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TRUDEAU UNLEASHES KHALISTANIS ON INDIA

Canada PM breaches trust, blames India for terrorist's murder

RAHUL DATTA ■ NEW DELHI

A massive dispute has flared up between Canada and India. In a retaliatory move, New Delhi expelled a Canadian diplomat shortly after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau asserted in Parliament that there were "credible allegations" of a potential connection between Indian Government agents and the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Canada in June. Canada also expelled a high-ranking Indian diplomat.

Taking exception to this, India on Tuesday asked a Canadian diplomat to leave the country within five days and rejected Trudeau's statement.

In a strongly worded statement, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) termed as "absurd" and "motivated" the Canadian Prime Minister's allegations late on Monday in the House of Commons that there were "potential" Indian links to the killing of the Khalistani separatist leader.

"That Canadian political figures have openly expressed sympathy for such elements remains a matter of deep concern. The space given in Canada to a range of illegal activities including murders, human trafficking and organised crime is not new... We reject any attempts to connect

the Government of India to such developments. We urge the Government of Canada to take prompt and effective legal action against all anti-India elements operating from their soil," the MEA said.

In a strong reaction to remarks by Trudeau and the Canadian Foreign Minister, the MEA said such "unsubstantiated" allegations seek to "shift the focus from Khalistani terrorists and extremists, who have been provided shelter in Canada and continue to threaten India's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

However, on Tuesday Trudeau said, "We are not looking to provoke or escalate the issue."

Canadian High Commissioner to India Cameron MacKay was summoned and informed about the decision to expel the senior official, with the MEA saying the move reflects New Delhi's growing concern at the "interference of Canadian diplomats in our internal matters and their involvement in anti-India activities."

The Congress backed the Government's action and said the country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount and its fight against terrorism has to be uncompromising. "The Indian National Congress has always believed that our



Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau delivers a statement in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. AP/PTI

country's fight against terrorism has to be uncompromising, especially when terrorism threatens India's sovereignty, unity and integrity," Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a post on X. "Our country's interests and concerns must be kept paramount at all times," he added.

Though the MEA did not divulge the name of the Canadian diplomat who has been asked to leave India within five days, people familiar with the matter said it is the Canadian intelligence agency's

station chief in New Delhi Olivier Sylvestre.

The Indian action to expel the Canadian diplomat came hours after Canada's Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly announced that a "top Indian diplomat" has been expelled from Canada in view of the alleged links to the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian Khalistani leader. He was shot dead by two gunmen in Surrey in June.

Joly's office said the diplomat is Pavan Kumar Rai, the head of the Research and

unacceptable violation of our sovereignty... It is contrary to the fundamental rules by which free, open and democratic societies conduct themselves," he said. "As you would expect, we have been working closely and coordinating with our allies on this very serious matter."

He also said he had raised the issue during their meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi earlier this month. Trudeau urged the Indian government to "cooperate with Canada to get to the bottom of this matter."

The ties between India and Canada have come under strain in view of New Delhi's concerns over increasing activities of Khalistani elements in that country. Last week, the talks on a bilateral free trade agreement were frozen apparently in view of the deteriorating ties.

"The high commissioner of Canada to India was summoned today and informed about the decision of the Government of India to expel a senior Canadian diplomat based in India. The concerned diplomat has been asked to leave India within the next five days," the MEA said in a statement, adding, "We have seen and rejected the statement of the Canadian PM, as also the statement by their Foreign Minister."

Congress leader shot, Canada-based ultra claims responsibility

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

In a chilling incident that has sent shock waves through Moga district in Punjab, local Congress leader Baljinder Singh Balli (45) was shot at his residence in Dala village late on Monday. The assailants, believed to be two in number, arrived on a motorcycle, with one entering Balli's home while the other kept watch outside.

Hours after the gruesome incident, fugitive gangster and Canada-based Khalistani terrorist Arshdeep Singh Gill, notoriously known as Arsh Dala, claimed responsibility for Balli's murder through a Facebook post.

Dala, in his post written in Punjabi, attributed his actions to Balli's alleged involvement in crime and harassment of his mother. The post alluded to a longstanding vendetta fueled by personal and political grievances.

In disturbing CCTV footage capturing the incident,

a gunman can be seen forcefully entering the premises just as Balli, also known as 'numberdar' in the community, stood on his porch. Without hesitation, the assailant opened fire, striking Balli twice — once in the chest and once in the thigh. The injured leader was rushed to the hospital, but tragically, he succumbed to his injuries, according to the police.

Arsh Dala wrote: "I am responsible for the murder of Balli in Dala village because it was my own village's politics which had made me tread this path. This man (Balli) was responsible for keeping my mother in CIA (police) custody for a week and he also got my friends arrested. He was hand in glove with police. He destroyed my home just to gain his own afsar shaahi"

Notably, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs had designated Arsh Dala a terrorist earlier this year due to his involvement in a range of heinous crimes.

Women's quota Bill tabled

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

After an inordinate delay, the much awaited and long-pending demand of several political parties, the Centre on Tuesday introduced a Bill to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies. The Bill, known as the "Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam", was introduced and became the first Bill to be taken up for discussion and passage in the new Parliament building.

Officials said even if the Bill is passed during the ongoing Special Session, its implementation may still take some time and is unlikely to be in force for the next Lok Sabha elections in 2024 as the reservation will come into effect only after a delimitation exercise is completed.

The Bill will need to overcome several hurdles before becoming a reality, including support cutting across political lines and early census and



Congress members celebrate the Women's Reservation Bill in New Delhi on Tuesday. Ranjan Dimri / Pioneer

delimitation exercise.

Lok Sabha data shows that women MPs account for nearly 15 per cent of the lower House's strength while their representation is below 10 per cent in many State Assemblies.

In the present Lok Sabha, 82 women members were elected which account for less than 15 per cent of the total strength of 543. In the Rajya Sabha also,

women's representation is about 14 per cent, according to the data shared by the Government with Parliament last December.

The provisions in the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill make it clear that the women's reservation will come into effect only after the delimitation exercise or the redrawing of constituencies

taking into account the data of the census conducted once the bill becomes a law.

Constitutional experts said after the passage of the Bill by both Houses of Parliament, it will also have to be approved by at least 50 per cent of State Assemblies to become a law.

According to Article 82 of the Constitution, amended in 2002, the delimitation process can be carried out based on the first Census taken after 2026.

The first Census after 2026 was to be carried out in 2031, which would be followed by delimitation or redrawing of constituencies.

The Government postponed the 2021 census exercise in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will have to be put on a fast track by the Government for the Women's reservation to be turned into reality before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. In 2011, the census was carried out in February-March and the provisional figures were released on March 31 that year.

Modi unveils his vision in new Parl

DEEPAK K UPRETI/DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

Heralding a new chapter by stepping into a new Parliament building, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday called for expanding the canvas to build a stronger India, and said all reforms and new laws going forward must have rising aspirations of the country as their priority.

Addressing a function first at the Central Hall of the old Parliament building, Modi said that a big picture cannot be painted on a small canvas and the idea of a grand India cannot be envisioned if the members do not think big. Later, the PM addressed as the first speaker, alongside the Presiding Officers of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, in both Houses.

Marking a historical turn in the legislative empowerment of women in the country, the Modi Government also introduced a Constitution amendment Bill, "Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam", for 33 per cent quota for women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, with Union Ministers Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh and other parliamentarians, enters the new Parliament building, in New Delhi, on Tuesday. PTI

in the new Parliament.

Members bid adieu to the old one, which has completed 96 years of its existence.

In his first speech in the first session in the new Parliament building, Modi underlined the role of politics in the effective transformation of society and said Indian women have immensely contributed in sectors ranging from space to sports and start-ups to self-help groups.

Recounting the laws passed in the old Parliament building,

Modi said Muslim mothers and sisters got justice as the law against "triple talaq" was unilaterally passed from here. "In the last few years, Parliament has also passed laws giving justice to the transgenders. We have unilaterally passed laws that will guarantee a bright future for the specially-abled people. It is our privilege that we got the opportunity to abrogate Article 370," he said.

It was an emotional moment not only for the Parliamentarians, but the offi-

cials, support staff like that of pantry, gardening, security system people to be witness to the grand transition by keeping up with the heritage yet writing a history for generations to come in what will be called the Parliament House of India.

The old Parliament building will now be known as "Samvidhan Sadan" as suggested by Modi.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla announced that henceforth, terms such as "House", "Lobby", and "Galleries" used in the proceedings of the Lok Sabha will refer to the new building, which is now the Parliament House of India.

Led by Modi, several MPs walked from the old to the new Parliament building on Tuesday to attend the sitting in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha chambers in the new complex. Modi, flanked by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP chief JP Nadda, walked from the old Parliament building to the new one, with NDA MPs following them while raising slogans such as 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' and 'Vande Matram'.

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Uproar at MGM Hospital after tragic death of girl

Doctor assaulted, SDO intervenes



SDO Piyush Sinha, upon learning of the escalating situation, arrived at the hospital to engage in discussions with the agitating medical professionals. PNS

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In a shocking incident that transpired late on Monday night, a doctor at Kolhapur's largest government hospital, MGM Hospital, was brutally assaulted following the unfortunate death of a 4-year-old girl. The incident has sparked outrage within the medical community and led to a protest by doctors at the hospital.

The doctor at the center of this incident, identified as Dr. Kamlesh, was attacked after the young patient, Anu Pradhan, passed away during treatment. Anu Pradhan's family, hailing from Devnagar

in the Sitaramdera police station area, immediately expressed their anger and grief, accusing Dr. Kamlesh of medical negligence. The situation escalated quickly, resulting in an appalling act of violence against the doctor in the ICU ward of the hospital.

The incident sent shockwaves through MGM Hospital, as chaos erupted within the premises. Hospital staff, patients, and visitors were left in a state of panic as the situation spiraled out of control. Fortunately, intervention from those present at the scene eventually quelled the commotion.

As the news of the doctor's

assault spread, the medical community at MGM Hospital rallied in protest. On Tuesday, doctors, nurses, and medical staff initiated a strike, refusing to perform any non-emergency medical procedures. They congregated in front of the hospital superintendent's office, demanding safety and justice for Dr. Kamlesh and expressing their concerns over the safety of medical professionals in the workplace.

The strike has significantly affected the hospital's regular operations, leading to the postponement of non-urgent treatments and surgeries. Patients in need of immediate medical attention are still

being attended to by the doctors participating in the emergency services.

This incident has once again highlighted the growing concerns regarding the safety of healthcare workers, who often face challenging situations and difficult decisions while providing care. The hospital administration and local authorities are currently investigating the assault, and it remains to be seen what actions will be taken against those responsible.

The strike, which disrupted medical services and caused concern among patients, was brought to a close after Sub-Divisional

Officer (SDO) Piyush Sinha intervened, pledging to expedite the arrest of the assailants within 24 hours.

SDO Piyush Sinha, upon learning of the escalating situation, arrived at the hospital to engage in discussions with the agitating medical professionals. During the meeting, the doctors expressed their grievances regarding the security lapses within the hospital premises and their fear of working under such conditions.

In response to their concerns, SDO Sinha assured the doctors that the administration would take immediate action to address the security

issues. Furthermore, he promised that a dedicated team of law enforcement officers would be assigned to investigate the assault case with a mandate to identify and apprehend the assailants within the next 24 hours.

The tragic events at MGM Hospital serve as a stark reminder of the need for improved security measures and support for healthcare professionals who dedicate their lives to saving others. The medical community's protest underscores their commitment to addressing these issues and ensuring the safety of both patients and medical staff in the future.

Re-certification Audit of ISO 9001:2015 QMS of BGH

R SHARMA : BOKARO

Recertification audit of ISO 9001:2015 QMS for Bokaro General Hospital was conducted in hybrid mode by external auditors of M/s TUV. Notably Auditor for re-certification audit M.P. Sharma visited BGH and 03 other auditors U. Sharma, P. Mandal and expert Dr. NK Rojha joined in virtual mode for the audit. Chief Medical Officer Dr. BB Karunamoy was present in the inauguration and closing meeting of the audit of all the departments of the hospital. After a thorough review of all aspects during the audit, some suggestions for improvement were given by the auditors against which



the hospital management reiterated its commitment to comply with them. The recertification audit was successfully completed and Bokaro General Hospital was recommended for recertification of ISO 9001:2015 QMS for the next 03 years.

The audit was conducted in coordination with the

General Managers of Business Excellence Department of Bokaro Steel Plant, Anupama Tiwari, Bishwajit Banerjee and Manager Sagarika Sahu. Also Dr. Indranil Choudhary, Dr. Trupti Chandra, Vasuki, Rupalok Kumbhakar and Sunil Kumar of the ISO team of Bokaro General Hospital were present.

Nuvoco's 'Duraguard Xtra F2F' now in Jharkhand

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Nuvoco Vistas Corp. Ltd., India's fifth-largest cement group in terms of capacity, launched its premium composite cement 'Duraguard Xtra F2F' as part of its extensive Duraguard range of products in Jharkhand. The product improves workability, provides a superior finish, and solidifies the construction from foundation to finish (F2F), thus complementing its tagline "Mazbooti Joh Tike, Finishing Jo Dikhe".

On the launch, Mr. Jayakumar Krishnaswamy, Managing Director, Nuvoco said, "Our customers are the epicenter in driving our innovations, and Duraguard Xtra F2F is one such innovative product that ensures safety, strength, and performance for constructions from foundation to finish. As a leading player in Eastern India, Jharkhand plays a key role in our business and helps in building strong brand equity in the premium category. We continue to remain focused on introducing quality products for our stakeholders and committed to our vision of Building a safer, smarter sustainable world."

Developed under the mother brand Duraguard, Duraguard Xtra F2F is a cutting-edge product engineered for all your construction needs from Foundation to Finish (F2F). It offers higher durability, superior finish, and chloride-resistance. It is packaged in a premium laminated propylene bag that keeps it dry and extends its shelf life. Further, the cement is sealed in the factory and opened only once it reaches the site, which prevents tampering during transit and ensures zero waste.



Vishwakarma Puja celebrated in Bokaro Steel Plant

PNS : BOKARO

Lord Vishwakarma, the god of plants and equipment, was worshipped with full devotion and enthusiasm as per tradition at Bokaro Steel Plant on 17th September. Employees in various departments worshipped the machines with full enthusiasm and wished for the safe and successful operation of the plant. BSL Executive Director (Works) B.K. Tiwari, Executive Director (Finance & Accounts) Suresh Rangani, Executive Director (Materials Management) Amitabh Srivastava and Executive Director (Personnel & Administration) Rajan Prasad along with their other senior colleagues Participated in the celebration of various departments of the city and plant premises and offered prayers.

Vishwakarma Puja also celebrated in the plant premises consist of Main Fire Station, RMP, Coke Ovens, RMHP, Sinter Plant, Heavy Maintenance Mechanical (Iron Field), General Maintenance Mechanical (Iron Field), Central Store, Traffic, PEB, SMS-New, IMF, Heavy Maintenance Mechanical (Steel Zone), Capital Repair (Mechanical), Blast Furnace, BPSC, TBS, Oxygen Plant, SMS-2 & CCS, DNW, Machine Shop, Heavy Maintenance Mechanical Mill (Zone), Hot Strip Mill, Cold Rolling Mill, RGBS, MRD , CRM-3 and HRCF, where members of nearby departments also gathered.

Apprenticeship-cum-Job Fair draws over 2000 candidates

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

The two-day apprenticeship-cum-job fair, held in collaboration with the 'Board of Practical Training (Eastern Region)' (BOPTER), concluded at Karim City College, leaving a trail of enthusiasm and opportunity in its wake. The event witnessed participation from more than 2000 candidates hailing from both Jharkhand and beyond.

Aspiring individuals, ranging from diploma and engineering degree holders to general graduates, flocked to the fair with hopes of securing employment and enhancing their skill sets. A total of 54 companies, comprising both national and multinational entities, participated in the event. Notable national companies included Tata Steel Limited, Tata Motors Limited, Tata Bluescope Steel, Ramkrishna Forgings Limited, Jindal Steel and Power Limited, Samcon Limited, RSB Transmission India Limited, among others. On the international front, companies such as Vision India Development Private Limited and Skypro Technology Private Limited made their presence felt.

Dr. Mohammad Reyaz, Principal of Karim City College, expressed his gratitude towards BOPTER and the Department of Higher



Education under the Ministry of Education, Government of India, for their collaboration in organizing such a significant training-cum-employment fair. He emphasized the pride the college and the state took in hosting such a large-scale event and hinted at the possibility of making it an annual tradition.

Dr. Mohammad Moazzam Nazari, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Nodal Officer for the event, highlighted the crucial role played by BOPTER in bringing together 54 companies to provide employment opportunities to the youth and aspiring entrepreneurs. He noted that the fair aimed not only to create job opportunities but also to nurture and enhance the talents of its participants. Dr. Nazari expressed his gratitude towards the teaching and non-teaching staff of Karim City College, whose cooperation was instrumental in the event's success.

K. Chandramouli,

Assistant Director of the Board of Practical Training (Eastern Region), extended his appreciation to Karim City College and praised the institution's effective organizational skills. He also expressed gratitude to the participating companies and underscored the importance of collective efforts in conducting such a large-scale event. Chandramouli didn't forget to acknowledge the support of the Government of Jharkhand's Department of Higher and Technical Education in making the event possible.

The two-day apprenticeship-cum-job fair not only served as a platform for job seekers but also as a testament to collaborative efforts aimed at addressing the unemployment challenge while nurturing the talents of the youth. The event's success promises the potential for future editions, ensuring continued opportunities for aspiring individuals.

Dalmia Bharat honours 162 veteran contractors

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Dalmia Bharat Limited, one of India's leading cement manufacturers, honoured 162 experienced contractors across the Eastern Region as part of their 'Aap Hai Sachche Vishwakarma' initiative, an annual tradition celebrated during the auspicious Vishwakarma Puja festival. Dalmia Bharat's 'Aap Hai



Sachche Vishwakarma' initiative aims to appreciate and acknowledge the invaluable contributions of contractors whose skilled hands have

helped to shape countless dream homes into reality and their role in mentoring other skilled professionals in the industry.

As part of the celebrations held in Jharkhand, 19 experienced contractors were felicitated by Dalmia Cement representatives in the presence of their families, dealers and other members of the contractor community.

Railway Minister orders repair of dilapidated road at Tatanagar Railway Station on demand of BJP leader

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

In response to a fervent plea from Bharatiya Janata Party's youth leader, Satbir Singh Somu, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has issued orders for immediate action to repair the deteriorating road leading to Tatanagar Railway Station. The young BJP leader shared his concerns with the Railway Minister, highlighting the dire condition of the road through a tweeted picture.

Somu's demand stems from the unsafe state of the main road connecting Jugsalai and Burmanines to Tatanagar Railway Station. He pointed out that the road's crumbling infrastructure has led to frequent accidents and vehicle damage. In his tweet, Somu also tagged local BJP MP Bidyut Baran Mahato and the district administration to draw attention to the issue.

The Railway Minister, having discussed the matter with



local authorities, acknowledged that this concern falls under the purview of the Railway Ministry. Consequently, he assured Somu that appropriate steps would be taken to address the issue. In response to Somu's plea, the Union Railway Ministry promptly registered his complaint and informed him that it had been forwarded to the Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) for necessary action. Additionally, the Railway Ministry provided a link to track the progress of

decisions and actions related to the case.

Somu emphasized the hazardous nature of the road, citing large potholes that make it challenging for vehicles of all sizes to navigate safely. He also warned of the potential for a major accident if the road remains in its current state. It's worth noting that the Railway Ministry has jurisdiction over the road from Jugsalai to Tatanagar Railway Station. Approximately 30 years ago, Tata Steel took the initiative to build a Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) road due to similar concerns. However, the road has deteriorated over time due to insufficient maintenance, resulting in the current condition.

Satbir Singh Somu has made it clear that if immediate action is not taken to repair and reconstruct the road, he will be compelled to launch a mass movement to address this pressing issue.

People should take benefits of Govt schemes: Minister

VINOD PRASAD : LOHARDAGA

Under the chairmanship of Labor Planning, Training and Skill Development Department-cum incharge Minister Satyanand Bhokta, a meeting of the District 20 Point Program Implementation Committee and District Planning Committee was held in the auditorium of the District Council office on Monday. Finance Minister Dr. Rameshwar Oraon also participated in the event.

During this, 136:54 lakh schemes of Rural Development Special Division including 32:225 lakh rupees of Zilla Parishad's schemes worth 300:96 lakhs were inaugurated, distribution of assets worth 420:928 lakhs among various beneficiaries and foundation stone of other schemes including construction of Gadwal Check Dam PCC road staircase to be built at a cost of 301:753 lakhs was laid. In the meeting, the proposal for closure of Bondowar Duggu path has been sent under the Rural Works Department, instructions were given to send the proposal to the PWD Department within a week. Various roads and bridges of REO were reviewed.

By tendering the schemes, the Minister gave instructions to resolve the technical prob-



lems and start the work by laying the foundation stone of the road and on the dilapidated condition of the Arru-Hesway road, construction of a Banda bridge in Kairos.

Under the review of the schemes of the Rural Works Special Division, the proposal sent to the department regarding bridge construction in the district in the years 2022-23 and 2023-24 was reviewed. Also, instructions were given to get the plans approved. The repair action plans of Anganwadi centers were reviewed under DMFT item under NREP.

