

Top brass of Dept of AH&VS in sleeping mode Para-Veterinary staff stage protest to wake them all

KARTIK

PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ The Para-Veterinary Staff of Directorate of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Science has observed a Black Band protest on 4th & 6th October 2022, in their respective working place from Diglipur to Campbell Bay. The A&N Para-Veterinary Sangh has observed the protest in support of their genuine demands. Notable demands include amendment and finalization of Recruitment Rule as instructed by the Ministry of Agriculture which is pending since 2019, implementation of Pay up-gradation of Para-Veterinary staff from 7th CPC, restructuring of promotional posts and risk allowance for the Para-Veterinary staff. The Sangh has so far submitted as many as 10 reminders

and meetings were carried out to resolve these issues but till date not a single issue has been resolved by the department despite assurance by



former Secretaries and Commissioners of the Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services

Department.

Meanwhile, agitated staff of the department blamed the senior officers of the department for delay in initiating the amendment process of RRs denying the existing Para-Veterinary staff the benefits of promotion. They argue that over 100 posts in different categories are lying vacant in the Department of Andaman Husbandry & Veterinary Services which have not been filled-up for the past four years. Besides, the department has not framed any transparent transfer policy and transfer and postings are done at the whim and fancies of these officers. Non-action on these issues is leading to growing resentment among the staff. As a result more and more staff are resorting to protests and dharnas to press their genuine demands.

MP chairs general body meeting of MWEU of government dockyard

PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ The General Body meeting of Marine Works Employees Union (MWEU) of Government Dockyard affiliated to Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) was held on Friday in the Labour Welfare Centre of Directorate of Shipping Services under the chairmanship of Member of Parliament, Mr Kuldeep Rai Sharma, President INTUC (A&N Islands) and MWEU.



Mr. Sharma while addressing the gathering expressed his gratitude to the employees of Dockyard, afloat and other operational staff of DSS for the service rendered by them in keeping the shipping services live during the lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic for transportation of essential commodities, ration items, medicines etc. to various distant inhabited Islands. He assured the dockyard's employees to get their grievances resolved in the most pragmatic manner and shall ever endeavour for the welfare of the employees. In the General Body meeting, the issue of

strengthening and modernization of workshops, timely conduct of trade test for filling up of various promotional posts, providing 1/30th of the pay at the minimum of relevant post plus Dearness Allowance to the contractual employees, timely grant of MACP etc. were discussed and deliberated.

The audit report of the MWEU for the period 14th Aug 2019 to 05th October 2022 was also presented before the General Body for concurrence. The new Committee of the MWEU was constituted unanimously by the General Body with Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma, MP as

President, Mr. MT Khalid, Mr. Venkat Rao, Mr. N Akbar Ali, Mr. K Ganeshan, Mr. Aboobacker, Mr. Shaddevan, Smt. Ratna Kannan, Smt. Zubaida Begum as Vice President. Mr. M Yousuf & Mr. Gyan Prakash Krishna as General Secretaries, Smt. Raswanti as Treasurer besides four Secretaries, four Organising Secretaries, four Joint Secretaries and 25 Executive Members.

The General Body meeting of the Marine Works Employees Union was also addressed by Mr. MT Khalid, Mr. M Yousuf, Mr. Shaddevan and Mr. Gyan Prakash Krishna who presented the activities of

the Union and highlighted various needs and aspirations of the workers of the Government Dockyard.

Police crackdown on bootleggers, drug peddlers

PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ In the fight against bootlegging, illicit liquor and drug abuse, the Andaman & Nicobar Police has adopted a multi-pronged strategy coupled with zero tolerance against this menace. On the supply front, Police are cracking the whip against bootleggers and drug peddlers. On demand side, mass public awareness campaign has been launched to spread awareness about ill-effects of alcohol/drug abuse.

Cracking down on bootlegging, as many as 118 cases under 32 Regulation III of 1876 were registered in the month of September 2022, as compared to 61 cases in July and 85 cases in August, 2022. 892 bottles of liquor, 327 kgs of Handia and 127.5 ltrs of illicit liquor were recovered from the possession of bootleggers. Apart from this, search and combing operations were carried out in the jungle in which as much as 5,570 ltrs of Lehan (fermented wash to prepare illicit liquor) was destroyed.

Similarly, in the fight against drug abuse, 13 cases under NDPS Act were registered in September, 2022, in which 16 accused were arrested. From their possession, 11.7 kgs of Ganja and 3.18 kg of Methamphetamine were recovered.

During August 2022, more than 50 awareness programmes on "Alcohol/

Drug Abuse" were conducted in Schools/ Colleges, with Community leaders, PRI members and other stakeholders. To reach out to the youth, A&N Police has joined hands with David Beckham, a rising athlete and international cyclist from Nicobar,

118 cases registered in September 2022, and 892 bottles of liquor, 327 kgs of Handia and 127.5 ltrs of illicit liquor were recovered from the possession of bootleggers

as role model to spread awareness against drug abuse and alcoholism.

The message of the hazardous impact of alcohol/drug abuse on physical, mental, social and financial health is disseminated in a simple and entertaining manner with the help of Skit/Nukkad Natak enacted by the Police Team. The A&N Police is committed to take stern action against bootleggers, illicit liquor, drug peddlers and other illegal activities.

The public is requested to share information pertaining to any crime or other illegal activities to Police at 100,112 & 03192-233077. The identity of the informant will be kept secret.

Vishal, CTET team meet CS

PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member, along with a delegation of qualified CTET candidates met the Chief Secretary on Friday and urged him to fill

up the vacancies of Teachers in the Education department. He also detailed the status of vacancies in the department. In response to this, the Chief Secretary informed that soon the

vacancies would be advertised as per the Recruitment Rule & the administration is making all necessary endeavors to do the same in a fair & proper manner.

New twist in alleged rape case

Ex-CS claims he was not present at Port Blair when offences attributed to him were allegedly committed

ROOPA LALL

PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ While the Andaman & Nicobar Police has been thoroughly investigating the alleged rape of a woman by former Chief Secretary, a new twist has surfaced with the ex-Chief Secretary writing a letter to the Andaman & Nicobar Police mentioning that on 14th April 2022, he was in New Delhi for a series of official meetings for which he left Port Blair on 11th April 2022 and returned only on 18th April 2022. These details are well known to the A&N Police which provides close security and protection to him in Port Blair, together with

PSOs using RT set to coordinate all movement with the police control room under Chief Secretary's call sign. Therefore, the question of him being physically present in Port Blair and committing offences in the manner described in the charges do not arise at all, the CS claimed in his letter.

It may be recalled that a woman has filed a complaint with the A&N Police alleging the ex-Chief Secretary and some others of raping her. After receiving the complaint, the Police started an investigation into the matter. However, finding that the Police, even after conducting the investigation, had not

registered an FIR on her complaint, the woman approached the Hon'ble Court and accordingly, the A&N Police had to register an FIR and start a detailed investigation on the case.

Meanwhile, in order to support his claims, the former CS has also submitted documents like flight tickets, accommodation & food bills from Andaman & Nicobar Bhawan, New Delhi and his tour details in New Delhi. The former Chief Secretary has mentioned that while conducting the investigation, the Police team should go through all his movement records, including his tour details, his tower

locations, CCTV footages, his movement details in Delhi, CCTV footage of Andaman House etc to ascertain his location on the dates on which rape was allegedly committed in Port Blair.

He has also requested the Police department, A&N Islands for detailed verification of information regarding allegations levelled against him in the form of government records and documents.

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Delhi HC seeks NIA's response to plea for FIR copy, grounds of arrest of PFI activists

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the NIA's response to a plea by an alleged PFI activist, arrested during a massive crackdown on the radical Islamist outfit before it was banned, seeking a copy of the FIR registered against the members of the organisation and the grounds for arrest of each of them.

Over 200 alleged PFI activists were detained or arrested in several states during the massive raids preceding the nation-wide ban imposed on September 28. Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta issued notice to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on a petition filed by Mohd Yusuf, who was arrested from his residence in Chennai on September 22 in the case lodged under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), the stringent anti-terror law. During the hearing, the counsel for the NIA submitted the Additional Solicitor General, who was to argue the case, was unwell, after which the court listed the matter for October 10. Petitioner Yusuf, who claims to be a practising advocate, sought a direction to the NIA to provide him a copy of the FIR lodged by the agency in Delhi on April 13 and also the documents listing the grounds of arrest of each accused person. He also sought a copy of the remand applications filed by the NIA

before a trial court.

The petitioner said he was arrested around 3 am on September 22 from his residence in Chennai by the NIA along with others, who all were picked up from different parts of the country and brought to the national capital by the agency in connection with the case lodged in Delhi. At the time of his arrest, the respondent (NIA) did not communicate to the petitioner any particulars of the offence for which he has been arrested or any grounds of such arrest in clear violation of the statutory mandate provided under Section 50 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) read with Article 22(1) of the Constitution, the plea submitted. It said when the accused were produced before a trial court there, their counsel sought a copy of the FIR lodged on September 22 as well as on September 26.

However, the additional sessions judge (ASJ) rejected the application filed by the petitioner on the ground that the matter is of a sensitive nature and that providing a copy of the FIR will hamper the investigation, the petitioner submitted. Till date the petitioner is unaware of the particulars of the offences or the allegations against him despite being in the custody of the respondent since September 22. "The ASJ failed to appreciate that

Section 50 CrPC clearly provides that every police officer arresting any person without warrant is required to communicate to such person the full particulars of the offence for which he is arrested or other grounds for such arrest. No such information has been given to the petitioner till date, the petition said. It added Article 22(1) of the Constitution prohibits the detention of a person arrested and in custody without being informed of the grounds of such arrest. The plea said denial of a copy of the FIR, circumscribing the allegations and particulars of the offences against the accused persons, is a clear violation of the principles of natural justice and the accused person's right to fair trial and investigation.

The plea claimed the trial court failed to appreciate that an accused is entitled to a copy of the first information report at an earlier stage. It contended the trial court also failed to consider that the Supreme Court has, in a previous matter, categorically held that even in cases where decisions have been taken not to give copies of the FIR due to the sensitive nature of the case, an accused is entitled to a copy of such FIR within three days of filing an application before the court concerned to which the FIR has been sent. The ASJ failed to appreciate that the

Supreme Court did not create any distinction between different FIRs involving sensitive offences, including offences relating to insurgency, terrorism, etc. and provided that in all such cases, without exception, the accused is entitled to receive a copy of the FIR from the concerned court, the plea said.

The Union government banned the PFI and several of its associate organisations on September 28 for five years under the stringent anti-terror law UAPA, accusing them of having "links" with global terror groups like the ISIS. In connection with the FIR registered in Delhi, the NIA arrested 19 cadres of the PFI from different parts of the country.

Out of these 19 people, 16 are in judicial custody and three in NIA custody till October 10. In near-simultaneous raids across the country as part of a multi-agency operation spearheaded by the NIA, over 200 PFI activists were detained or arrested in 11 states for allegedly supporting terror activities in the country. The arrests were made in states and union territories including Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Delhi and Rajasthan. (PTI)



Madhya Pradesh Assembly Speaker Girish Gautam while inviting President Draupadi Murmu to a program to be organised by the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly under the Amrit Mahotsav of Azadi, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Friday

Govt must fix accountability: Anand Sharma on 'cough syrups-linked' deaths in Gambia

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ Senior Congress leader Anand Sharma on Friday hit out at the Centre over the deaths of children in Gambia allegedly due to the consumption of cough syrups manufactured by an Indian firm, and asked the government to fix accountability.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday warned that four "contaminated" and "substandard" cough syrups allegedly produced by Maiden Pharmaceuticals Limited based in Haryana's Sonapat could be the reason for the deaths in the West African nation. India's drug regulator Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has already initiated a probe and sought further details from the WHO. In a statement on the issue, former commerce and industry minister Anand Sharma said the deaths of dozens of children in Gambia "due to consumption of Cough syrup made by an Indian company Maiden Pharmaceuticals has shocked the world".

