled the trial for March 4, 2024, over the vigorous objections of defense lawyers who said that would not give them enough time to prepare. The case in Washington, charging Trump in a four-count indictment with plotting to overturn the results of the 2020 election, is one of four criminal cases confronting the former president as he seeks reelection to the White House.

In asking Chutkan to step aside, the Trump legal team is relying on a familiar playbook. He tried unsuccessfully to get the judge removed from the

hush-money case against him in New York state court, with his lawyers claiming that Judge Juan Manuel Merchan is biased because he's given cash to Democrats and his daughter is a party consultant.

Taiwan says it spotted 22 Chinese warplanes, 20 warships near island

AP ■ TAIPEI

Taiwan said Tuesday it spotted 22 Chinese military aircraft and 20 vessels near the island over the previous 24 hours, as Beijing steps up its military activities in the area. Over the weekend, the United States and Canada sailed warships through the Taiwan Strait in a challenge to China's sweeping territorial claims. On Monday, China sailed a naval formation led by its aircraft carrier Shandong, about 70 miles (110 kilometres) to Taiwan's southeast. The vessel was expected to conduct drills simulating aircraft, submarine, warship and land attacks, according to Chinese state media. Thirteen of the Chinese military aircraft reported on Tuesday had crossed the median line of the Taiwan Strait, an unofficial demarcation zone between China and Taiwan, according



to Taiwan's defence ministry. China claims Taiwan, a self-ruled democracy, as part of its territory to be reunited by force if necessary. Over the past year, Beijing has stepped up military activities around the island, including by sending warships and warplanes on a near-daily basis.

"The period from July to September this year was the peak period for the Chinese Communist Party's exercises," Maj. Gen. Huang Wen-Chi, the assistant deputy chief with the General Staff for

Intelligence of Taiwan's Defence Ministry, said during a press conference.

"There are a lot of warship activities in the waters surrounding the Taiwan Strait. There was also a large number of warships operating in different areas in the South China Sea and East China Sea," he said.

Huang said the Taiwanese military would continue the monitor the movements of Chinese warplanes and warships.

On Saturday, the USS Ralph Johnson and the Royal Canadian Navy's Halifax-class frigate HMCS Ottawa sailed through the Taiwan Strait. The timing coincided with a Group of 20 leaders' summit in New Delhi.

The US routinely sails through the strait in what it calls "freedom of navigation" operations, which China sees as provocative actions.

Israeli SC hears first challenge to Netanyahu's judicial overhaul

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel's Supreme Court heard the first challenge Tuesday to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's contentious judicial overhaul — deepening a showdown with the far-right government that has bitterly divided the nation and put the country on the brink of a constitutional crisis.

Netanyahu's coalition, a collection of ultranationalist and ultrareligious lawmakers, unveiled the overhaul earlier this year, saying it was necessary to rein in an unelected judiciary they believe wields too much power. Critics say the plan — which would weaken the Supreme Court — represents a profound threat to Israeli democracy and argue it would concentrate power in the hands of Netanyahu and his allies. They contend that

the court is a key check on majority rule in a country with an otherwise weak system of checks and balances — just one house of parliament where the governing coalition is headed by the prime minister. The country's president is a figurehead, and there is no firm, written constitution.

The case opened Tuesday focuses on the first law passed by parliament in July — a measure that cancels the court's ability to strike down government moves it deems to be "unreasonable". Judges have used the legal standard in rare cases to prevent government decisions or appointments viewed as unsound or corrupt.

The hearing puts Israel's Supreme Court in the unprecedented position of deciding whether to accept limits on its own powers. In a sign of the case's significance, all 15 justices

are hearing appeals to the law together for the first time in the country's history, rather than the typical smaller panels.

The proceedings were also being livestreamed and aired on the country's main TV stations.

A ruling is not expected for weeks or even months, but the hearing could hint at the court's direction.

The political survival of Netanyahu, who returned to power late last year while standing trial on bribery, fraud and breach of trust charges, is also bound up with the overhaul.

His hard-line, religiously conservative coalition partners have threatened to rebel if he doesn't see the legislation through, and critics say Netanyahu could use the overhaul to get the charges against him dismissed.

The plan has infuriated

people across many segments of Israeli society, bringing hundreds of thousands into the streets to march at one protest after another for the past 36 weeks.

"We stand here today with millions of citizens to stop the government coup," said Eliad Shraga, chairman of the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, one of the groups that asked the court to strike down the new law. "Together we will preserve Israeli democracy."

But it has also exposed an enormous gulf in Israel. Opponents of the plan come largely from the country's secular middle class. Leading high-tech business figures have threatened to relocate. Perhaps most dramatic, thousands of military reservists have broken with the government and declared their refusal to report for duty over the plan.

Cease-fire declared in Lebanon's Palestinian refugee camp

Lebanon: (AP) An "immediate and lasting cease-fire" was declared on Monday after a top Lebanese general met with officials from rival Palestinian factions, following days of fighting in Lebanon's largest Palestinian refugee camp, which left several people dead and dozens wounded.

The new ceasefire failed to halt the fighting, however, residents and officials in the camp said in the hours after the agreement was announced. It was the latest in a series of cease-fires that only lasted for hours before fighting erupted again.

The announcement was made in Beirut by the General Security Directorate.

Gunfire and explosions were heard throughout the day inside the Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp, claiming the life of at least one person. Stray bullets and shells hit residential areas in the country's third-largest city.

The fighting that broke out Thursday night after nearly a month of calm in Ein el-Hilweh refugee camp near the port city of Sidon between Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah group and militant Islamist groups has left six people dead and more than 50 wounded according to medical officials and state media.

The UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, shared its own tally on Sunday saying four people were killed and 60 others wounded. Clashes erupted at Fatah and other allied militant factions in the camp had intended to crack down on suspects accused of killing Fatah military general, Abu Ashraf al Armoushi, in the camp in late July. AP

Researcher rescued from Turkish cave

AP ■ TURKEY

Rescue rescuers pulled an American researcher out of a Turkish cave more than a week after he became seriously ill 1,000 metres (more than 3,000 feet) below its entrance, the Speleological Federation of Turkey said.



Dickey is out of the Morca cave," said a statement by the speleological federation. It said that Dickey was removed from the last exit of the cave at 12:37 am local time on Tuesday, or 9:37 pm GMT on Monday. "He is fine and is being tended to by emergency medical worker in the encampment above," the statement said.

Mark's parents, Debbie and Andy Dickey, thanked the international caving community, doctors and rescuers, and the Turkish government for

helping rescue their son. "The fact that our son, Mark Dickey, has been moved out of Morca Cave in stable condition is indescribably relieving and fills us with incredible joy," they said in a statement.

The American was first treated inside the cave by a Hungarian doctor who went down the cave on September 3. Doctors and rescuers then took turns caring for him. The cause of Dickey's illness was not clear.

The biggest challenges for the rescuers were the steep vertical sections and navigating through mud and water at low temperatures in the horizontal sections. There was also the psychological toll of staying inside a dark, damp cave for extended periods of time.

Around 190 experts from

Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Turkiye took part in the rescue, including doctors, paramedics and experienced cavers. Teams comprised of a doctor and three to four other rescuers took turns staying by his side at all times.

The rescue began on Saturday after doctors, who administered IV fluids and blood, determined that Dickey could make the arduous ascent.

Before the evacuation could begin, rescuers first had to widen some of the cave's narrow passages, install ropes to pull him up vertical shafts on a stretcher and set up temporary camps along the way.

Dickey, who is from Croton-on-Hudson, New York, is a well-known cave researcher and a cave rescuer himself who had participated in many international expeditions.

Google's search dominance challenged in antitrust trial

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Google has exploited its dominance of the internet search market to lock out competitors and smother innovation, the Department of Justice charged Tuesday at the opening of the biggest US antitrust trial in a quarter century. "This case is about the future of the internet and whether Google's search engine will ever face meaningful competition," said Kenneth Dintzer, the Justice Department's lead litigator.

Over the next 10 weeks, federal lawyers and state attorneys general will try to prove Google rigged the market in its favour by locking its search engine in as the default choice in

a plethora of places and devices. US District Judge Amit Mehta likely won't issue a ruling until early next year. If he decides Google broke the law, another trial will decide what steps should be taken to rein in the Mountain View, California-based company.

Top executives at Google and its corporate parent Alphabet Inc, as well as those from other powerful technology companies are expected to testify. Among them is likely to be Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai, who succeeded Google co-founder Larry Page four years ago. Court documents also suggest that Eddy Cue, a high ranking Apple executive, might be called to the stand.

The Justice Department filed its antitrust lawsuit against

Google nearly three years ago during the Trump administration, charging that the company has used its internet search dominance to gain an unfair advantage against competitors.

Government lawyers allege that Google protects its franchise through a form of payola, shelling out billions of dollars annually to be the default search engine on the iPhone and on web browsers such as Apple's Safari and Mozilla's Firefox.

Regulators also charge that Google has illegally rigged the market in its favour by requiring its search engine to be bundled with its Android software for smartphones if the device manufacturers want full access to the Android app store.