Under the Agriculture Department, the benefits given to farmers and deprived farmers under Agriculture Loan Waiver Scheme, KCC Scheme were reviewed. Under the year 2022-23, the emergency seed distribution scheme, status of paddy plantation, Birsra crop extension scheme, seed covering were reviewed. Besides, instructions were given that the yield

produced by the farmers among whom the seeds are to be distributed should also be checked. The ponds constructed by land conservation in the year 2021-22 and 2022-23 were reviewed.

Apart from this, instructions were given to stop the salary of the junior engineer responsible for the ponds for which payment is pending and the Zilla Parishad Engineer was directed to inspect the site and make the payment within 15 days. Under the Rural Development Department, 90 percent grant will be received in the year 2023-24. The target and the target achieved against it were reviewed. In the year 2018-19, distribution of cows among Tana devotees on 100 percent subsidy was also reviewed and along with review of Fisheries Department, Jharkhand State Crop Relief Scheme and Chief Minister Drought Relief Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

Electricity of Municipal Council. Divisional Supply Department, Road Division, Welfare Department, Drinking Water and Sanitation Division, District Planning Department, Labor Department, Mining Department etc. were also reviewed. And necessary instructions were given.

The minister said that all the 20-point members should inspect whether the common people are getting the benefits of the schemes provided by the government or not. First bring it to the notice of the district officials. If the problem is not resolved, please inform me about that issue. On the occasion, Chief Minister Sarathi Scheme was inaugurated in Kudu and an awareness chariot was flagged off by the Labor Department. In the meeting, Vice Chairman of District 20 Point Program Implementation Committee, Lohardaga Sabir Khan, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Waghmare Prasad Krishna, Superintendent of Police Harish Bin Zaman, District Council President Reena Kumari, Deputy Development Commissioner Jaiyoti Samanta, MP representative Chandrashekhar Aggarwal, MLA representative Nishith Jaiswal, District Level officials and other dignitaries were present.

Rajbhasha Quiz and Hindi Presentation competition organised at NTPC CMHQ

PNS : RANCHI

NTPC Coal Mining Headquarters, Ranchi is observing Hindi Pakhwada from September 14 to 29, 2023. As part of Hindi Pakhwada various competitions among its employees and their family members (housewives and children) are being held to propagate Hindi.

In this regard, to encourage the use of Hindi, Rajbhasha Quiz with general knowledge Hindi competition was held on 18.09.2023 and Hindi Presentation by employees on 19.09.2023, in which employees have made their presentation high-



lighting their respective department work which was judged on various parameters i.e content, presentation skills, Creativity, Hindi language proficiency and confidence. The competitions saw good participation from the employees and family members.

The closing ceremony and prize distribution program of Hindi Fortnightly celebration will be held on September 29, 2023.

Murder of a Sikh youth in Chhattisgarh is condemnable: Matharu

PNS : JAMSHEDPUR

Jharkhand State Minority Commission's Vice Chairman Jyoti Singh Matharu has strongly condemned the news of the brutal murder of Sikh youth Malkit Singh in Khursipar, Bhilai, Chhattisgarh and has expressed his deep condolences towards the deceased Malkit Singh. Matharu talked to Mahendra Singh Chhabra, Chairman, Minority Commission, Chhattisgarh and took complete information about the incident. Chhabra said that after watching Ghadar movie and fighting over its scene, an innocent Sikh youth was brutally beaten due to which he died.

Chairman of Minority Commission Chhattisgarh told Matharu that in the meeting of Sikh Panchayat, a compensation of Rs 10 lakh was demanded by the government to the family of the deceased and to give a government job to one member of the family, which the government immediately accepted.



HC takes cognizance over encroachment of water bodies in Capital

Court sought action plan from RMC over water scarcity

PNS : RANCHI

The Jharkhand High Court on Tuesday took suo moto cognizance over encroachment of areas around water bodies at the same time sought action plan from Ranchi Municipal Corporation on tackling water crisis in State Capital, as the region has witnessed scanty rainfall. The Jharkhand High Court has sought a reply from the State Government and the Municipal Corporation within four weeks.

state government that there has been less rainfall so far in the monsoon this year, what is the action plan so that the people of Ranchi do not face drinking water problems. The court has sought response from Ranchi Municipal Corporation regarding removal of encroachment from around the city's water sources such as Kanke Dam, Dhurva Dam, Getsud Dam, Hinoo river and directed the civic bodies to ensure that solid and liquid waste entering these water sources are checked.

Earlier, Amicus Curiae Inderjit Singh told the court that this year there has been 27 percent less rainfall in Ranchi in the monsoon, the problem of drinking water will start happening in Ranchi from December this year, in such a situation, it should be clarified how the government will tackle the problem. A division bench headed by High Court Chief Justice Sanjay Kumar Mishra scheduled the hearing of the case on October 31. Advocate LCM Shahdeo appeared on behalf of Ranchi Municipal Corporation.

In the last hearing, the court had asked the state government and Ranchi Municipal Corporation to remove encroachment from around the dam, Dhurva Dam, Getsud Dam, Hinoo River and Bada Talab. If the encroachment is not removed, the court has also said that it will pass a strict order. The court had also taken suo motu cognizance of the case of encroachment of land of Ranchi's water sources like Kanke Dam, Dhurva Dam and Getsud Dam.

Meanwhile, in a big relief to citizens, most places across Jharkhand are expected to experience light to moderate rain today, said a bulletin issued by IMD's Ranchi Meteorological Centre. The Met Centre also issued an alert of heavy rain at a few isolated places in southern Jharkhand today.

The monsoon trough at mean sea level was passing through Jaisalmer, Ajmer, Shivpuri, Sidhi, Daltonganj, Digah and thence southeast to the east-central Bay of Bengal. The cyclonic circulation over the east-central and adjoining Northeast Bay of Bengal was lying over the northeast and adjoining east-central Bay of Bengal extending up to 5.8 km above mean sea level.



Under its influence, a low-pressure area is likely to form over the northwest Bay of Bengal and the neighbourhood during the next 24 hours. Monsoon activity was weak over Jharkhand during the past 24 hours.

Light to moderate rain was observed at isolated places. Weathermen did not rule out the possibility of heavy rainfall at isolated places over the west and central parts of the state tomorrow. Met statistics suggested that Jharkhand state as a whole was still facing a rainfall deficit of 34 per cent.

INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE SUMMIT

‘Impact of climate change visible in more than 33% green Jharkhand’

PNS : RANCHI

Despite Jharkhand being more than 33 per cent green, the effects of climate change are beginning to be seen here. In the north-western districts of Garhwa, Latehar and Palamu, increase in average temperature and forest fires and decrease in rainfall are some of the impacts of climate change are being seen. The state government has started working to reduce the impact of climate change. Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF) Dr. Sanjay Srivastava informed this to the delegates at the 2-day International Climate Summit held in Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.



Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Jharkhand Dr. Sanjay Srivastava addresses delegates at the 2-day International Climate Summit held in Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on Tuesday. PNS

The International Climate Summit was organised through collaboration of various Ministries of Central Govt with Indo-Nordic cooperation and PHD Chamber of Commerce & Industry on the issue of “Sustainability through green growth”. Various partners of the Summit were Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Ministry of Coal, Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, office of Principal Scientific Adviser to Govt. of India, NITI Aayog etc. along with participating States and industry representatives.

Dr. Sanjay Srivastava was invited as the sole representative of the Indian Forest Service in the country in this Summit to share views on climate responsible actions, policies and legislations. He said in the conference that keeping in view the challenges of climate change viz. greenhouse gases, fossil fuel use, fragmentation of forest habitat, and pollution, many initiatives have been taken in Jharkhand towards green hydrogen, biofuels and renewable energy. The State Industries Department has signed an MoU with Tata Group to set up a hydrogen engine manufacturing unit in Jamshedpur. A new solar energy policy has also been launched to contribute to the field of renewable energy, he said.

President of Jharkhand Pradesh Professionals Congress Committee, Aditya Vikram Jaiswal, today participated in the Bhagwat Katha Gyan Yagya of Sadguru Shri Riteshwar Ji Maharaj going on at Shri Dauji Maharaj Temple, Baldev, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh and took the blessings of Maharaj Ji by wearing a stall. During this, Shri Riteshwar Maharaj ji garlanded him as a blessing and also blessed him with happiness and prosperity.

‘Aim to take message of Sanatan Dharma to every home’



PNS : RANCHI

The Bhagwat Katha Gyan Yagya is going on in Shri Dauji Maharaj Temple, Baldev, which started from 14th September 2023 and will continue till 20th September 2023 and after this, Baldev Chhat Mahotsav has also been kept on 21st September. A large number of devotees are participating in the story and receiving blessings from Maharaj Ji.

Jaiswal, after performing aarti and Guruvandan of Sadguru Shri Riteshwar Ji Maharaj, said that it is very important to propagate and expand Sanatan Dharma in Jharkhand. People should never forget their culture and tradition. To save it, there is a need to organize such stories which connect with people's heart. He said that soon Gurudev will be called in Jharkhand too to take forward Sanatan Dharma and save our culture. There will be a new beginning of tradition and people will be awakened. Efforts will be made to spread Sanatan Dharma to every home in the entire state and people will be made to understand the greatness of their religion and efforts will also be made to connect them with Sanatan Dharma.

‘Ranchi-Howrah Vande Bharat to run soon’

Ranchi MP meets Railway Minister



PNS : RANCHI

Ranchi is going to get the gift of Ranchi Howrah Vande Bharat Express very soon. Preparations for this are also being completed by the Railways. Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav gave this information to MP Sanjay Seth during his meeting today. During the special session of Parliament, MP Sanjay Seth met Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav in Delhi on Tuesday. He was informed about the request letter given earlier for expanding rail passenger facilities in Ranchi Lok Sabha constituency. He also urged to take positive initiative on this. In light of this, the Union Railway Minister told Seth that Ranchi Howrah Vande Bharat Express will be given to Ranchi very soon. There is every possibility that the Prime Minister himself will flag off and inaugurate it. After this gift, Seth has expressed his gratitude to the Union Railway Minister and has also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In the course of this meeting, the Ranchi MP requested the Union Railway Minister to come to Ranchi and hold a review meeting of the ongoing railway projects here, so that the railway work here can be given more momentum. On this, the Union Railway Minister assured the Parliament that he is planning to come to Ranchi very soon. All plans will be reviewed. It will be given more momentum. Seth also urged the Union Railway Minister to re-stop the trains running before the Corona period in McCluskieganj, Muri and Tatisilva. On this, the Union Minister told the MP that stoppage of many trains has been given to Ranchi Lok Sabha constituency. The stoppage of other trains will also start soon. Apart from this, the Union Railway Minister has also assured that positive initiatives will be taken in the matter of construction of the overbridge in Chutuya.

After the meeting, MP Sanjay Seth said that there is great news for Ranchi that Vande Bharat Express running between Ranchi and Howrah will run on the tracks very soon. The journey between Ranchi and Kolkata will become even more smooth, pleasant and easy. Apart from this, the Union Railway Minister has also shown seriousness regarding the expansion of rail passenger facilities in Ranchi Lok Sabha constituency. He also urged to take positive initiative on this. In light of this, the Union Railway Minister told Seth that Ranchi Howrah Vande Bharat Express will be given to Ranchi very soon. There is every possibility that the Prime Minister himself will flag off and inaugurate it. After this gift, Seth has expressed his gratitude to the Union Railway Minister and has also thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

State BJP hails women reservation bill, terms it historic

PNS : RANCHI

The proposed women reservation bill was given the nod by the Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday and today it was introduced in the Lok Sabha. The BJP leaders from State have hailed the decision terming it as a historic decision for half the population of the Country. The proposed bill, which has been pending for nearly 27 years, seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative assemblies. The proposed legislation seeks 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies. While the government is yet to confirm the news and give out details of the proposed legislation, here's what the structure of the bill was when it was last introduced in Parliament in 2008.



Union Minister Arjun Munda and BJP National Vice President Raghubar Das. (File Photo)

Union Tribal Affairs Minister Arjun Munda welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the introduction of 'Nari Shakti Vandan Act' in the Lok Sabha today. He said that this is a decision by which our Nari Shakti will get their rights in the true sense. Under the Nari Shakti Vandan Act, there is a provision for reservation of 33 percent seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. Out of this 33 percent, one-third seats are to be reserved for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes. Munda said that out of 81 seats in the Jharkhand Assembly, 27 seats will be reserved for women. At present the total number of members in the Lok Sabha is 543. At present the number of women MPs is 82. After the bill is passed, the number of women MPs in the Lok Sabha will increase to 181. On behalf of crores of countrymen, I congratulate Modi ji from the bottom of my heart for this historic decision.

BJP national vice president and former Chief Minister Raghubar Das welcoming the women reservation bill said that by introducing 'Shakti Vandan Act 2023' Prime Minister has taken big steps for women empowerment since 2014, which has given women the right to live with dignity and security. Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, toilets were built across the country, women were given houses through the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Women were given relief from smoke through the Ujjwala scheme, the sex ratio was vastly improved by running the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao campaign. Sukanya Samridhi Yojana was started to promote savings in the name of daughters. Similarly, when there was a double engine government in Jharkhand led by the Prime Minister, at that time also many works were done for women power. Right to registration of property for one rupee, free stove and refill under Pradhan Mantri Yojana, 40 thousand rupees under Sukanya Yojana from the birth of the daughter till the age of 18 years and 30 thousand rupees separately on the marriage of the daughter under the Chief Minister Kanyadaan Yojana. Rs. were being given. Women were being linked to employment by forming Sakhi Mandal. Under the Tapaswini scheme, girls from tribal areas were being linked with employment by developing their skills. Rani Mistry status was given for house construction under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. Apart from this, women were added by nominating Ujjwala Didi and Poshan Sakhi.

The Initiative for Research and Innovation in STEM (IRIS) is a research-based science initiative which promotes science and research among young Indian innovators. IRIS introduced the concept of Mentoring Camps and Kumar Divyanshu Raj and Vinayak Kumar (Std. IX) of our school have been invited to the platform for securing the top position in CBSE National Exhibition. The students are all geared up for submitting the projects. School Head Personnel & Admin., Dr. Pradip Varma, congratulated the team for their proud achievement. Principal, Paramjit Kaur, congratulated the team and wished them luck for the Mentoring Camps. She added that NEP 2020 has shifted the focus to innovation and competency-based learning and our school is committed to provide opportunities for exposure to the students in the field of STEAMIE (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Maths, Innovation and Entrepreneurship).

SBPS invited to IRIS Mentoring Camp

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AGAINST ALL ODDS

Ranchi Banker defies death to finish Ladakh Marathon

56-year-old runner overcomes life-threatening health scare to fulfill his dream

PNS : RANCHI

In a remarkable tale of unwavering determination and resilience, a 56-year-old avid runner, defied all odds to achieve his dream of conquering the Ladakh Marathon, despite facing a life-threatening health scare during his journey. A banker by profession, Suman Prasad's journey to the Ladakh Marathon was a testament to his unyielding spirit. Having taken up running just last year, he set his sights on completing one of India's most challenging marathons, a dream that seemed impossible to achieve for most at his age. His journey to Ladakh began with the successful completion of the Delhi Half Marathon (21 Kms), Kolkata Marathon (25 Kms) and the gruelling Mumbai Marathon (42 Kms), demonstrating his dedication and commitment to his newfound passion. To secure his spot in the Ladakh Marathon, Suman registered himself eagerly for the event that held a special place in his heart.



However, as he embarked on his training in the treacherous terrain of Patratu Valley at Jharkhand and late sat out for Ladakh, chilly wind took a toll on his health. He fell seriously ill and was unable to walk, with his low oxygen level. His condition deteriorated and he was admitted to hospital. Doctors delivered a grim prognosis, urging him to abandon his dream for the sake of his life, due to posing threat to heart attack. He sought multiple medical opinions, all echoing the same dire warning. Sharing his experience, he said, "My passion and love for the realization of my dream to complete the goal of Marathon in Ladakh kept haunting me. I refused to give up. Mustered the courage once again and thought of going up-hill to this goal. As I walked a few steps, I realized that my oxygen level has increased; this gave me courage to continue my challenge. Prasad's perseverance was not his sole driving force. The arrival of his nephew, who had rushed to

Ladakh upon learning of his uncle's dire health, injected him with an additional burst of energy. Suman's determination surged and he quickened his pace. In a breathtaking display of sheer willpower, Suman Prasad crossed the finish line, completing the Ladakh Marathon in the set timeline. Overwhelmed with emotion, he broke into tears of joy, realizing his dream against all odds. This extraordinary tale of courage serves as an inspiration to all, a testament to the human spirit's indomitable strength. Suman Prasad's journey reminds us that dreams can be achieved through unwavering determination and the refusal to give in to adversity.

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CMPDI forays into Non-Coal Exploration

PNS : RANCHI

Central Mine Planning and Design Institute, A Mini Ratna Company and a Subsidiary of Coal India Limited forays in to Non-Coal Exploration and successfully submitted Geological Report of Bauxite Exploration for the project "Preliminary Exploration (G3) of Bauxite in Madua Pat I Bauxite Block, Lohardaga District, Jharkhand" National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET). This project was fully funded by National Mineral Exploration Trust (NMET), Ministry of Mines, Govt. of India. A total of 1.40 million tonnes net in-situ Bauxite resource with an average grade of 33.46% Al2O3, 11.67 million tonnes net in-situ Aluminous Laterite resource with an average grade of 34.46% Al2O3 in "Inferred Category" has been estimated in the block and were added in the national inventory. In addition to above 10.95 million tonnes net in-situ TiO2 containing ore has been estimated with an average grade of 7.04 % TiO2 in the block. Furthermore, two Bauxite exploration projects in Lohardaga district and one Base metal exploration project in Giridih district are being executed by CMPDI.

TWO-DAYS FAIR AT CMPDI

PNS : RANCHI

Women in Public Sector (WIPS), CMPDI Branch will organize two-day Indra Dhanush Fair-cum-Sales exhibition from 22 to 23 September, 2023 at Rabindra Bhawan, Kanke Road. Rupali Gupta, President, Kasturi Mahila Sabha, CMPDI, will inaugurate this fair on 22nd September, 2023 at 12 noon. Chairman-cum-Managing Director and Functional Directors of CMPDI will be present on this occasion. In this fair, about 75 stalls will be installed consisting of fashionable garments/sarees, jewellery, medical advisors, financial advisors, house plants and various saplings and food stalls. Moreover, items/goods of jute, crafts, frames, souvenirs, wooden crafts, bamboo crafts, hand bags and terra cotta crafts will also be available for sale, especially made by women from the rural areas around Ranchi district.

Weaponising disruptions in Parliament antithetical to democracy: Dhankar

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Urging Members of Parliament to bury the strategy of “weaponising” disturbances and disruptions in parliamentary functioning, Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday said these are antithetical to democratic values.

Addressing a function to commemorate the rich legacy of the Parliament of India in the iconic Central Hall of the old Parliament building, he also called for emulating the exemplary conduct and decorum of the members of the Constituent Assembly.

Dhankhar said the time has come to give up the justification of transgression of conduct and outrageous disregard of rules in the temples of democracy by making reference to past instances.

“As we march into the new Parliament building, we must



enhance cooperation and consensual approach. Time for us to bid farewell to confrontational stance and resolve to ever keep national interest uppermost,” he told the gathering of parliamentarians in the central hall.

“Time to bury the strategy of weaponising disturbance and disruptions in parliamentary functioning as these are antithetical to democratic values and can never have the sanction of the people – our

ultimate masters,” Dhankhar said.

“Time has come to give up once and for all the premise of justifying the transgression of conduct and outrageous disregard of rules in the temples of democracy by making reference to past instances,” he added.

The Vice President said, “In this very chamber, the members of the Constituent Assembly embarked upon the journey to accomplish the

daunting task of drafting the Constitution.”

He said the deliberations in the Constituent Assembly in this theatre exemplified decorum and healthy debate. “Contentious issues were negotiated in a spirit of consensus with scholarly debate and spirited deliberations. We need to emulate the exemplary conduct of our founding fathers,” he noted.

Dhankhar also recalled the final speech of B R Ambedkar in the Constituent Assembly where he had said, “If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing in my judgement we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives.”

“Let us heed his clarion call,” Dhankhar asserted.

“This historic walk to the new building of Parliament, in Amrit Kaal, be the march to

Bharat in 2047 as a Vishwaguru,” the Chairman said. He also called for making the new chambers of Parliament the sanctum sanctorum of “our temple of democracy in togetherness”.

Marking the day as a “momentous occasion,” he said, “I congratulate you all on our phenomenal rise. Traversing over a seven-decade journey, from Samvidhan Sabha to the present day in Amrit Kaal, these hallowed precincts have witnessed many a milestone.”

Dhankhar also said “From the ‘tryst with destiny’ at midnight of 15th August 1947, to unfolding of innovative forward-looking GST regime at midnight of June 30, 2017, and now this day.”

In this very Central Hall, Rajya Sabha chairman said, the members of the Constituent Assembly embarked upon the journey to accomplish the daunting task of drafting the Constitution of India.

—RAJYA SABHA: DAY 1— Heated exchanges between Treasury, Opposition benches



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The first day of the Rajya Sabha sitting in the new Parliament House on Tuesday witnessed heated exchanges between the treasury and Opposition benches after Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge made remarks on the manner in which political parties select women candidates from weaker sections and raised the issue of “delayed” GST payments to non-BJP ruled states.