"This is a monumental tragedy that raises serious concerns as conveyed by WHO and also questions which, must be answered. The bland statements from the Health ministry and Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) are devoid of sensitivity and empathy and do not register the seriousness of the issue and its adverse fallout," Sharma said. Noting that over the decades, the Indian pharmaceutical industry has assiduously built a reputation and global acceptability, Sharma said the arrival of Indian generics brought down the cost of life-saving medicines and made them available at affordable costs in Africa and developing countries across continents. That saved millions of lives and earned India recognition as "Pharmacy of the world", he said.

India has a firm legal framework and regulatory mechanisms on safety, quality and standard of manufacturing, he noted. No drug that fails the test of safety can be marketed let alone exported, Sharma added. According to the Congress leader, the "casual statements" of the government authorities and Drugs regulator that these syrups are not sold in India and exported only to Gambia are not reassuring that the gravity has registered. "This is unacceptable and need urgent course correction," he asserted.

"No drug can be exported without the Certificate of Pharma Products (COPP). How syrups adulterated with Diethylene glycol and Ethylene glycol were given export permits? This incident is a wake-up call. (PTI)

Karnataka to increase SC/ST quota through Constitutional amendment

BENGALURU, OCT 7 /--/ In a major decision ahead of the Assembly polls a few months away, the BJP government in Karnataka on Friday decided to increase the Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SC/STs) quota in the state, by seeking a Constitutional amendment.

The decision has been taken by the state government on the basis of the report of Justice H N Nagamohan Das Commission, which has recommended hiking the quota for SCs from 15 per cent to 17 per cent and for STs from three per cent to seven per cent. Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai made an announcement to this effect after chairing an all-party meeting that was attended by Congress and JD(S) leaders. Noting that it was a "long-standing and a just demand" from the communities that the reservation should be based on population, he said, "The Nagamohan Das Commission's recommendations were discussed at the all party meeting today and has been approved. Before that it was discussed within our party (BJP) where it was decided to keep up our commitment for the welfare of SC/STs."

The Cabinet meeting will be convened on Saturday itself, where a formal decision will be taken in this connection, he added. The

Bommai government was under tremendous pressure from SC/ST lawmakers to implement the commission's report. Also, the 'Valmiki Gurupetha' seer Prasannananda Swami has been on a hunger strike demanding the ST quota hike. The Opposition parties, especially the Congress had been attacking the government for the delay in implementation. The commission had given its recommendations to the government in July 2020. However, following a couple of judgements from the Supreme court regarding reservation, the government had constituted a committee under Justice Subhash B Adhikari on implementation of the recommendations as per law and Constitution, which too submitted its report subsequently. After studying both the reports, the state government wanted to take everyone into confidence before arriving at any decision on a matter relating to law and Constitution, hence the all party meeting was called today, the Chief Minister said.

At present, Karnataka provides 32 per cent reservation for OBCs, 15 per cent for SCs and 3 per cent for STs, totalling to 50 per cent, and the only way before Karnataka to hike the SC/ST quota is via the Schedule 9 route. Noting that if the

reservation exceeds 50 per cent, then courts will take exception, state Law Minister J C Madhuswamy said there is a SC decision saying reservation in the states should not exceed 50 per cent, but some states have exceeded the ceiling and there is a provision to do it under special circumstances. We will introduce it under Schedule 9, because it has judicial immunity. Tamil Nadu did it under Schedule 9 to increase reservation to 69 per cent. We will recommend to the Union government to amend the Constitution, Madhuswamy added.

Responding to a question, the Minister said hiking the SC/ST quota and exceeding 50 per cent would eat into the general category space to some extent". Reservation in Karnataka is already on the borderline and it will be difficult to rejig quotas within the 50 per cent, he said. "If we have to do it, we will have to reduce the OBC quota by six percentage points, which nobody will tolerate. So, to exceed 50 per cent, it must be done via Schedule 9." Leader of Opposition and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, also another former CM and JD-S leader H D Kumaraswamy attended the all party meet. The decision is also being seen by some with a political prism with Assembly elections due in about six months. (PTI)

Army veteran's wife gives books penned by her husband to PM

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ The wife of an Army veteran presented three books written by her late husband, including one on his experiences about the Partition, to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday.

Modi said he had a memorable interaction with Uma Suchdeva (90) and noted that her husband, Colonel HK Suchdeva (retd), was a widely respected veteran. She was accompanied by her nephew and former Army Chief General Ved Prakash Malik (retd).

She is blessed with great vigour and a spirit of optimism, the prime minister said. "Uma Ji gave me copies of 3 books penned by her late husband. Two of them are associated with the Gita and the third one titled 'Blood and Tears' is a moving account of Col (Retd) HK Suchdeva's experiences during the traumatic period of Partition and its impact on his life," the Prime Minister said in a tweet.

"We discussed India's decision to mark 14th August as Partition Horrors Remembrance Day as a tribute to those who suffered due to Partition, built their lives from scratch and contributed to national progress. (PTI)

Kharge rubbishes talk of him being 'Sonia's remote control', attacks BJP over its way of choosing party chiefs

AHMEDABAD, OCT 7 /--/ Senior Congress leader and candidate for the party's presidential polls Mallikarjun Kharge on Friday said there is no such thing as "remote control" in his party unlike the Bharatiya Janata Party, where every president is selected through a "consensus".

In the city to campaign for the election to the party's top post, Kharge asserted that if he becomes the head of the grand old party, the remote control would be with him.

The senior Congress leader was replying to a query about the BJP's claim that he would act as the "remote control" and "proxy" of Sonia Gandhi after being elected to the post.

"A lot of people say I am a remote control and work from behind. They say I will do what Sonia Gandhi will say. There is no such thing as remote control in Congress, people take decisions together. It is your thinking. A few people are creating this idea," Kharge said.

Attacking the BJP, he said: "How many times has the prime minister held

(party president's) election? All the presidents were selected through consensus, and you are teaching me? Where is the remote control in the BJP? When I become



Mallikarjun Kharge

president, the remote control will stay with me." Decisions would be taken by "our committee, elected members, working committee and parliamentary board", he said, adding that he would try his best to ensure 50 per cent of organisational posts are reserved for those below 50 years of age.

Hailing Gandhi, Kharge said she had made an renowned economist the country's Prime Minister (Manmohan

Singh) rather than taking up the post herself or considering her son for it. She hails from a family that has sacrificed its members for this nation and has even spoken of pardoning the killers of her husband, Kharge said.

The Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha said if he becomes the party president, he would try to give representation to women, youth, Dalits, backward classes at every level of the party, and also appeal to state units to fight polls unitedly. "I have jumped into the fray to save the ideology of my party, the ideology of Gandhi, Nehru and to strengthen the call for unity given by Sardar Patel," Kharge said. Asked about his competitor Shashi Tharoor, the veteran Karnataka leader said he was contesting the polls after colleagues and workers asked him to do so.

"When our workers, delegates and youth say you have to take leadership, then should I run away?" he asked. Kharge said the Congress faces many challenges, but has the capacity to face and overcome them bravely. (PTI)

National Herald case: ED quizzes Karnataka Cong president Shivakumar in Delhi

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday questioned Karnataka Congress president D K Shivakumar in the National Herald money laundering case, officials said.

Shivakumar, 60, told reporters here before stepping into the agency office at A P J Abdul Kalam Road that he was a "law-abiding citizen" and hence he was depositing before the agency despite not knowing why he was exactly called. "I am a law-abiding citizen...I have respect for the law...I had requested for a time (deferring October 7 summons) but they said no you have to come. I have come today...let me see, let me hear them, let me answer whatever I know..." he said. The senior Congress leader said he reached Delhi after leaving the Bharat Jodo Yatra traversing through Karnataka in the middle. Shivakumar had walked along with party leaders Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi on Thursday

during the yatra. Shivakumar had appeared before the ED last on September 19 in Delhi where he was questioned with regard to another money laundering case



DK Shivakumar

linked to alleged possession of disproportionate assets.

The latest round of questioning pertains to Shivakumar and his MP brother D K Suresh donating an unspecified amount of money in the past to Young Indian, the company that owns National Herald. The agency wants to know the details of these

transactions, sources said. Working President of Telangana Congress J Geeta Reddy and few other party leaders have also been questioned by the agency with regard to similar transactions made by them in the past. Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and other senior Congress leaders like Mallikarjun Kharge and Pawan Bansal have been questioned by the ED over the last few months in the National Herald money laundering case. Shivakumar first got into the ED crosshairs when he was arrested by the agency on September 3, 2019 following multiple rounds of questioning in a case that emerged from an Income tax department action against him. The Delhi High Court had also granted him bail in October that year.

In May this year, the agency filed a chargesheet against him and some others linked to him in this case. The case is registered after taking cognisance of a charge sheet (prosecution

complaint) filed by the Income Tax Department against them in 2018 before a special court in Bengaluru on charges of alleged tax evasion and hawala transactions worth crores. The I-T department has accused Shivakumar, the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee chief, and his alleged associates of transporting huge amounts of unaccounted cash on a regular basis through 'hawala' channels with the help of three other accused. The Kanakapura MLA played an instrumental role in ensuring the safe stay of Gujarat Congress MLAs in a Karnataka resort during the Rajya Sabha polls in 2017 amid allegations that the BJP was trying to poach them. Congress president Gandhi's political secretary, the late Ahmed Patel, had fought the Rajya Sabha election from Gujarat in 2017 and Shivakumar had hosted 44 Gujarat Congress MLAs at the resort to keep the flock together. (PTI)

MUMBAI, OCT 7 /--/ The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has seized 60 kg mephedrone drug worth more than Rs 120 crore from Mumbai and Gujarat, and arrested six members of an inter-state drug cartel, including a former Air India pilot, a senior official said here on Friday.

"On Thursday, the NCB team raided a godown located on S B Road in Fort area of south Mumbai, from where it seized 50 kg mephedrone and arrested two more accused, including the kingpin in the case," he said, adding that more people are likely to be held.

The accused former pilot had started his career as a lower-rank employee and later passed a pilot course exam, he said. Between 2016 and 2018, he had worked in the airline, Singh said, adding that he had completed his pilot training from San Antonio, Texas in the USA and Lithuania. "The pilot had left his job due to some medical reasons and since then he had been involved in the drug cartel," the NCB official said.

One of the accused held from Mumbai is a history-sheeter. He was arrested by the Directorate of Revenue intelligence (DRI) in 2001 in a 350 kg mandrax drug trafficking case and has been out on bail since 2008, the official added.

"During the probe, we found that all the members of the cartel are experienced in drug trafficking and they have so far distributed at least 225 kg mephedrone in various states," he said. The mephedrone seized in this operation was manufactured at a lab near Mumbai, which was already busted by the Mumbai police's Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC), the official said. "We have information about other similar networks and our probe is in progress," he said, adding that it also came to light that the accused arrested in the case had links in the recent seizure of mephedrone by the ANC. "It has come to light that the seized 60 kg MD is part of a consignment and has linkages with the seizure of the drug made recently by the Mumbai police," he said.

Mephedrone, also known as 'meow meow' or MD, is a synthetic stimulant and psychotropic substance banned under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. (PTI)

NCB seizes mephedrone worth more than Rs 120 cr from Mumbai, Gujarat; former Air India pilot among 6 held

Vishal raises isles' crucial issues with CS

PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ Mr. Vishal Jolly, BJP's National Executive Member met the Chief Secretary and highlighted various crucial issues. These are the sufferings of Islanders & the damages caused due to constant disruptive power supply, since months together. In response to this, the Chief Secretary informed about certain vital steps that are being undertaken by the A



& N Administration to ensure that the situation is improved considerably. Another issue is the pathetic condition of National Highway (NH-4) in the North & Middle Andaman region. The problems of the commuters were placed before the CS. In response to this issue, the Chief Secretary informed that this issue is under active consideration of the A & N Administration and necessary steps are being undertaken in this regard. He himself had ascertained the condition of NH 4 during his recent visit & said that the Managing Director of the NHIDCL would arrive soon in these Islands and all issues would be discussed & sorted out. He further assured that the Administration would ensure that the project is completed soon in the best way.