Cipher case: Verdict on Imran's plea reserved

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

A Pakistani court on Tuesday reserved judgement on a petition filed by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan challenging the hearing of the cipher case inside the Attock prison in Punjab province. The 70-year-old chairman of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party has been kept in jail since August 5 after his conviction in the Toshakhana corruption case. His sentence was suspended by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on August 29, but he continues to remain in Attock prison in the cipher case. His remand has been extended till September 13 by a special court in the case.

The cricketer-turned-politician is charged with the violation of the Official Secrets Act in connection with the leakage of a confidential diplomatic cable from Pakistan's embassy in Washington.

During the hearing at the Islamabad High Court, Imran's



PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Counsel Sher Afzal Marwat alleged that there was malice behind the change of venue for the cipher case hearing. The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

"The purpose of this change of venue notification is to keep the PTI chairman in jail. We have not even been notified why the notification was issued," he said.

Underlining that any trial of a civilian registered under the Official Secret Acts takes

place in a special court, as per the law, Marwat argued the rule should be applicable in Khan's case as well.

He further questioned under which law and authority was the law ministry able to transfer the hearing of the case to Attock Jail.

"How can the trial be transferred from Islamabad to Punjab? Transferring a trial to another province can legally be done only by the Supreme Court, not by the chief commissioner or home secretary," Marwat argued, adding that if the trial venue was to be changed, a petition should have been filed with the trial judge.

In his argument, Additional Attorney General Mansoor Iqbal Dogal said the notification related to the jail trial was for one time only and that the exception made and the PTI chief's petition ineffective.

After hearing both parties, the IHC reserved its decision in the petition.

Nawaz will return to Pak on Oct 21, says PM

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) supreme Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan from London on October 21 to lead the party's political campaign in the upcoming elections, his younger brother and former prime minister Shehbaz Sharif said on Tuesday.

Nawaz, 73, has been living in self-imposed exile in London since November 2019. "Nawaz Sharif will return to Pakistan on October 21," Shehbaz said in a statement after a meeting of the PML-N's top leadership headed by Nawaz in London.

Shehbaz added that the party founder would be given a grand welcome upon return. Nawaz was convicted in the Al-Azizia Mills and Avenfield corruption cases in 2018. He was serving a seven-year imprisonment at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in the Al-Azizia Mills case before he was allowed to proceed to London in 2019 on "medical grounds."

28 places of worship of Ahmadis attacked, destroyed in Pak in '23

PTI ■ LAHORE

At least 28 places of worship of the Ahmadi minority community have either been attacked by radical Islamists or partially demolished by police in different parts of Pakistan so far in 2023, a report said on Tuesday. The report, brought out by the Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan, representing the persecuted community, said that since January 2023, at least 28 incidents of desecration of its places of worship have taken place across the country with 10 of these occurring in Sindh and remaining in Punjab province.

"Some Ahmadi places of worship came under attack by a radical Islamist party while in other incidents, police, under the pressure of religious extremists, demolished minarets and arches and removed sacred writings," the report said.

The latest such incident was on Friday, September 8, when the arches of a place of worship of the Ahmadis were destroyed by the police in Punjab province, in defiance of a high court order banning such actions against the places of worship of the minority community built before 1984.

The radical Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) is reportedly at the forefront of stoking hatred against Ahmadis and exerting pressure on police action against its places of worship. However, not a single case against the TLP activists has been registered for their alleged involvement in any such incident so far.

Earlier, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) said the destruction of part of Ahmadiyya sites of worship is a brazen violation of the recent Lahore High Court judgment regarding the protection of Ahmadiyya sites of worship. "It demonstrates yet again that the community is being hemmed in systematically and deliberately by law enforcement and the religious far right alike. According to the 2014 Supreme Court judgment, the police are supposed to protect the community's right to practice its faith. The government must hold the perpetrators accountable, repair the damage and ensure that this does not recur again," the HRCP said.

The Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya Pakistan says the situation is becoming worse day by day for the already marginalised Ahmadis in the country. "Ahmadis are facing persecution at the hands of the evil elements. The acts of desecration of the places of worship in various areas of Pakistan continue unabated. It is a new norm and the authorities are doing nothing," the report said. The police are complicit with the extremist elements

Pak SC upholds sentences of army officers for conspiring against Benazir govt

Islamabad (PTI): Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday upheld the sentences of military officers involved in the 1995 conspiracy to overthrow the government of slain former PM Benazir Bhutto. The case was based on a plan by a group of officers to storm a corps commanders meeting scheduled to be held on September 30 in 1995 at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi to kill then Army chief Gen Waheed Kakar and prime minister Bhutto. The plotters allegedly wanted to set up a so-called Islamic government in the country. The conspirators were led by Maj Gen Zaherul Islam Abbasi, Brig Mustansir Billa and 38 other military officers, including Col Mohammad Azad Minhas and Col Inayat Ullah Khan. They were arrested on September 26, 1995.

The Field General Court Martial sentenced Maj Gen (retired) Abbasi to seven years in jail and Brig Mustansir Billa to 14-year jail term for their involvement in the attempted coup. Col Minhas and Col Khan were court-martialled in September 1996 for their alleged role in the conspiracy and sentenced to four years each in prison. Years later, Col Khan challenged the sentence in the Supreme Court in 2000 and Col Minhas in the Lahore High Court which dismissed his appeal in May last year. Later he also challenged it in the SC.

Outgoing Pak CJ points to constitutional litigation for top court's performance

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

Blaming the current political situation in Pakistan for hindering the judicial performance of the Supreme Court, outgoing Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial has said that the "bitter constitutional litigation" had impacted the top court's working, media reports said on Tuesday.

Bandial, the Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), was speaking at a full court reference, a ceremony to mark the commencement of the judicial year 2023-24 on Monday, a day when the apex court reopens after a three-month vacation. His speech was termed a farewell speech as he would be retiring on September 16. He took office as the top judge in February 2022.

"The bitter constitutional litigation has impacted the Supreme Court's performance. The court was put to test in a trying contest which was ... only hostile and aggressive [and] as a result we sat back and became [its] victim and suffered in performance," Bandial, 64, was quoted by the Dawn newspaper as saying.

He expressed the hope that the number of political and constitutional matters would decline so that the court could focus more on disputes concerning ordinary litigants. He had also pointed out how the backlog remained substantial, with only 2,000 cases addressed out of the desired 50,000 reduction, the Dawn mentioned.

For the past almost one year, the Supreme Court has been marred with controversies against the backdrop of a political crisis, the Dawn reported and added, how Bandial had said he prayed for "political stability that would bring economic stability" but regretted that his "innocent observations" were sometimes mocked.

The term "short and sweet judgment" was turned into sarcasm, he said, referring to his remarks earlier this month on a petition filed by former prime minister, Imran Khan challenging amendments to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) law.

His greeting "good to see you" was taken out of context and misreported, Bandial said and remarked that he expected accurate reporting from the media, the Dawn said, referring to the CJP's remarks when Khan, arrested in an alleged corruption case, appeared before him, seeking bail.

At the full court reference, the CJPs usually take stock of achievements and mention the missed-out targets along with a to-do list for the next year. But, quoting legal experts, the Dawn said, "The CJP's speech hints at the possibility that the ceremony was his last official commitment and that he may not be addressing a full court farewell reference on the eve of his retirement, as per tradition."

The Express Tribune newspaper reported that Bandial recounted the trials faced by the court during his tenure and regretted that the Supreme Court remained bogged down by controversies. "Bandial blamed the ongoing political situation for hobbling the judicial performance," it said, adding,

Israel accuses Iran of building airport in southern Lebanon to launch attacks

AP ■ JERUSALEM

Israel accused Iran on Monday of building an airport in southern Lebanon to be used as a launchpad for attacks against Israelis across the border, signalling a possible escalation in tensions between the regional foes.

Speaking at a high-profile security conference hosted by Reichman University near Tel Aviv, Defence Minister Yoav Gallant claimed Iran has been building a runway that slices through forested mountains just 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Israel's northern border.

Gallant displayed satellite photographs that he said showed the site, where the Iranian national flag and the flag of Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group could be seen.

Gallant alleged that Iran "is planning to act against the citizens of Israel", using the runway as a base. Iran's mission to the United Nations did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

A spokesperson for Hezbollah declined to comment on Israeli accusations. The defence minister did not specify when the satellite photos were taken. The location he gave was near the hilly border of the Israeli town of Metulla. Hezbollah earlier this year invited journalists to watch a military exercise in a nearby town in southern Lebanon.

Satellite images from Planet Labs Inc. obtained by The Associated Press from July 28 showed work on a 1.2 kilometer (3,937-foot) runway with four hangars constructed on a tarmac just east of the runway. Satellite images from January showed the runway largely unpaved. Israel has said in recent years that it shot down Hezbollah or Iranian-linked drones launched from Lebanon and Syria. Israel and Hezbollah, the Shiite group that controls much of southern Lebanon, fought a war in 2006. The border has remained tense but largely quiet since then, with both sides wary of another major confrontation. But tensions have mounted. Hezbollah is committed, like its patron Iran, to Israel's destruction and its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, regularly threatens Israel. In an unusually bold attack earlier this year, a man who Israeli officials said was linked to Hezbollah infiltrated into Israel from Lebanon and detonated a bomb that severely wounded an Israeli citizen.