Addressing the Upper House at its first sitting, during which Prime Minister Narendra Modi was present, Kharge, who is the Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, referred to the Women Reservation Bill which was passed in 2010 in the House.

His comments that all political parties only give tickets to those women from backward classes who cannot assert themselves evoked sharp reactions from the treasury benches.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the “sweeping statement” of Kharge that all parties do not choose effective women candidates is “absolutely unacceptable”.

“I speak on behalf of all our women. We all have been empowered by our party, by our Hon’ble Prime Minister. Hon’ble Rashrapati Droupadi Murmu ji is an empowered woman. Every (female) MP of my party is an empowered woman,” she added. Sitharaman stressed that the opposition leader cannot insult

people like this.

To this, Kharge, who is president of the Congress party, said: “Women belonging to backward classes, scheduled caste women do not get the kind the opportunities she (Sitharaman) gets”. Sitharaman again objected and asked, “Who is Droupadi Murmu? Opposition leader cannot insult the people like this, cannot draw a differentiation between women... We are asking for reservation for all women”.

After the intervention of Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar, House proceedings continued. Kharge said he welcomes the women’s reservation bill titled Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam.

Later Kharge referred to the remarks made by Prime Minister Modi regarding federal structure and competitive federalism in the country and alleged, “Federal structure is being weakened under your leadership day-by-day”. This statement was vociferously objected to by BJP members.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said the prime minister’s speech was totally “apolitical”, unbiased and balanced, and urged Kharge to speak in the House like a “statesman”. The senior Congress leader accused the central government of engineering the fall of governments led by opposition parties in states like Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

This remark too was vehemently objected to by the ruling party MPs. Kharge also

accused the central government of delaying GST dues to the non-BJP state governments and also grants for welfare schemes like MNREGA.

However, Finance Minister Sitharaman challenged the statement regarding the payments of dues. “A factually incorrect statement has been made by the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) wherein he’s saying that GST revenue is not given to the states on time. This is absolutely wrong,” she said.

The minister also told the House that her ministry even borrowed money and paid to the states. “Three times we have paid the money in advance. There is no money pending for any state in GST and there is no delay in payment to the states. It is wrong on the part of the LoP to blame like this,” Sitharaman added.

Chairman Dhankhar asked both the finance minister and Leader of the Opposition to table documents in supporting their remarks on the table of the House during the course of the day. Kharge’s remarks that the prime minister can speak for 2-3 hours but will not say anything on the Manipur situation also evoked a sharp reaction from the BJP members.

Dhankhar said that he was ready for a discussion on the Manipur issue in the House but it could not take place because of objections by opposition members. The House proceedings were adjourned till Wednesday morning after Kharge’s speech.

India-Malaysia review bilateral ties at 12th defence cooperation panel meet

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

India and Malaysia on Tuesday reviewed the entire spectrum of their defence ties here and explored effective and practical initiatives to further expand bilateral defence engagements during the 12th meeting of Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Committee (MIDCOM).

Giving details of the parleys, defence ministry officials said both sides assessed the existing defence cooperation between the two countries and held wide-ranging discussions on issues of mutual interest including regional issues.

They agreed to establish a Strategic Affairs working Group (SAWG) to formulate a consultative mechanism intermediate between the MIDCOM and the two Sub-committees to handle all aspects of the defence cooperation between the two countries.

The meeting was co-chaired by Defence Secretary Giridhar Aramane and Deputy Secretary General (Policy), Malaysia Mohd Yani bin Daud. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the outcomes of the two sub-committee meetings name-



ly Sub Committee on Military Cooperation held on July 27, 2023 and Joint Sub Committee on Defence Science Technology and Industry Cooperation held on September 18, 2023.

The two chairs also articulated steps in the direction of emerging areas of cooperation like cyber security and issues pertaining to global commons. They identified means to enhance existing areas of collaboration, especially in the field of

defence industry, maritime security and multilateral cooperation.

During the MIDCOM, the Defence Secretary shared an 8-point proposal with the Malaysian side to expand cooperation between India and Malaysia on a wide range of areas such as Government to government-level engagement, Tri-Service cooperation, Training, UN Peacekeeping, Bilateral Services Engagement, Defence Industrial Cooperation, Research & Development and Regional/ Sub-Regional Engagements.

The Defence Secretary highlighted the potential of the domestic defence industry with capacity and capability to cooperate with the Malaysian Armed Forces in its shipbuilding and maintenance plans. Malaysia expressed confidence in the capability of the Indian defence industry and discussed possibilities for co-design, co-production and co-development in the field of defence industry.

Both countries reaffirmed their commitment to implement fully the Enhanced Strategic Partnership based on mutual trust and understanding, common interests and shared values of democracy & rule of law.

It's ours, says Sonia amid Opposition reactions to women's reservation Bill

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Mixed reactions poured in amongst the Opposition parties over the women reservation bill in a rechristened format – Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam – after it was introduced in Parliament on Tuesday. Some of the women leaders welcome the move, Congress too appreciated but with a rider that the Bill was first introduced by the Congress. JD(U) and BJD mentioned that the Bill on women reservation was inspired by their party.

Congress’ parliamentary party chief Sonia Gandhi said the women’s reservation bill “is ours”. “It is ours, apna hai,” Sonia said in first recation to the proposed Bill. It was during the UPA government that the bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha on March 9, 2010 but not taken up in the Lok Sabha, stated Congress.

Noting the Centre has stated that the reservation will be effective only after a Census and delimitation exercise is conducted post-enactment of the bill, Congress termed as “election jumla” and “huge betrayal of hopes of women”.

Former chief ministers – Mayawati, Rabri Devi, Mehbooba Mufti – all welcomed the announcement and hailed the decision a great one. “Having navigated the rough terrain of a predominantly male political landscape myself, I am happy to see that finally the Women Reservation bill will become a reality.

Despite constituting half of the population, we are grossly underrepresented. It’s a great step,” PDP chief and former Jammu and Kashmir CM Mehbooba said.

Former Uttar Pradesh CM Mayawati said her party will support any bill that allows reservation for women in Parliament and other legislatures, even if the party’s demand for a quota for the SC, ST and OBC within that



quota is not met.

Former Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi said the women’s reservation bill brought by the Narendra Modi government should have provided separate quotas for those belonging to SCs, STs and OBCs. She also alleged that the bill was “a gimmick, aimed just at making some noise” since the implementation was proposed only after a fresh round of delimitation.

Odisha’s ruling BJD said Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik’s efforts bore fruit with the Narendra Modi government introducing the women’s reservation bill in Lok Sabha. BJD vice-president Debi Prasad Mishra said his party nominated 33 per cent women candidates from the state in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Of the seven women candidates fielded by the party, five won the elections. The BJD government has also reserved 50 per cent of seats for women in the local bodies of the state, he said.

According to Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav, reservation for women should be a balance of gender justice and social justice and demanded clarity on share of backward, Dalit, minority, and tribals in the seats set aside.

While AIMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi said the government should have also provided for reservation of Muslim and OBC, AAP

leader and Delhi minister Atishi questioned the provision of delimitation and census.

“This means that women reservation won’t be implemented ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls,” she said.

Another Opposition party hailing allegiance to the India bloc, Janat Dal (U) claimed that Women’s Reservation Bill brought by the Narendra Modi government was “inspired” by quotas for women brought long ago by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

“Bihar, in 2006, became the first state in the country where women were given 50 per cent reservations in local bodies and Panchayats.

Nitish Kumar took the bold step within months of taking over as Chief Minister in November 2005”, a statement to this effect was issued by JD(U) national general secretary and spokesman Rajib Ranjan who asserted “the bill proves that Bihar shows the way”.

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal attacked the government asking why did Prime Minister Narendra Modi wait for almost 10 years for it and saying that probably 2024 general elections is the reason. Sibal, who was a Union minister during the UPA 1 and 2 regimes, quit the Congress in May last year and was elected to the Rajya Sabha as an independent member with the Samajwadi Party’s support.

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

The country’s top drug regulator, National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed the retail price of 51 formulations, including pain killers, pulmonary drugs, and those used to treat high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, and bacterial infections. Fixing the retail price of these daily used drugs particularly diabetes will come as a huge relief to the patients in the sector.

An official from the NPPA said that the decision was taken at the 116th Authority meeting held on September 6 where the authority deliberated on the new drug applications for price fixation under various clauses of drugs prices control order,



2013.

These include Synokem pharmaceutical/Torrent Pharmaceutical’s fixed dose combination Rosuvastatin plus Clopidogrel Capsules, Daiwik Pharnasphere/ Aristo Pharmaceuticals’ Diclofenac Diethylamine, Methyl Salicylate and Menthol Gel, E x e m e d

Pharmaceuticals/ Abbott Healthcare’s Linagliptin and Metformin Hydrochloride Tablets, Sai Primus Life Biotech/Primus Remedies’ Linagliptin plus Metformin Hydrochloride Tablet.

The list further includes, Skymap Pharmaceuticals’ Linagliptin plus Metformin Hydrochloride Tablet, Skymap

Research finds link between non-stick cookware, cancer

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Are certain chemicals including polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which are used in thousands of household and industrial products, including in stain- and heat-resistant items like non-stick cookwares fueling the rise in ovarian, skin, breast and other types of cancers in women?

A new research funded by the US government based on data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has found evidence of this disturbing link. The study is published in the Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology.

The researchers also found similar links between women diagnosed with cancer and high exposures to phenols, which are commonly used in food packaging, dyes and personal care products. They did not find similar associations between the chemicals and cancer diagnoses in men.



PFAS is referred to as ‘forever chemicals’ due to their longevity in the environment. These are found in products such as Teflon pans, waterproof clothing, stain-resistant carpets and fabrics, and food packaging.

The study showed that women in particular who were more exposed to PFDE, a long-chain PFAS compound, were twice as likely to have a previous melanoma (form of skin cancer) diagnosis.

While the women with higher exposure to two other long-chained PFAS compounds, PFNA (Proximal

Femoral Nail Antirotation) and PFUA (Perfluoroundecanoic acid) had nearly double the odds of a prior melanoma diagnosis.

Researchers had analysed blood and urine samples from more than 10,000 people and found a link between PFNA and a prior diagnosis of uterine cancer.

They found that women with higher exposure to phenols, such as BPA (used in plastics) and 2,5-dichlorophenol (a chemical used in dyes and found as a by-product in wastewater treatment), had higher odds of prior ovarian cancer diagnoses.

Work from home can result in reduced carbon footprint: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Opting for hybrid working or work from home can result in a reduced carbon footprint compared to full-time office work, according to a new study.

Published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, the study found that hybrid workers who work from home two to four days per week can reduce their carbon footprint by 11 percent to 29 percent, but working from home one day per week is cutting carbon footprint by only 2 per cent.

The study, conducted by researchers at Cornell University and Microsoft, used survey data and modelling to incorporate factors sometimes overlooked when calculating carbon footprint, including residential energy use based on time-use allocation, non-commute distance and mode of transportation, communications device usage, number of household members and office



configuration, such as seat sharing and building size.

“Remote work is not zero carbon, and the benefits of hybrid work are not perfectly linear,” said study senior author Fengqi You, a professor in energy systems engineering at Cornell.

The study found that seat sharing among hybrid workers under full-building attendance can reduce carbon footprint by 28 percent. Hybrid workers tend to commute farther than onsite workers due to differences in housing choices.

According to the study, effects of remote and hybrid work on communications technologies such as computer, phone and internet usage have negligible impacts on overall carbon footprint.

ECI officers ask 12 DEOs to complete poll preparations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

In view of the upcoming Lok Sabha general elections, Senior Deputy Election Commissioners of Election Commission of India (ECI) Dharmendra Sharma and Nitesh Vyas asked the district election officers/ district magistrates (DEOs/DMs) of 12 districts of this region including Varanasi to complete poll preparations on time. Holding a meeting with the DEOs/DMs of Varanasi, Sonbhadra, Mirzapur, Chandauli, Ghazipur, Jaunpur, Azamgarh, Mau, Ballia, Prayagraj, Amethi and Bhadohi at a meeting held here on Monday, they also reviewed the progress of preparations.

They also discussed the preparation of the voter list in the context of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, 2024. To make the voter list proper, instructions were given to all the 12 DEOs regarding registering the names of eligible voters in the voter list, removing the names of dead voters from the voter list and improving elector population (EP) and gender



ECI officers holding a meeting with 12 DEOs/DMs on poll preparations in Varanasi on Monday.

ratio.

In the meeting, SDECs instructed the DEOs/ DMs that efforts should be made that the name of any eligible voter is not deprived of being registered in the voter list and directed them to take efforts to register the names of young voters of 18-19 age group in the voter list. For this, they said that special camps should be organ-

ised in educational institutions like universities, technical and medical colleges, ITIs, Polytechnics etc. Besides, they also asked the DEOs/ DMs to organise regular meetings with political parties to help in purifying the voter list.

The ECI officers said that the suggestions of the political parties should also be taken and steps should also be taken

to implement their suggestions after examining them on their merits and demerits. ECI Director Deepali Masirkar, Secretary Pawan Diwan, Under Secretary Prafulla Awasthi, Chief Electoral Officer, Uttar Pradesh Navdeep Rinwa along with Additional Chief Electoral Officers Nidhi Srivastava and Kumar Vineet were also present in the meeting.

CM distributes certificates

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath watched the cultural talents of children and distributed certificates to them in the programme of Kashi Sansad Sanskritik Mahotsav (KSSM) organised in the Divisional Auditorium here on Monday evening during his one-day visit when the CM was in the city to inspect the preparations for the proposed visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to his parliamentary constituency on September 23. During his visit, the PM will also give awards to the winners of mega event of KSSM to be held at Rudraksh International Convention Centre.

During the programme, the CM was also honoured by UP Minister of State (Independent Charge) Ravindra Jaiswal by giving him an angavastram and a memento. UP Labour and Employment Minister Anil Rajbhar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu' along with Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma, District Magistrate S Rajalingam, Chief Development Officer



CM Yogi Adityanath distributing a certificate to a participant of KSSM in Varanasi on Monday.

Himanshu Nagpal etc were also present.

Meanwhile, the district level competitions was held at five places in the series of KSSM being organised with the aim of promoting Indian culture in genres like dance, music, singing, street drama etc. A cultural competition in solo and

group categories of classical and sub-classical singing genres was organised in Police Commissionerate in different age groups. The event was presided over by UP Minister Dr Dayashankar Mishra 'Dayalu'. Additional Municipal Commissioner Rajiv Rai, Education Officer Shashikant

Srivastava, Project Officer of DUDA Nidhi Bajpai and many others were also present.

A street drama competition was organised for participants in the age group of 18 to 40 and above 40 at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Education, Sarnath. The competition was inaugurated by lighting the lamp by MLC Hansraj Vishwakarma. At an event held at Sunbeam Varuna, Zila Panchayat Chairperson Poonam Maurya was the chief guest. Divisional Commissioner Kaushal Raj Sharma lit the lamp while Sunbeam Group Chairman Deepak Madhok and Director Bharti Madhok welcomed the guests.

In Sant Atulanand Convent School, solo competition category in folk playing Naal and Tasha Damru and cultural competition in group playing Naal Damru and Naal genre was organised.

The event was presided over by Nagendra Raghuvanshi, member Central Khadi Board and local corporator Sandeep Raghuvanshi. At Padma Vibhushan Giri Devi Cultural Complex, Chowkaghat events. The chief guest was MLA Sunil Kumar Patel from Rohaniya.

38 ATVM kiosks installed at 25 railway stations

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 38 Automatic Ticket Vending Machine (ATVM) kiosks have been installed at 25 railway stations of Varanasi Division of North Eastern Railway (NER) on the instructions of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM) Vineet Kumar Srivastava. Under the leadership of Senior Divisional Commercial Manager (SDCM) Shaikh Rehman, these ATVM kiosks have been installed at 38 locations in 25 stations of the division to enable passengers to book unreserved tickets in a smart manner by avoiding the hassle of long queues at the unreserved ticket counters.

The SDCM said that now it would be easier for common passengers to get unreserved tickets and they would be able to get unreserved tickets themselves through ATVM kiosks. He informed that four such ATVM kiosks each have been installed at Chhapra Junction and Siwan Junction railway stations, two each at Banaras, Varanasi City, Ghazipur City, Azamgarh, Ballia, Mau and Deoria Sadar stations and one ATVM kiosk each at Prayagraj Rambagh, Gyanpur Road, Siwan Bazaar, Kaptanganj, Suresmanpur, Belthara Road, Rasra, Ekma, Jakhania and Aunrihar.



He further informed that facilitators have been deputed on all these ATVM kiosks to help the passengers. Nine such facilitators have been deputed in Chhapra, eight in Siwan, three each in Ballia, Mau, Deoria Sadar, two each in Banaras, Varanasi City, Ghazipur City, Prayagraj Rambagh, Indara, Suresmanpur, Duraundha, Mairwan, Thawe and Bhatni stations and one each in Azamgarh, Gyanpur Road, Siwan Bazar, Kaptanganj, Belthara Road, Rasra, Ekma, Jakhania and Aunrihar.

Shaikh Rehman said that through these ATVM kiosks, passengers can not only get unreserved tickets but can also make an inquiry like the station from which one has to go.

"Now passengers will not have to stand in long queues. If they wish, they can get their tickets issued through these ATVM kiosks themselves or can get their tickets issued with the help of a facilitator. In this machine, tickets can be obtained by scanning the QR code through Android mobile and making digital payment or in case of any problem, one can get the facility to get one's journey ticket by paying cash to the facilitators appointed by the Railways at ATVM kiosks," he said.

Telling about working mechanism of ATVM kiosks, the SDCM said that for travel ticket booking, one has to select the destination station from the map or by entering other station options, select the

ticket type, select passenger number and train type, payment option and then select QR Pay option from any UPI App, scan the QR code shown on the screen and make the payment and do not take it out until the entire ticket is printed and automatically gets separated from the machine, he said, adding that precautions to be taken while using ATVM kiosks as this is a touch screen machine, so please use only finger to select it and do not use pen, pencil or sharp objects to select the screen. Besides, one should also not spit or spill liquids on the kiosk/screen. In case of any inconvenience related to ATVM kiosks, one should contact the Chief Booking Supervisors/Shift Supervisors, he said.

Kaushambi triple murder: Cong delegation visits village

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

Four days after three members of a family, including a pregnant woman, were killed by their neighbours over property dispute in Panda chauraha in Kaushambi on Friday, a 26-member Congress delegation visited the village and demanded justice for kin.

"Cases of atrocities on Dalits are on the rise in Yogi-led state government. Congress party will launch a massive agitation against the triple murder," said Congress national secretary Pradeep Narwal. The Congress leaders including, Alok Prasad, Suresh Yadav, Mukund Tiwari, Vivekanand Pathak, Haseeb Ahmed and others, said they were with the grief-stricken family.

Three persons of a family, including a pregnant woman, her husband and father, were shot dead allegedly by their neighbours over property dispute near Panda chauraha under Sandipan Ghat police station of Kaushambi on Friday. Irked over the killings, agitated mob of villagers had gone on a rampage for around two hours and torched about half a dozen huts and make-shift shops and two vehicles. The delegation of Congress

leaders also will investigate the cause of the triple murder. The Congress aims to highlight the 'poor law and order' situation in the state under BJP's rule. The delegation will present a detailed report to the party high command.

ARRESTED: The arrest of four Bihar-based criminals, who were held from city for committing crimes in UP, West Bengal and Assam has revealed that the gang didn't use mobile phones fearing being trapped and preferred bikes to move from one place to other, police said.

They also made advance booking of tickets (for one member) in premium trains like Rajdhani if the amount of looted cash was more than expected.

The four members — Neeraj Kumar Banjara, Shankar Kumar Yadav, Kishan Yadav and Kashi Banjara — were arrested by Prayagraj police on Sunday. The police also seized Rs 8.35 lakh cash, three 0.315 bore licensed pistols along with six live cartridges, two bikes, eight SIM cards, four packets each of itching and chilly powder and other valuables from their possession. The gang had executed Rs 7 lakh loot in Prayagraj and Rs 9 lakh loot in

Sitapur on September 12 and 15 and had stayed in Varanasi and Lucknow respectively, they said. The gang, police said, had taken a cue from a similar gang in Odisha.

"The gang members used to travel on their bikes to different cities to execute crime. They didn't prefer mobile phones and once they reached a particular city to execute crime, then they purchased basic mobiles and SIM cards on forged documents," DCP (City) Deepak Bhuker told reporters.

Before executing loot in Prayagraj on September 12, the gang members had travelled to Varanasi from Katihar (Bihar), and took shelter in a hotel on fake identities.

"Once they arrived in Prayagraj, they purchased three keypad mobile sets and SIMs and destroyed it after executing the loot. The robbers then escaped to Lucknow and deposited the looted amount in the accounts of their wives. Cops, however, managed to freeze the accounts," the DCP said.

Bhuker added that efforts were on to compile more information about Pushpendra - said to be kingpin of the gang - and other members. The DCP

said compilation of CCTV and video footages has helped the cops connect the missing links and identify the criminals.

Senior police officials said the gang had made Katihar as their base camp where they assembled after executing crimes.