UP: CM Yogi directs officials to speed up relief work in rain-battered districts

LUCKNOW, OCT 7/--/ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has directed district magistrates of the regions affected by heavy rains to carry out relief work on priority. In waterlogged areas, Adityanath instructed them to make arrangements for drainage on priority, according to an official statement issued on Friday. He pressed for immediate relief to people affected by the rains and also directed the officials concerned to sanction ex-gratia to the kin of those who lost their lives, the statement said. Further, Adityanath directed the departments of revenue, panchayati raj, rural development, urban development, health, and animal husbandry among others to be actively involved in carrying out relief works, it said. The state has recorded excess rainfall in the last couple of days. (PTI)

Youth gets 15-year jail term for sexual assault

MANGALURU, OCT 7/--/ The additional district and sessions court (Fast track special court-II) here has sentenced a 26-year-old youth to undergo 15-year jail term for sexually assaulting a girl who is his relative. The person is also alleged to have video-graphed the act and threatened the girl that it will be uploaded on the social media. The convicted person, Seetharama (26), a resident of Todar, was arrested in 2019 by Bajpe police under Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, based on the complaint given by the victim. The girl, who is related to the accused was sexually assaulted at a deserted place. (PTI)

Basic Statistics handbook 2020-21 released



PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ Mr. Nikhil Kumar, Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Statistics) released the publication of 'Basic Statistics Handbook 2020-21' of Andaman & Nicobar Islands in his chamber yesterday in the presence of Shri Arjun Sharma, Secretary (Statistics) and Mr. D.S. Clement Stephen, Director (Economics & Statistics) I/c, alongwith the statistical team. The publication is very useful for Administrators, Planners, Stakeholders, Research Scholars, Policy Makers, Educationalists, Govt. Offices, other

Organizations and public in general. Basic Statistics handbook of A&N Islands contains all the relevant figures pertaining to different Section and Departments of A&N Islands. This handbook will aid in decision making and information collation in all Departments. Basic Statistics Handbook is a guide to access the development indicators of the UT and can help in overall planning of the Islands. The Basic Statistics can also be accessed in the official website of A & N Administration in URL <http://andssw1.and.nic.in/ecostat/index.php>.

Human rights of people of Xinjiang should be respected and guaranteed: India

NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/ India on Friday said rights of people in China's Xinjiang region should be "respected and guaranteed" but noted that its decision to abstain from a resolution on the concerns at the UN human rights commission was in line with the practice of not voting on country-specific resolutions. It is for the first time that India clearly called for respecting the human rights of the people of Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region. "The human rights of the people of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region should be respected and guaranteed. We hope that the relevant party will address the situation objectively and properly," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

His comments came at a media briefing when asked about India's abstention at the UN rights body on the resolution calling for a debate on the human rights situation in Xinjiang. "India remains committed to upholding all human rights. India's vote is in line with its long held position that country specific resolutions are never helpful. India favours a dialogue to deal with such issues," he said.

Bagchi said India has taken note of

assessment of human rights concerns in Xinjiang by the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR). "We have taken note of the OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China," he said.

The draft resolution was pushed by a group comprising Canada, Denmark, Finland, the UK, the US, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and was co-sponsored by some other countries. In its recent report, the OCHCR said serious human rights violations have been committed in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region (XUAR) in the context of the Chinese government's application of counter-terrorism and counter-extremism strategies. "The implementation of these strategies, and associated policies in XUAR has led to interlocking patterns of severe and undue restrictions on a wide range of human rights," it said.

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SC registrar appointed during ex-CJI's tenure repatriated to All India Radio



NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/ Supreme Court Registrar Prasanna Kumar Suryadevara, who was appointed in the rank of Additional Registrar during the tenure of former Chief Justice of India N V Ramana, has been repatriated to the All India Radio, sources said on Saturday.

Suryadevara, who was earlier a joint director at Prasara Bharati, was handling media related work in the CJ's office during Justice Ramana's tenure as the head of the judiciary. Sources in the apex court

said he was repatriated to his parent cadre on September 30.

During Ramana's tenure, Suryadevara was promoted to the rank of Registrar. The reason for revoking Ramana's decision and repatriating Suryadevara to Prasara Bharati was not immediately known. Justice Ramana became the 48th CJI on April 24 last year and retired on August 26 this year. He was succeeded by Justice Uday Umesh Lalit on August 27. The incumbent CJI is due to retire on November 8, 2022. (PTI)

Awareness prog on 'Ill Effects of Alcohol & Drug Abuse'



PORT BLAIR, OCT 7/--/ The Social Welfare department has initiated a campaign to create awareness on 'Ill Effects of Alcohol & Drug Abuse' involving A&N Police, Health and Education Department. Accordingly, a tentative calendar of activities for students of class IX to XII of different schools has been finalized.

The awareness campaign was initiated from Government Model Senior Secondary School, Port Blair on 5th October. More than 100 students,

including teachers and staff attended the programme. The resource persons viz. Mr. Thyagarajan and Mr. Yousuf from Health Deptt. Mr. Soman Kumar Halder, S.I. from Police Deptt., Mr. A.K.Biswas, Nodal Officer (Prohibition) from Social Welfare Deptt highlighted the issues and problems of drugs among the youth and apprised the students and teachers to join the campaign, towards making Andaman & Nicobar Islands 'Drug Free' and also stated that the issue of alcohol & drug

abuse is becoming a major health hazard and social evil in Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

To overcome this issue, it is required to create awareness and educate students about the ill effects of alcohol & drug abuse on an individual, family, workplace and society at large. Earlier, Smt.(Dr.) Pushpavallil from Govt. Model Senior Secondary School, in her welcome address, expressed her happiness for organizing such an awareness programme.

EC asks Thackeray to respond to Shinde faction's claim on Shiv Sena poll symbol

NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/ The Election Commission has asked the Uddhav Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena to respond by Saturday on rival Eknath Shinde group's claim on the party's 'bow and arrow' election symbol in view of the upcoming assembly bypoll in the state. The Commission's directive came on Friday after the Shinde faction submitted a memorandum seeking it be allocated the symbol as the Andheri East assembly bypoll is approaching. In a letter to Thackeray, the Commission directed it to furnish comments along with requisite documents latest by 2 pm on October 8. "In case no reply is received, the Commission will take appropriate action in the matter accordingly," the Commission said.

The Commission told Thackeray the Shinde faction had staked claim to the bow and arrow' on October 4. The Andheri East bypoll was notified on Friday. Shiv Sena leader Anil Desai, who belongs to the Thackeray faction, said the party would respond to the Commission within the stipulated time. Desai met Commission officials earlier on Friday to submit documents in connection with a separate matter where the Shinde faction had claimed to be the "real Shiv Sena", citing support of majority members of the Lok Sabha and the state assembly. The fresh claim to the 'bow and arrow' election symbol by the Shinde faction is seen as an attempt to deny its use by the Thackeray group which has decided to field Rutuja Latke, the widow of MLA Ramesh Latke, for the November 3 bypoll. The BJP, an ally of the Shinde faction, has decided to field Murji Patel, a corporator in the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, for the bypoll necessitated due to the death of Ramesh Latke. (PTI)

Son arrested for killing father in property dispute in Gurugram

GURUGRAM, OCT 7/--/ A 26-year-old man was arrested almost a month after he allegedly killed his father in a fight over property, police here said on Friday. The accused, Anuj, had killed his father on September 17 and dumped his body near the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) Expressway in IMT, Manesar, said police. He had been absconding since. Police recovered the body of Rakesh, 52, on September 18 but when no one came to identify it in 72 hours, handed over the body to civic authority for cremation. After the cremation, an FIR of murder was registered at IMT, Manesar police station and a hunt was launched for the accused, police said.

Anuj was arrested Thursday night from Nawad village in Manesar, they said.

According to police, Anuj's grandfather had given a portion of his land to his father and aunt. He took exception to the decision and developed serious ill-will towards his father and aunt.

Due to this, on the intervening night of September 17 and 18 he killed his father with his car tool, crushed his face, and fled in his car. We are questioning the accused, Preet Pal Singh Sangwan, ACP, Crime, said. (PTI)

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I'm not judging people, I'm judging their actions. It's the same type of distinction that I try to apply to myself, to judge, but not be judgmental
Jeff Melvoin

WTO cuts global trade forecast, bad news for India

Global uncertainties have cast dark shadow over growth in world trade, prompting the World Trade Organisation to forecast a one per cent slow down in 2023. World trade is expected to lose momentum in the second half of 2022 and remain subdued in 2023, as multiple shocks weigh on the global economy, the multi-lateral body has said. The forecast does not augur well for India. WTO economists also predict global merchandise trade volumes will grow by 3.5 per cent in 2022 -- slightly better than the 3 per cent forecast in April. For 2023, however, they foresee a 1 per cent increase -- down sharply from the previous estimate of 3.4 per cent. The forecast does not augur well for India as it is looking to increase its exports. A decline in exports in sectors such as engineering, ready-made garments of all textiles and rice led to a contraction in the country's overall outbound shipments by 3.52 per cent to USD 32.62 billion in September, while the trade deficit widened to USD 26.72 billion, according to the preliminary data released by the commerce ministry.

According to WTO, import demand is expected to soften as growth slows in major economies for different reasons. In Europe, high energy prices stemming from the Russia-Ukraine war will squeeze household spending and raise manufacturing costs. In the United States, monetary policy tightening will hit interest-sensitive spending in areas such as housing, motor vehicles and fixed investment. China continues to grapple with COVID-19 outbreaks and production disruptions paired with weak external demand. Finally, growing import bills for fuels, food and fertilisers could lead to food insecurity and debt distress in developing countries. If the current forecast is realised, trade growth will slow sharply but remain positive in 2023. There is a high degree of uncertainty associated with the forecast due to shifting monetary policy in advanced economies and the unpredictable nature of the Russia-Ukraine war, the WTO said.

The Geneva-based trade body has said if the war in Ukraine worsens, it will have a huge impact. Weather events hitting food-producing regions or damaging energy export infrastructure could further hit trade growth, along with weakness in China, where COVID-19 outbreaks have disrupted production. While global trade has rebounded from a deep slump in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, US Federal Reserve and other central bank moves to choke off inflation through higher interest rates are likely to have knock-on effects for crucial spending in areas like housing, motor vehicle sales and bond prices. The trade body said, however, that new information from purchasing managers, on final goods prices, and an index of input prices suggested that inflationary pressures "may have peaked" - a factor that could influence decision-making from central bankers in the months ahead.

MP BJP unit making massive preparations for Assembly Polls

REFLEX ACTION

L S Herdenia

GopalBhargava and Vijay Shah were left out of the meeting. Sources said that the party has constituted a 'political affairs subcommittee' and only ministers who are part of this group were called to the meeting. Among them were Inder Singh Parmar and even Mohan Yadav and VishwasSarang, who are junior to Bhargava. Later in the evening VD Sharma said "Whether 2023 or 2024, BJP takes every election seriously. We review our work and hold meetings routinely. We are observing a SevaPakhwada (service week) to celebrate the birthday of Prime Minister NarendraModi. That was reviewed. Future political functions were also on the agenda. Our party organisation general secretary BL Santosh gave his guidelines, From Shiv Prakash to Ajay Jamwal, all main party workers reviewed their work at the meeting. Organisational work and its expansion, we kept working on that too."

Asked about the inclusion of select ministers in the meeting, Sharma said, "Everyone is given some work or the other and that is why they were also part of the expansion. Also strengthening of booths".