The group also allowed Palestinian militant factions to operate in its strongholds and fire rocket barrages toward Israel this past spring.

Shanmugaratnam to be sworn in as Singapore's president tomorrow

Singapore (PTI): Indian-origin Singapore-born economist Tharman Shanmugaratnam will be sworn in as the ninth president of the city-state on Thursday, days after he was overwhelmingly elected as the ninth head of state of the country. The 66-year-old president-elect won 70.4 per cent of the (1,746,427 votes) of the 2.48 million ballots cast by local voters on September 1, while his Chinese-origin rivals Ng Kok Song and Tan Kin Lian received 15.72 per cent and 13.88 per cent respectively.

About 76 per cent (2,834) of overseas Singaporeans voted for Tharman, while Ng and Tan received 595 votes (15.99 per cent) and 292 votes (7.85 per cent) respectively. Incumbent President Halimah Yacob's term will end on September 13. The elected president serves a six-

US moves to advance prisoner swap deal with Iran and release USD 6 bn in frozen Iranian funds

AP ■ WASHINGTON

The Biden administration has cleared the way for the release of five American citizens detained in Iran by issuing a blanket waiver for international banks to transfer USD 6 billion in frozen Iranian money from South Korea to Qatar without fear of US sanctions. In addition, as part of the deal, the administration has agreed to release five Iranian citizens held in the United States.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken signed off on the sanctions waivers late last week, a month after US and Iranian officials said an agreement in principle was in place. Congress was not informed of the waiver decision until Monday, according to the notification, which was obtained by The Associated Press.

The outlines of the deal had been previously announced and the waiver was expected. But the notification marked the first time the administration said it was releasing five Iranian prisoners as part of the deal. The prisoners have not been named. The waiver drew criticism of President Joe Biden from Republicans and others who say the deal will boost the Iranian economy at a time when Iran poses a growing threat to US troops and Mideast allies.

On X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa said "it's ridiculous for US to be blackmailed into paying USD 6 billion for hostages which will help indirectly finance the number 1 foreign policy of Iran: terrorism." Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas accused Biden of "paying ransom to the world's worst state sponsor of terrorism."

Another Iran hawk, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said the waivers were a sign the administration was secretly pursuing a broader deal with Iran to include more than the release of the detainees.

"Today's news confirms there has already been a side deal including a USD 6 billion ransom and the release of Iranian operatives," Cruz said in a statement.

The White House pushed back on all criticism of the waiver decision, saying it was only a "procedural step" aimed at fulfilling the tentative agreement reached with Iran in August.

"What is being pursued here is an arrangement wherein we secure the release of 5 wrongfully held Americans," said Adrienne Watson, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council. "This remains a sensitive and ongoing process. While this is a step in the process, no individuals have been or will be released into US custody this week." The waiver means that European, Middle Eastern and Asian banks will not run afoul of US sanctions in converting the money frozen in South Korea and transferring it to Qatar's central bank, where it will be held for Iran to use for the purchase of humanitarian goods.

The transfer of the USD 6 billion was the critical element in the prisoner release deal, which saw four of the five American detainees transferred from Iranian jails into house arrest last month. The fifth detainee had already been under house arrest.

2 Indian-origin authors shortlisted for Book Prize

PTI ■ LONDON

Two authors of Indian heritage, UK-based Nandini Das and US-based Kris Manjappa, are among six worldwide writers on the shortlist unveiled here on Tuesday for the 2023 British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding, a leading international non-fiction prize worth GBP 25,000. India-born Nandini Das is in the running for 'Courting India: England, Mughal India and the Origins of Empire' and Caribbean-born Manjappa of mixed African and Indian parentage has been shortlisted for 'Black Ghost of Empire: The Long Death of Slavery and the Failure of Emancipation'.

The prize, now in its 11th year, is open to authors of any nationality based anywhere in the world and working in any language provided the nominated work is available in English and published in the UK. It celebrates research-based works of non-fiction that have made an outstanding contribution to the public understanding of world cultures and the ways in which they interconnect. "We were greatly impressed by the exceptional quality of writing in this year's shortlist and the ability of the authors to unearth extraordinary new discoveries and to find new perspectives on old perceptions," said Professor Charles Tripp, Fellow of the British Academy and chair of the 2023 jury.

Das, in her 40s, is Professor of Early Modern Literature and Culture in the English faculty at the University of Oxford. She was brought up in India and studied at Jadavpur University in Kolkata before moving to England for further study. Her shortlisted work has been praised by the judges as a "ground-breaking" debut.

"This beautifully written book tells the story of England's first diplomatic mission to India in the early 1600s, through a combination of biography and historical narrative, alternating microscopic details with broader panoramas," the judges note.

"As we learn how the Mughals and English understood and misunderstood each other, we appreciate how Das's shifting perspective reveals important insights into global connections and changing power dynamics in this pivotal period of world history," they said.

Manjappa, also in his 40s, grew up in Canada and is now Stearns Trustee Professor of History and Global Studies at Northeastern University in Boston, Massachusetts. His shortlisted work examines the slow, drawn-out death of slavery and the failure of emancipation. "Written with restrained passion, this is a detailed and disturbing account of the false dawn of emancipation that accompanied the formal abolition of slavery in the 19th century," read the judges' comments.

"Set against the enormity of the transatlantic slave trade and the myths surrounding its ending, this book gives life and memory to the enslaved, identifies the forces that built new systems of servitude in the aftermath of slavery, and argues forcefully against the disavowal of these ghosts in our social order," they said.

The other writers on the 2023 shortlist include France-based Daniel Folliard for 'The Violence of Colonial Photography', exploring the role of photography in the history of British and French imperialism; Spain-based Irene Vallejo 'Papyrus: The Invention of Books in the Ancient World' which chronicles literary culture in the ancient world; UK-based journalist Tania Branigan for 'Red Memory', unearthing rarely-heard stories from China; and US-based anthropologist Dimitris Xygalatas for 'Ritual: How Seemingly Senseless Acts Make Life Worth Living'.

The winner of the GBP 25,000 prize will be announced at an awards ceremony in London on October 31, when each of the shortlisted writers will receive GBP 1,000.

The 2023 judging panel for the British Academy Book Prize for Global Cultural Understanding is made up of Professor Madawi Al-Rasheed FBA, Visiting Professor at the Middle East Centre at the London School of Economics; Professor Rebecca Earle, food historian and Professor of History at the University of Warwick; Fatima Manji, award-winning broadcaster; and Professor Gary Younge Hon, the award-winning author, broadcaster and Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester.

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that, Neelam Tandon W/o Late Ajay Kumar Tandon R/o DDA LIG Flat No. 96-A, Ground Floor, Pocket E, Disha Garden, Delhi-110095 has applied for conversion of Flat No. 96-A, Ground Floor, under LIG Category Pocket E, Disha Garden, Delhi-110095 from lease hold to free hold in DDA vide Application No. DDHC/A9/7524127 Dated 29.05.2023. The original documents i.e. Demand-cum-Allotment letter, Possession Letter & NOC for Electricity and Water Connection of the above flat have been lost AN FIR to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch in vide S.O. No. 430 /2014 LR No. 8737/65/2023 dated 12.09.2023 Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 7529957108 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest, objections with respect to this property can personally inform/ write to, Director (LAB) at Lab Director (H)/H-II, D Block, 3rd Floor, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Be it inform to the general public at large that the D.D A. original document i.e. Allotment cum demand letter of flat no. 102 first floor pocket D-6 Block G-2 Cat-HIG, Vasant Kunj ND, 110070 vide D.D.A file no. H/ 365(70) 2013 VK issued by D.D.A have been lost at Vasant Kunj Market. Whoever find the above said document may kindly return to Deputy Director LAB (H) SFS third floor, D-Block, D.D.A office, INA, ND, 110023 or Pixy Raina Balmuchu Flat no 102 First Floor, Pocket D-6 Block G-2 Vasant Kunj ND 110070

BABA FARID UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES, FARIDKOT

Sadiq Road, Faridkot-151203 Ph: 01639-256232, 256236

ADMISSION NOTICE - B.Sc PARA MEDICAL COURSES, SESSION 2023

Fresh online applications are invited w.e.f. 12-09-2023 to 30-09-2023 through University website alongwith requisite fee from eligible candidates for applying admission to B.Sc Para Medical Courses, session 2023 i.e. B.Sc. Anesthesia Technology, B.Sc. Intensive Care Unit Techniques, B.Sc. Operation Theatre Technology, B.Sc. Medical Radiography & Imaging Technology, B.Sc. Radiotherapy Technology, B.Sc. Optometry, B.Sc. Dialysis Techniques, B.Sc. Orthopedic Assistant & Plaster Techniques, B.Sc. Emergency Responder, B.Sc. Cardiac Technology, Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology.