"They used to conduct proper recce before committing a crime. Moreover, the gang struck only at places where they could get hefty amount. They kept on changing their location to dodge police. They moved in groups of three to five and they didn't execute crime in cities where they stayed," they said adding that the gang was expert in executing snatchings and robbery swiftly.

"Every member of the gang was assigned different task right from snatching loot or valuables to its transportation to safer areas. Now, police are on the lookout for other operatives of the gang. The gang preferred to travel long distances to execute crimes. The gang always remained prepared for any eventuality and had a back-up plan ready.

They changed their names and carried fake identities to dodge law enforcement agencies," they said.

Letter writing competition launched

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The 'Dhai Akhar' letter writing competition on topic 'Digital India for New India' has been launched by Department of Posts. The winners will get prizes from Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000. The last date for sending entries is October 31.

The Digital India campaign has been started by the Government of India to make citizens of the country aware and digitally empowered. When every citizen of the country is aware and digitally empowered, the country will develop rapidly. In view of this a national level letter writing competition is being organised by the Department of Posts on the topic 'Digital India for New India'. If letter of the applicant is selected, the applicant will receive a prize ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 50,000.

While providing above information, Postmaster

General (PMG), Prayagraj Region, Krishna Kumar Yadav, said for this various schools and colleges can organise their own competitions in association with the Postal Department. The last date has been fixed as October 31.

The PMG said people of any age can participate in the 'Dhai Akhar' letter writing competition. The first category will be up to 18 years and the second will be above 18 years of age. The letter will be accepted only in an inland letter or in envelope issued by the Department of Posts in which letter can be written by hand in English, Hindi or local language in 500 and 1,000 words respectively. This letter should be sent to the Postmaster General of the region concerned by October 31 with full name, address, date of birth, mobile number and name of the school of participant. The participants of Prayagraj,

Kaushambi, Pratapgarh, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra, Sultanpur and Amethi districts under Prayagraj region will have to send their letter addressed to the Postmaster General, Prayagraj Region, Prayagraj - 211001.

Yadav said three prizes each in different four categories will be given to the winners of the competition at the state and national levels. The best letter selected at the circle (state) level will be given prizes of Rs 25,000, Rs 10,000 and Rs 5,000 in the first, second and third category respectively. The prizes of Rs 50,000, Rs 25,000 and Rs 10,000 will be given to the best letters selected at the national level in the first, second and third category respectively. Overall, prizes worth Rs 40.20 lakh will be given to the winners across the country. For more information superintendents of various postal divisions and postmas-

ter of the Head Post Office can be contacted.

RUCKUS: Enraged over the death of Nageshwar Singh (24) of Belhat village in the Koraon police station area, the kin created a ruckus and gheraoed the Koraon-Meja Highway bringing the traffic into a standstill for hours here on Tuesday. The operation of youth's stone was done by doctors and the youth died after some time. Angered by it the family members created a ruckus.

The police reached the spot and somehow pacified the agitators. On information, Koraon police station incharge Vinod Singh reached the spot. After hours, the police convinced the family members. Singh said that investigation is being done on the basis of the complaint filed by the relatives of the deceased. A case will be registered soon and action will be taken.

Jagat Taran School first in group song competition

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ PRAYAGRAJ

The Jagat Taran Golden Jubilee School stood first while Mahila Sewa Sadan Inter College secured the second place in a group song competition organised by Bharat Vikas Parishad Prayagraj and the CAV Inter College got the consolation prize.

The programme was organised at Jwala Devi Saraswati Inter College hall. Former vice-chancellor of Raja Maan Singh Tomar Music and Arts University Prof Swatantra Bala Sharma was the chief guest who garlanded the portrait of Bharat Mata and Swami Vivekanand to inaugurate the competition.

Appreciating the programme Prof Sharma said such competitions inculcate the feel-

ing of nationalism and bravery in the younger generation. She spoke about national heroes and asked children to beware of anti-nationals and their activities of disturbing the fabric of unity in diversity.

President of the organisation Dr Alpna Agrawal welcomed the guests and participating institutions. The judges of the competition were Dr Geeta Banerjee of Sanskrit department of Allahabad University, Dr Sanjay Kumar Singh from Hindi department, Allahabad Degree College and Prof Indu Sharma from Music department, Allahabad Degree College. They also emphasised the need of holding such programmes at regular intervals to awaken national feeling in children.

The coordinator of the

programme Dr Brijesh Kumar conducted the proceedings while vote of thanks was proposed by Dr Purshottam Das. Dr NC Agrawal honoured the chief guest by presenting a memento and a shawl.

Principal of Jwala Devi Saraswati Inter College Vikram Bahadur Singh, Umesh Dutt Bhatt, Prof Jagdish Dwivedi and others were present.

JOINT DEGREE PROGRAMME: Good news awaits the students doing postgraduation (PG) and research from Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT-A).

The students pursuing MTech, MBA or PhD will be able to obtain degree from renowned educational institutions abroad.

The institute is starting a joint degree programme

wherein in the first phase, PG and research are being added. In the second phase, graduate level courses will also be added.

The postgraduate students will be able to study a part of their course from foreign technical educational institutions and universities. The joint degree will have the name and logo of both the institutions. This decision was taken in the meeting held recently in the institute.

Director of the institute Prof Mukul Sutavane said that after the implementation of the New National Education Policy (NEP), MoUs have been signed with technical institutions of other countries including USA, France, Germany and Korea, where students of the institute will be able to study while pursuing their joint degree.

Minister inspects Amrit Sarovar

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Uttar Pradesh Minister of State for Rural Development Vijay Laxmi Gautam while holding the meeting of the officials concerned with the Rural Development and Rural Engineering Services at Ashtabhja guest house on Monday directed the officials to carry out works by adopting the norms. After the meeting the minister inspected a Upavan Vatika located at Vijaypur village under Chhanbey block where she planted saplings. During the inspection she was apprised by Chief Development Officer (CDO) Srilaxmi VS that the Vatika was developed within two-three years and around Rs 20 lakh had been spent through MGNREGA. Appreciating the Vatika the minister asked the official concerned to plant saplings to make it more use-

ful. In Kamapur village of Chhanbey block a chaupal was organised in which the minister interacted with people, especially women, and greeted them on the occasion of Teej festival. She watched the Shilaphalakam constructed under the scheme 'Meri Mati Mera Desh' and she taught the lesson of nationalism to the people. Inspecting the Amrit Sarovar (pond) the minister appealed to people to maintain the it and make it useful that it can prove to be an asset for the village. She said the government was working for the welfare of every section of the society but online application is necessary for new candidates to avail the facilities. Referring to the new PM Vishwakarma Scheme which was launched by the prime minister on September 17 the minister said 18 types of skilled artisans were covered under the scheme including those who were

involved in their traditional profession like washermen, cobblers, barbers etc. She said loan of up to Rs 3 lakh was available for workers of that category without any security and toolkit worth Rs 15,000 was being provided by the government free of cost. During her visit the minister was accompanied by MLAs Ratnakar Moshra and Rinki Kol, block pramukhs Indra Bahadur Pandey and Suman Singh, veteran BJP leader Dhanendra Pandey and others. Prior to the government programmes the minister performed the rituals at the Vindhyavasini temple.

SHADI ANUDAN YOJANA: Backward Class Welfare Officer Rajesh Sonkar has informed that marriage aid will be sent directly to the beneficiary's account but that account should be linked to the Aadhar card. Giving details about the changes in the Shadi

Anudan Yojana said from the year 2023-24 verification of Aadhar and e-KYC has been made compulsory for applicants and all process will be carried out through online system. He said persons who had already applied through manual process their applications will not be considered and they were being suggested to submit online applications again.

ARRESTED: The Kachhawaan police have arrested an accused in an assault case on Monday. Ajay Kumar Upadhyay of Baraini village under Kachhawaan police station had lodged a named case on August 8 alleging that the accused had assaulted him and snatched a gold chain. On being tipped off by an informer the police nabbed the accused Harsh Singh of Bajahana village under Kachhawaan police station, sent him to jail and seized his vehicle.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Stree Shakti

The women’s reservation Bill is set to turn into an Act, ending a long wait for female leaders

After a long 33 years when it was first tabled in Parliament, the women's reservation Bill is finally likely to secure passage. After Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Cabinet accorded it approval late on Monday, the decks are virtually clear for its approval in the special session of Parliament. The Bill has been tabled by the Union law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal. The women's reservation Bill provides for 33 per cent quota for the fair gender in the Lok Sabha and all State Assemblies. The Prime Minister had informed the House that while more than 7,500 public representatives have served in both Houses, the number of female representatives is a negligible 600 or so. The representation of women in the Indian political system has been abysmally low, and the reservation of seats sets to correct that anomaly. This crucial and overdue legislation seeks to counter the longstanding issue of underrepresentation of women in legislative bodies and encourage their active participation in shaping up the nation with their assistance of vision and strong voice. The central pillar of this Bill revolves around the reservation of 33 per cent of seats in both the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies for female candidates. This reservation will apply to constituencies across the spectrum, including general, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe.

To ensure diversity in the representation of women from various backgrounds, the Bill introduces a rotational system. Under this system, the reserved seats for women will change with each electoral cycle, facilitating broader representation with the passage of time. Within the overarching 33 per cent reservation, sub-reservations will be carved out for women belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. This provision seeks to address the complex issues of gender and caste-based discrimination simultaneously. This legislation is not a run-of-the-mill piece of law but rather a constitutional amendment. Consequently, it necessitates a special majority in both Houses of Parliament (a two-thirds majority of members present and voting) and ratification by at least 50 per cent of State legislatures before it can be enacted as law. Parties will be required to provide equal opportunities to women when distributing tickets, thus mitigating biases in the selection process. With enhanced presence of women in legislature bodies, the women's reservation Bill is poised to exert a profound influence on the Government's policy decisions. This may result in the formulation of more inclusive and gender-sensitive laws and policies by empowering women in political leadership roles. When enacted, this Bill has the potential to usher in a more inclusive and representative democracy. So, finally after twenty-seven years wait and 13 years after being passed by the Rajya Sabha, the Women Reservation Bill would become the law. However, the law would be implemented by 2029 Lok Sabha elections and would not affect the 2024 elections. It is indeed a big accomplishment for the Modi government for which it deserves all the praise.



Why does India trade with China?

India gains from Chinese imports as it allows for value addition in the country and helps create jobs

It is often asked why despite India's enmity against China, is there still a \$136 billion business between them. It is a fact that India shares quite unpalatable & hostile terms with China as it's one of the closest neighbours in Asia. But despite several border issues & dicey security threats to India flowing from China, the last year's (2022) bilateral trade between them was of \$136 billion. And just because of these high-yielding business figures, people tend to fall in ambiguity about India-China bilateral relations which are still financially affluent despite border disputes & China was being marked as Covid's epi centre by India.

So, the story is, actually India wants to subvert China's economic, diplomatic & geopolitical power and presence across the globe but India's economic stance & stature are not very competitive to send China out of the doors. Even in the contemporary era, no nation can afford to attack its enemy straightaway because the world has already witnessed a situation of stalemate



between Russia & Ukraine where not a single solution has come out. The reason why India still opens its gates customs department to let Chinese products come inside is that, first of all, whatever products China exports to India are tangible items, not services. So, India has a hidden & special foreign trade policy to tackle China's abundance of exports to India, out of all those tangible products imported that India makes from China, a substantial part of it is of those goods that India imports in the form of raw material for shaping & polishing them further into finished goods. For example, the mics that news readers use are majorly manufactured inside China yet India imports them. Even though the metal stick used in eyeglasses is also from China, it is still being

imported by companies like Lenskart to procure just the raw material at a cheap cost from China & further convert that metal stick into stylish eyewear having more final value than its raw material's cost. Another question the public raises is whose economy is dicer for India, the USA or China? So, it has already been propounded about the reason for India still being a bilateral trading partner with China. But Indians have less discourse about the nasty effects of the USA's economy on India. India in its bilateral trading ties with the USA is an importer because of the current account deficit. The sorts of goods & services India imports from the USA are unlike of China's which anyhow lead to some value addition in India. Brands like McDonald's & KFC have their genesis in the USA & India buys eatables from such multi-national food chains, but the crux is, that India cannot add any further value addition in a burger or a chicken bucket for selling it to some other party just like the case of China, where

India remains with a scope of doing 3 times valuation addition in a product imported as a raw material from China. So, India has been more at the loss side in trading bilaterally with the USA in comparison to China because products India imports from the USA are directly consumed by the final customer, it may be a US Polo shirt, KFC's chicken, McDonald's burger, etc. Thus, there is no value addition in India. In questioning about the ideology of India's foreign trade policy, it was found that India restricts itself to importing completely manufactured products from others, it always nods to those products only having a scope of more value addition even when they are imported into India. It is so in the policy because it results in employment & income for Indians while they further process those unfinished products that were imported earlier. (The writer is an expert on international business issues and has been featured in the International Business Times. Views are personal)



Final blow to the colonial rule

Operation Vijay I was dexterously planned. India employed an overwhelming tri-service force to defeat the Portuguese garrison of 7000 personnel in Goa

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Goa, unlike its masters in Delhi who rule Bharat that is India, is not running a campaign to cleanse itself of colonial rule: that is why it is peaceful and civilised through recent invasions from the North have disturbed the market. But harmony has prevailed, thanks to leaders like Manohar Parrikar, offshore casinos, heritage fish markets duty liquors and Peoples rice beer. The Portuguese Consulate sits at the base of Altino hill from where Goa is ruled today as it was for 451 years earlier. Portugal, which had occupied Goa, Daman and Diu was the last colonizer to be evicted from Indian soil on 19 December 1961 in the first Op Vijay. Last Sunday, the 76th anniversary of Operation Polo, the defeat of Nizam's forces in Hyderabad, was commemorated but the event was politicised.

India has not eschewed the use of force in national integration. Of the 562 princely states under the suzerainty of the British Crown, all were persuaded to accede to India except three: J&K, a Muslim majority state ruled by a Hindu raja; Junagadh with a Hindu majority ruled by a Muslim Nawab; and Hyderabad, a Hindu majority state ruled by the Muslim Nizam. In July 1946, Mr Nehru said no princely state could stand against independent India's Army. In May 1947 they were told that those who did not integrate would be treated as enemy states. Nawab of Junagadh fled to Pakistan on 26 October 1947 after he acceded to it. It was militarily coerced by 1 Armoured Division and by 9 November India assumed its administration. The J & K ruler signed the Instrument of Accession on 27 October 1947 after tribal raiders from Pakistan had begun the first war over Kashmir which has not ceased to this day. The Hyderabad Nizam insisted on remaining neutral, forcing India to launch Op Polo on 13 September 1948 in which my battalion 2/5 Gorkha Rifles (Frontier Force), winner of three Victoria Crosses (equal to PVC), participated. Hyderabad was liberated on 17 September.



What remained were French and Portuguese enclaves on the East and West Coasts. While France vacated occupied territories in 1956, Portugal refused, necessitating Op Vijay (Kargil is Op Vijay II). I was fortunate to visit the surrender site last week on Altinho Hill where the 2 Signal Training Centre (STC) of the Army is currently partly located. Vijay Vatika is well marked and indicates the place where Gen Vassalo e Silva surrendered to Lt Col Sucha Singh on 19 December 1961. Op Vijay was meticulously planned by GoC Southern Command, Lt Gen JN Choudhary (also led Op Polo). It was India's first tri-service operation involving the 17 Infantry Division and 50 Para Brigade led by Maj Gen KP Candeth and Brig Sagat Singh. Indian Navy's Op Chutney entailed reconnaissance and surveillance. On 11 December, the 17 Infantry Division was ordered to advance and capture Panaji and Mormugao. The assault began with artillery bombardment under air cover at 0400 hrs with the Portuguese opting to offer resistance. 50 Para Brigade of 1st Para Punjab and 2nd Para Marathas captured Panaji and Ponda the next day. India employed an overwhelming tri-service force to defeat a Portuguese garrison of

MANY GOANS HAVE KEPT THEIR LINKS WITH LISBON. PRIME MINISTER ANTONIO COSTA IS HALF-GOAN AND HAS HELPED TO REV UP INDIA-PORTUGAL AMITY

7000 personnel, one Frigate and three Offshore Patrol boats. Casualties were on both sides – 22 Indian soldiers killed while the Portuguese lost 30 soldiers and 570 wounded with one frigate disabled and the remaining 4668 personnel captured. On 18 December Portugal urged the UNSC for a ceasefire and ending hostilities. The US disapproved of India's military action while the USSR used its veto to ensure surrender. By the evening of 18 December, most of Goa was in Indian hands, even as Portuguese soldiers were ready to defend the port town of Vasco da Gama, according to Op Plano Sentinel. The Portuguese President ordered a scorched earth policy but the Governor General refused to implement it. He ordered a ceasefire and surrender at 2030 hrs on 19 December. The surrender of the garrison marked the end of 451 years of Portuguese rule of Goa. Just above the Portuguese Consulate is the Army House, the erstwhile residence of the Military Commander, Gen Vassalo e Silva. It is a 400-year-old Portuguese construction later acquired by the Governor General. It must have commanded a 360-degree view of Panaji. After the Signals Commandant was allotted the heritage house, many Chief

Ministers who also live on Altinho (anyone who rules Goa lives there) have had an eye on the houses including Parrikar. 2 STC residents dispersed in the pockets of Panaji. Like the British, the Portuguese chose the best land for cantonments as well as several hill stations, especially in Himachal after the British CinC chose to initially live in Simla. Many of today's popular hill resorts were strategic locations covering Simla. Many Goans have kept their links with Lisbon. Prime Minister Antonio Costa is half-Goan and has helped rev up India-Portugal amity. People in Goa affectionately call him Baboush (in Konkani, a young loved one). The Signals Army Unit in Goa maintains high standards of pride and decorum, co-habiting with Goans who look up to their Army for liberating Goa. Portuguese surrender should be commemorated befittingly as the first tri-service campaign at a time when theorisation is on the anvil. (The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS
Sir — "Illegal immigrants" are the main reason behind the resurgence of extreme nationalism in many European countries in the 21st century. In their name, nationalists have won elections in many countries, but the problem of immigrants remains unchanged. For example, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, who won the election in the name of combating illegal immigration, now finds that the number of illegal immigrants coming to her country is increasing day by day. Unfortunately, there seems to be only one reason for these people's plight: illegal smugglers who, driven by greed, transport individuals from Africa and Asia to the borders of wealthy countries. But no one is willing to address the core issue: the poverty, hunger, unemployment, and civil wars that force millions of people to risk their lives and seek refuge in resource-rich countries via dangerous sea routes.

Therefore, if all the world's wealthy nations want to curb this influx, they must seriously consider providing resources to address the root causes. No immigrant leaves their homeland willingly; it is out of sheer desperation. Until a solution to the fundamental causes is found, the influx of immigrants will persist at any cost. **Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur**

MORE DEPUTY CMS FOR KARNATAKA?
Sir — A minister in Karnataka's Siddaramaiah government has urged the Congress high command to appoint three more deputy chief ministers (DCMs) for the state, despite already having one in DK Shivakumar. It is ironic that as many as 12 Indian states have DCMs. The DCM post holds no constitutional importance; it serves as a selection post aimed at appeasing certain castes, communities, and individual egos. Furthermore, it is often used to placate dissenters or competitors within the party. The question arises: does a stable state government require one or more DCMs when the chief minister is firmly in control? There are no clear guidelines that



define the role of a DCM. While high commands and chief ministers downplay the position of DCM by presenting it as equal among equals, the reality is that the DCM wields significant power, official or unofficial, second only to the chief minister. Therefore, it makes little sense to maintain the ornamental post of DCM. It should either be abolished or limited to just one DCM in a state. **Ganapathi Bhat | Akola**

RBI'S NEW DIRECTIVE
Sir — The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has a consistent practice of issuing notifications that prioritize the interests of the public. In this regard, RBI has issued a significant directive pertaining to the release of movable and immovable property documents upon the full repayment or settlement of personal loans, along with penalties for violations of these instructions. This move aims to streamline practices and prevent customer grievances related to the release of such documents. According to RBI's new guidelines, regulated entities (REs) are mandated to release all original movable and immovable property documents within 30 days after the complete repayment or settlement

of a loan account. This provision ensures that borrowers promptly regain ownership of their assets. Borrowers will have the flexibility to collect their original property documents either from the branch where the loan account was serviced. This added convenience enhances the borrower's experience. Transparency is also emphasized in loan sanction letters. RBI requires REs to specify the timeline and location for returning original property documents in loan sanction letters issued on or after the effective date. This clarity ensures that borrowers are aware of the process. In cases of a borrower's demise, RBI mandates that REs have a well-defined procedure for returning property documents to legal heirs. This procedure must be readily available on the REs' website, promoting transparency. In May, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das cautioned banks against aggressive growth strategies and loan evergreening, which leads to a rise in non-performing assets. It is commendable that Das is taking steps to address the gaps in bank governance practices. **Yash Pal Ralhan | Jalandhar**

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FIRST COLUMN

SELF-LIBERATION
THROUGH FORGIVENESS

The power to forgive comes from compassion; move with what is good



RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR **NIKUNJ JI**

If we want to love, we must learn how to forgive, said Mother Teresa. Like her, many saints, gurus and spiritual teachers have often said to their followers that if anyone misbehaves with you, talks bad about you or indulges in mudslinging and character-assassination, you should forgive such a person and forget about his misdemeanour. They further advise that one should repay such a person with his acts of friendliness and think of improving the self instead of retaliating against such a negative person or person. But the question that most of us would naturally have is that if we forgive such evil-doers and forget about their malicious and maligning campaigns, will we not be letting loose many mad bulls or elephants run amuck? Will we not be encouraging such kinds of people in their nefarious designs and wicked acts? Before we come to any conclusion, one question that we all need to ask ourselves is that - is it as easy to forgive as it sounds to be?