State BJP spokesman DurgeshKeswani told reporters, IN BJP we have our ways of sitting together and holding discussions. We have just won the polls in 46 civic bodies. Discussions are held on how to work for the people of the state and the country". Asked why only selected leaders were called for the meeting and everyone else kept 8 kms away, Keswani said "The criteria of such meetings are fixed by the central leadership. We, at the state unit, cannot intervene in the arrangements."

As for Congress, it has launched its massive Choupal programme on Gandhi Jayanti day. The

programme will conclude on January 30, the day of Gandhiji's martyrdom. A year before the assembly elections, state Congress launched this campaign to reach out to the 23,000 village panchayats with Gnadhianbhajans and the mantra of Gram Swaraj. Through this campaign Congress targets to add two lakh new members to the party. Party MLAs and office bearers will launch the Choupals after paying floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and former Prime Minister LalBahadurShastri.

"From October 2, the state Congress campaign cell will launch hosting the Gandhi Choupal in 23,000 panchayats" said state PCC media cell vice-president Bhupendra Gupta. "In the Gandhi Choupals, bhajans and songs of unity will be sung like 'RaghupatiRaghav Raja Ram' and 'Ishwar Allah TeroNamm'. Mahatma Gandhi's principles will be discussed" he explained. Senior and elderly members of the villages will be felicitated. "The party will reach out to all 23,000 panchayats in the next four months, campaign will conclude on January 30 - the 75th death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. It is also our pledge to have two lakh members join the Congress party during the campaign. And these workers will get the opportunity to join the Bharat JodoYatra" Bhupendra Gupta said. State Congress leaders claimed that financial disparities are increasing in the country with one or two persons becoming the richest in the world while the rest of the population becoming poorer every day. "To bridge the gap, it is required to promote Gram Swaraj and the Mahatma's model of self-reliance" Bhupendra Gupta said.

"Through this Choupal Congress will talk to the people in the villages about how the rich-poor disparity and hatred between communities is increasing. Rural India is being exploited while Inflation is spiralling and the youths face increasing unemployment. The Congress will work through this campaign to bring people of all communities together" he said. (IPA)



Members of Sovabazar Rajbari ferry the idol of Goddess Durga on a boat for immersion --Arijit Ganguly

Ukraine war behind present distress in Germany

FOCUS

Victor Grossman

As for the Greens, once viewed as leftist radicals, they have long led the chase against the Russian devils. Loudest among the exorcists is AnnalenaBaerbock, Green party co-chair and Minister of Foreign Affairs, whose life mission, long seen as wrecking Russia, is now best accomplished by backing Zelensky with all it takes. As she stated: "I will put Ukraine first no matter what my German voters think!" This did not go down well with some of her German voters, but friendly media quickly (if falsely) blamed the Russians for misquoting the video and are keeping her popularity undamaged. Yes, the Greens form the vanguard in backing "rules-based order" with Zelensky and NATO.

The Social Democrats of Chancellor Scholz are more complicated. A few SPD leaders can still hear and maybe heed the demands of labor union constituents, whose votes they urgently hope to win back. The hardships caused by the boycott of Russian oil imports - and by profiteers - with the soaring prices on nearly everything, threaten to motivate growing protests, one already very visibly with several thousand protesters in Leipzig on September 5th, yesterday in Chemnitz (called Karl

Marx Stadt in GDR days.) Not all too far away, in Prague, an angry crowd reached five, maybe even six-digit size. This makes even stolid Chancellor Olaf Scholz, a Social Democrat, a bit shaky. Despite his coalition partners he has been accused of dragging his feet at meeting every new Zelensky demand for big tanks and more and heavier weaponry and for saying "We mustn't move even faster than the USA and other NATO countries."

On September 14 Scholz had an unusual 90-minute telephone exchange with Putin, in which he "urged a diplomatic resolution of the Russian war in Ukraine as soon as possible, based on a cease fire, a full withdrawal of Russian troops and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine." We had "very different views," he said, but there was "definite movement" and "always a friendly tone." Even the word "diplomatic" was almost unique - instead of "victory."

But his partners are actively reining in any undesirable deviation from the correct political line. Many are

now scrambling to pass relief measures (but constrained by the Free-Democrat-yellow Finance Minister) to demonstrate their concern for citizens in Germany hit hard by sanctions against Russia - and thus discourage protests and demonstrations for peace.

As for the two "Christian" sister parties, officially in opposition, they too bark loudly for more weapons for Kiev and a more martial war spirit and attack their unsteady rivals for doing a bit too much for families with children, the jobless and underpaid while they wait eagerly for the Traffic Light to fizzle out so they can resume rule of the highway.

The Alternative for Germany (AfD), furthest right in the Bundestag, takes the perhaps odd position of supporting Putin, embarrassingly for some on the left. The AfD always supports anything against the European Union, also a key Putin target because of its sanctions policy. But it wants to build up the German army with a big increase in armaments, re-introduce the draft and start up a compulsory year of semi-

military service for young people, male and female, while opposing "alternative family lifestyles" and abortion. Its main line is to hate Muslims, hate all immigrants, and - more discreetly - hate Jews as well. Its pace-setters are busy planning "Day X," a German equivalent of Jan. 6 in Washington. Their growth, generally stalled at 10-14%, is still strong in the eastern states of Thuringia and Saxony, where it leads with 26%.

For me, other voices are at least as alarming. While fully supporting NATO in Ukraine and aiming at its main goal, weakening Russia and ideally replaying the 2014 victory in Kiev's Maidan Square in Moscow's Red Square, they are hinting at a break with any further subservience to U.S. power.

"OK, keep on building up the military force of NATO, led by the Pentagon. But also, independently, strengthen European military power led by Germany. The •100 billion [about \$98 billion] armament program advanced by Olaf Schulz - who wasn't a bit hesitant in this matter - must be further increased; there is already a stress on aggressive weapons for attacking, for landing, for seizing and holding areas in Eastern Europe, in Africa, the Near East and now, with its navy manoeuvres, in the "Indo-Pacific" region near China. (IPA/Concluded)

Conventional Crossword									
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ACROSS					DOWN				
1	Showily splendid	2	Auguries		1	Auguries			
4	Male swan		2	Stir violently	3	Female sheep			
7	Plaintive cry		3	Quote	4	Burden			
8	Whole		4	Seek charity	5	Mesher fabric			
11	Pull forcibly		5	Dark-coloured viscid	6	Military attire			
12	Tidy		6	Forefront (Arch)	7	Anger			
13	Prosecutes		7	Office furniture	8	Conceal			
15	Wander off		8	Send out	9	Facts given			
16	Very bright		9	Equipment	10				
20	Pay attention								
23	Get along								
24	Edge								
25	Makes up for								
26	Foolish person								
27	Obtain								
28	Lets in								

SUDOKU : 3659									
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Yesterday's Solution 3658									
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3	8	5	2	1	7	9	6	4	
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1667									
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DISCLAIMER

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Human rights of people of Xinjiang should be respected and guaranteed: India

NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/ India on Friday said rights of people in China's Xinjiang region should be "respected and guaranteed" but noted that its decision to abstain from a resolution on the concerns at the UN human rights commission was in line with the practice of not voting on c o u n t r y - s p e c i f i c resolutions. It is for the first time that India clearly called for respecting the human rights of the people of Xinjiang Uyghur autonomous region. "The human rights of the people of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region should be respected and guaranteed. We hope that

the relevant party will address the situation objectively and properly," External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. His comments came at a media briefing when asked about India's abstention at the UN rights body on the resolution calling for a debate on the human rights situation in Xinjiang. "India remains committed to upholding all human rights. India's vote is in line with its long held position that country specific resolutions are never helpful. India favours a dialogue to deal with such issues," he said. Bagchi said India has

taken note of assessment of human rights concerns in Xinjiang by the UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR). "We have taken note of the OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China," he said. The draft resolution was pushed by a group comprising Canada, Denmark, Finland, the UK, the US, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, and was co-sponsored by some other countries. In its recent report, the OCHCR said serious human rights violations have been committed in Xinjiang

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EC asks Thackeray to respond to Shinde faction's claim on Shiv Sena poll symbol

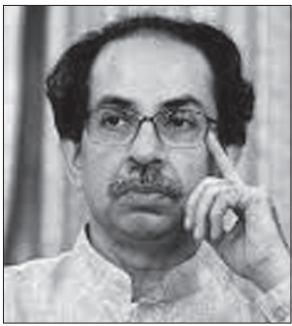
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Latke. The Congress and the NCP have decided to support the candidate of the Thackeray faction of the Shiv Sena, their coalition partner in the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA). Shinde had raised a banner of revolt against Thackeray for entering into an "unnatural alliance" with the Congress and NCP. Over 40 of the Shiv Sena's 55 MLAs had supported Shinde, forcing the resignation of Thackeray from the post of Maharashtra Chief Minister. Twelve of the 18 Lok Sabha members of the Shiv Sena also came out in support of Shinde, who later claimed to be the leader of the original Shiv Sena. The Andheri East bypoll is the first after Shinde and the BJP unseated the MVA government in June, and is considered by political analysts as a precursor to settling of claims by Shinde and Thackeray to be the "real Shiv Sena". (PTI)

To say Chola emperor Raja Raja was Shaivite not Hindu is like saying someone is Catholic but not Christian: Cong leader

NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/ Veteran Congress leader Karan Singh waded into the row over Chola emperor Raja Raja's religious identity on Friday, asserting that to say the king was a Shaivite and not a Hindu is like saying someone is a Catholic but not a Christian. More than his monumental achievements and the Brihadishwara temple that he constructed in Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur, which still draws lakhs of devotees annually, the mighty Chola emperor's religious identity has suddenly come into focus. Tamil filmmaker Vetrimaaran has stoked a controversy, apparently targeting the right-wing forces. He has alleged that Raja Raja Cholan was depicted as a Hindu king and attempts were made to take away Tamil saint-poet Thiruvalluvar's identity as well. Vetrimaaran has found support from actor and Makkal Needhi Maiam founder Kamal Haasan and Congress parliamentarian S Jothimani. Several pro-Tamil activists have



claimed on social media that the Chola kings were Shaivites by faith and this identity of the Tamil kings was "hijacked". The remarks came days after the release of Mani Ratnam's multi-starrer film "Ponniyin Selvan", based on author Kalki Krishnamurthy's historical fiction depicting the story of Arulmozhivarman, who came to be known as Raja Raja Cholan later. Reacting to the controversy, Singh said he has been astounded to read statements that the great emperor was not a Hindu king. "This is absolutely ridiculous. Shiva is the primordial Hindu deity, focus of intense devotion

for millions over the millennia from Srinagar down to Rameshwaram. The emperor built one of the greatest Shiva temples which are marvels of architecture, specially the great Brihadishwara Temple in Thanjavur, where I have worshipped many times," he said in a statement. "To say that he was a Shaivite not a Hindu is like saying someone is a Catholic but not a Christian. These semantic gymnastics in a way denigrate and confuse our great religion, and are not acceptable," Singh said. The word Hindu may have gained traction later, but Shiva and Vishnu, Hanuman and Ganesha, Mahalakshmi and Mahakali have all been part of what we call Sanatan Dharma for millennia, the former Union minister said. "Let us not again try and create a division between Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism, the three main streams of the great Hindu religion which has a billion followers around the world," he added. (PTI)

Son arrested for killing father in property dispute in Gurugram

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Youth gets 15-year jail term for sexual assault

MANGALURU, OCT 7/--/The additional district and sessions court (Fast track special court-II) here has sentenced a 26-year-old youth to undergo 15-year jail term for sexually assaulting a girl who is his relative. The person is also alleged to have video-graphed the act and threatened the girl that it will be uploaded on the social media. The convicted person, Seetharama (26), a resident of Todar, was arrested in 2019 by Bajpe police under Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, based on the complaint given

by the victim. The girl, who is related to the accused was sexually assaulted at a deserted place. Seetharama was the first accused in the case, while Narayana, who intervened in the issue saying that he will get the girl married to Seetharama was the second accused. K R Nayak, inspector of Bajpe police station had investigated the case and submitted charge sheet to the court. Justice Radhakrishna of FTSC-II court awarded 15-year imprisonment to Seetharama and fine of Rs 50,000. The second accused Narayana was acquitted. (PTI)

Vehicle registrations: Govt proposes tweaks in BH series rules

NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/ The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has proposed to allow conversion of regular vehicle registrations into Bharat Series (BH) numbers as part of measures to widen the scope of the BH series ecosystem. At present, only new vehicles can opt for BH series mark. In a draft notification, the MoRTH informed about the proposed amendments in the rules governing Bharat (BH) series registration mark which was launched for people who are in transferable jobs. Among other changes, the transfer of vehicles with BH series registration mark to other persons, who are eligible or ineligible for BH series, has been facilitated, according to the notification.