Note: For Schedule/Eligibility/detail/Fee/Prospectus visit University website i.e. www.bfuhis.ac.in

REGISTRAR Sd/-

00/12/115/2023/27873 Dated CHD - 9/11/2023

H&RA HOTEL AND RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN INDIA

Regd. Office: 406/75-76, Manisha Building, Nehru Place, New Delhi - 110019
Tel: 011-41306628, 42804416, Fax: 011-26236201
Website: www.hranl.net.in, E-mail: hranl.1950@gmail.com

NOTICE OF 72nd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION

Pursuant to Rule 20(3) (v) of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 notice is hereby given that 72nd Annual General Meeting of Members of Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India will be held on **Wednesday, the 27th September, 2023** at 12:30 hrs at The Umrao, National Highway 48, Rajokri Rd, D Block, 6, Samalkha, Delhi 110037 (Phone: 011 4770 7070). The notice of the Annual General Meeting has been served to all Members of HRANI on September 11, 2023. The same is also available on the Company's website www.hranl.net.in.

Following businesses will be transacted at the Annual General Meeting:

ORDINARY BUSINESS

- Adoption of Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March, 2023
- Appointment of Auditors

SPECIAL BUSINESS

- Alterations in the Articles of Association of Company (HRANI)

Members may cast their votes electronically on the business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM through electronic voting system of 'Right2Vote Infotech Pvt Ltd' from a place other than venue of the AGM (remote e-voting). All the members are informed that:

- The business as set forth in the Notice of the AGM may be transacted through voting by remote e-voting/in-person voting at the AGM.
- The cut-off date for the purpose of completing all formalities for renewal of membership and thereby being eligible for remote e-voting and voting at the Annual General Meeting is **19th September, 2023**.
- The remote e-voting shall commence on **September 23, 2023 (9:30 am IST)** and end on **September 26, 2023 (5:00 pm IST)**.
- Members may note that a) the remote e-voting module shall be disabled by Right2Vote Infotech Pvt Ltd beyond 5:00 p.m. IST on September 26, 2023 and once the vote on a resolution is cast by the member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently; b) the members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.
- In case of queries in regard to electronic voting, members may contact Right2Vote Infotech Private Limited, B-406, Hill Side, Raheja Vihar, Chandivali, Mumbai-400072 Ph+91 9920591306, Email: contact@right2vote.in

For Hotel and Restaurant Association of Northern India Sd/-

New Delhi, India **Renu Thapliyal**, Secretary General
September 11, 2023

Industrial production growth rises to 5-month high of 5.7%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's industrial production growth rose to a five-month high of 5.7 per cent in July, mainly due to good showing by the manufacturing, mining and power sectors, according to the official data released on Tuesday.

The factory output growth measured in terms of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) stood at 2.2 per cent in July 2022. The previous high was recorded at six per cent growth in February 2023. Thereafter, the growth rate declined to 1.9 per cent in March 2023 before rising to 4.6 per cent in April and further to 5.3 per cent in May. The IIP growth again decelerated to 3.8 per cent in June this year.

During April-July 2023-24, the IIP growth works out to be 4.8 per cent, down from 10 per cent in the corresponding period a year ago.

"The growth rates over the corresponding period of the previous year are to be interpreted considering the unusual circumstances on account of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020," an official state-



ment said.

As per the IIP data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO), the manufacturing sector's output grew 4.6 per cent in July 2023 against 3.1 per cent a year ago.

Power generation rose eight per cent in July 2023 compared to 2.3 per cent in the year-ago period.

Mining output rose by 10.7 per cent during the month under review against a 3.3 per cent contraction a year ago.

As per use-based classification, the capital goods segment grew 4.6 per cent in July this year compared to 5.1 per cent.

Consumer durables output during the month declined by 2.7 per cent against a 2.3 per cent growth in the year-ago period.

Consumer non-durable goods output increased by 7.4 per cent compared to a contraction of 2.9 per cent a year earlier.

Infrastructure/construction goods posted a growth of 11.4 per cent over a 4.8 per cent expansion in the same period a year ago.

The data also showed that the output of primary goods logged 7.6 per cent growth in the month against 2.5 per cent in the year-ago period.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected the CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023.

Inflation down to 6.83% in Aug on falling food prices

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Retail inflation declined to 6.83 per cent in August compared to July, mainly due to easing food prices, according to official data.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) based inflation was at 7.44 per cent in July and at 7 per cent in August 2022, as per the data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Tuesday.

Food inflation eased to 9.94 per cent in August from 11.51 per cent in July.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected the CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for 2023.

The intermediate goods output in July rose 1.9 per cent from 3.7 per cent growth during the corresponding month last year.

Sensex logs 8th day of gain, Nifty slips from record highs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark Sensex closed higher by 94 points while the broader Nifty retreated from record high levels in a volatile trading on Tuesday as investors turned cautious amid high valuation concerns.

Rising for an eighth day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 94.05 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at 67,221.13. During the day, it jumped 412.02 points or 0.61 per cent to 67,539.10.

The broader Nifty, however, pared all its gains and ended marginally lower by 3.15 points or 0.02 per cent at 19,993.20. During the day, the 50-issue barometer climbed 114 points or 0.57 per cent to hit its all-time high of 20,110.35.

Among the Sensex firms, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro, Infosys, UltraTech Cement, ICICI Bank, Nestle, ITC and Sun Pharma were the major gainers.

Power Grid, NTPC, Tata Motors, Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra and Reliance Industries were among the laggards. "The level of pessimism has risen in the stock market leading to a precautionary approach to book profits on a notion that the valuation has extended beyond the rationale. The correction is happening on midcaps while largecaps are maintaining their strength.



"This cautious trend can prevail in the short-term, but the end-game is on the rise of the domestic economy, surprising upside in corporate earnings, and change in domestic investment patterns, which is

expected to continue on a long-term basis," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

In the broader market, the BSE smallcap gauge tumbled 4.02 per cent and midcap index fell by 2.96 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities tanked 3.74 per cent, power declined by 3.66 per cent, telecommunication (3.63 per cent), realty (3.26 per cent), oil & gas (3.07 per cent), energy (2.77 per cent) and industrials (2.76 per cent). IT, bank and tech were the gainers.

In Asian markets, Tokyo settled in the green while Seoul, Shanghai and Hong Kong ended lower. European markets were trading on a mixed note. The US stocks ended in positive territory on Monday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Monday as they bought equities worth Rs 1,473.09 crore, according to exchange data.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.74 per cent to USD 91.31 a barrel.

The 30-share BSE benchmark regained the 67,000 level on Monday. The benchmark jumped 528.17 points or 0.79 per cent to settle at 67,127.08. The Nifty ended at 19,996.35, reflecting a gain of 176.40 points or 0.89 per cent.

The Nifty scaled the record 20,000 mark for the first time ever in intra-day trade.

US praises India for G20 summit, hails 'India-Middle East Corridor'

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

The US lauded India for hosting the G20 summit, calling it a big success and hailing the landmark 'India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor' which will usher in a new era of connectivity from Europe to Asia and will stimulate economic growth across the two continents.

The G20 Leaders' two-day summit, held under India's presidency, wrapped up on Sunday. On Saturday, the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was jointly announced by the leaders of the US, India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union on the sidelines of the summit in New Delhi.

The new economic corridor is

seen as an alternative to China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

During a regular press briefing on Monday, the US State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller told reporters, "It was a landmark India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) that we believe will usher in a new era of connectivity from Europe to Asia that will stimulate economic growth, economic development across the two continents, as well as cooperation on energy and digital connectivity."

"The memorandum of understanding is among the United States, India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, EU, and other G20 partners to explore a shipping and rail transportation corridor that will enable the flow of commerce, energy, and data from India,

the Middle East, and Europe," he said in response to a question.

Miller said that the recently concluded G20 Summit in New Delhi was a big success.

"We absolutely believe that it was a success," he said.

"First, with respect to the statement, the G20 is a big organisation. Russia is a member of the G20; China is a member of the G20. There are members that have a diverse range of views. We believe the fact that the organisation was able to issue a statement that calls for respecting territorial integrity and sovereignty and saying that those principles should not be violated is an extremely important statement because that is exactly what is at the heart of Russia's invasion of Ukraine," he said.

"It is those very questions. So we



thought that was an incredibly important statement for them to make. You also saw important announcements made at the G20 about new economic arrangements between Saudi Arabia and India that the United States was a part of," Miller said.

"With respect to (Chinese) President Xi Jinping not attending - I'm not going to speak to whether President Xi should have attended or should not have attended. I will say we found it incredibly productive for President Biden and Secretary Blinkin to be there, engaging directly with their counterparts," he said.

"There is no substitute for that, and we found it incredibly productive for the interests of the United States to be able to have those conversations and advance them. As the White House made public over the

weekend, in addition to the sessions, the President had a number of pull-aside with leaders of other countries where we were actively advancing the foreign policy priorities of the United States, including engaging on the war in Ukraine," Miller said.