The majority of us would say 'NO' because the ability to forgive others depends on how honest we are with ourselves. Have we journeyed through our life pure, perfect and clean with never a wrong thought, a wrong word or action? If we look at ourselves honestly, then how can we not forgive another person? When we face our shortcomings, then anger against others disappears. In the past, we have all acted wrongly, either because of not knowing what is right, or out of fear or misunderstanding. Looking back on the past, most of us regret many things that we have said or done. With time and knowledge we realize what is right and begin to make amends. Just by having the desire to do this, we begin this process of our forgiveness. If this process is to progress, we have to forgive others. We cannot condemn others and excuse ourselves. This is cheating and the universally applicable Law of Karma will not allow it.

How green are the electric vehicles?

Electric vehicles are not the ultimate solution for our environment. The solution lies in adjusting our lifestyles, consumption and mobility patterns



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE





There can be many answers to the questions raised by many individuals regarding forgiveness, however, what we should understand in our capacity as human beings is that, if the tendencies to evil or misbehaviour are within tolerable limits and are not likely to obtain a boost by our action of forgiveness and if the person charged with misconduct expresses sincere regrets and apologies after deep realisation of his evil acts, then we should forgive and forget else we should take such preventive, non-violent, non-aggressive steps that do not downgrade our worth as a human being. And, let us remember that vengeance, vindictiveness, violence, virulent acts, vile and guile or wickedness and wrong-doing are not the ways of a noble-minded person.

Remember! The power to forgive comes from compassion, which means we should compassionately and peacefully move forward with what is good, towards what is better. But before we start to forgive others, we must learn to forgive ourselves, otherwise, the process of releasing the burden would neither begin nor progress. Forgiving ourselves means letting go of the past. But it also means not making the same mistakes again and again; not inventing convenient ways to excuse ourselves. A person who has hardened his own heart against others cannot feel even God's forgiveness and compassion. Hence, if we want to be forgiven, then we must be willing to forgive first because the one who forgives first not only proves his justice but especially proves his love. That is why it is said that 'A life well lived is your best revenge'. So, instead of focusing on your wounded feelings, and thereby giving the person who caused you pain, the power over you, learn to look for the love, beauty and kindness around you. This will make the world a better place to live in.

(Writer is a spiritual educator & popular columnist for publications across India, Nepal & UK)

India has set an ambitious target of 30 per cent Electric Vehicle (EV) penetration in private cars, 70 per cent in commercial vehicles, and 80 per cent in two and three-wheelers by 2030. To achieve the targets, the Government is giving various incentives to buyers and manufacturers of EVs, including subsidies, tax relief etc. Across the world also, automakers are being prodded by their governments to promote the sale of EVs to fight climate change. But how green, truly, are the EVs? While EVs are more climate-friendly than our traditional cars driven by internal combustion engines (ICE), they are not free from their adverse impacts on the environment. Let me make it clear that this is not an article against EV which is the road to the future, but that road needs to be negotiated with caution, and not craze.

A vehicle's impact on the environment can be judged by the totality of its impact on production, running and scrapping at the end of its useful life. Let us consider these stages one by one. As regards production, to assess the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) emitted during EV manufacture, we need to estimate how their components are made and where their raw materials are sourced from. While manufacturing an ICE car based on petrol or diesel or an EV without its battery releases about the same amount of carbon dioxide (CO2) - about 7 to 10 tonnes, it is the EV-battery production that adds significantly to the emission.

The battery is the heart of an EV, and about 150 kgs of CO2 are released to create every kilo-watt-hour (kWh) of battery capacity. An average EV consumes 0.20 kWh per km, and for an EV to have a decent range (say 300 km) between charges, it needs a battery capacity of 60kWh, which means additional CO2-emission of 9 tonnes, which makes an EV almost twice as environment-unfriendly as an ICE-car. Making EVs thus evidently creates more emissions, and improving technology is the only solution. Also, while the EVs don't emit toxic exhaust fumes, their batteries can emit toxic fumes, if damaged.

The raw materials for the battery have to be mined, and the process of mining, refining and transportation also adds a lot of GHGs. The raw materials include rare earth materials like lithium, and neodymium, besides copper, cobalt, aluminium, nickel and also manganese and graphite. The rare earth materials are available only in a few countries. Lithium, the third element in the periodic table of elements, is lighter compared to other elements used in batteries like lead and has an extra electron in its outermost shell which increases power flow through the cell.

While Australia is currently the largest supplier of lithium, the 'lithium triangle' of Bolivia, Chile and Argentina accounts for half the total global reserves. But it is China that controls 77 per cent of the global lithium-ion battery manufacturing capacity and is home to six of the world's 10 largest manufacturing companies. India currently imports all of its lithium from Australia and Argentina and 70 per cent of its lithium-ion cell requirements from China. The recent discovery of large lithium reserves in Rajasthan and Jammu may catapult

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WHILE AUSTRALIA IS CURRENTLY THE LARGEST SUPPLIER OF LITHIUM, THE 'LITHIUM TRIANGLE' OF BOLIVIA, CHILE AND ARGENTINA ACCOUNTS FOR HALF THE TOTAL GLOBAL RESERVES

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(The writer, a former Director General at the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India, is currently a Professor at the Arun Jaitley Institute of Financial Management; views expressed are personal)

Reign in coaching centres in the country

Coaching centres have only fostered a fiercely unhealthy competition among students which is taking a heavy toll on their mental health



ATUL SEHGAL

A few weeks ago, a leading daily newspaper carried the account of increasing suicide cases by students undertaking coaching for competitive examinations in Kota, Rajasthan, the prime centre for the coaching industry in India. The following paragraph is extracted from the article Kota: As student suicides soar, ministers blame coaching 'mafia', the burden of education loans, published in Times of India on 29th August 2023.

Minister Mahesh Joshi recently said that the burden of educational loans on parents was one of the causes of stress among the students and the Centre must formulate a policy so that the parents do not have to borrow money for education. Food and Civil Supplies

Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas alleged that coaching institutes in Kota were only interested in collecting money. He termed coaching centres as Mafia and said the government would have to take strict action against them. "When we were children, there was no coaching. Were students not becoming IPS then? A mafia has emerged in the name of coaching and the government will have to take strict action against it", Khachariyawas said.

Viewed deeply and analytically, it has become a net drain on national resources. It distorted the already incongruous educational system foisted on the country during India's colonial period in the early 19th century (1835) by the Britisher Thomas Babington

Macaulay.

All coaching centres in India should be banned. Here are seven reasons why.

- They do not serve the professed basic purpose of coaching for competitive examinations—selection of best applicants or aspirants. The best students will be selected even if there are no coaching centres. In fact, in the absence of coaching centres selection of the best students will be more genuine because it will be based on self-study and raw talent.
- Coaching centres are partly the product of a non-uniform pattern of education in the country in which different syllabi and text materials are prescribed for different states.
- Coaching centres are a

huge drain on the monetary resources of economically middle and lower-class families who have to educate their children for professional streams. The huge expenditure often breaks the back of poor families who have to run this rate race.

- A limited number of seats in professional institutions and a burgeoning student population make the competition tougher and tougher each year. This stresses the young aspirants physically and mentally. Many of them, unfortunately, failing to cope with this enormous stress, end their precious lives. The current market revenue of the coaching industry in India is Rs 58,088 crore, according to Infinium Global Research, a consultancy firm based in

Pune. The coaching industry's growth is projected to reach Rs 1,33,995 crore by 2028. This is a colossal waste because this industry is providing no net value addition to our student community and society at large.

- As mentioned above, we have to gauge the adverse effect of coaching centres on established, formal schools and educational institutions. They suffer because many of their regular teachers neglect their jobs and perform part-time private tuitions which groom the students to make them coaching centre-ready.
- Our industry should be productive, creative, innovative and progressive for all sections of society. Industries that run parallel to and are detrimental to existing established insti-

tutions are a bane for society and the nation at large. The coaching industry is one such industry that has inflicted incalculable harm to the existing educational institutions and has economically burdened the society by creating unhealthy, morbid competition which is manifesting itself in such symptoms as suicides by frustrated students. Our government should realize this stark truth and come down heavily on the coaching mafia playing havoc with our society. Our society has traditionally maintained an economic environment of cooperation, collaboration and healthy competition but these coaching centres have only fostered a fiercely unhealthy competition which is slowly and surely killing the spirit of creativity

and entrepreneurship among the students affected by it in large numbers. Our elite should put pressure on the government to promulgate laws that will put an end to all coaching centres in the country.

Needless to say, the government must establish more professional institutions of good standard to serve the needs of the burgeoning population. Encouraging start-ups and entrepreneurship in a bigger way will also bring down the enormous competition generated due to limited seats in academic institutions and limited professional positions in government organizations. The coaching industry is outright non-productive and should be done away with as early as possible.

Biden lauds G20 achievements

PTI ■ UNITED NATIONS

US President Joe Biden on Tuesday highlighted “groundbreaking” achievements — including an economic corridor linking India, the Middle East and Europe; and admission of the African Union in the G20 grouping — made at the G20 Summit in New Delhi, as he addressed world leaders at the high-level UN General Assembly session.

The annual G20 Leaders’ Summit was hosted by India under its presidency from September 9-10.

“In groundbreaking effort, we announced at the G20 to connect India to Europe through the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel,” Biden said in his address to Heads of State and Government at the 193-member UN General Assembly on the opening day of the General Debate.

He said this would “spur opportunities” for investment across two continents.

“This is part of our effort to build a more sustainable, integrated Middle East. It demonstrates how Israel has a greater normal-

isation and economic connection with its neighbours” which will bring positive and practical impacts.

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 G20 summit.

The new economic corridor is seen as an alternative to China’s controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

The IMEC is expected to stimulate economic development through enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe.

The IMEC will comprise two separate corridors, the east corridor connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf to Europe.

It will include a railway that, upon completion, will provide a reliable and cost-effective cross-border ship-to-rail transit network to supplement existing maritime and road transport routes — enabling goods and

services to transit to, from, and between India, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel, and Europe, the Memorandum of Understanding on the Principles of an India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor said.

In his address from the iconic UN General Assembly podium, Biden also referred to the admission of the African Union to the G20 during the summit.

“We strengthened the G20 as a vital forum, welcoming the African Union as a permanent member. By upgrading and strengthening our institutions, that’s only half of the picture. We must also forge new partnerships, confront new challenges,” he said. Referring to the Quad, Biden said in the Indo-Pacific, “We’ve elevated our Quad partnership with India, Japan, Australia to deliver concrete progress for the people of the region, on everything from vaccines to maritime security.” The Quad comprises Japan, India, Australia and the United States.

Biden travelled to New Delhi to attend the G20 Leaders’ Summit that culminated in the successful adoption by consensus of a joint declaration.

In a significant milestone under India’s G20 presidency, the African Union became a new permanent member of the grouping of the largest economies of the world during the summit in Delhi. It was the first expansion of the influential bloc since its inception in 1999.

All member countries of the G20 accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s proposal to bring the key bloc of the Global South to the high table of the world’s top economies.

In his inaugural remarks at the Summit, Modi had asked the President of the Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union (AU) Azali Assoumani to join other leaders at the high table, making the 55-member bloc the second multinational grouping, after the EU, to be a permanent member of the G20.

Biden also reiterated Washington’s support for reform of the UN Security Council, with expansion in both permanent and non-permanent members.

“Simply put, the 21st century results are badly needed to move us along. That starts with

the United Nations, starts right here in this room. In my address to this body last year, I announced the United States will support expanding the Security Council, increasing the number of permanent and non-permanent members,” he said.

Biden underlined that the US has undertaken serious consultation with many member states. “We’ll continue to do our part to push more reform efforts forward,” he said.

He said Washington recognises that to meet the “new challenges of our decades-old institutions and approaches, they must be updated to keep peace with the world”.

“We have to bring in more leadership and capability that exists everywhere, especially from regions that have not always been fully included. We have to grapple with the challenges that are more connected and more complex. We have to make sure we’re delivering for people everywhere, not just somewhere, everywhere,” Biden said.

He emphasises that nations have to look for points of common ground and make progress in the year ahead.

Russia launches massive drone attack on western city of Lviv

AP ■ LVIY

Russia launched a massive drone attack on the western city of Lviv early Tuesday, damaging a warehouse facility in a fiery blaze and killing one man, Ukrainian authorities said. Ukraine intercepted 27 of 30 Shahed drones overnight, the Air Force said. But drones that got through air defense systems sparked an inferno at the industrial storage facility that was not used for military purposes, Gov. Maksym Kozytsky said. An artillery strike in Kherson in the south struck a bus, killing a police sergeant and wounding two men, said Ihor Klymenko, Ukraine’s minister of internal affairs. That strike also set a warehouse on fire. The developments in the war front came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy was in New York to address the UN General Assembly and Security Council before going to Washington on Thursday to meet with lawmakers and President Joe Biden. Zelenskyy



Emergency services work to extinguish a fire after a Russian attack in Lviv, Ukraine, on Tuesday. Agencies

has continued to drum up funding and support for new weapons as the counteroffensive Ukraine launched in June approaches what could be its final weeks before wet weather slows progress. Ukraine has made small advances but no major breakthroughs. Meanwhile, US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said, while in Germany attending the

meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, that the 31 M1 Abrams tanks it promised will soon begin arriving in Ukraine, as was expected. Norway said it will donate approximately 50 tracked cargo carriers to Ukraine. In a statement Tuesday, Norwegian Defence Minister Bjorn Arild Gram said it would help get supplies to areas without roads.

Erdogan says he trusts Russia as much as he trusts West

AP ■ ISTANBUL

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that he trusts Russia as much he trusts the West. Explaining his recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Erdogan said he had failed to get him to resume the Black Sea grain deal the Kremlin withdrew from in July but had elicited a pledge for Russia to supply 1 million tons of grain to Africa.

“I have no reason not to trust them,” Erdogan said during an interview late Monday with US broadcaster PBS in New York, where he is attending the UN General Assembly.

“To the extent the West is reliable, Russia is equally reliable. For the last 50 years, we have been waiting at the doorstep of the EU and, at this moment in time, I trust Russia just as much as I trust the West.” Ankara has maintained close ties with both Russia and Ukraine during the 19-month war. In July last year,

Turkiye and the UN engineered a deal to allow Ukrainian grain to be safely shipped from its Black Sea ports, helping alleviate a global food crisis.

Moscow pulled out of the agreement two months ago, claiming a parallel deal to allow its exports of foodstuffs and fertiliser had not been honoured. Erdogan is visiting New York four months after winning elections that extended his 20-year rule for another five years.

His fresh mandate has seen signs of an improvement in Ankara’s often fractious relationship with the West.

at an event on Monday, the Turkish leader appeared to roll back comments he made immediately prior to his departure for New York, in which he suggested Turkey could end its 24-year bid for European Union membership. “We see that a window of opportunity has opened for the revitalization of Türkiye-European Union relations in a

critical period,” Erdogan said, according to a text of the meeting published by his office.

“We continue to emphasize the importance of revitalizing Türkiye’s EU accession process.”

Erdogan also indicated improving ties with Washington, which have recently focused on Ankara’s approval of Sweden’s NATO membership application and a possible deal to supply Turkey with F-16 fighter jets.

“We are pleased with the development of our cooperation with the US,” Erdogan said. “We have resolved most of the deadlocks during the talks with Mr. Biden and we have decided to hold more talks in line with the positive agenda.” Turkey and Hungary are the only NATO members not to have approved Sweden’s bid to join the defence alliance, which Stockholm made following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The issue is due to be debated by the Turkish parliament when it returns from recess next month.

US defence chief urges nations give Ukraine air defence systems

AP ■ RAMSTEIN AIR BASE

Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin urged allied leaders on Tuesday to “dig deep” and provide more air defence systems for Ukraine, to help the country block increasing barrages of Russian missiles. But while the allies said they will discuss how they can best help Ukraine’s counteroffensive, they appeared no closer to commitments on the longer-range missiles that Kyiv’s leaders insist they need.

“Air defence is saving lives,” Austin said as he opened the meeting of the Ukraine Defence Contact Group at Ramstein air base in Germany.

“So I urge this group to continue to dig deep on ground-based air defence for Ukraine. We must continue to push hard to provide Ukraine with air-defence systems and interceptors.” The group is made up of the defense and military leaders

from more than 50 nations and is the main forum for raising contributions of weapons, other equipment and training for Kyiv’s war effort. It meets about once a month, in person and virtually, and this is the 15th gathering. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other Ukrainian leaders have repeatedly pushed for the longer-distance weapons. Proponents have argued that Ukrainian forces need to be able to strike Russian troops and facilities while still staying out of range.

But the US has continued to balk, expressing longstanding worries that Kyiv could use the weapons to hit deep into Russian territory and enrage Moscow. The Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS, could give Ukraine the ability to strike Russian targets from as far away as about 180 miles (300 kilometers), but the US also has other variants of the missile that have a shorter

range.

Speaking before the meeting began, Bill Blair, the Canadian defence minister, told reporters that the allies are listening to Ukrainian leaders’ descriptions of their military needs and are discussing “new and important ways” to help bolster the ongoing counteroffensive. Austin said the 31 M1 Abrams tanks promised months ago will soon begin arriving in Ukraine, as has been expected. A defence official said they have arrived in Europe and will begin crossing the border into Ukraine within the coming days. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the precise location of the tanks is sensitive.

Ukrainian troops began training on similar tanks in June, while the ones arriving soon were being refurbished in the US. Defence leaders are working to continue what they say is unbowed support of

Ukraine, despite growing worries that public and international government backing for the war, which is well into its second year, may be starting to wane.

Zelenskyy will be in Washington, DC, later this week to meet with President Joe Biden and congressional leaders in a move to shore up support for continued American funding and weapons. The visit comes as there is a growing partisan divide in Congress over continued Ukraine funding.

Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy has told reporters that he wants more aid for Ukraine to be debated on its own merits as a standalone bill, rather than attaching it to other priorities like government funding. But Senate leaders want to combine the aid with other priorities, such as a short-term spending bill that will likely be needed to avoid a shutdown at the end of September.

Ex-Belarusian operative under Lukashenko goes on Swiss trial

AP ■ GENEVA

A former member of Belarusian President Aleksander Lukashenko’s special security forces was going on trial on Tuesday in Switzerland over the enforced disappearances of political opponents in the late 1990s — seen as a landmark case of international justice.

Yuri Harauski, a former member of a military unit known as SOBR, exited a tinted-window van wearing a hood as he entered the courthouse in the northern city of St. Gallen.

Activists have said the two-day trial marks a pivotal moment in international justice that could trigger prosecutions abroad of other Belarusian officials — including Lukashenko. The court case was brought under a rarely applied legal principle known as universal jurisdiction, under which foreign courts can prosecute severe crimes that happened in other countries.

Harauski will be tried over the enforced disappearances of Yuri Zakharenko, a former interior minister who was fired by Lukashenko in 1996; opposition leader Viktor Gonchar; and publisher Anatoly Krasovsky, said Trial International, an advocacy group that has spearheaded the case.

The defendant lives in Switzerland, where he applied for asylum in 2018. He has made high-profile confessions about his involvement in the kidnapping and murder of Lukashenko’s political opponents in 1999. The motives behind the confessions were not entirely clear. An extract of the court filing, obtained by The Associated Press, indicated that prosecutors planned to seek a three-year prison sentence — of which two would be suspended — against Harauski for his alleged role in the disappearances.

‘Russia, China must edge closer’

AP ■ MOSCOW

A senior Kremlin official on Tuesday called for closer policy coordination between Moscow and Beijing to counter what he described as Western efforts to contain them as he hosted China’s top diplomat for security talks. Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of Russia’s Security Council chaired by President Vladimir Putin, told Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi that Moscow “seeks progressive development and strengthening of the Russian-Chinese relations of comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation.”

“Amid the campaign unleashed by the collective West that is aimed at the double containment of Russia and China, it’s particularly important to further deepen Russian-Chinese coordination

and interaction on the international arena,” Patrushev said.

He noted that Putin is set to hold “substantive” talks with Chinese leader Xi Jinping during next month’s trip to Beijing to attend a summit of the Chinese Belt and Road infrastructure initiative.

Patrushev, a longtime Putin associate, reaffirmed Russia’s “invariable” support for Beijing’s policy on issues related to Taiwan, the western Xinjiang region and Hong Kong, which he said “are being used by the West to discredit China.”

China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has conducted increasingly large military drills in the air and waters around the island. Chinese authorities also have sought to eradicate any possibility of unrest in regions that are home to sizeable ethnic and religious groups, includ-

ing Tibetans and the Uyghur community in Xinjiang, north of Tibet, the harsh policies that have drawn strong criticism from the West.

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

Last month, China helped engineer an expansion of the BRICS partnership, which included six more countries to join what has been a five-nation bloc that includes China, Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa.