"Vehicles currently having regular registration mark can also be converted to BH series registration mark subject to payment of requisite tax, to facilitate persons who subsequently become eligible for BH series registration mark," it said. The ministry has also proposed the amendment in rule 48 to provide flexibility to submit application for BH series either at the place of residence or place of work with a view to providing further ease of life to citizen. It also said that the Working Certificate to be submitted by private sector employees has been further strengthened to prevent misuse. To ensure seamless transfer of personal vehicles across states, last year in September, the road

transport ministry had come up with a new registration mark for new vehicles - Bharat Series (BH series). In this regard, the government had notified a new vehicle registration regime that will free vehicle owners from re-registration process when they shift from one state/union territory to another. "This vehicle registration facility under 'Bharat series (BH series)' will be available on voluntary basis to defense personnel, employees of central government/ state government/ central/ state public sector undertakings and private sector companies/organisations, which have their offices in four or more states/union territories," MoRTH had said in a statement.(PTI)

No hostile' or internal agency' involved in audio leaks, says Pak minister Sanaullah

ISLAMABAD, OCT 7/--/ Pakistan's Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah on Friday categorically denied the involvement of any "hostile" or "internal agency" in the embarrassing audio leaks from the Prime Minister's House, asserting that the panel constituted to probe the leaks will submit a detailed report soon.



internal agency is involved in this. Nowadays, technology has advanced so much that hacking a telephone call is not a herculean task anymore, the minister said at a press conference on Friday. Sanaullah said the investigation into the security breach had concluded and the decision to make it public would be taken soon by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

A comprehensive report is being presented to the prime minister and the recommendations in the report will be implemented as soon as the Prime Minister issues directives, he said. The minister elaborated that the federal government would purchase the necessary equipment to avoid the repeat of such incidents in the future. On September 30, a high-level panel constituted by the National Security Committee completed combing the Prime Minister's House. Last week, the Pakistan government said it was taking necessary measures, including changing some standard operating procedures (SOPs) to secure the Prime Minister's House, under which no staff and officers were allowed to take their mobile phone inside the premises. A cyber security

department is being formed at the PM House to be headed by a director general. Waiters and low-ranked staff were under strict watch and their access to Sharif has been restricted. Meanwhile, Sanaullah reiterated that the federal government is fully prepared to deal with upcoming proposed rally by Khan and his party workers, saying the Army would be summoned to tackle them. The minister said that while they would be allowed to hold protests at designated spots here in the federal capital, the government would not allow them to enter the high security Red Zone. Khan on Monday asked his party workers to prepare for a mega protest later this week to press for the dissolution of the National Assembly and announce fresh elections in the country. (PTI)

Real-time data of courses, college preferences now available on DU website

NEW DELHI, OCT 7/--/The Delhi University has added a new tab on its admission website to provide real-time instantaneous data and information of the programmes and college preferences that the candidates are opting for. The new tab College-program wise preference count' will help candidates see how many aspirants have opted for a particular programme in a college. The tab also displays that the data is updated every two hours. The university in a statement said the new feature is available on the dashboard of the candidates as well as on the admission website and it will help the candidates seeking admission to the varsity. The varsity officials have also raised concerns over candidates not adequately optimising the provisions of available preferences offered to them by the university. "While providing their preferences, the candidates are opting for

far less number of choices despite being eligible for many such choices. For example, if a candidate has been provided with 1469 programme plus college preferences by the university, he/she must select all the combinations to benefit maximally from the allocation rounds," the statement said. On September 26, the university commenced the second phase of the admission process for undergraduate programmes to allow candidates to choose their programme and college combination preferences. Phase I, which started on September 12, and Phase II will remain open till October 10. The Common University Entrance Test (CUET) scores will also be required in both phases. "It must be noted that the Phase I and Phase II of Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS) will auto-lock the preferences saved by the candidate on October 10, 2022 at 04:59 p.m," the university mentioned. (PTI)

6 Indian prisoners died in Pak in last 9 months: India calls it 'alarming'

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ Six Indian prisoners, who completed their jail terms, died in Pakistan in the last nine months and India has raised the "alarming" issue with Islamabad, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Friday.

MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said five of the six Indians were fishermen and asserted that Pakistan is "duty-bound" to ensure safety and security of all Indian prisoners. "Six Indians, five of them fishermen, died in Pakistani custody in the last nine months or so," he said. "All the six, interestingly, had completed their sentences, but what we would say, were illegally detained by Pakistan despite completing their sentences and in spite of multiple demands by the Indian side for their release and repatriation," Bagchi added.

The spokesperson said there has been an increasing number of deaths of Indian fishermen in Pakistan in recent times. "The increasing incidents of deaths of Indian fishermen is alarming and raises the question of their safety and security in Pakistani jails. The matter has been raised by our high commission in Islamabad as well as with the Pakistani high commission here," he said. "Were request the Pakistan government once again to release and repatriate all Indian prisoners immediately," he said. (PTI)

Nobel Peace Prize goes to activists from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine

KYIV, OCT 7 /--/ Human rights activists from Ukraine, Belarus and Russia won the Nobel Peace Prize on Friday, a strong rebuke to Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose invasion of Ukraine has outraged the international community, and to the Belarusian president, his authoritarian ally.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded the 2022 prize to imprisoned Belarus activist Ales Bialiatski, the Russian group Memorial and the Ukrainian organisation Center for Civil Liberties. Berit Reiss-Andersen, chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, said the panel wanted to honour "three outstanding champions of human rights, democracy and peaceful coexistence. Through their consistent efforts in favour of human values and anti-militarism and principles of law, this year's laureates have revitalised and honoured Alfred Nobel's vision of peace and fraternity between nations, a vision most needed in the world today, she told reporters in Oslo.

Belarus' foreign ministry denounced the Nobel Committee for honouring Bialiatski, with the spokesman calling its choices in recent years so politicised that Alfred Nobel got tired of turning in his grave. (AP)



A girl dressed as Bharat Mata walks with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during Bharat Jodo Yatra in Karnataka's Mandya, on Friday

US reduces India Travel Advisory Level to 2, asks advises citizens not to travel to J&K due to 'crime and terrorism'

WASHINGTON, OCT 7 /--/ The US on Friday asked its citizens to exercise "increased caution" while travelling to India due to "crime and terrorism" and advised them to not to travel to the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a new travel advisory issued on Friday, the US state department reduced the India Travel Advisory Level to 2 on a scale of 1 to 4 with the latter being the highest. The state department in a separate advisory, a day earlier, had put Pakistan on Level 3 and asked its citizens to reconsider their travel especially its restive provinces due to terrorism and sectarian violence. Exercise increased caution in India due to crime and terrorism, said the state department. Do not travel to: The union territory of Jammu and Kashmir (except the eastern Ladakh region and its capital,

Leh) due to terrorism and civil unrest. Within 10 km of the India-Pakistan border due to the potential for armed conflict, it said. According to the travel advisory, "Indian authorities report rape is one of the fastest growing crimes in India. Violent crime, such as sexual assault, has occurred at tourist sites and in other locations." The advisory said that "terrorists may attack with little or no warning, targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs, markets/shopping malls, and government facilities.

The US government has limited ability to provide emergency services to US citizens in rural areas from eastern Maharashtra and northern Telangana through western West Bengal as US government employees must obtain special authorisation to travel to these areas, said the travel advisory. (PTI)

Cong attacks Govt over WB report downgrading India's growth forecast

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ The Congress on Friday attacked the Union government over a World Bank report that flagged worsening of poverty numbers in India during the Covid pandemic and downgraded its economic growth forecast, alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is hardly worried and is still indulging in empty slogans.

The World Bank on Thursday projected a growth rate of 6.5 per cent for the Indian economy for the fiscal year 2022-23, a drop of one per cent from its previous June 2022 projections, citing deteriorating international environment. Addressing a press conference at the

AICC headquarters here, Congress spokesperson Supriya Shrinete alleged that during the Covid pandemic, the Modi government's failures increased poverty. Poverty has worsened in India, a report by the World Bank last evening has red flagged the fact that nearly 5.6 crore Indians have been pushed into extreme poverty during the Covid pandemic, Shrinete said.

"According to experts, the World Bank's estimates of poverty in India are actually lesser than the situation on the ground. Some economists believe that nearly 27 to 30 crore Indians were pushed into abject poverty during the Covid pandemic," she said.

The Congress leader said it was precisely due to the apprehension of rising poverty that Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and party leader Rahul Gandhi had both suggested to PM Modi and his government that money should be given directly to the poor so that they can continue to consume.

"If only they had paid heed to the suggestions made by the Congress party, the economic situation wouldn't have been so bad, millions of daily wage labourers wouldn't have had to walk home, lakhs of MSMEs wouldn't have had to close down and almost six crore people would not have been pushed into abject poverty," she said. The

Situation has not returned to normal: MEA on eastern Ladakh border row

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ India on Friday said the situation in eastern Ladakh has not returned to the stage of full normalcy as some steps are yet to be taken for it.

The comments of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi came days after Chinese envoy Sun Weidong claimed that the situation in eastern Ladakh is "overall stable" as the two sides have moved from the "emergency response" that followed the Galwan valley clashes in June 2020 to "normalised" management. "Some steps are required for full normalcy, we have not reached there," Bagchi said when asked about the Chinese ambassador's remarks. The MEA spokesperson said India has been maintaining that it expects disengagement followed by de-escalation for the return of normalcy on the border, which could pave the way for normal ties between the two neighbouring countries.

"We have not reached there.... I would not like to say that the situation is normal. There have been some positive steps, but some steps are yet to be taken," Bagchi stated. He also



External Affairs (MEA) Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi

referred to external affairs minister S Jaishankar's remarks last month that the disengagement at Patrolling Point 15 in eastern Ladakh was "one problem less" on the border.

Indian Air Force (IAF) chief Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhary on Tuesday said the benchmark for the situation to become normal in eastern Ladakh would be to return to status quo ante prior to the standoff and a complete withdrawal of troops from all friction points. Though the two sides

have disengaged from Patrolling Point 15 (PP-15), there has been no progress yet on resolving the standoff in the Demchok and Depsang regions. Following the eastern Ladakh standoff, India has been consistently maintaining that peace along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) is key for the overall development of its ties with China and the state of the border will determine the state of the bilateral relationship.

The eastern Ladakh border standoff erupted on May 5, 2020, following a violent clash in the Pangong lake areas. Both sides gradually enhanced their deployment by rushing in tens of thousands of soldiers and heavy weaponry. As a result of a series of military and diplomatic talks, the two sides completed the disengagement process last year on the north and south banks of the Pangong lake and in the Gogra area. The disengagement in the Pangong lake area took place in February last year, while the withdrawal of troops and equipment from Patrolling Point 17(A) in Gogra took place in August last year. (PTI)

Centre forms panel to examine matter of giving SC status to religious converts, who were 'historically' SCs

NEW DELHI, OCT 7 /--/ The Centre has appointed a commission headed by former CJI K G Balakrishnan to examine the matter of giving Scheduled Caste status to new people who claim to historically have belonged to the SCs, but have converted to a religion other than those mentioned in the Presidential orders.

The Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 (amended from time to time) says that no person professing a religion other than Hinduism or Sikhism, or Buddhism can be deemed to be a member of a Scheduled Caste. However, Muslim, and Christian groups have often demanded similar status for Dalits who have converted to their religions. The BJP has been opposed to their demand. The three-member team also includes retired IAS officer Dr Ravinder Kumar Jain and member UGC Professor Sushma Yadav, according to a gazette notification issued by the Social Justice and Empowerment ministry on Thursday. The panel will examine the matter of



giving Scheduled Caste status to new persons, who claim to historically have belonged to the Scheduled Castes, but have converted to religion other than those mentioned in the Presidential Orders issued from time to time under article 341 of the Constitution.

The panel will also examine the implications of the decision if it comes to be on the existing Scheduled Castes, besides taking into account the changes in customs, traditions, and their status of social discrimination and deprivation, after these people converted to other religions. The commission will also examine any other

related questions that the Commission deems appropriate in consultation with the Centre and with its consent. K G Balakrishnan is the Supreme Court's first Dalit Chief Justice. He was also the chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission of India. In the notification, the ministry said the issue is a "seminal and historically complex sociological and constitutional question", and a definite matter of public importance.

"And whereas, given its importance, sensitivity and potential impact, any change in definition in this regard should be on the basis of a detailed and definitive study and extensive consultation with all stakeholders and no Commission under the Commissions of Inquiry Act, 1952 (60 of 1952) has so far inquired into the matter," the notification said. The headquarters of the commission will be in New Delhi and it will submit its report within two years from the date of taking over of the charge by the Chairperson, the notification said. (PTI)

Mulayam still in ICU; condition critical, says Gurugram hospital

L U C K N O W / GURUGRAM, OCT 7 /--/ Samajwadi Party founder Mulayam Singh Yadav continues to be in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of Medanta hospital in Gurugram and his condition remains critical, the hospital said on Friday.

He is being administered life-saving drugs, it said in a health bulletin. "Mulayam Singh ji is still critical and on life-saving drugs. He is being treated in the ICU (of) Medanta hospital, Gurugram, by a comprehensive team of specialists," the hospital said. The bulletin was also shared by the Samajwadi Party's official handle on Twitter. Yadav, 82, was admitted to the hospital on Sunday. Defence minister Rajnath Singh visited the hospital on Friday to enquire about the health condition of the former UP chief minister. "Visited Gurugram-based Medanta Hospital and enquired about former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav's health and well-being. I pray to God he gets well soon," Singh said in a tweet in Hindi. (PTI)

India, US announce launch of new energy storage task force to support clean energy transition

WASHINGTON, OCT 7 /--/ India and the United States on Friday announced the launch of a new energy task force to support large-scale integration of renewable energy needed to support the clean energy transition.

The announcement of the initiative, which will further strengthen the India-US partnership in the critical energy sector to an altogether new level, came following a bilateral meeting between Union minister of petroleum and natural gas Hardeep Singh Puri and US Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm here. During the meeting the two leaders underscored the critical importance of bilateral clean energy engagement to

strengthen energy security and to accelerate clean, secure, and just energy transition. Meeting amidst volatility in global energy markets, continuing recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and increasingly frequent climate-related challenges, the two leaders underscored the importance of ensuring reliable energy supplies to ensure balanced energy markets, including India's support for the US initiative to release crude oil from the strategic petroleum reserves, and the importance of diversifying to clean energy sources. Puri and Granholm reiterated the importance of private sector engagement to facilitate investment, inform policy, and accelerate

technology deployment. To that end, the United States and India continue to convene public-private task forces on hydrogen and biofuels, and announced the launch of a new Energy Storage Task Force to support large-scale integration of renewable energy needed to support the clean energy transition, said a joint statement issued after the meeting.

Puri and Granholm welcomed collaboration between Indian and US companies through a Memorandum of Understanding to deploy methane abatement technologies in India's city gas distribution sector under the Low Emissions Gas Task Force to help reduce emissions in the

oil and gas sector. As climate and clean energy leaders, the United States and India share a common vision to deploy clean energy at scale during this critical decade to reduce emissions and achieve climate change mitigation goals, taking into account different national circumstances, it said.

Through regular consultations on global energy markets, efforts to strengthen collective energy security, and deepening technical engagement to support economy-wide decarbonisation, the two countries are proactively addressing the multiple crises that the world faces through the US-India Strategic Clean Energy Partnership, said the joint

statement. Welcoming the increased clean energy collaboration between stakeholders of both countries which is facilitating expanded clean energy investment, including in emerging technologies, the two leaders recognised that ambitious national climate and clean energy goals require concerted action and implementation at all levels of government to ensure their viability and sustainability. Discussing the progress on continued efforts to advance emerging fuels and technologies and electrification and decarbonisation of end use sectors, they also talked about hard-to-abate sectors. The Ministers were informed about various initiatives, including

joint research and development on smart grids and energy storage and new collaboration on carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS) technologies, and the potential to explore collaboration on other novel technologies under the US-India Partnership to Advance Clean Energy-Research (PACE-R).

Among the enhanced bilateral efforts include strengthening the power grid to ensure reliable, affordable, and resilient clean energy supply including through smart grids and energy storage; assessing grid-integrated buildings, electric vehicles, and other distributed energy resources to support load management. This includes advancing renewable

energy development and deployment, including to support India's goal of achieving approximately 50 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources by 2030.

India and the US are also working on advancing energy efficiency and conservation in appliances, buildings and the industrial sector; electrifying and decarbonising the transportation sector, including creating an enabling ecosystem through setting up an Electric Vehicle (EV) financing services facility in India; and reducing emissions across the oil and gas value chain including efforts at deploying methane detection and abatement technologies. (PTI)

US sanctions Asian firms over North Korean fuel shipments

WASHINGTON, OCT 7/--/In the midst of increasingly aggressive North Korean missile launches this week, the US on Friday imposed sanctions on people and firms in Asia accused of helping North Korea procure fuel in violation of UN sanctions. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control targeted two people and three firms from Singapore, Taiwan and the Marshall Islands.

The US accused them of moving fuel through an "illicit ship-to-ship transfer" that circumvents United Nations sanctions restricting the import of petroleum products and supports the development of North Korea's weapons programmes and military.

The sanctions are the first directed toward the isolated Asian country since the start of its most recent round of missile launches six rounds of tests in less than two weeks.

North Korea also flew 12 warplanes near its border with South Korea on Thursday, prompting the South to scramble 30 military aircraft in response, Seoul officials said.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said North Korea continues its unprecedented pace, scale, and scope of ballistic missile launches this year," adding that it has launched 41 ballistic missiles this year alone.

Tensions have risen quickly on the Korean Peninsula as North Korea's recent missile tests prompted South Korea, the US and Japan to conduct joint drills in response.

The sanctioned companies are the Marshall Islands-based New Eastern Shipping Co. Ltd., and Singapore-registered Anfasar Trading (S) Pte. Ltd. and Swaneas Port Services Pte. Ltd. The US also targeted Singapore-based Kwek Kee Seng and Taiwan-based Chen Shih Huan for coordinating the deliveries.

Among other things, the sanctions deny them access to any property or financial assets held in the US and prevent US companies and people from doing business with them.

Brian Nelson, Treasury's under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, said North Korea's ballistic missile launches demonstrate a continued disregard for United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The United States will continue to enforce multilateral sanctions and pursue the DPRK's sanctions evasion efforts worldwide, including by designating those who support these activities. (AP)

Thais mourn dozens, mainly kids, killed in day care attack

UTHAI SAWAN, OCT 7/--/Relatives wailed and some collapsed as they grieved Friday over the small coffins carrying children slain by a fired police officer who stormed a day care centre in rural Thailand during naptime. Thailand's deadliest mass killing left virtually no one untouched in the small community nestled among rice paddies in one of the nation's poorest regions. Grief also gripped the rest of the country, where flags were lowered to half-staff and schoolchildren said prayers to honour the dead. At least 24 of the 36 people killed in Thursday's grisly gun and knife attack were children, mostly preschoolers. I cried until I had no more tears coming out of my eyes. They are running through my heart," said Seksan Sriraj, 28, whose pregnant wife was due to give birth this month and who worked at the Young Children's Development Center in Uthai Sawan. My wife and my child have gone to a peaceful place. I am alive and will have to live. If I can't go on, my wife and my child will be worried about me, and they won't be reborn in the next life," he said.

A stream of people, including Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, other government representatives and relatives themselves, have left flowers at the day care center. By afternoon, bouquets of white roses and carnations lined the wall outside, along with five tiny juice boxes, bags of corn chips and a stuffed animal. Later, relatives received the bodies at the local Buddhist temple. As the small, white coffins were opened, some screamed, while others fainted. Paramedics

revived them with smelling salts. For a time, the grounds outside the temple were crowded with people overcome by grief. It was just too much. I can't accept this, said Oy Yodkhao, 51, sitting on a bamboo mat in the oppressive heat as relatives gave her water and gently mopped her brow.

Her 4-year-old grandson Tawatchai Sripthu was killed, and she said she worried for the child's siblings. The family of rice farmers is close, with three generations living under one roof. Som-Mai Pitfai collapsed when she saw the body of her 3-year-old niece. When I looked, I saw she had been slashed in the face with a knife," the 58-year-old said, holding back tears.

King Maha Vajiralongkorn and Queen Suthida were expected later in the day to go to hospitals, where seven of the 10 people wounded remain. A vigil was planned in a central park in Bangkok, the nation's capital.

Police identified the attacker as Panya Kamrap, 34, a former police sergeant fired earlier this year because of a drug charge involving methamphetamine. He had been due to appear in court Friday. An employee told a Thai TV station that Panya's son

had attended the day care but hadn't been there for about a month.

Witnesses said the attacker shot a man and child in front of the center before walking toward it. Teachers

center, said staff locked the door to the building after seeing the assailant shoot a child and his father out front. But the attacker broke the glass and went on to attack the children and workers with his knife and firearm.

Satita said she and three other teachers climbed the center's fence to escape and call police and seek help. By the time she returned, the children were dead. She said one child who was covered by a blanket survived the attack, apparently because the assailant assumed he was dead.

She said the center usually has around 70 to 80 children, but there were fewer at the time of the attack because the semester had ended for older children and rain prevented a school bus from operating. They wouldn't have survived, she said.

Satita added that the attacker's son hadn't been to the day care center recently because he was sick. One of the youngest survivors is a 3-year-old boy who was riding a tricycle close to his mother and grandmother when the assailant began slashing them with the knife. The mother died from her wounds, and the boy and grandmother were being treated at hospitals,

according to local media.

Mass shootings are rare but not unheard of in Thailand, which has one of the highest civilian gun ownership rates in Asia, with 15.1 weapons per 100 people compared to only 0.3 in Singapore and 0.25 in Japan. That's still far lower than the U.S. rate of 120.5 per 100 people, according to a 2017 survey by Australia's GunPolicy.org nonprofit organization.

Support and condolences poured in from around the world. "All Australians send their love and condolences," Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese tweeted. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken called the violence senseless and heartbreaking.

Pope Francis offered prayers for all those affected by such unspeakable violence. I'm profoundly saddened by the heinous shooting at a childcare centre in Thailand, UN Secretary-General Antnio Guterres tweeted.

Thailand's previous worst mass killing involved a disgruntled soldier who opened fire in and around a mall in the northeastern city of Nakhon Ratchasima in 2020, killing 29 people and holding off security forces for some 16 hours before eventually being killed by them. Nearly 60 others were wounded in that attack. Its death toll surpassed that of the previously worst attack on civilians, a 2015 bombing at a shrine in Bangkok that killed 20 people. It was allegedly carried out by human traffickers in retaliation for a crackdown on their network.