India managed to hammer out an unexpected consensus among the G20 countries on the contentious Ukraine conflict through a series of hectic negotiations with emerging economies such as Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia playing a leading role in reaching the agreement on the declaration on the first day of the summit.

The G20 member countries represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

Rupee rises 9 paise to close at 82.94 against US dollar

PTI ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated 9 paise to close at 82.94 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday amid fresh foreign fund inflows and expectations of better macroeconomic data.

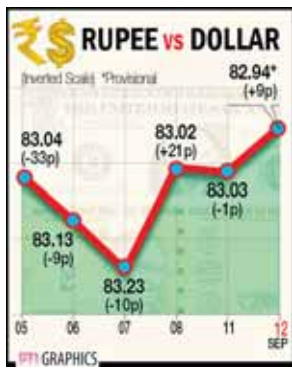
Forex traders said the Indian rupee appreciated on Tuesday as domestic markets hit fresh record highs after Nifty breached the 20,000-mark for the first time on Monday.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 82.93 against the US dollar and moved in a range of 82.86 to 83.01 in the day trade.

The rupee finally settled 9 paise higher at 82.94 (provisional) against the previous close.

On Monday, the rupee closed on a flat note at 83.03 against the American currency.

"Indian rupee outperforms among the Asian currencies on the central bank's dollar selling ahead of the inflation data. The expectation of ease in India's inflation numbers and better



industrial output, which will be released after the market closes, supported the rupee," Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst at HDFC Securities, said.

Spot USD-INR has support at 82.80 and resistance at 83.15. In the short term, the pair is likely to consolidate in a narrow range before heading higher while the medium-term trend remains bullish, Parmar said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.18 per cent to 104.76.

Gadkari talks of 10 per cent more tax on diesel vehicles, later clarifies no proposal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday spoke of the need to levy an additional 10 per cent tax on diesel-run vehicles to help cut emissions, but later clarified that there was no proposal under government consideration to impose such a tax.

Speaking at the annual convention of automobile manufacturers body SIAM, Gadkari said rising pollution level is a serious health concern and there is a case for increasing taxes to dissuade sale of diesel vehicles.

"I am requesting the Finance Minister to impose an additional 10 per cent GST on diesel engines/vehicles. This is the only way to phase out diesel vehicles," he said, indicating a meeting was scheduled with the Finance Minister for handing over a letter he had drafted on the issue.

But soon after he took to X, formerly known as Twitter, to clarify the government's position.

"It is essential to clarify that there is no such proposal currently under active consideration

by the government," he said in a post on X, referring to media reports quoting him as suggesting an additional 10 per cent GST on diesel vehicles.

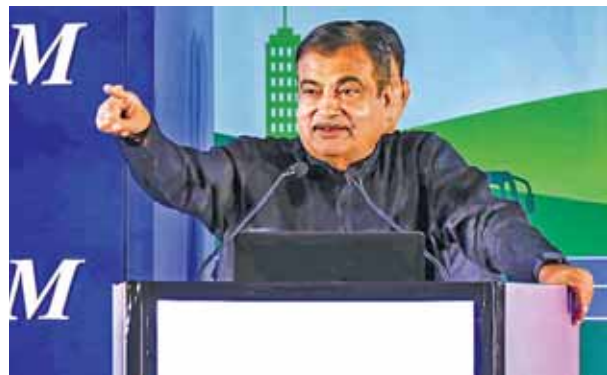
He emphasised that there was a need to embrace cleaner fuels to cut emissions.

"In line with our commitments to achieve Carbon Net Zero by 2070 and to reduce air pollution levels caused by hazardous fuels like diesel, as well as the rapid growth in automobile sales, it is imperative to actively embrace cleaner and greener alternative fuels. These fuels should be import substitutes, cost-effective, indigenous, and pollution-free," he said on X.

At the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) convention, he had warned that the government would increase taxes so much that it would become difficult to sell diesel vehicles.

Most of the commercial vehicles in the country currently run on diesel.

In the passenger vehicle segment, various carmakers including Maruti Suzuki India and Honda have already stopped manufacturing diesel cars.



Gadkari said the contribution of diesel cars has already come down drastically in the country and the manufacturers need to stop selling them in the market.

The minister also highlighted that India is utilising a major portion of fossil fuels in the transport sector which is posing a big economic as well as pollution challenge.

He suggested alternatives such as biofuels, ethanol and green hydrogen in addition to electric vehicles.

At the SIAM annual convention, the minister said the country is making good roads

across the country, which is leading to the growth of the automobile industry.

"The auto industry is growing at 15-18 per cent and it is also leading to enhanced usage of fossil fuels. If this goes on like this, you (companies) will be happy, but pollution will make the people of this country sad. So quickly leave petrol, diesel. Please focus on alternatives, this is my request to you," Gadkari said.

He further said, "I will request the finance minister for 10 per cent pollution tax as additional GST on all such engines utilising diesel, from generator

sets to vehicle engines."

Seeking cooperation from the auto industry, Gadkari said, "I think you will not force me to push this proposal... This is the appropriate time, it is not rocket science, this is already everywhere in the world... So I will request you all to take suo moto initiative and cooperate with us in moving away from diesel/petrol, this is my humble request."

Termining diesel as a hazardous fuel, he noted that the country has to import the fuel to meet the demand.

"Say goodbye to diesel... Please stop making them, otherwise, we will just increase the tax so much that it would become difficult to sell diesel cars" Gadkari said.

He said he would propose additional GST on diesel-powered generators as well.

Automobiles are currently taxed at 28 per cent GST, with additional cess ranging from 1 per cent to 22 per cent depending on the type of vehicle.

SUVs attract the highest GST at the rate of 28 per cent along with a compensation cess at 22 per cent.

He also asked the industry to focus on green hydrogen.

Gadkari also asked the industry to focus on environment-friendly alternative fuels like ethanol.

He also asked the industry to focus on green hydrogen.

Gadkari reiterated that India needs to move away from fossil fuels in order to meet its carbon neutral target, which cannot happen without the cooperation of the auto industry.

Later, addressing the gathering, SIAM Vice President and Managing Director Tata Motors Passenger Vehicles, Shailesh Chandra said, "The need from the automotive industry to reach net zero ahead of nations pledge of 2070 is pretty much an imperative and the industry will strive to deliver as per the vision of the government."

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BUSINESS BRIEF

SCOPE TO ORGANISE NATIONAL MEET OF RTI ACT

NEW DELHI: Decoding the importance of the Right to Information Act, and how it empowers citizens, Standing Conference of Public Sector Enterprises (SCOPE) is organising its 'National Meet of RTI Act' on September 14-15 in Lucknow. The national meet will be inaugurated by YK Sinha, Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) in the presence of guest of honour K Ravinder Naik, IAS, Principal Secretary, Secretariat Administrative Department, UP.

HINDALCO-METRA PARTNERSHIP FOR RAIL COACHES

NEW DELHI: Hindalco Industries Ltd, world's largest aluminium rolling and recycling company, has signed a technology partnership with Italy-based Metra SpA renowned for its expertise in producing structured and value-added aluminium extrusions. The partnership aims to enable the production of large-size aluminium extrusion and fabrication technology for building high-speed aluminium rail coaches in India, underscoring Hindalco's flagbearer role in upholding the Indian Government's vision to foster superior domestic manufacturing capabilities. "We are pleased to join forces with Metra to introduce a new era of aluminium extrusions for passenger trains in India," said Satish Pai, Managing Director of Hindalco Industries.

TPDL PARTNERSHIP FOR CYBER SECURITY

NEW DELHI: Tata Power Delhi Distribution on Tuesday announced its strategic partnership with the US-based cyber security and data analytics software company Utiyix to enhance the company's preparedness against future threats and challenges related to cyber security. "As we embark on the up-gradation to create utilities of the future, it is essential to create or acquire capabilities to deal with future challenges and build upon the opportunities," said Ganesh Srinivasan, the CEO of Tata Power-DDL.

No slowdown in tech spends in India; confident of data privacy law confusions getting clarified: IBM

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Global tech major IBM on Tuesday said there is "no slowdown" in tech spends in India, ducking the headwinds reported in some advanced economies.

IBM India's managing director Sandip Patel also said that people's confusions on the data privacy law will get clarified as the law is implemented.

It can be noted that a slew of domestic IT majors, which depend on technology spends in advanced economies for their revenues, have reported headwinds because of factors like geopolitical tensions, commodity price hikes, inflationary pressures and interest rates hardening.

"Domestic market, I don't see any slowdown," Patel said when asked about the impact of the global scene on the company's operations locally.

Patel said he is "very bullish" on the technology prospects in the country, given the tailwinds like digitalisation and increased adoption of automation.

The company's general manager for Asia



Pacific Paul Burton said that he does not see things slowing down either, pointing to lower technology spends as percentage of GDP when compared to advanced economies and a growing integration with world markets as the factors which will aid the growth.

He, however, said that factors like demographics — where fewer people are entering the workforce as compared to those retiring or withdrawing — will have a fall-out on the IT sector.