Beijing has sought to project itself as neutral in the Ukraine conflict, even while it has refused to condemn Moscow’s actions and declared last year that it had a “no-limits” friendship with Russia. China has denounced Western sanctions against Moscow, and

accused NATO and the United States of provoking Putin’s military action.

Beijing has also proposed a peace plan that was largely dismissed by Ukraine’s allies that insist that Moscow must withdraw its forces from the neighbouring country.

Wang arrived in Russia on Monday on a four-day visit following his weekend talks with US President Joe Biden’s national security adviser in Malta. He began his trip by conferring with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

“The more violent the unilateral actions of hegemony and bloc confrontation become, the more important for us to keep up with the times, show a sense of duty as great powers, and further fulfil our international obligations,” Wang said at the start of Monday’s talks with Lavrov.

Indian-origin expert joins UK panel to review clashes in Leicester

PTI ■ LONDON

Dr Samir Shah, an Indian-origin race relations expert has been named on a three-member panel set up by the UK government to independently review the unrest that took place in the city of Leicester last year as community groups clashed in the aftermath of an India-Pakistan Asia Cup cricket match in Dubai. Shah, conferred a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) honour by the late Queen Elizabeth II in 2019 for services to heritage and television, will join fellow expert panellists to publish their findings by next year, the UK government said on Monday.

Shah, in his 70s, has experience conducting such

reviews as a former Commissioner for the UK’s Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities. He was also the former chair of the country’s independent race equality think tank, the Runnymede Trust, for 10 years and was a member of the Holocaust Commission.

“Leicester has a proud history of diversity, tolerance and community cohesion, which makes what happened last year all the more troubling,” said Lord Ian Austin, the chair of the review announced by the government in May.

“We want to listen to people in Leicester to understand last year’s events, what can be learned from them and how communities in the city can work together to prevent problems in future. It is, therefore,

vital that the review is comprehensive and even-handed and that this aim is reflected in the panellists we appoint,” he said.

“The diverse panel brings together a wealth of experience and knowledge, which should result in an honest, frank and productive review,” he added. Hilary Pilkington, Professor of Sociology at the University of Manchester and Fellow of the UK Academy of Social Sciences, whose research focus covers the study of youth participation, activism, stigmatisation and extremism in the UK, is another expert on the panel. They are joined by Dr Shaaz Mahboob, Head of Digital Development at NHS England and Trustee of British Muslims for Secular Democracy for 10 years until 2018.

Lanka gazettes Online Safety Bill, opp flays

Colombo (PTI): The Sri Lankan government gazetted the Online Safety Bill on Tuesday, drawing criticism from the Opposition, who labelled it harmful to the freedom of expression guaranteed in the Constitution. Gazetted by the Minister of Public Security, the bill aims to establish the Online Safety Commission, make provisions to prohibit online communication of certain statements of fact in Sri Lanka and prevent the use of online accounts and inauthentic online accounts for restricted purposes. It also makes provisions to identify and declare online locations used for prohibited purposes in the island nation, suppress the financing, and other support of communication. The Opposition leader, Sajith said the new bill aims to curb the people’s right to create social platforms for organising themselves.

Google brings its AI chatbot ‘Bard’

AP ■ NEW YORK

Google is introducing Bard, its artificially intelligent chatbot, to other members of its digital family — including Gmail, Maps and YouTube — as it seeks ward off competitive threats posed by similar technology run by Open AI and Microsoft.

Bard’s expanded capabilities announced Tuesday will be provided through an English-only extension that will enable users to allow the chatbot to mine information embedded in their Gmail accounts as well as pull directions from Google Maps and find helpful videos on YouTube. The extension will also open a door for Bard to fetch travel information from Google Flights and extract information from documents stored on Google Drive.

Google is promising to protect users’ privacy by prohibiting



human reviewers from seeing the potentially sensitive information that Bard gets from Gmail or Drive, while also promising that the data won’t be used as part of the main way the Mountain View, California, company makes money — selling ads tailored to people’s interests.

The expansion is the latest development in an escalating AI battle triggered by the popularity of OpenAI’s ChatGPT chatbot and Microsoft’s push to infuse similar technology in its Bing search engine and its

Microsoft 365 suite that includes its Word, Excel and Outlook applications. ChatGPT prompted Google to release Bard broadly in March and then start testing the use of more conversational AI within its own search results in May.

The decision to feed Bard more digital juice in the midst of a high-profile trial that could eventually hobble the ubiquitous Google search engine that propels the USD 1.7 trillion empire of its corporate parent, Alphabet Inc. In the biggest US antitrust

case in a quarter century, the US Justice Department is alleging Google has created its lucrative search monopoly by abusing its power to stifle competition and innovation. Google contends it dominates search because its algorithms produce the best results. It also argues it faces a wide variety of competition that is becoming more intense with the rise of AI. Giving Bard access to a trove of personal information and other popular services such as Gmail, Google Maps and YouTube, in theory, will make them even more helpful and prod more people to rely in them. Google, for instance, posits that Bard could help a user planning a group trip to the Grand Canyon by getting dates that would work for everyone, spell out different flight and hotel options, provide directions from Maps and present an array of informative videos from YouTube.

London police force says it will take years to root out bad cops

London: London’s police force says that over 1,000 officers are currently suspended or on restricted duties as the department steps up efforts to root out bad cops following a scathing report that found it was institutionally racist, homophobic and misogynistic.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Stuart Cundy said it will take years for the Metropolitan Police Service to get rid of officers who have breached standards or weren’t properly vetted before they were hired, with about 60 officers facing disciplinary hearings each month.

“This is going to take one, two or more years to root out those who are corrupt,” Cundy said in a statement released on Tuesday. AP

Iraq prez to summon Turkish ambassador

Baghdad (AP): The Iraqi president announced Tuesday that he will summon Türkiye’s ambassador and hand him a formal letter of protest over recent Turkish airstrikes on Iraqi territory. The official protest came a day after an airstrike on a military airport in Arbat, southeast of the city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq’s semi-autonomous Kurdish region.

Three members of the region’s counterterrorism force died and three of the Kurdish Peshmerga forces were wounded, according to local officials. “Day after day, systematic military attacks on Iraqi territory, specifically in (the Kurdish) region, are escalating without military or security justification,” Iraqi President Abdul Latif Rashid said in a statement. The “aggression targeted innocent

civilians and military and security headquarters,” he said. Rashid belongs to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) party, which has its main seat of power in Sulaymaniyah. There was no immediate comment from Türkiye.

The targeted airport had recently undergone rehabilitation to facilitate the training of anti-terror units affiliated with the PUK, one of the two often-competing main parties in the region. Bafel Talabani, the party’s leader, in an official statement on Monday labelled the Turkish attack as part of a series of “conspiracies” aimed at jeopardising Kurdistan’s security. He urged the federal government to “uphold its constitutional and national duties” in safeguarding Iraq’s territory and airspace, specifically in the Kurdish region.

Americans released by Iran arrive home, declare ‘Freedom!’

AP ■ WASHINGTON

Americans detained for years in Iran arrived home Tuesday, tearfully hugged their loved ones and declared “Freedom!” after being let go as part of a politically risky deal that saw President Joe Biden agree to the release of nearly USD 6 billion in frozen Iranian assets. The prisoners landed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, with clapping and cheers heard in the predawn hours. Siamak Namazi, the first off the jet, paused for a moment, closed his eyes and took a deep breath before leaving the plane. Loved ones, some holding small American flags, enveloped them in hugs and exchanged greetings in English and Farsi, the main language of Iran.

“The nightmare is finally over,” Namazi’s brother, Babak, said at the airport.

“We haven’t had this moment is over eight years,” he added, his arm around his brother and his formerly detained father, Baquer, who had been earlier released by Iran. “It’s unbelievable.”

The former prisoners later posed for a group photograph with their families, calling out: “Freedom!”

The successful negotiations for the Americans’ freedom brought Biden profuse thanks from their families but heat from Republican presidential rivals and other opponents for the monetary arrangement with one of America’s top adversaries. “Today, five innocent Americans who were imprisoned in Iran are finally coming home,” the Democratic president said in a statement released as the plane carrying the group from Tehran landed in Doha, Qatar, on Monday.

Iran’s hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi, on hand for the United Nations General Assembly in New York, suggested the exchange could be “a step



in the direction of a humanitarian action between us and America.” “It can definitely help in building trust,” Raisi told journalists.

However, tensions are almost certain to remain high between the US and Iran, which are locked in disputes over Tehran’s nuclear programme and other matters. Iran says the program is peaceful, but it now enriches uranium closer than ever to weapons-grade levels.

The prisoner release unfolded amid a major American military buildup in the Persian Gulf, with the possibility of US

troops boarding and guarding commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20 per cent of all oil shipments pass.

After the plane slowed to a stop in Doha, three of the prisoners — Siamak Namazi, Emad Sharghi and Morad Tahbaz — emerged.

They hugged the US ambassador to Qatar, Timmy Davis, and others. The three then threw their arms over one another’s shoulders and walked off toward the airport. In a statement issued on his behalf, Namazi said: “I would not be free today, if it wasn’t for all of you who didn’t allow the world to forget me.” “Thank you for being my voice when I could not speak for myself and for making sure I was heard when I mustered the strength to scream from behind the impenetrable walls of Evin Prison,” he said. The United States did not immediately identify the other two freed Americans. All were released in exchange for five

Iranians in US custody and for the deal over the frozen Iranian assets owed by South Korea. The Biden administration said the five freed Iranians pose no threat to US national security.

Two of the imprisoned Americans’ family members, Effie Namazi and Vida Tahbaz, who had been under travel bans in Iran, also were on the plane.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani said two of the Iranian prisoners will stay in the US Meanwhile, Nour News, a website believed to be close to Iran’s security apparatus, said two of the Iranian prisoners were in Doha for the swap.

Nour News identified the two in Doha as: Mehrdad Ansari, an Iranian sentenced by the US to 63 months in prison in 2021 for obtaining equipment that could be used in missiles, electronic warfare, nuclear weapons and other military gear, and Reza Sarhangpour Kafrani, an Iranian charged in 2021 over allegedly unlawfully exporting laboratory equipment to Iran.

The USD 5.9 billion in cash released to Iran represents money South Korea owed Iran — but had not yet paid — for oil purchased before the US imposed sanctions on such transactions in 2019. The US maintains that, once in Qatar, the money will be held in restricted accounts to be used only for humanitarian goods, such as medicine and food. Those transactions are currently allowed under American sanctions targeting the Islamic Republic over its advancing nuclear program.

Iranian government officials have largely concurred, though some hard-liners have insisted, without evidence, that there would be no restrictions on how Tehran spends the money. The deal has already opened Biden to fresh criticism from Republicans and others who say the administration is helping boost the Iranian economy at a

time when Iran poses a growing threat to American troops and Mideast allies. That could have implications in his re-election campaign. Former President Donald Trump, currently the lead Republican challenger in that race, called it an “absolutely ridiculous” deal on the Truth Social social media site. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell accused Biden of “rewarding and incentivising Tehran’s bad behaviour.” Biden held what the White House described as an emotional phone call with the families of the freed Americans after their release. In his statement, Biden demanded more information on what happened to Bob Levinson, an American who went missing years ago. The Biden administration also announced fresh sanctions on former Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence.

Pak denies selling arms to Ukraine for IMF funding

AP ■ ISLAMABAD

Secret Pakistani arms sales to the US to be used by Ukraine helped cash-strapped Islamabad secure a crucial IMF bailout earlier this year, a report cited internal Pakistani and American government documents as confirming. The arms sales were made for the purpose of supplying the Ukrainian military — marking Pakistani involvement in a conflict it had faced US pressure to take sides on, the Intercept, an online investigative website has reported.

Pakistan’s Foreign Office Spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch on Monday, however, rejected as “baseless and fabricated” the American non-profit news organisation’s report, saying that the cash-strapped country provided arms to the US to get its support to clinch the USD 3 billion deal with the IMF towards the end of June to avoid default.

Pakistan has struggled to maintain a balance in ties with the Kremlin and Washington since the Russia-Ukraine crisis began earlier last year.

“The IMF Standby Arrangement for Pakistan was successfully negotiated between Pakistan and the IMF to implement difficult but essential economic reforms. Giving any other colour to these negotiations is disingenuous,” Dawn News quoted Baloch as saying.

Baloch said Pakistan maintained a policy of “strict neutrality” in the dispute between the two countries and did not provide them any arms or ammunition in that context.

“Pakistan’s defence exports are always accompanied by strict end-user requirements,” she said. During a visit to Pakistan in July, Ukrainian

Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba had rejected similar reports that Islamabad was supplying arms to Ukraine to support its military during the ongoing conflict with Russia, according to Dawn.

He had clarified that the two nations had no deal for the supply of arms and ammunition.

Former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had also expressed similar views, maintaining that Pakistan had not signed any agreement with Ukraine for military supplies since the war began.

An earlier report had also claimed Pakistan set up a defence trading firm in Warsaw to smoothen the process of arms supplies to Ukraine. In April in an interview with BBC, a Ukrainian commander had talked about receiving rockets from other countries including Pakistan. But officials strongly reject

claims of providing any ammunition to Ukraine insisting the country maintained a “policy of strict neutrality”.

An official, however, had said if a third party supplied weapons purchased from Pakistan to another country, it was their responsibility.

The revelation is a window into the kind of behind-the-scenes manoeuvring between financial and political elites that rarely are exposed to the public, even as the public pays the price, the Intercept report said. The Russia-Ukraine crisis began last year when President Vladimir Putin ordered the latter’s invasion on February 24.

In July, the IMF transferred USD 1.2 billion to cash-strapped Pakistan, part of the USD 3 billion bailout programme for nine months to support the government’s efforts to stabilise the country’s ailing economy.

Libyan leader says flooded city divided to create buffers in case of disease outbreaks

AP ■ DERNÄ (LIBYA)

The prime minister of Libya’s eastern administration said on Tuesday that authorities have divided the flood-stricken city of Derna into four sections to create buffers in case of disease outbreaks, a day after thousands of angry protesters demanded the city’s rapid reconstruction. Last week, two dams collapsed during Mediterranean storm Daniel, sending a wall of water gushing through Derna. Government officials and aid agencies have given death tolls ranging from about 4,000 to 11,000. “Now the affected areas are completely isolated, the armed forces and the government have begun creating a buffer out of fear of the spread of diseases or epidemics,” Prime Minister Ossama Hamad said in a telephone interview with Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV. No further details were given.

On Monday, the United Nations warned that a disease outbreak could create “a second devastating crisis”.

Libyan protesters gathered in central Derna on Monday in the first mass demonstration since the flood. Outside the city’s al-Shabana mosque thousands called for a rapid investigation into the disaster, the urgent reconstruction of the city and other demands.

On Monday evening, the former mayor of the city, Abdel-



Moneim al-Gaithi, said his home was set on fire by protesters. Public prosecutors opened an investigation on Saturday into the collapse of the two dams, built in the 1970s, as well as the allocation of maintenance funds for them. That same day al-Gaithi was suspended pending the investigation. Many of the city’s residents see politicians as the architects of the crisis. The country has been divided between rival administrations since 2014. Both are backed by international patrons and armed militias whose influence in the country has ballooned since a NATO-backed Arab Spring uprising toppled autocratic ruler Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. Both authorities have deployed humanitarian teams to the city but have struggled to respond to the large-scale disaster. The recovery operation, with help from international teams, has been poorly coordinated, and residents say aid distribution has been uneven.

Conflicting death tolls and statistics have been released by various official bodies.

Libya’s Red Crescent has said at least 11,300 people have been killed and an additional 10,000 are missing. After earlier reporting the same death toll, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is now citing far lower numbers, about 4,000 people killed and 9,000 missing.

Nawaz ‘excited’ to return to Pak ‘PDM saved country from default prevented ₹ 1000/ltr petrol price’

PTI ■ LAHORE/LONDON

Pakistan’s former prime minister Nawaz Sharif has said that he is “excited” to return to his country on October 21, ending a four-year “self-imposed exile” and to lead his party in the upcoming elections. Addressing an online meeting of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) ticket holders from London on Monday, the PML-N supreme leader also said that the price of petrol, which is currently hovering around Rs 330 per litre, would have been Rs 1,000 per litre had the coalition government led by PML-N not “saved” the country from default, Dawn News reported. Amid double-digit inflation, Pakistan’s caretaker government last week effected yet another hike in the prices of petrol and diesel taking them to a historic high — over Rs 330 per litre — prompting immediate protests and a legal challenge too.

The fuel price hike comes on the heels of a 27.4 per cent increase in the rate of inflation in August, putting an unbearable burden on the masses, as petrol is used by all private and public service vehicles. Petrol and diesel have become costlier by 20 per cent since the

caretaker government took over in August. Sharif told senior PML-N leaders, including Maryam Nawaz, Hamza Shehbaz, Ahsan Iqbal, Pervaiz Rashid, Khurram Dastgir, Marriyau Aurangzeb, Azma Bokhari and Rana Sanaulah, that he was “excited and happy” to return to the country. Lashing out at the military and judicial establishment of 2017, the PML-N supremo said the people should know who the real culprits for their agony were. “The man (Nawaz) who rid the country of power load shedding was sent home by four judges,” Sharif, 73, said in his emotional speech, adding that the former army chief General (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa and ex-Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief General (retd) Faiz Hamid were behind his ouster. “(Former) chief justices Saqib Nisar and Asif Saeed Khosa were tools of [the former army chief and his spy chief]. Their crime is bigger than a murder offence. Giving them pardons will be an injustice to the nation. They don’t deserve pardon,” Sharif said, vowing to hold them accountable. “These ‘characters’ who unleashed economic misery on the people of Pakistan will have to face accountability,” the PML-N supreme leader pledged.

Defending the PML-N decision to form the 16-month government after sending Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan home through a no-confidence motion in April last year, Sharif claimed that had the PML-N-led Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) not saved the country from default, per litre petrol price would have been Rs 1,000.

“We put at risk our political capital to save the country from default. In fact, we paid the price of saving Pakistan from default. However, I can give in writing that in elections we will win,” Sharif claimed, recalling that in 2017, when he was in power, it was not the case. He said cheap flour, ghee and sugar were available then while the poor today were receiving heavy electricity bills and did not know how to pay them.

In July, the IMF transferred USD 1.2 billion to cash-strapped Pakistan, part of the USD 3 billion bailout programme for nine months to support the government’s efforts to stabilise the country’s ailing economy.

Pakistan’s economy has been in a free fall mode for the last many years, bringing untold pressure on the poor masses in the form of unchecked inflation.

Trump plans to meet striking autoworkers in Michigan

WASHINGTON (AP): Former President Donald Trump will travel to the battleground state of Michigan next week to meet with striking autoworkers instead of participating in the second Republican presidential debate, a person familiar with his plans said Monday. Trump, who also skipped the first debate last month, has signal led that he is

already focused on the 2024 election against President Joe Biden as he maintains a wide lead against his GOP rivals in primary polls. In recent days, he has been leaning hard into the strike, painting himself as sympathetic to the workers and accusing Biden of trying to destroy the car industry by expanding electric cars and green energy policies.

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S India Infoline Housing Finance Ltd VS AMOL ASHOK BHANDGE
CIS NO NACT/20074/2017
CNR No. HRGR03-055627-2017
Next Date:- 20-09-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO : AMOL ASHOK BHANDGE :-
Address: FLAT NO C5 BARDHANA VIHAR HSG SOC WADGA ON BK PUNE-411041
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE HOUSING FINANCE LTD VS OCEAN
CIS NO NACT/19462/2017
CNR No. HRGR03-054736-2017
Next Date:- 20-09-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO : OCEAN :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR VANDANA KHANNA OFFICE AT 5 C SHAHPUJ JAT BACK PORTION SOUTH DELHI
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE HOUSING FINANCE LTD VS AMARJEET KAUR
CIS NO NACT/722/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-001522-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO : AMARJEET KAUR :-
Address: R/O H-87 SANT NAGAR EXTN WEST DELHI
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE HOUSING FINANCE LTD VS SHRI RAM TELECOM
CIS NO NACT/734/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-001527-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO : SHRI RAM TELECOM :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR RAMIT SINDWANI OFFICE AT SHOP NO 1 PROP 244 PKT E 21 SEC 3 ROHINI NORTH WST DELHI 110085
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

Before the National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi
Company Petition no. IB-347/ND/2023
In the Matter of:
Tribhuvan Markplus Pvt Ltd
... Applicant
Versus
Green Valley Bio-Energy Pvt Ltd
...Respondent
PUBLICATION OF NOTICE
Notice may be taken by the directors of the Company, Green Valley Bio-Energy Pvt Ltd that a Company Petition being IB-347/ND/2023 has been filed by the above mentioned applicant before the National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi Bench Kindly note that the matter is listed on 27.09.2023.