Last month, a clerk shot co-workers at Thailand's Army War College in Bangkok, killing two and wounding another before he was arrested. (AP)



A police officer stands guard at the childcare center where a shooting took place in Nong Bua Lamphu province, Thailand

Teen's mother disputes Iran, says she died of blows to head

DUBAI, OCT 7/--/The mother of a 16-year-old Iranian girl has disputed official claims that her daughter fell to her death from a high building, saying the teen was killed by blows to the head as part of the crackdown on anti-hijab protests roiling the country. Nasreen Shakarami also said authorities kept her daughter Nika's death a secret for nine days and then snatched the body from a morgue to bury her in a remote area, against the family's wishes. The bereaved mother spoke in a video message on Thursday to Radio Farda, the Persian-language arm of the US-funded station Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. Nika Shakarami has become the latest icon of the protests, seen as the gravest threat to Iran's ruling elites in years. Attempts by authorities in recent days to portray the teen's death as an accident could signal concern that the incident could further fuel anger against the government.

The protests, which enter their fourth week on Saturday, were sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in the custody of the morality police. They had detained Amini for alleged violations of the country's strict Islamic dress code. Young women have often been leading the protests, tearing off and defiantly waving their headscarves as they call for toppling the government.

The protests quickly spread to communities across Iran and have been met by a harsh government crackdown, including beatings, arrests and killings of demonstrators, as well as internet disruptions. Human rights groups estimate that dozens of protesters have been killed over the past three weeks. On Thursday, the London-based group Amnesty International published its findings about what appears to be the

single deadliest incident so far in the city of Zahedan on September 30. The report said Iranian security forces killed at least 66 people, including children, and wounded hundreds, after firing live rounds at protesters, bystanders and worshippers in a violent crackdown that day. Iranian authorities claimed the Zahedan violence involved unnamed separatists. More than a dozen people have been killed since then in the area, the report said.

Meanwhile, Nika Shakarami's mother pushed back against attempts by officials to frame her daughter's death as an accident. In her video message, she said that the forensics report showed that Nika had died from repeated blows to the head. Nika's body was intact, but some of her teeth, bones in her face and part of the back of her skull were broken, she said.

The damage was to her head, she said. Her body was intact, arms and legs. Earlier this week, Iran's police chief, Gen. Hossein Ashtari, claimed that the teen had gone to a building and fell from the upper floor at a time of gatherings. He said that the fall from that height led to her death. Nasreen Shakarami said her daughter left her home in Tehran in the afternoon of September 19 to join anti-hijab protests. She said she was in touch by phone with Nika several times in the next few hours, pleading with her to come home. They last spoke before midnight. Then Nika's mobile was off, after she and her friends were shouting names of forces while they were fleeing, she said.

The following morning, the family searched for Nika at police stations and prisons, but had no word of her whereabouts for nine days.

Authorities finally handed over the body on the 10th day and the

family headed to the city of Khoramabad for burial, she said. Authorities repeatedly demanded to take possession of the body, which was in the meantime stored in the Khoramabad morgue. On the day of the planned funeral the family learned that the body had been snatched from the morgue and was taken to a remote village for burial, under heavy security, Nasreen Shakarami said.

Since the confirmation of her death, Nika has emerged as another icon of the protests, alongside Amini. A photo of Nika, wearing a black T-shirt and sporting a stylish two-tone bob haircut and eyeliner, has been widely circulated on social media.

Authorities arrested Nasreen Shakarami's brother and sister. The sister, Atash, later said on Iranian TV that her niece fell from a high building. Nika's mother said she believes her siblings had been pressured to echo the official version.

Iran has a long history of broadcasting forced confessions. Also on Friday, the official IRNA news agency quoted the coroner's office saying examinations found that Mahsa Amini died of cerebral hypoxia in which oxygen supply to the brain decreases. It said she suffered multiple organ failure but her death was not led by blunt force trauma to the head, organs and vital parts of the body. It said Amini suffered heart arrhythmia, hypotension and loss of consciousness before being taken to a hospital.

Amini's family has previously disputed official accounts of their daughter's death and its cause while in police custody. The family has said Mahsa Amini's corpse showed clear signs of being bruised and beaten. (AP)

Peacetalks in Ethiopian conflict are delayed, diplomats say

NAIROBI, OCT 7/--/African Union-sponsored peace talks to resolve Ethiopia's two year-long Tigray conflict will not take place as planned this weekend, diplomatic sources told The Associated Press on Friday.

Ethiopia's federal government on Wednesday said it had accepted an invitation from the chair of the African Union Commission to attend the peace talks in South Africa.

The Tigray authorities said they were ready to send negotiators but sought clarity on the structure of the talks, having previously insisted on the participation of international officials as observers. The Tigray authorities also sought security assurances for their travel.

The diplomatic sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorised to discuss the matter publicly, said logistical issues were partly to blame for the delay.

They said the format of the talks had not been agreed upon. No new date has been set.

The AU has said the talks are due to be led by AU special envoy Olusegun Obasanjo, supported by former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta and Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, a former deputy president of South Africa.

The conflict between the Tigray forces and Ethiopia's federal government renewed in late August, ending a lull in fighting in place since March that had allowed thousands of truckloads of aid to enter the Tigray region, where more than five million people need humanitarian assistance. Now aid deliveries have stopped.

Forces from neighbouring Eritrea are again deeply involved in the fighting on the side of Ethiopian forces, according to witnesses and recent satellite imagery.

Millions of people in northern Ethiopia, including the neighbouring regions of Amhara and Afar, have been uprooted from their homes and tens of thousands of people are believed to have been killed since the conflict broke out in November 2020.

Babies in Tigray are dying in their first month of life at four times the rate before the war cut off access to most medical care for over five million people, the AP reported this week, citing a yet-unpublished study shared by its authors.

Women are dying during pregnancy or within 42 days of giving birth at five times the rate before the war. (AP)

UN rights body agrees to appoint expert to scrutinize Russia

GENEVA, OCT 7/--/The UN's top human rights body voted on Friday to appoint an independent expert to step up scrutiny of Russia's rights record at home as arbitrary arrests, a crackdown on dissenting voices and limits on free speech worsen during the war in Ukraine. The 47-member Human Rights Council passed the proposal, presented last week by all European Union member countries except Hungary, on a 17-6 vote, with 24 abstentions.

Shortly before the vote in Geneva, Russian human rights group Memorial was named a co-winner of the 2022 Nobel Peace Prize. The original proposal expressed concerns about mass forced shutdowns" of independent media, non-governmental organisations and opposition groups in Russia.

The Human Rights Council majority agreed to name a special rapporteur to keep tabs on rights violations in Russia, in part by relying on help from Russian groups and activists who are both still in the country and abroad. The council previously appointed a Commission of Inquiry the UN-backed body's highest form of scrutiny that is looking into rights abuses related to Russia's war in Ukraine.

The Russian government has taken a number of steps to limit domestic dissent over the war, including passing a law that criminalises spreading fake news about Russia's military. Russia was a member of the Human Rights Council until earlier this year, when it suspended its participation as the UN General Assembly was set to strip the country of its membership due to the invasion of Ukraine.

Friday was the last day of the council's fall session. A day earlier, member countries rejected a proposal, first floated by the United States and several other Western countries, to hold a debate over alleged human rights abuses in China's Western Xinjiang region. (AP)

Reactions to Nobel Peace Prize for rights defenders

BERLIN, OCT 7/--/Officials in Europe praised the awarding of this year's Nobel Peace Prize to activists standing up for human rights and democracy in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year has pushed Moscow's relationship with its western neighbours to a new low.

Even before that, ties had been fraught over Russian President Vladimir Putin's backing for pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and Syrian leader Bashar Assad, and his repression of political opponents such as Alexei Navalny at home.

I hope the Russian authorities read the justification for the peace prize and take it to heart, Norwegian Prime Minister Jonas Gahr St re said after the Nobel Committee awarded the 2022 prize to imprisoned Belarus rights activist Ales Bialiatski, the Russian Group Memorial and the Ukrainian organization Center for Civil Liberties.

It sends a signal that keeping civil society down is protecting one's own power. It is seen from the outside and it is criticized."

French President Emmanuel Macron was among world leaders who quickly hailed the laureates, tweeting that their prize pays homage to unwavering defenders of human rights in Europe.

Artisans of peace, they know they can count on France's support, the French leader said.

In Paris, exiled Belarus opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya told The Associated Press that the award was recognition of all the people who are sacrificing their freedom and lives for the sake of (Belarus)."

"Physically, you know, this prize will not influence their situation but I am sure it (will) influence the moods and intentions of other countries to help those people who are behind the bars, she said.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg congratulated the winners, tweeting that the right to speak truth to power is fundamental to free and open societies. (AP)

Developing economies will need USD 1 trillion in renewable energy sector to achieve net-zero target: IMF

WASHINGTON, OCT 7/--/The IMF on Friday said that developing economies needed an investment of USD 1 trillion a year by 2030 solely in the renewable energy sector to stay on track to achieve the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050.

Observing that emerging markets and developing economies account for two-thirds of global greenhouse gas emissions and many are highly vulnerable to climate hazards, the International Monetary Fund said these developing economies would need significant climate financing in the coming years to reduce their emissions and to adapt to the physical effects of climate change.

The investment needs of these economies solely in renewable energy could reach USD 1 trillion a year by 2030 if they are to stay on track to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, it said, adding that developing

economies alone will require up to USD 300 billion a year by 2030 to adapt agriculture, infrastructure, water supply, and other parts of their economies to counterbalance the physical effects of climate change. If efforts to reduce emissions fall short of global temperature objectives set by the Paris Agreement, the need for adaptation financing will rise sharply for emerging markets and developing economies. Estimates range from USD 520 billion to USD 1.75 trillion annually after 2050 depending on the emission pathway, it said.

Emerging markets and developing economies will need significant climate financing in coming years to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation finance) and adapt to the current and predicted physical effects of climate change (adaptation finance), the IMF said in a report released on Friday ahead of the

annual meeting of the IMF and the World Bank here. In a simultaneous blog post, three senior IMF officials Torsten Ehlers, Charlotte Gardes-Landolfini, Fabio Natalucci, and Ananthakrishnan Prasad said private climate financing must play a pivotal role as emerging markets and developing economies seek to curb greenhouse gas emissions and contain climate change while coping with its effects.

Estimates vary, but these economies must collectively invest at least USD 1 trillion in energy infrastructure by 2030 and USD 3 trillion to USD 6 trillion across all sectors per year by 2050 to mitigate climate change by substantially reducing greenhouse gas emissions, they wrote.

While private sustainable finance in emerging markets and developing economies rose to a record USD 250 billion last year, the blog post said that private finance

must at least double by 2030, at a time when investable low-carbon infrastructure projects are often in short supply and funding of the fossil fuel industry has soared since the Paris Agreement.

The IMF in its report said that scaling up private climate finance in emerging markets and developing economies calls for a multi-pronged approach with improvements across various dimensions, including support from multilateral development banks (MDBs), the IMF, and the public sector. This reflects both the scale of financing needs and the variety of investments needed to achieve material climate change mitigation and adaptation. Innovative financing instruments can help overcome some of the challenges faced by the private sector in emerging markets and developing economies, such as credit and political risks and lack of scale, it said. (PTI)

We are aiming for quarter-finals berth: India U-17 women’s head coach Dennerby

BHUBANESWAR, OCT 7 /--/ Head coach Thomas Dennerby has full faith that Indian team, will give stronger nations like Brazil and USA, a run for their money with an aim to qualify for the quarter-finals in the upcoming FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, starting Tuesday. India will begin their campaign against the mighty USA on October 11, followed by Morocco and Brazil on October 14 and October 17 respectively at the Kalinga Stadium here.