"Fewer people (are) entering the work-

force, and even a smaller percentage of that cohort entering the workforce has the skills that are needed for digital transformation and digitisation that is happening in the economy, that should tell you that labour rates are going up," he said.

He was also quick to clarify that he is not hinting at a hike in prices of services, and added that businesses will have to resort to using tools like artificial intelligence and automation which will ensure that they are not forced to increase prices and face the consequences on the demand front.

Meanwhile, when asked about confusions among small businesses on the provisions of the new bill on data privacy, Patel said a lot of the concerns on an earlier draft have been taken on board in the new bill.

"... people are still confused about it (the bill). I think as some of these solutions and technologies, they start to take shape, the bill will get a lot more clarified in terms of how it is implemented," Patel said.

Both Patel and Burton said that IBM is using a slew of artificial intelligence inputs in its own work across departments.

Domestic air passenger traffic rises about 23 per cent to 1.24 crore in August: Ica

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India's domestic air passenger traffic rose about 23 per cent year-on-year to 1.24 crore in August and was 6 per cent higher than the pre-Covid level (August 2019) of around 1.18 crore, credit rating agency Ica said on Thursday.

On a sequential basis, the growth in traffic during the previous month was around 3.2 per cent, with 1.21 crore passengers flying on domestic routes in July, it added.

Also, the capacity deployment in the reporting month grew 10 per cent against August 2022 and lower by 1 per cent in comparison to the pre-COVID levels (August 2019), Ica said.

The ratings agency said the outlook on the domestic aviation industry is 'stable' on the back of the fast-paced recovery in

domestic passenger traffic in the previous fiscal and expectations of the trend continuing in this fiscal as well.

Moreover, the industry witnessed improved pricing power, reflected in the better yields and thus the revenue per available seat kilometre — cost per available seat kilometre (RASK-CASK) spread of the airlines, it noted.

The same is expected to continue with a year-on-year decline in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices since April this year and relatively stable foreign exchange rates, Ica said.

It noted that sequential increases in jet fuel prices remain at elevated levels vis-a-vis pre-COVID levels, and despite a healthy recovery in air passenger traffic, the domestic aviation industry continues to face challenges.

NO RONALDO, NO PROBLEM

AP ■ BARCELONA

Bruno Fernandes shines as Portugal lash Luxembourg in record 9-0 win



Ramos drilled home the second goal in eight appearances for his country. Liverpool striker Jota hit the crossbar as Portugal dominated at the Algarve stadium near the country's south coast. Inacio headed home his second goal in eight appearances for his country.

Liverpool striker Jota hit the crossbar as Portugal dominated at the Algarve stadium near the country's south coast. Inacio headed home his second goal in eight appearances for his country.

from another Fernandes cross on the stroke of half-time and Jota struck early in the second half for the fifth, set up by the Red Devils midfielder again.

The Grand Duchy and Horta rifled home from the edge of the box for their sixth of the night to match the haul. Jota, who set up Horta, walked home the seventh as Portugal continued pushing on

Santos' future as Poland coach remains uncertain

AP ■ WARSAW



Fernando Santos' position as Poland coach remained uncertain on Tuesday after he met with the president of the country's football federation following the team's poor start to European Championship qualifying.

The 68-year-old Santos, who has only been in the job since January after spending eight years as coach of his native Portugal, will hold further talks with Cezary Kulesza this week and no final decision has been taken on his future, federation spokesman and team manager Jakub Kwiatkowski said.

Poland, with star striker Robert Lewandowski, is fourth in its five-team European Championship qualifying group - behind Albania, the Czech Republic and Moldova - after losing three of its five games so far. The results and performances have prompted criticism from fans and national media.

Paulo Sousa. He was tasked with improving Poland's underwhelming record at recent major tournaments, with the team having only advanced from the group stage at one World Cup (2022) and one European Championship (2016) since 1986, but it might not even get to Euro 2024.

With three matches remaining in qualifying, Poland is four points behind first-place Albania and two points off the Czechs in second place. The top two qualify automatically.

Santos was asked after the 2-0 loss to Albania on Sunday if he would resign, and he said he wouldn't because "not everything is lost yet" for Poland in qualifying.

Polish sports media have speculated that Santos could be replaced by a Pole, with Marek Papszun and Michal Probiez potential options.

Raków Czestochowa became Polish league champions for the first time last season under Papszun and also won the Polish Cup twice under him, in 2021 and '22.

Murray confident as Davis Cup gears up for last 16

AP ■ LONDON

semi-final exit at Flushing Meadows.

"I talked to him and his team throughout the US Open," said Spain captain David Ferrer. "I was there and watched most of his games, but it is true that he ended up very tired, with some physical problems."

With no Rafael Nadal either, Spain will instead be led by Alejandro Davidovich, currently ranked 25th in the world.

It is Canada, however, drawing on the experience of Denis Shapovalov and Vasek Pospisil, who are ranked at number one in Davis Cup, having won their first-ever title last year.

Canada are one of four teams to qualify automatically, along with last year's runners-up Australia and wildcards Spain and Italy, who will meet the Canadians in a crunch match on Wednesday.

They have been joined by 12 qualifiers -- Chile, Croatia,



Czech Republic, Finland, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, Serbia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and United States. Eleven of the 16 contenders have already won the Davis Cup including Britain who claimed their tenth title with a Murray-inspired victory over

Belgium in the 2015 final.

Now ranked 41 in singles after some serious career-threatening injuries and struggling to make an impact in Grand Slam tournaments, 36-year-old Murray is craving one last tilt at a major title.

"I do genuinely believe the team can win the event," he said at the team press conference on Monday.

"That's huge motivation to be a part of it. I want to help the team in any way I can, whether that's on the court or off. We'll see what happens."

He has good support from world number 17 Cameron Norrie, Dan Evans (27th), doubles specialist Neal Skupski and 21-year-old Jack Draper, who was called up after reaching the fourth round of a Grand Slam for the first time in New York.

There are two singles matches in each tie and a doubles, all played on the same day,

reducing the likelihood of doubling up.

Another old favourite Stan Wawrinka, 38, who delivered the Davis Cup for Switzerland alongside Roger Federer in 2014, is back in the Swiss line-up alongside 21-year-old Dominick Stricker who made the last 16 at Flushing Meadows.

The US, who won the last of their 32 Davis Cups in 2007, will be led by Francis Tiafoe and Tommy Paul while South Korea will be aiming to reach the quarter-finals for the first time.

DAVIS CUP GROUPS

- Group A, Bologna: Italy, Canada, Sweden, Chile
Group B, Manchester: Great Britain, Australia, France, Switzerland
Group C, Valencia: Spain, Serbia, South Korea, Czech Republic
Group D, Split: Croatia, United States, Netherlands, Finland

Subroto Cup from September 19

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bengaluru has been added to the list of host cities for the upcoming edition of the Subroto Cup International Football Tournament, to be held from September 19 to October 23 at three venues.

The oldest national inter-school football tournament was earlier held in Delhi and Gurugram. While the Under-17 junior boys and girls tournaments will be held in Delhi-NCR, the Under-14 sub-junior boys competition will be played at the ASC Centre, the Air Force School, Jalahalli and the Air Force School, Yehalanka in Bengaluru.

In Delhi-NCR, the matches will be played at the Amedkar Stadium, Tejas Football Ground (Delhi), Subroto Football Ground (Delhi) and the GD Goenka School (Gurugram).

Kiran fails to enter main draw of Hong Kong Open

PTI ■ KOWLOON

India's Kiran George, who won the Indonesia Masters title last weekend, failed to keep the momentum going as he could not make the main draw, bowing out in the men's singles qualification round of the Hong Kong Open here on Tuesday.

George was shown the door by Malaysia's Jun Hao Leong 20-22, 21-14, 14-21 in the second round of qualification. The Indian had earlier defeated Chinese Taipei's Yu Jen Chi 21-15, 21-17 in the opening round of the qualifiers. Mithun Manjunath and Ravi also bowed out in the qualifiers of the men's singles. Both the players lost to Hong Kong's Jason Gunawan.

While Manjunath lost 20-22, 15-21 to Gunawan in the opening round, Ravi was shown the door 15-21, 14-21 in the sec-

ond round by the local shuttler.

In women's singles, Malvika Bansod progressed to the main draw after her Thai opponent Pitchamon Opatniphuth retired midway due to an injury while leading 14-21, 10-11.

The Indian women's doubles pair of Treena Jolly and Pullela Gayatri Gopichand entered the second round of the main draw after beating Dutch combination of Debora Jille and Cheryl Seinen 21-15, 16-21, 21-16 in the opening round.

The other Indian women's doubles duo of Tanisha Croston and Ashwini Ponnappa will take on Chinese Taipei's Chia Hsin Lee and Chun Hsun Teng in the opening round after qualifying for the main draw following a 21-16, 21-14 win over compatriots N Sikki Reddy and Arathi Sara Sunil.