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is to inform public in general that Kotak Mahindra bank Ltd has organized an auction in below mention respect of Vehicles.
VEHICLES FOR SALE
1) SWRJ MAZDA SARTAJ XM
REG. NO. DL1MA1554-YOM -2018
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 452446
2) ASHOK LEYLAND LIMITED -AL 1618
REG. NO. HR55AC2859-YOM -2017
MINIMUM RESERVE PRICE 615000
UNDER HYPOTHECATION WITH M/S KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK IS UNDER SALE IN ITS "AS IS WHERE IS CONDITION"
INTERESTED PARTIES CAN GIVE THEIR QUOTATIONS (ONLINE) WITHIN 15 DAYS FROM THIS PAPER PUBLICATION I.E. ON OR BEFORE 05-10-2023
(PLEASE NOTE THAT CLOSING AUCTION DATE WOULD NOT BE A WEEKLY OFF / HOLIDAY).
BRANCH ADDRESS: KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD., PLOT NO.7 INSTITUTIONAL AREA, SECTOR-125 NOIDA NEAR DELL CAMPUS NOIDA (U.P.) UP-201313 OR CONTACT : RAMAN AHUJA KOTAK MAHINDRA BANK LTD. CONTACT / 8377988238
EMAIL-raman.ahuja@kotak.com

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE FINANCE LIMITED VS SANIKA MARBLE AND GRANITE
CIS NO NACT/2540/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-005945-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO : SANIKA MARBLE AND GRANITE :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR DINESH UTTERSHWAR BIKKED OFFICE AT S NO 29/22 MUMBAI PUNE BYPASSNR TRIMURTI GARDEN AMBEGAON PUNE MAHARASHTRA
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

COURT NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF
Ms. Sarita Solanki
Judicial Magistrate - 1st Class, Gurugram

M/S INDIA INFOLINE FINANCE LIMITED VS SHRI RAM TELECOM
CIS NO NACT/2534/2018
CNR No. HRGR03-005969-2018
Next Date:- 20-09-2023

PUBLICATION ISSUED TO : SHRI RAM TELECOM :-
Address: THROUGH ITS PROPRIETOR RAMIT SINDWANI R/O SHOP NO 1 PROP 244 PKT E 21 SEC 3 ROHINI NORTH WEST DELHI
In above titled case, the accused could not be served. It is ordered that accused should appear in person or through counsel on **21-10-2023 at 10.00 a.m.**
For details logon to <https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?trs=districtnotice&district=Gurugram>
Judicial Magistrate, 1st Class Gurugram
Dated, this day of **01-09-2023**

Foreign cos in China feel tension with US affecting business plans

PTI ■ BEIJING

Foreign companies operating in China say tensions with Washington over technology, trade and other issues and uncertainty over Chinese policies are damaging the business environment and causing some to reassess their plans for investing in the giant market. The results of surveys released Tuesday by the American Chamber of Commerce in Shanghai and by the European Union Chamber of Commerce in China largely concurred in appealing for greater certainty and clarity over China’s stance toward foreign businesses.

“For decades, European companies thrived in China, benefitting from a stable and efficient business environment. However, after the turbulent past three years, many have reevaluated their basic assumptions about the Chinese market,” Jens Eskelund, the EU Chamber’s president said, in a letter that accompanied the report.

Eskelund said that predictability and reliability had been undermined by “erratic policy shifts,” hurting confidence in China’s growth prospects.

“At the top of a growing list of questions about the Chinese market is, what kind of relationship does China want to have with foreign enterprises?” he said.

The Shanghai AmCham’s survey showed a continued downgrading of China’s importance as an overseas destination for investment, even though two-thirds of the 325 companies responding said they had no immediate plans to change their China strategy.

Just over one in five of the companies surveyed said they were decreasing their investment

in China this year, with the top reason being uncertainty about the US-China trade relationship, followed by expectations of slower growth in China, it said.

Overall, the survey showed sentiment worsened from last year, when companies were embroiled in disruptions from “zero-COVID” policies that caused parts of entire cities, transport networks and travel to be shut down, sometimes for weeks at a time.

Such disruptions were a major “push factor” that companies cited in expanding their operations outside China, the survey showed. Asked about the survey, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said that Beijing has recently taken measures to attract foreign investment and that China welcomes foreign companies to invest and operate in China.

“What I can tell you is that China’s economy is resilient, promising and dynamic, and the fundamentals of long-term development have not changed,” said the spokesperson, Mao Ning.

“The outstanding advantages of a super-sized market and a complete industrial system have also remained unchanged,” she said. While 52 per cent of those surveyed by AmCham Shanghai said they were optimistic about their five-year business outlook in China, that was the lowest figure since the group began the annual survey in 1999. Nearly nine in 10 companies said rising costs were a big challenge.

Intensifying competition has also been worsened by policies that favour local companies over foreign ones and courts that tend to favor Chinese companies in decisions on protection of intellectual property such as patents and trademarks, the chamber said.

Govt to tweak PLI schemes for pharma, textiles, drone sectors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government may soon tweak the production-linked incentive scheme for pharmaceuticals, drones and textiles sectors to encourage investment and boost manufacturing, an official said.

These sectors have been identified after inter-ministerial consultations on the performance of the scheme for various products.

The official also said that disbursement of production-linked incentives (PLI) for white goods (AC and LED lights) would start this month and that would push the amount of disbursement, which was only Rs 2,900 crore till March 2023.

The scheme was announced in 2021 for 14 sectors such as telecommunications, white goods, textiles, manufacturing of medical devices, automobiles, specialty steel, food products, high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell battery, drones and pharma with



an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore. "We have identified the sectors. We are going to send the combined note to seek approval of the Union Cabinet. The changes include extending some time (for pharma sector) and adding some additional products in some sectors.

"In textiles, we are expanding the definition of certain other products in the technical textiles segment; in drones, we are increasing the amount," the government official, who did not wish to be named said.

The total amount allocated for the PLI scheme for

drones and drone components is Rs 120 crore spread over three financial years.

A senior official of the commerce and industry ministry had earlier stated that some course corrections or tweaking were needed in PLI schemes that were not doing well.

PLI schemes for sectors which are not picking up well include high-efficiency solar PV modules, advanced chemistry cell (ACC) batteries, textile products and specialty steel.

On the other hand, the

scheme is doing well in sectors such as electronics, pharma, medical devices, telecom, food processing, and white goods.

The government is trying to sort out issues such as timely processing of claims, visa-related matters where vendors require Chinese professionals' expertise, and delay in getting environmental clearances that have been raised by certain stakeholders of PLI schemes.

The purpose of the scheme is to attract investments in key sectors and cutting-edge technology; ensure efficiency and bring economies of size and scale in the manufacturing sector; and make Indian companies and manufacturers globally competitive.

These schemes for all 14 sectors have been notified by the concerned ministries/departments after due approval. These schemes are in various stages of implementation.

The government is expected to disburse about Rs 13,000 crore to eligible firms seeking benefits under the schemes.

SMEV writes to Gadkari, seeks unified policy of road tax exemption for EVs

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles (SMEV) on Tuesday urged the government to formulate a unified policy of road tax exemption for Electric Vehicles (EVs) across the country.

In a letter to the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari, SMEV said a consistent and favourable policy environment is essential to accelerate the shift towards electric mobility in India.

"I am writing to request your esteemed office to weigh in on a unified policy of road tax exemption for EVs that will play a pivotal role in encouraging the adoption of clean and sustainable transportation options, which is vital for our nation's environmental and economic future," SMEV Chief Evangelist Sanjay Kaul wrote.

In July, SMEV had named Kaul as its Chief Evangelist to help revise the association's agenda.

In view of the Ministry of Heavy Industries' decision to



reduce the subsidy component mid-way through the FAME II scheme, this input (unified policy of road tax exemption for EVs) from the government would become even more relevant and critical, he stated.

Road tax and registration fees aren't just bureaucratic formalities; they're pivotal factors influencing the rise or fall of EVs, Kaul said.

"These fees can act as either a carrot or a stick, nudging consumers toward greener choices or pushing them back into the arms of traditional gas-guzzlers. EVs often carry a hefty price tag due to their advanced battery systems, so these extra upfront costs can be the tip-

ping point that deters would-be buyers," he said.

The patchwork of road tax policies across states is a roadblock to the EV revolution, Kaul said.

While some states like Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have already waived road tax and registration fees, others lag woefully behind, he wrote.

"This uneven playing field doesn't just sow confusion; it actively discourages eager EV adopters, stalling the momentum of a market ready to shift into high gear.

"Even more disheartening are states like Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, who once enticed buyers with tax breaks only to backtrack and impose taxes, adding yet

another hurdle in the race toward a sustainable future," he noted.

Inconsistent tax policies across states are not merely confusing; they are crippling the EV movement in its tracks, Kaul stated.

"What India needs now is a unified, favourable framework that supercharges our transition to electric mobility. A centralised advisory from your esteemed office can cut through the noise and set the stage for widespread adoption of this groundbreaking technology," he added.

By issuing a nationwide advisory that advocates for a uniform policy on road tax exemptions for EVs, the government has a unique opportunity to drive India into a cleaner, greener future, he said.

Kaul has been tasked with helping the EV sector tide over the crisis faced since last year with almost all OEMs in the sector dealing with issues of non-compliance with policy details of the FAME II scheme.

'Working on using AI to reduce pendency of consumer cases'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Consumer Affairs Ministry on Tuesday said it is working on using artificial intelligence (AI) to reduce the pendency of cases in various consumer courts in the country.

The ministry also said the National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has successfully resolved 854 cases during August, the highest disposal rate in the current year.

This was possible due to proactive steps taken by the NCDRC, streamlined processes and advanced technology like E-daakhil, which helped resolve cases faster than ever before, it added.

"In furtherance of keeping the same momentum of disposal of cases, the Department has made filing of cases through E-daakhil in consumer commissions compulsory and soon going to launch the feature of VC (video conference) on E-daakhil," the ministry said in a statement.

As the scope of artificial intelligence is increasing rapidly, the ministry is "also working on using the AI facilities in reducing the pendency of cases



in the National, State and District Consumer Commissions," it added.

The case filed in the Consumer Commissions will be analysed through AI and will generate the summary of the case and many more actions will be done through AI in resolving the case, the statement said.

According to the ministry, NCDRC has significantly improved the disposal of consumer cases in the commission in 2023. NCDRC and the Department of Consumer Affairs successfully resolved 854 consumer cases in August, whereas the filing of cases during the same period was 455, making it the highest disposal rate of 188 per cent this year, it said.

This achievement underscores the NCDRC's unwavering commitment to safeguarding consumer rights and ensuring prompt redressal of grievances, the ministry said.

Even the regular monitoring of consumer cases by the ministry and holding various one-day regional workshops in Guwahati and Chandigarh helped expedite the process.

The ministry also conducted sector-specific brainstorming sessions on insurance and real estate to reduce the pendency in the consumer commissions.

State-specific meetings in various states like Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Bihar, Maharashtra and Kerala were also held, the statement added.

Staff shortage at DGCA delays issuance of pilot licences

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is taking at least a couple of months to issue licences to trained pilots as the regulator is grappling with the shortage of staff at key positions, according to sources.

After training, individuals need to obtain a Commercial Pilot Licence (CPL) to be eligible to fly commercial flights.

Sources in the civil aviation ministry said that at present, a pilot has to wait for a couple of months to get his or her licence and the pendency time is likely to go up in the coming months.

"The Directorate of Training and Licensing (DTL), under the Operations Department which deals with licensing, has a total of 129 sanctioned posts of assistant directors. Of those, 92 posts or almost 72 per cent of the total strength are lying vacant," one of the sources said.

Till July 2022, the DGCA had only 72 sanctioned posts of assistant directors. In August 2022, the ministry created 57 new posts and the sanctioned strength rose to 129 positions.

However, DGCA has failed to initiate any process to fill the 57 newly created posts. As many as 35 old posts out of the 72 that fell vacant due to



retirement or promotions of the employees are also lying vacant," the source said.

When contacted, DGCA Director General Vikram Dev Dutt did not offer any comment on the issues.

However, a senior official on the condition of anonymity said that the hiring process is tedious and time-consuming, and that is the reason for the delay in filling crucial posts.

As per the DGCA's own 'Standard of Service', after due process, a CPL has to be issued within three days.

Further, the source said the regulator published an advertisement through the Union Public Service Commission (PSC) for filling entry-level posts in airworthiness, legal

and air safety areas. However, no advertisement for filling the posts in the operations cadre at the entry level for assistant directors that deal with the licensing process has been issued, the source added.

The sources at the ministry said that institutes which provide training for drone flying have to get a licence from the DGCA. Over a dozen such institutes have applied for licences but their applications are lying for approval for a considerable amount of time, they added.

"Companies that sell drones to trained pilots have to obtain a UIN (Unique Identification Number) from the DGCA for each drone. Similarly, trained drone pilots

also have to get a licence from the DGCA to fly drones.

Aviation experts, who are aware of the issue, said that the pendency time in issuing licences to pilots might go up as the operations department under DTL is under the restructuring process due to which the files are moving among DGCA, the ministry and the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).

"So far as I know, even the higher positions such as the post of Deputy Director General (DDGs) are also facing severe shortage as the DGCA initiated new recruitment rules last year for these posts. "Out of total 18 DDGs posts at DGCA, 9 are vacant.

As many as 7 out of these 9 posts were created in August 2022," Captain SS Panesar, Ex-Director of Flight Safety and Training at Indian Airlines, said.

According to him, in the absence of recruitment rules, the feeder cadre, -- directors from legal, airworthiness, operations, flying training aircraft and engineering, among other departments, could not be promoted.

"This has also resulted in a roadblock in the career progression of all group A officers in DGCA and in future, will severely impact the aviation industry. The ministry immediately needs to fill all these technical positions with competent and highly skilled professionals," he said.

The operations department, which deals with drone licensing too, has crucial positions such as Deputy Director General (DDG), Director Operations and Deputy Director Operations remaining vacant for more than a year.

"There is pendency in all these services due to lack of officials," one of the sources said.

The sources also claimed that even Air Traffic Controllers Licensing and Aerodrome Licensing processes are also moving at a snail's pace.

Govt rolls out mandatory quality norms for solder wires

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has issued mandatory quality norms for solder wires, used in electronics and engineering industry, to curb the import of sub-standard goods and boost domestic manufacturing of these goods.

A notification in this regard was issued by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) on September 18.

Items under Flux Cored Solder Wire (Quality Control) Order, 2023 cannot be produced, sold, traded, imported and stocked unless they bear the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) mark.

These orders will come into force with effect from six months from the date of publication of this notification, the DPIIT said on Tuesday.

Soldering is a critical process where quality of flux cored solder wire is of para-



mount importance as any failure will impact quality and safety of the products soldered particularly in electronic and automobile industry.

"The implementation of the Quality Control Order (QCO) for this product is crucial not only for the safety of consumers, but will also improve the manufacturing quality standards in the country and curb imports of sub-standard products into India," it added.

Till now, BIS certification rules were not applicable on these products.

Reliance KG-6 gas price to be cut by 14% from Oct

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The price of natural gas produced from difficult areas like KG-D6 of Reliance Industries is likely to be cut by about 14 per cent from next month in line with softening energy prices, sources said.

For the six-month period starting October 1, the price of gas from deepsea and high-pressure, high-temperature (HPTP) areas is likely to be cut to around USD 10.4 per million British thermal unit from the current USD 12.12, they said.

The government bi-annually fixes prices of the locally-produced natural gas -- which is converted into CNG for use in automobiles,

pipet to household kitchens for cooking and used to generate electricity and make fertilisers.

Two different formulas govern rates paid for gas produced from legacy or old fields of national oil companies like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Ltd (OIL), and for newer fields lying in difficult-to-tap areas, such as deepsea.

Rates are fixed on April 1 and October 1 each year.

In April this year, the formula governing legacy fields was changed and indexed to 10 per cent of the prevailing Brent crude oil price. The rate was however capped at USD 6.5 per mmBtu.

Rates for legacy fields are

now decided on a monthly basis. For September, the price came to USD 8.60 per mmBtu but because of the cap, the producers would get only USD 6.5.

Brent crude oil has averaged around USD 94 per barrel this month but rates will continue to be capped at USD 6.5. Sources said the price for difficult area gas continues to be governed by the old formula that takes one-year average of international LNG prices and rates at some global gas hubs with a lag of one quarter.

International prices had fallen in the reference period of July 2022 to June 2023 and so it will translate into lower prices for difficult fields, they

said.

The price for gas from difficult fields was cut to USD 12.12 per mmBtu for a month period, beginning April 1 from a record USD 12.46 earlier.

The global spurt in energy prices after Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to rates of locally-produced gas climbing to record levels - USD 8.57 per million British thermal unit for gas from legacy or old fields and USD 12.46 per mmBtu for gas from difficult fields between October 2022 and March 2023.

On April 1, prices of gas from legacy fields were slated to climb to USD 10.7 per mmBtu using the old formula.

la. But the government changed the formula and put a cap to keep inflation under check.

Rates of CNG and piped gas for kitchens had risen by 70 per cent because of the previous gas price hike.

The ceiling price covers the cost of production of producers while protecting consumers, particularly CNG users, kitchens using piped cooking gas and fertiliser plants which had grappled with soaring input costs.

India is aiming to become a gas-based economy with the share of natural gas in its primary energy mix targeted to rise to 15 per cent by 2030 from the existing level of around 6.3 per cent.

Job fair draws 5K job seekers

New Delhi: CADD Centre's Job Pakka Fair 2023 held at Greater Noida Institute of Technology drew over 13,000 registrations and welcoming more than 5,000 eager participants.

The fair aimed to link students, fresh graduates, and professionals with over 3,800 job openings spanning engineering and non-technical sectors.

The inauguration witnessed the esteemed presence of Sushri Akriti, Civil Judge from Greater Noida, and Rohit Pandey, Head of Training & Placement at GNIO. This event, India's largest talent search, provided a robust platform for diverse fields, attracting major companies like Tech Mahindra, Adroit, and Decathlon in search of the right candidates.

Google to integrate Bard with other Google apps, results in more languages

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Search engine Google has said it is opening up access to AI-powered chatbot Bard while integrating it with Google apps such as Maps, Docs and Drive and offering results in more languages and countries.

Touted as Google's answer to open-source GenAI platform ChatGPT, Google said Bard is now available in languages and countries worldwide. Users can collaborate on creative projects, start in one language and continue in up to over 40 languages and countries.

Bard will be able to interact with information from Gmail, Docs and Google Drive



to find, summarise and answer questions across personal content.

Google is also integrating real-time info from Maps, YouTube, Hotels and Flights - expanding Bard's capabilities

by pulling in information from the Google apps and services. These extensions are enabled by default, and you can disable them any time, Google said.

"With permission, you can enable Bard to interact with

information from your Gmail, Docs and Drive so you can find, summarise and answer questions across your personal content. Your Google Workspace data won't be used to train Bard's public model and you can disable it any time," the company said.

Google said it is making these features available in English and will be bringing it to other languages soon.

Bard will also be able to develop creative strategies, formulate points of view, create programs that are case-insensitive (where it does not matter if the text is capital or small), create interview questions with talking points, and so on.

VIT-AP University-PI Datacenters sign MoU

PNS ■ AMARAVATI / HYDERABAD

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the VIT-AP University and the PI Datacenters on September 15th during the opening ceremony of the company's new headquarters in Hyderabad's Financial District. Kalyan Muppaneni, the founder and CEO of PI Datacenters, and Dr. S. V. Kota Reddy, Vice Chancellor of VIT-AP University, both signed the MOU.

The MOU was signed in the presence of Sri Jayesh Ranjan, IAS-Principal



Secretary - ITE&C and Dept. of Industries & Commerce, Govt. of Telangana, Ms. Rebekah Drame - U.S. Consulate General (Acting), Hyderabad, Gareth Wynn Owen, British Deputy High Commissioner Telangana & A.P., and Dr. Ameet Chavan, Director of IIEC VIT-AP University.

Tender Cancellation Notice

SS/CW/RR/78/2023/64/7275 Date : 18.09.2023

In reference to the tender no. SS/CW/RR/78/2023/41 dated 28/08/2023 published in the portal www.assamtenders.gov.in, it is for information of the prospective bidders that the tender for the work, 'Repair & renovation works of State Mission Office of Samagra Shiksha, Assam, Kahilpara, Guwahati-19' hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

Sd/-Mission Director,
Samagra Shiksha, Assam
Kahilpara, Guwahati-19

Janasanyog/CF/2737/23/20-Sep-2023

Kane set out for only trophy that truly matters

AP ■ MUNICH

Harry Kane's Bayern Munich host Manchester United on Wednesday, kick-starting their campaign in the competition which matters most to them this season.

Despite domestic dominance which has seen Bayern win the past 11 Bundesliga titles, the club judges itself on its performances in the Champions League.

Since winning in Lisbon in 2020, Bayern have been eliminated at the quarter-final stage of the Champions League for three straight years.

These early eliminations led to the exits of former managers Hansi Flick and Julian Nagelsmann.

Current Bayern boss Thomas Tuchel, who took over from a sacked Nagelsmann who had won eight from eight in the Champions League, is aware that making it at least to the semis is considered par for the course in Munich.

While this understanding is not new for Bayern or indeed any of the handful of modern superclubs where domestic success is assured, the big money addition of Kane makes winning now a necessity.



100 MILLION REASONS

Bayern broke their transfer record to lure Kane from Tottenham in the summer, paying 100 million euros (\$108 million) for the 30-year-old England captain.

With Bundesliga titles and

German Cups finding their way to Munich more often than not, Kane's move to Bayern has clearly boosted his chances of capturing that elusive first trophy.

But only by winning the Champions League will his

decision to leave England be seen as an unqualified success.

The England captain said as much when unveiled in Munich, explaining "I want to play for the Champions League title, that's why I came to Bayern."

Kane has shown few difficulties adjusting to life in Germany, having scored four goals in his first four league matches.

Kane said on Monday he was looking forward to "something special" in his first

Champions League match for Bayern -- and first against Premier League opposition since arriving in Munich.