India lose 0-3 to UAE in AFC U-23 Asian Cup Qualifiers

PTI ■ DALIAN

India lost to the UAE 0-3 as their campaign in the AFC U-23 Asian Cup 2024 Qualification ended with a second consecutive defeat, here at the Dalian Suoyuan Stadium on Tuesday.

India finished at the bottom of Group G, having earlier lost to China 1-2.

UAE topped the group with four points and a better goal difference. China, who also have four points, now have an outside chance of making the next round as one of the four best second-placed teams.

Both India and the UAE sensed the urgency and began the match at great intensity with tackles flying in both halves of the pitch. Jiteshwar Singh picked up a booking after the quarter hour mark for a tackle in the middle of the pitch.

The UAE managed to take the lead in the 26th minute as the Indian defenders were left rather confused after a melee inside the box. Mohammed Abbas Alblooshi was awarded the goal after a lengthy discussion between the referee and his assistant. The lead was doubled just three min-



utes after the half-hour mark, when Sultan Adil Alameeri's low drive from inside the box found the back of the net. Sensing the game slipping away, India began to rotate the ball around the park in search of openings. However, the UAE back-line managed to keep the Indians at bay. After the change of ends, India looked to put some pressure on the UAE defence. Parthib Gogoi made a foray down the right into the attacking third early in the second



Pogba sinks to new low after doping revelation

AP ■ TURIN

Once the most expensive footballer in the world, France star Paul Pogba has sunk to a new low after being provisionally suspended for a doping violation.

Injuries and a bizarre blackmail plot involving his own brother have dominated his second spell at Juventus, and the latest revelations came just as the midfielder looked ready to get back to his best.

Italy's anti-doping authority NADO revealed on Monday that Pogba, who is still only 30, showed elevated levels of testosterone in a test taken after Juve's season-opening win at Udinese, a match in which he did not even play.

Pogba has since been a substitute in Juve's other two Serie A matches and despite picking up a thigh knock against Empoli earlier this month could well have featured in Saturday's home fixture against Lazio had he not been dealt the latest of a series of blows to his career. The test result came soon after the release of an interview

with Al Jazeera in which he said he wanted to make his critics "eat their words". "I want to show them I'm not weak. They can talk bad about me. I will never give up," he said.

He has only started one match since returning to Juve as a free agent from Manchester United in July last year, six years after leaving the Turin giants for a then world record 105 million euros with four Italian league titles to his name. It was a move which was supposed to regenerate his career which had gone stale in England, but he almost immediately suffered a serious knee injury in pre-season.

And his initial decision to not undergo surgery in a bid to make the Qatar World Cup eventually back-fired, ending his chances of helping France defend their world title and further complicating his club campaign.

Pogba faces an anxious wait for the result of his 'B' sample, with the spectre of a potential four-year ban hanging over a player whose life has turned into something of a nightmare.

Rubiales summoned to appear in Spanish court over forced kiss

AP ■ MADRID

Former Spanish football federation president Luis Rubiales must appear in court on Friday in connection with the investigation into his forcible kiss on Jenni Hermoso's lips after the Women's World Cup final.

Rubiales has been summoned to appear at 1200 local time (1000 GMT) before an examining magistrate "to be heard as an accused" and to respond to accusations of "sexual assault", a Madrid court said in a statement on Tuesday.

The 46-year-old kissed Hermoso following Spain's triumph in Sydney on August 20, which she says was not consensual, while Rubiales insists it was

Judge Francisco de Jorge of the National Court admitted a complaint against Rubiales on Monday filed by Spanish prosecutors last week regarding alleged "crimes of sexual assault and coercion".

Under a recent reform of the Spanish penal code, a non-consensual kiss can be considered sexual assault, a criminal category that groups together all types of sexual violence.

The penalties for a forced kiss can range from a fine to four years in prison, according to sources from the public prosecutors' office.

Rubiales stepped down as the Spanish football federation's president on Sunday but continued to defend



himself over the kiss. "I have faith in the truth and I will do everything in my power so that it prevails," Rubiales wrote in an open letter.

Hermoso, 33, who plays for Mexican club Pachuca, has said the unwanted kiss left her feeling "vulnerable and like the victim of an assault", with a statement on social media describing it as "an impulsive, macho act, out of place and with no type of consent on my part".

She also accused Rubiales of pressuring her to speak out in his defence immediately after the furore over the kiss erupted, which prosecutors said could be considered a crime of coercion.

SL RESTRICT INDIA TO 213

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lankan duo of Dunith Wellalage and part-timer Charith Asalanka spun a web around the Indian batters on a turning track, restricting them to a sub-par 213 in their Asia Cup Super 4 match here on Tuesday.

Left-arm spinner Wellalage (5/40), all of 20, and offie Asalanka (4/18) knifed through the star-studded line-up after India opted to bat.

But before spinners exploited the generous turn and grip on the Premadasa pitch, India started their innings in a blazing fashion.

Rohit Sharma, who made 53 off 48 balls, added 80 runs for the opening wicket with Shubman Gill (19), and that remained the brightest phase of Indian innings.

Watching Rohit and Gill adding those runs in just 12 overs rekindled the memories of India's blitz against Pakistan on Monday, when they posted a massive 356 for two.

During his innings, the Indian captain also went past a significant personal milestone, becoming the sixth Indian batsmen to score 10000 runs in ODIs.

The landmark came in a befitting fashion too, as Rohit lifted pacer Kasun Rajitha over his head for a majestic six.

Other Indian batsmen to reach the mark are: Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid, Virat Kohli and MS Dhoni. Indeed, a magnifi-



cent company to be in!

However, the introduction of Wellalage changed the whole complexion of the game as the spinner halted Indian batsmen's charge.

Gill was the first to go. The opener played a forward defence without entirely covering the line and once the ball beat his bat,

Gill's fate was sealed.

Wellalage, a former under-19 captain of his country, then went on to show why he has been spoken so highly in Lankan cricketing circles.

He bowled a straight, quick delivery and Rohit could not bring his bat down on time, as the ball rearranged his timber.

But Wellalage wasn't finished yet. He added the wickets of Virat Kohli (3), KL Rahul (39), who added 63 runs with Ishan Kishan (33) for the fourth wicket, and Hardik Pandya (5) to his kitty for his maiden five-wicket haul in ODI cricket.

None of the following batsmen also could effectively negate

the uneven bounce and turn on the pitch, as Asalanka wreaked havoc.

His delivery to dismiss Ravindra Jadeja would carry a lot of repeat value.

The ball reared from the length, turned and bounced viciously to take an edge of Jadeja's bat before nesting in

Rohit becomes 6th Indian to score 10K ODI runs

PTI ■ COLOMBO

India captain Rohit Sharma on Tuesday became the sixth batter from his country and 15th overall to complete 10,000 ODI runs.

Rohit achieved the feat during India's Asia Cup Super 4 contest against Sri Lanka here.

The India skipper hit a six off Sri Lanka's Kasun Rajitha to complete the milestone in the seventh over of the innings, a day after Virat Kohli became the quickest ever batter to cross 13,000-run landmark in a record 267 ODI innings.

In fact, Rohit completed his 10,000 runs in 241 innings, which is second fastest ever after Kohli did so in 205 innings.



The other Indians in the 10,000-run club are Sachin Tendulkar (18,426 runs), Virat Kohli (13,026), Sourav Ganguly (11,363), Rahul Dravid (10,889) and MS Dhoni (10,773).

As the only player in the history to have hit three double centuries in 50-overs cricket, Rohit also holds the record of most runs in an innings - or the highest individual score - 264 against Sri Lanka at Eden Gardens in November 2014.

Rohit recorded his first ODI double ton against Australia in November 2013 when he scored 209. Four years later, he smashed another double ton against Sri Lanka - 208 not out at Mohali in December 2017.

stumper Kusal Mendis' gloves. Now, the Indian spin trio of Kuldeep Yadav, Axar Patel and Jadeja will have to replicate the performance of their Lankan counterparts.

For India, a win against Lanka will assure them a place in the final with four points.

A defeat will not harm India, but they will need a victory against Bangladesh on Friday.

Their current NRR of +4.56, which will dip a bit if they lose this match, too might come handy in the event of an equation tussle with Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

If India will have to split points on Tuesday after a washout, then they will enter the final with three points, awaiting either Lanka or Pakistan in the summit clash.

Iyer advised rest due to back spasm



PTI ■ COLOMBO

Middle-order batter Shreyas Iyer missed India's second consecutive game in the Asia Cup after being advised rest for the Super 4 contest against Sri Lanka due to a back spasm.

Iyer, who has returned to top flight cricket after six months following a back surgery, had also missed the contest against Pakistan.

Missing back to games has raised fresh questions over his fitness ahead of the World Cup in India next month.

"Shreyas Iyer is feeling better but is yet to fully recover from back spasm."

"He has been advised rest by the BCCI Medical Team and has not travelled with the team to the stadium today for India's Super 4 match against Sri Lanka," the BCCI said in a statement.

I was initially nervous: KL on his comeback match

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Returning to action after a long injury layoff, India wicketkeeper batter KL Rahul says he was a bundle of nerves and it took him some time to settle down before going for his shots against a quality Pakistan attack in the Asia Cup in Colombo.

The 31-year-old, who had suffered a debilitating thigh injury during the IPL, which later necessitated a surgery, smashed an unconquered 106-ball 111 to play a vital role in India's massive 228-run win over Pakistan on Monday.

"Obviously, this is my first international match after a long time. I played a couple of practice games, but we all know the intensity is not the same. So when I walked in, I had that initial nervousness," Rahul told Star Sports after his sixth ODI hundred.

"It took me 10-15 balls to just calm myself down and get my feet moving, get my mind thinking of the right things. Then, when I hit one or two boundaries, all those things, the fogginess in your clarity, went away, and it became like before."

Rain interruptions made things further difficult as Rahul and Virat Kohli (122 not out) had to restart the India innings, which was suspended on Sunday because of rain, at 147 for two in 24.1 overs.

"I was looking at the ball,



looking at the situation, and you see what you have to do. But just when I got my rhythm, it started raining... And I had to wait for a whole day," Rahul said.

"Today we came back and had to wait for the innings to start. So I had to restart the innings again. So, again, the first 10-15 balls were sort of nervous, and after that, once you start to hit a few balls in the middle, you forget about those things, and then you start thinking about where you can score runs and what I have to do."

Rahul, who underwent rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to get fit for the Asia Cup but missed the first two

group matches due to a niggle, forged a 233-run stand with Kohli for the unconquered third wicket to power India to 356-2.

Talking about his partnership with Kohli, Rahul said: "He has hit 13,000 runs. I can't say anything about that man; he is just phenomenal. Words are short to describe what a great cricketer he is, and I've always felt comfortable playing with him in the middle."

"Initially, he gave me some time; I had said that I need some time to get those quick singles because I need to feel comfortable and confident in my body, and he understood that. After that, it was just a flow.

Injured Rauf, Naseem doubtful for remainder of Asia Cup

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Pakistan pacers Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah's participation in the remainder of the Asia Cup has been rendered doubtful after the duo picked up injuries during the Super 4 match against India.

The Pakistan team management said quicks Shahnawaz Dahani and Zaman Khan have been included as back-ups for Rauf and Naseem in their Asia Cup squad "as a precautionary

measure". "Pakistan have called up Shahnawaz Dahani and Zaman Khan as backups. The two have been called up after Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah picked up niggles in the match against India," read a statement from the Pakistan team.

"This is only a precautionary measure keeping in mind the fitness and well-being of the players ahead of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup next month," the management said. Rauf, who had bowled five

overs on Sunday, had felt "a little discomfort in his right flank" and did this did not roll his arm or come out to bat against India when the match resumed on the reserve day on Monday.

Naseem completed his quota of 10 overs but the pacer left the field in the 49th over of India's innings on Monday, holding his hand. He is suspected to have suffered an injury to his bowling shoulder. He also did not come out to bat as Pakistan ended their innings at

128 for 8, losing to India by a record margin of 228 runs.

The Pakistan team management said both Rauf and Naseem will be monitored over the next few days.

"Haris and Naseem will continue to remain under the observation of the team's medical panel. The team management will only request replacement from the ACC technical committee if Naseem or Haris are ruled out for the next seven days," the statement added.

Straighter run-up, aggressive rhythm key to my ODI success: Kuldeep

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav believes tweaks in his technique, including a straighter run-up and an aggressive rhythm, has helped him to improve his bowling and achieve success in ODI cricket.

The 28-year-old has taken 27 wickets from 14 matches this year, the highest by an Indian bowler in ODIs.

"After the (knee) surgery (last year), my run-up has become much straighter, and rhythm has become aggressive. My hand used to fall over but that has been controlled and now it (hand) is facing the batsman," said Kuldeep in the post-match press conference.

Kuldeep said he had worked on spin and drift post his surgery to improve his efficiency.

"I exerted care not to lose my spin and drift without losing my pace. If a leg-spinner lands the ball on a good length, he can pick up wickets more regularly and loose balls can be reduced. You can be consistent," he added.

Kuldeep said he worked with NCA physio Ashish Koushik post his surgery to reduce the burden on his knee while landing in the crease.

"I did not want to lose my zip, nip or drift. After surgery I went for a three-month recuperation at NCA and physio Ashish



Koushik said I had to reduce the load on my knee. So, I worked to make my rhythm faster," he said.

However, Kuldeep said it took him some time to make the remodelled action work at the top level cricket.

"I tried the new action in a practice game in Kanpur. The batsmen were struggling to face me. But even in the IPL and during the tour of the West Indies I was struggling with it (action). It took some 6-7 matches for me to make work at this

level," said Kuldeep.

His (5/25) five-wicket haul helped India outclass Pakistan by a massive 228-run margin and Kuldeep said he will always remember this effort as it came against a top opposition.

"I will always remember that I picked up five wickets against Pakistan when I retire. It is a big thing for me because Pakistan players can play spin well. If you perform against a side that plays spin well in the subcontinent, it motivates you," he said.

Pakistan 'grateful' for India wake-up call ahead of WC

AP ■ COLOMBO

Pakistan's heavy defeat to India in the Asia Cup was a "timely reminder" for the team to get their act together before next month's World Cup, head coach Grant Bradburn said. India posted 356-2 in Colombo after rain forced the match into a reserve day and then bowled out Pakistan for 128 in 32 overs to register their biggest ODI victory over their arch-rivals.

"My gut feeling is that we are grateful for the gift that has been this last two days," Bradburn told reporters after the drubbing.

"We don't get to play some of the best players in the world very often," he added.

"We haven't lost a game of cricket for the last three months, so it's a timely reminder that we need to turn up every day, put in our best on the park, and it's actually a gift in the last two days we haven't done that."



Pakistan elected to bowl after Azam won the toss but the team soon lost their grip after a 121-run opening stand between skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill.

Virat Kohli and KL Rahul hit 122 and 111 respectively to extend India's domination in an unbeaten stand of 233.

"We lost at all facets of the game," Bradburn said. "No excuses, we weren't good enough in the last two days."

Pakistan's bowling, led by Shaheen Shah Afridi, had rattled India's top order last week in an Asia Cup group game, bowling them out for 266 before the match was abandoned because of rain.

But Rohit, Gill, Rahul and Kohli came roaring back in the Super Four contest to take the attack to the bowlers.

Bradburn, a former New Zealand international who played seven Tests and 11 ODIs, said Pakistan will learn from the batting assault.

"Certainly wasn't a surprise. Everyone's seen how lethal our bowling attack is and good teams will counteract that," he said.

Azam started the tournament with 151 against minnows Nepal but Bradburn said Pakistan's batting still lacked firepower. "Our batting unit hasn't clicked in the past month and again, that is a positive sign," he said.

"We have full trust in them. We are very consistent with our selection. We know they will come right."

Pakistan next play Sri Lanka on Thursday.

Topley looks to put injury history behind him

AP ■ LONDON

Reece Topley is taking nothing for granted regarding his involvement in the defence of England's World Cup title in India following an injury-blighted career. The 29-year-old left-arm quick has suffered four separate stress fractures in his back.

But having overcome those injuries, he seemed all set to feature in last year's T20 World Cup in Australia only to be ruled out by a freak trip over a boundary cushion ahead of England's final warm-up match.

The ensuing ankle ligament damage meant he was reduced to the role of a long-distance spectator as England added the T20 global title to their 50-over crown.

Having regained fitness, the 6ft 7in (2.01 metres) paceman dislocated his shoulder at the Indian Premier League in April.

And with the start of the 50-over World Cup in India now less than a month away, Topley admitted: "You could say I have a bit of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) about getting on the plane again because it was pretty emotional coming back from the last (World Cup) injured."



"But injuries happen in sport. You can only do so much to prevent them. I don't really think about it too much. It's just the nature of it; you get good days and bad days at the minute."

"As you get older, the injuries do get a bit harder to come back from — just

the nature of just being years older. It's not like you won't ever come back from it, it's just always a bit trickier."

Topley has been included in England's provisional World Cup squad following a fine home season last year.

But having gone wicketless in four

ODIs, he starred with 3-27 in the 2nd ODI against New Zealand at Southampton on Sunday as England levelled the four-match series at 1-1 with a 79-run win in a rain-affected match.

Topley, who took 13 wickets in seven ODIs in the last English season at an impressive average of 16.38, said: "I've got to thank the guys for showing that what I did last year didn't go unnoticed."

"My record in the format is pretty good. I like to think that I can contribute whenever needed. It's nice to be finding my feet again, hopefully just at the right time for India," he added ahead of Wednesday's third ODI against New Zealand at The Oval.

England, however, have several seam-bowling options to call upon, with two other left-arm quicks in Sam Curran and David Willey among those vying for a place with Topley in England's final 15-strong squad for the World Cup.

"I can only do so much as a new-ball and death bowler that it's hard to leave me out," said Topley, the son of former Essex seamer Don Topley.

"That's what all of us in the changing room want to do is just to make those decisions tough, but with the talent that we have, it's always going to be a tough decision — for the 15, or the 11."