The striker told Germany's Sports Illustrated that he "wants to get the supporters behind us as early as possible and

approach the game with a lot of intensity."

Early starts are common for Bayern in the Champions League. The six-time winners have won their opening match for the past 19 seasons.

Bayern will however need to see the match through without Tuchel, who saw red as his side was eliminated by eventual champions Man City last season.

Tuchel will watch from the stands, with his assistant Zsolt Low taking the reins.

Typically fiery, Tuchel has pointed much of his scorn at his own club this season, particularly after Bayern failed to sign a defensive midfielder.

Bayern had tried -- the club brought Fulham's Joao Palhinha to Munich on deadline day and had the Portugal star taking pictures in club shirts on deadline day -- but the deal broke down and the midfielder flew back to London.

Despite netting Kane, Serie A defender of the year Kim Min-jae and a host of other useful additions, Tuchel hit out at the club, calling the club "gutsy" for giving him such a "thin" squad.

"We will see if it's enough for the club's targets this season."

While squad complaints are a sport of their own for modern managers, letting go of

Benjamin Pavard, Ryan Gravenberch, Lucas Hernandez, Josip Stanisic and to a lesser extent Marcel Sabitzer and Sadio Mane could come back to haunt the side once the games start coming thick and fast.

WARY OF UNITED

Bayern and Man United are two of the most successful clubs in football history and have a strong rivalry of their own, headlined by the Red Devils' remarkable last-minute victory in the 1999 Champions League final.

They have however started the year in contrasting fashion.

While only goal difference is keeping Bayern from the top of the Bundesliga after an unbeaten start, United have stumbled out of the blocks this season.

Despite a strong opening season under former Bayern second-division coach Erik ten Hag, United have lost three of five league games this season and sit in the bottom half of the table.

Kane however said Bayern should be wary, saying on Monday "I know Manchester United are having a difficult time at the moment, but sometimes teams like that are dangerous because they're looking to come back in a big way."



Rice ready for first taste of Champions League

AP ■ LONDON

Mikel Arteta expects Declan Rice to play a pivotal role in Arsenal's return to the Champions League as the England midfielder prepares to make his debut in the tournament against PSV Eindhoven on Wednesday.

The Gunners are back in the Champions League for the first time since 2016/17, giving Rice his first taste of Europe's elite club competition after his close-season move from West Ham.

Arteta splashed out £100 million (\$124 million) on the midfielder precisely for occasions such as PSV's visit to the Emirates Stadium in Arsenal's opening Group B fixture.

Arteta believes Rice's astute reading of the game and unflappable demeanour strengthens his team. And the Arsenal boss said his new signing can also be a regular goal threat.

"For sure and when you see the technical ability that he has and how he executed it in this moment, his range when he's shooting from range, his accuracy, the power that he generates with no space, with both legs, he can do it with both feet. He's got the timing to arrive in the box."

Along with helping Arsenal challenge for the title -- the north Londoners are two points behind leaders Manchester City after Sunday's 1-0 win at Everton -- Rice will be firmly in the spotlight in the Champions League.

Having played his entire career with West Ham until this season, he has never experienced the thrill of lining up while the

Champions League anthem booms out before kick-off.

But he will finally be able to tick that off his bucket list on Wednesday.

"I'm so excited for that. I've said for many years now that I've wanted to play in the Champions League," Rice said.

"I've wanted to push myself at the biggest level. This opportunity at Arsenal has arisen. It's a great club."

Rice has already made his mark in continental action, captaining West Ham to their first major trophy since 1980 last season when they won the Europa Conference League.

He has made his mark for England as well, featuring as the fulcrum of Gareth Southgate's midfield in their run to the European Championship final in 2021 and impressing at last year's World Cup.

Despite their lengthy absence from the Champions League, the Gunners are expected to progress from a relatively undemanding group featuring Sevilla and Lens as well as PSV.

But Rice knows he must use Arsenal's opening group fixtures to show he can dominate at the highest level, with his sights already set on inspiring his side to a maiden Champions League triumph.

"At the end of the day you get one career, and I want to be as successful as I can with Arsenal, make as many Champions League appearances as possible and hopefully one day get my hands on that trophy," he said.

AP ■ MADRID

Jude Bellingham scored for Real Madrid on his debut, and in four of the five matches which have followed, in a superb start to life in the Spanish capital for the former Birmingham boy.

The England midfielder has five goals in five games in La Liga, taking the Spanish top flight by storm after his 103 million euro (\$110 million) move from Borussia Dortmund this summer.

Real Madrid boast a 100 percent record from their opening raft of domestic games, but their season begins in earnest with the start of the Champions League this week.

Bellingham, 20, is set to make his 'second' debut for Los Blancos against Union Berlin on Wednesday at the Santiago Bernabeu, in the competition they value above all others.

The record 14-time European champions were thrashed 4-0 by Manchester City in the second leg of last season's semi-final, 5-1 on aggregate, with Bellingham's purchase in part a response to that stinging defeat.

Madrid have started reducing minutes for their veteran players in midfield -- Luka Modric and Toni Kroos -- while allowing Bellingham, Eduardo Camavinga, Aurelien Tchouameni and Fede Valverde more opportunities.



China beat under-prepared India 5-1 in Asian Games

PTI ■ HANGZHOU

A severely-fatigued and under-prepared Indian team got a rude reality check with hosts China out-muscling them 5-1 in an opening group league encounter of the Asian Games football competition here on Tuesday.

Giao Tianyi (17th min), Dai Weijun (51st min), Tao Qianglong (72nd and 75th minute) and Hao Fang (90+2) scored for the hosts, while Rahul KP's (45+1 minute) equaliser from an acute angle was possibly the best strike of the match.

It was heartening to see a third-string team holding the title contenders on an even keel during the first 45 minutes, which saw Indian custodian Gurmeet Singh Chahal valiantly save a spot-kick taken by rival captain Zhu Chenjie.

India now need to beat Bangladesh and Myanmar in their remaining two games to qualify for the second round. Myanmar beat Bangladesh 4-2 in another game in this group.

Having reached the Games Village late on Monday evening, the third-string Indian team, with not even four specialist

defenders in their ranks, didn't have enough co-ordination amongst themselves. They looked jet-lagged, not rested enough and there was no way that there could have been a miracle.

The gulf in class and quality was evident and most of the Chinese attacks happened from India's wide left (China's right flank) side, which was being manned by Sumit Rathie. It became a free-ride for the Chinese attackers.

Also, the humidity and lack of training time had its

effect as the Indians didn't have the legs to last beyond the first hour. And, once the second goal was scored due to Sandesh Jhingan's poor anticipation, the floodgates opened.

Jhingan was also responsible for another goal when he had a brain fade and wanted to dribble his team past the danger in his own penalty box and committed harakiri.

A lot of players suffered from cramps due to humidity and, obviously, not having enough time to warm-up.

Indian men's hockey team leaves for Asian Games

PTI ■ BENGALURU

The Indian men's hockey team will look to extend its impressive run at the Asian Games in Hangzhou beginning September 23.

India will begin their campaign against Uzbekistan on September 24. India are placed in Pool A, alongside Pakistan, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore,

and Uzbekistan. Pool B consists of Korea, Malaysia, China, Oman, Thailand, and Indonesia.

The top two teams from each Pool will qualify for the semifinals.

Harmanpreet Singh will lead the team once again, with Hardik serving as his deputy.

"The team has been rigorously preparing for the Asian

Games and we performed well at the recently concluded Asian Champions Trophy Chennai, so the goal is to maintain that level of performance," said Harmanpreet before the Indian team left for Hangzhou. "We have some tough opponents in our Pool, but we are confident in our preparation and hope to finish on the podium."

Hudson-Odoi saves Forest from defeat

AP ■ NOTTINGHAM



Callum Hudson-Odoi's stunning strike salvaged a 1-1 draw for Nottingham Forest as Burnley were denied a first Premier League win of the season on Monday.

Zeki Amdouni scored the only goal when the sides met in the League Cup last month and the Swiss international put Vincent Kompany's men in front four minutes before half-time.

Hudson-Odoi's career has drifted since he broke into the England team as a teenager.

But the former Chelsea

winger showed what he is capable of to level on the hour mark with a curling effort that clipped the inside of the post on its way into the top corner.

Burnley still thought they

had claimed all three points when Lyle Foster found the net 13 minutes from time.

But a VAR check ruled Sander Berge had handled before teeing up the South African.

Foster's frustration was then compounded in stoppage time when he was shown a red card in stoppage time for lashing out at Ryan Yates.

The 10 men held on to at least register Burnley's first point back in the Premier League.

A draw is enough to edge Forest up to eighth.

Spain players arrive for national team camp

AP ■ MADRID

Six Spain players arrived at a Madrid hotel to join their women's national team camp on Tuesday, five of whom are currently striking over changes they want made in the Spanish football federation (RFEF).

Spain's women's World Cup final-winning goalscorer Olga Carmona and four others presented themselves, along with Athenea del Castillo, who is not on strike, while other players are expected to join up later for the camp in Oliva according to Spanish media reports.

Asked by a reporter if she was happy to be included in the squad, goalkeeper Misa Rodriguez replied "no" on her arrival to the hotel.

The striking players issued a statement on Monday in which they reiterated their wish not to be called up, but acknowledged legal consequences which may force them to attend.

The Spanish government said early on Tuesday that players who do not attend would have to be punished under the country's sports law.

New Spain coach Montse Tome named a surprise 23-



woman squad on Monday for upcoming Nations League qualifiers including 20 players who said they were striking until further changes were made in the RFEF after the kiss scandal which rocked Spanish football.

Disgraced former federation president Luis Rubiales forcibly kissed midfielder Jenni Hermoso on the lips after Spain won the World Cup in Sydney on August 20, provoking worldwide outrage.

Rubiales eventually resigned three weeks after the incident and controversial coach Jorge Vilda was sacked,

but many players want more wide-ranging improvements and structural changes.

As many as 39 players are on strike against the RFEF but they were told by the government early Tuesday that those who did not attend the team's camps when called up would have to be punished.

Hermoso was not named in the squad by Tome in order to "protect" her, the new coach, Vilda's former assistant, said Monday.

"Protect me from what? And from whom?" Hermoso posted on X, formerly Twitter, early Tuesday.

5 Indians miss FIDE Junior Chess C'ships due to visa issues

PTI ■ CHENNAI

In a major setback, five young Indian chess players will miss the FIDE World Junior Chess Championship in Mexico City from September 22 to October 2 due to visa issues.

Just days before their scheduled departure, the five players, funded by the government, and two coaches did not get their visas on time.

The affected players are Vrashank Chouhan, Arun Kataria, Bhagyashree Patil,

Prraneeth Vuppala and Femil Chelladurai, along with coaches Pravind Thipsay M and Kiran Agrawal.

"Despite the best efforts from the Indian government, we could not get the visas arranged," FIDE advisory board chairman Bharat Singh Chauhan said.

"It's a huge setback for the Indian contingent. It is not good news for the players involved, who will now be missing out on a great international exposure. They were also medal contenders.

ASHWIN BACK IN WORLD CUP RECKONING

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seasoned off-spinner R Ashwin on Monday made a comeback to the Indian ODI team for the three-match series against Australia and will be competing for a potential World Cup berth with Washington Sundar if Axar Patel doesn't get fit in time for the global event.

Senior players including skipper Rohit Sharma, senior batter Virat Kohli, all-rounder Hardik Pandya and in-form spinner Kuldeep Yadav were rested from the first two games, giving them a chance to get mentally fresh for the mega event.

K L Rahul will lead the side in the first two games against Australia before Rohit returns to lead a full strength squad in the third and final ODI ahead of the World Cup beginning October 5. The squad for the third game is effectively the 15 picked for World Cup and Ashwin and Washington.

Ashwin, who last played an ODI back in January 2022 in South Africa, could be a last minute addition to the World Cup side if Axar doesn't get fit before the September 28 deadline set by the International Cricket Council.

Axar had sustained a quadriceps tear during the recently held Asia Cup in Sri Lanka and missed the final against Sri Lanka on Sunday.

Chief selector Ajit Agarkar said both Ashwin and Washington are in contention for the replacement slot if Axar doesn't recover in time.

"There are couple of guys anyways, him and Washington. Look basically, what is being made known to us about Axar's injury is that he should be okay



and call we will make it once we know that but it leaves us with option to check these guys if they need to go that way," Agarkar told the media during a virtual session.

"If the need arises, we will look at that way but I don't think there is any need to speculate right now because we are hoping that Axar is fit," he added.

When the Ajit Agarkar-led selection panel had picked the 15-man squad for the World Cup at home earlier this month, questions over non selection of an off-spinner were raised with some of the opposition side's top order having multiple left-handers.

After the squad announcement on Monday, captain Rohit

was asked why Ashwin was not part of the Asia Cup squad if he was in the scheme of things. The India skipper responded by saying that a proven performer like Ashwin can be straightaway drafted into the team if the need arises.

Ashwin, who was sidelined from the India ODI set up following the Champions 2017 Trophy, made a recall to the side in January last year for the ODI series in South Africa. He made his comeback after four and a half years only to be sidelined again.

Ashwin's T20 career has also had a similar trajectory with the 37-year-old being left out of the team following the World Cup in Australia last year.

Injury-prone Shreyas Iyer,

who could only play two games in the Asia Cup due to a back spasm, is also available for all three ODIs.

"He got through his batting programme fine and at the moment, he is fit. We hope that he gets through all these three games," said Agarkar.

The first ODI will be played in Mohali on September 22, second in Indore on September 24 and third in Rajkot on September 27.

Following that, India will their two World Cup warm-up games against England and Netherlands on September 30 and October 3 in Guwahati and Trivandrum before playing their tournament opener against Australia in Chennai on October 8.

Squad for the first two ODIs: KL Rahul (captain), Ravindra Jadeja (vice-captain), Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shubman Gill, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Shardul Thakur, Washington Sundar, R Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Shami, Mohd. Siraj, Prasidh Krishna.

Squad for third ODI: Rohit Sharma (captain), Hardik Pandya, (vice-captain), Shubman Gill, Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, Suryakumar Yadav, KL Rahul (wicketkeeper), Ishan Kishan (wicketkeeper), Ravindra Jadeja, Shardul Thakur, Axar Patel (subject to fitness), Washington Sundar, Kuldeep Yadav, R Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohd. Shami, Mohammed Siraj.

With Ashwin, lack of game time is not much of concern: Rohit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ravichandran Ashwin finds himself in contention for a World Cup spot despite lack of game time but it doesn't concern skipper Rohit Sharma one bit.

The 37-year-old Ashwin, who last played an ODI in January 2022, was picked for the upcoming three ODIs against Australia alongside Washington Sundar. Both the off-spinners will be fighting for that potential World Cup spot if Axar Patel doesn't get fit in time for the global event beginning October 5.

"With the kind of experience Ashwin has, close to 100 Tests (94), close to 150 ODIs (113) and yes it is all in the past but he has been consistently playing Test cricket and with guys like Ashwin having game time is not so much of a concern," said Rohit after the squad was announced for Australia series beginning September 22.

"...With guys like him, it's all in the head, more than body and the stuff. We made the decision speaking to him and understanding where he is at with regards to his body and stuff like that.

"It's not like he is not playing any cricket. Yes, he hasn't played the format but he has been playing Test cricket in West Indies, and if I am not wrong, played TNPL as well



and although no comparison there but there is still some cricket there, and it gives us chance to look at how he is bowling," he said.

The selectors have rested in-form Kuldeep Yadav for the first two ODIs.

Asked if that was done to keep an element of surprise in the World Cup, Rohit said, "Kuldeep is a wrist spinner and needs rhythm but we also deliberated that his bowling form is great and as Ajit (chief selector) said we needed to give some of the players chance as they played only one match in Asia Cup and are there in WC squad and we needed to check them as well.

"Kuldeep, we have seen for last 18 months and we didn't want to expose him. He will be playing in the last match and the best decision to see him is in 3rd match. We have two practice games and he will be back in bowling

rhythm," said the skipper.

Rest given to senior players in the first two ODIs will provide opportunity for fringe players like Tilak Varma and Ruturaj Gaikwad.

"Our endeavour is to give everyone a chance. If we only play 11 through the year, then you can't create bench strength. You can see that some other teams are facing injury problems because it also involves lot of travelling and we have to play 11 matches and criss-cross the country," Rohit said when asked about travelling involved over the course of the World Cup.

"So, we will have a lot of travelling and a lot of matches. We want to make sure that some of the guys sitting out have enough confidence by playing a few games and not like suddenly they are thrown in. Eventually players need to be ready and anyone can be called at any time.



Pujara suspended for one game after Sussex docked 12 pts

PTI ■ HOVE

India international Cheteshwar Pujara has been suspended from one county game after his team Sussex was docked 12 points in the County Championship due to a code of conduct breach during the match against Leicestershire.

Pujara received an automatic suspension after the club reached the threshold of four fixed penalties in the same season and won't be available for this week's game against Derbyshire, according to a report in ESPN Cricinfo.

Sussex have also made the decision to stand down three players - Jack Carson, Tom Haines and Ari Karvelas - for behaviour that in the words of head coach, Paul Farbrace, "tarnished" the dramatic 15-run win over Leicestershire last week, the website reported.

"We have made Jack and Tom unavailable for selection for this game at Derbyshire," Farbrace said. "Following the umpires and match referee's decision to charge both players with on-field level one and level two offences, we needed to take a stance, and show them we will not condone such

Rajinikanth to be 'distinguished guest' during WC: BCCI

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Superstar Rajinikanth will 'grace' next month's ICC World Cup as a "distinguished guest," the BCCI said on Tuesday, while extending him the Golden Ticket that allows unhindered access during the multi-country tournament.

BCCI Honorary Secretary Jay Shah presented the Golden Ticket to the top star, BCCI said on its X handle, sharing a photo of the two.

"The Phenomenon Beyond Cinema! The BCCI Honorary Secretary @JayShah presented the golden ticket to Shri @rajinikanth, the true embodiment of charisma and cinematic brilliance. The legendary actor has left an indelible mark on the hearts of millions, transcending language and culture," it said.

"We are thrilled to announce that Thalaiva will



grace the @ICC @cricket-worldcup 2023 as our distinguished guest and will light up the biggest cricketing spectacle with his presence. #GoldenTicket," BCCI added. The marquee tournament will kick off in Ahmedabad on October 5, with the 2019 edition

finalists-England and New Zealand-facing off in the inaugural tie.

The golden tickets are a promotional strategy used by the BCCI for the showpiece event it is hosting, with the recipients granted VIP treatment during World Cup matches.

Finland vs Canada in Davis Cup quarterfinals



AP ■ LONDON

Finland's reward for beating the United States of America and Croatia to reach the knockout stage of the Davis Cup is a quarterfinal match against defending champion Canada.

Finland has never reached this stage before in the top team event in men's tennis.

The draw for the Final 8 was made on Tuesday. Serbia will play Britain, the Czech Republic will meet Australia and Italy will take on the Netherlands in the other matches in the quarterfinals.



3PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Young star Lakshya Sen said India, the Thomas Cup champions, are favourites to win the Asian Games men's team gold in badminton, and he is also nourishing the dream of meeting compatriot and Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra during the quadrennial event.

Sen, a 2021 world championships bronze medalist, was one of the architects of India's epic Thomas Cup victory in May last year. He said India will be a top contender for the gold at Asian Games.

"Definitely, the team is looking really good. It is the same team that won the Thomas Cup, so we are going as world champions. I think the players who are

playing against us know that it is not easy (to defeat India), as we can beat any team in the world," Sen told PTI.

Sen underlined the need for a collective effort at the Asian Games.

"I don't think we lack confidence. We have this camaraderie, and we know how to go about it. All the teams are tough and we have to give our best.

"We will need a good, collective effort to do well there. The whole team is positive and we are hoping for a good result," Sen said.

The 22-year-old from Almora, who won a silver at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games and a gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, will be playing only the team championships at the 19th edition of the showpiece.

"It will be my first experience at the Asian Games. It is a similar kind of atmosphere, like the Commonwealth Games and Youth Olympics.

"So I am looking forward to the event and also I will be getting a chance to meet other Indian and foreign athletes, and learn about their sports and life," said Sen.

"In the Commonwealth Games last year, we were there with the TT contingent, as only we played from the first to last day of the tournament. Their matches were in next hall. So, I watched a lot of TT matches. I didn't have time to see other events," he said.

Sen, who is currently ranked world no. 11, missed the individual event at the Asian Games after he lost to Kidambi Srikanth in the selection trials in May this year.

Sen hoped that it will give him some to meet Chopra, who will be competing in the javelin throw, in person.

"I'm only playing team event. So, I look forward to meeting Neeraj Chopra. If I get some time, I would love to go and watch him perform and support him.

"I have spoken to him before but never met him in person. So, I am really looking forward to that," he said.

The Indian players, who didn't get time to have a long training session due to busy international schedule, are currently honing their skills in a week-long camp in Hyderabad.

"This time there were some big events like China super 1000 and World Championships, which were kind of unavoidable.

"But we have been competing very recently and it is the same for everyone. The match preparation is there and it is all about playing well on the day.

"It is like a big pressure tournament, a lot of people in India give importance to Asian Games. So, I am going (to the Asian Games) with my full intention and expecting good results," he said.

Badminton events will start with the team competition on September 28.