"Of course, we're up against absolute top teams, but if we have a really good day and the teams have a little bit weaker outing, there's always a chance for the team coming out like underdogs to win that game," the 63-year-old told reporters in a virtual interaction ahead of the big meet.

"If we can score an early goal against one of these teams, they

may get a little bit nervous, get stressed and so on. There's always a chance and if we get a chance we'll take it." The top two teams from each group will make the cut for the quarters and if their respective senior FIFA rankings are of any indication, then USA are the world no 1. Brazil are in top-10, while Morocco (76) are the only nation below the 58-ranked India in the senior women's rankings.

"Of course, we want to be in the quarters, no doubt about that, and we are going to play with all our hearts. The way to do it is only by focusing on our performances."

"For me, it's not so much about results. We have to stick to our plan, stay calm to whatever the results (are). We are going to fight to take points from each and every opponent."

"But first of all, we are focusing on our performances



and hopefully good performances will also lead to points," said the Swede, who took charge of the Blue Tigress in November 2019 with the focus on the U-17 WWC. Counting high on the home support at the Kalinga Stadium here, he said: "We will have the supporters on our side. Hopefully a good number of spectators in the stands will help the team to really fight and fill that gap."

"But in total, I am going to look at performances that we can perform at the top level. If our top level is enough to beat the USA or Brazil, it's too early to say."

"Most importantly, it's about showing everyone who are

looking at us with high expectations that we also have a really good team with a lot of young players who can perform at the highest level in the age group." On his assessment of the side, Dennerby said the team has a solid organisational display with a strong defensive unit in Astam Oraon, Kajal, Naketa, Purnima Kumari, Varshika and Shilky Devi Hemam. In Nitu Linda, they have a deceptive mid-fielder who has a knack of finding good spaces and Dennerby said it's a team with a strong defence with quick attacks.

"I hope that you will see India with a really strong defence and well-organised team that it's hard to score on."

"Our style will have a little bit of quick attacks and counter attacks. We have a lot of speed up front and on the wings, so we have to utilise our best

strengths." On Nitu, he said: "She has super quality in deception and is always very active, fighting for her team, ready to move."

"She also has a quality to find good spaces to receive balls to play crucial final passes. She's really doing well." They are fresh from their Spain trip where they suffered a 1-3 defeat against Sweden in the first match of the exposure tour and returned with a 17-1 win over WSS Barcelona Club.

"We're ready and excited. We performed very well against Sweden, it was a very equal game. We have two shots on the bar and made small mistakes against a quality side like Sweden."

"The last game against the Academy team from Barcelona was not up to the mark as with their fitness level they couldn't handle the tempo of the game," he signed off. (PTI)

Fell short just by two strokes, says Sanju Samson

LUCKNOW, OCT 7 /--/ India fell short by just two big hits in the first ODI against South Africa, said wicket-keeper batter Sanju Samson who made an unbeaten 86 in a losing cause here. Chasing a stiff 250-run target in 40 overs in a rain-truncated game, the hosts lost by nine runs. Besides Samson, Shreyas Iyer (50) and Shardul Thakur (33) also played good hands but couldn't take India over the finishing line.

"I love spending time at the wicket, especially in India colours. We play to win the match. I fell short by just two shots -- one four and a six. I will try to make up for that in the next match but I am happy with my contribution," Samson said in the post-match press conference. Needing 30 runs off the last over, Samson hit Tabraiz Shamsi for one and three boundaries to garner 20 runs but it was not enough. He did not play a single ball in the 19th over, potentially proving to be the difference in the game.

"South Africa bowlers were bowling really well but Shamsi was going a little expensive so we thought we can target him. I knew he had one over left so if we needed 24 runs, I was confident that I could hit four sixes. So I was taking it deep. That was our plan," Samson said. With the city witnessing persistent rains for the last three days, the pitch was damp initially and offered movement for the bowlers.

"If you have noticed South Africa innings, you could see it was difficult to make runs with the new ball. After 15 overs (David) Miller and (Heinrich) Klaasen batted really well, it became easy."

"The ball wasn't moving. Batting became easy after 15-20 overs," Samson said. After the initial struggle, Miller (75 not out off 63 balls) and Klaasen (74 not out off 65 balls) shared 139 runs for the unbroken fifth wicket to take the visitors close to the 250-run mark. The Indian



bowlers struggled in the death overs, conceding 54 runs in the last five overs.

"I made 80 odd runs but I also made mistakes. It was a learning lesson for us and we would look to make up for that in the next match."

"We have some space to improve but we also need to look at the batsman we are bowling at. Someone like David Miller is the best finisher in the world at the moment and bowling against him in this ground was very challenging," Samson said.

"We responded decently I think. No-a-days 50 runs in 5 overs has become easy but definitely we can improve. They are a very experienced team so we will have a very challenging series ahead." (PTI)

Pakistan shock India for first T20 win over arch-rivals since 2016

SYLHET, OCT 7 /--/ Indian batters bungled badly in a straightforward chase as Pakistan recorded their first win over the arch-rivals in six years with a 13-run victory in the Women's Asia Cup, here on Friday.

India, the most formidable team in Asia by some distance, batted poorly to be all out for 124 in 19.4 overs after Pakistan posted a modest 137 for six. Pakistan scripted a remarkable turnaround less than 24 hours after their shock loss over Thailand. At 65 for five, India were in all sorts of trouble with majority of the batters including star player Smriti Mandhana (17 off 19) throwing their wickets away. Prior this game, India enjoyed a 10-2 record over Pakistan whose previous win over the arch-rivals came way back in the 2016 T20 World Cup in New Delhi. Pooja Vastrakar got herself run out after attempting a run off a misfield while Dayalan Hemalatha (20 off 22) let her team down after not capitalising on a start. Questions were raised over Harmanpreet Kaur's fitness as she came into bat at number seven before



Pakistan celebrate after beating India in the Asia Cup match

perishing cheaply.

"I think in the middle we were trying to give other batters a chance. That cost us today. It was a chaseable target. In the middle overs, we were not able to rotate the strike," a dejected Harmanpreet said after the match. With India needing 61 off the last six overs, Pakistan were the favourites

to pull off an unexpected win. Richa Ghosh (26 off 13), who had been taken off the field in Pakistan's innings after suffering a heat stroke, brought India back into the game with three sixes against the spinners before getting caught in the deep in the 19th over. Her dismissal effectively ended all of India's hopes. Earlier,

Pakistan, who were shocked by Thailand on Thursday, put an improved batting performance against the Indians but it still seemed below par. Nida Dar (56 not out off 37 balls) and skipper Bismah Maroof (32 off 35) shared a crucial 76 run stand off 58 balls to give the innings a much needed move on. Dar was the pick

of Pakistan batters as she used her feet well, especially against the spinners, to get the big hits. Off spinner Deepti Sharma (3/27) stood out among India's bowlers with best figures. She was not afraid to give some loop to the ball, helping her deceive Pakistan opener Muneeba Ali (17) that resulted in getting stumps. Omaina Sohail fell two balls later as she was found trapped in front of the stumps while attempting a sweep. Bismah got lucky on 8 with the umpire turning down Rajeshwari Gayakwad's appeal for what it appeared a clear lbw dismissal. Pakistan reached 61 for three in 10 overs. Dar then gave the innings some momentum as she stepped out to smashed Hemalatha for a four and straight six in a 15-run over.

Indian fielding was found wanting on more than one occasion with substitute Shafali Verma missing an easy stumping chance. (PTI)

Brief Score: Pakistan 137/6 in 20 overs (Nidar Dar 56 not out, Bismah Maroof 32; Deepti Sharma 3/27). India in 20 overs (Richa Ghosh 26; Nida 2/32).

Lionel Messi says World Cup in Qatar will be his last



BUENOS AIRES, OCT 7 /--/ Lionel Messi has confirmed that the World Cup in Qatar next month will be the last of his career.

The 35-year-old Argentina star will play in his fifth World Cup but is still seeking his first title at the showpiece tournament. There's some anxiety and nerves at the same time ... it is the last one," Messi said in an interview with Star Plus. It is the first time the Paris Saint-Germain striker has spoken openly about his future after the tournament, which starts on Nov. 20. Messi did not make it clear whether he would retire from the national team after Qatar. Argentina won the World Cup in 1978 and 1986. The team will open the tournament on Nov.22 against Saudi Arabia in Group C before facing Mexico and Poland. I don't know whether we are big favorites, but I believe Argentina is a candidate because of its history, which means even more now because of the way we got here," Messi added. But in a World Cup anything can happen, all the matches are very difficult. It isn't always the favorites who win it. (AP)

Bumrah and Jadeja’s absence opens opportunity to unearth new champions, says Shastri

CHENNAI, OCT 7 /--/ Former India coach Ravi Shastri feels the absence of Jasprit Bumrah and Ravindra Jadeja at the T20 World Cup will affect the team but it also opens up an opportunity to "unearth a new champion".

Both Bumrah and Jadeja will miss the showpiece event Down Under later this month owing to injuries. While Jadeja was ruled out due to a knee injury, a back injury has put Bumrah out of contention for the World Cup, dealing a major blow to India's chances at the marquee event.

"Bumrah not being there, Jadeja not being there - it hampers the side - but it's an opportunity to unearth a new champion," Shastri said at the launch of Coaching Beyond, his new initiative with B Arun and R Sridhar.



"(Bumrah's injury) is unfortunate. There's so much cricket being played, and people get injured. He is injured, but it's an opportunity for somebody else. There is nothing you can do with injury," he added. While a replacement for Bumrah has not been named yet, head coach Rahul Dravid has indicated Mohammad Shami could

replace his teammate if he gains full fitness after recovering from COVID-19. Shami, who is on the stand-by list for the ICC event alongside Deepak Chahar, hasn't played competitive cricket since July and was forced to miss the six home games against Australia and South Africa after contracting COVID-19. But Shastri feels the veteran pacers success and experience in Australia will benefit India.

"Precisely, his experience (in Australian conditions is his strength). India have been there a lot in the last six years and he has been an integral part of all those tours. So that experience (of having done well in Australia) counts."

The 60-year-old feels despite the injuries, the Indian team has enough depth to go deep into the tournament Down Under.

"I think we have got enough strength and we have a good team. If you make it to the semi-finals, it could be anyone's tournament."

"So, the endeavour would be to start well, get to the semis, and then you have got enough strength to probably win the (World) Cup." (PTI)

Kerala Blasters thrash East Bengal 3-1 in ISL opener

KOCHI, OCT 7 /--/ Ukrainian midfielder Ivan Kaliuzhnyi struck twice after Adrian Lima opened the account as Kerala Blasters started their Indian Super League campaign in style, crushing a lacklustre East Bengal 3-1 in the opener, here on Friday.

The opening goal was scored in the 72nd minute after a barren first half.

Luna latched onto an inch-perfect long ball from Harmanjot Singh Khabra, which found him inside the opposition penalty box. Luna slotted it home and dedicated his goal to his daughter.

Ivan doubled the lead in the 82nd minute with a stunning effort when he picked up the ball on the left side and

from around the middle of the park, he made a darting run inside the box.

Ivan shrugged off a couple of challenges and slipped past the East Bengal defenders with ease. He then moved to the right side and just placed the ball into the right bottom corner.

However against the run of play, Alex Lima's scorching left-footed pile driver from a loose ball off a flag-kick helped East Bengal pull one back in the 87th minute.

But in the 89th minute, Ivan's bullet punch from nearly 25 yards beat the East bengal goalkeeper hands down and sealed the issue for the home team in-front of a vociferous crowd. (PTI)



Ivan Kaliuzhnyi

Warner, Starc help Australia sweep series against West Indies



Mitchell Starc celebrates the wicket of Kyle Mayers

BRISBANE, OCT 7 /--/ An explosive David Warner slammed 75 and Mitchell Starc grabbed four wickets as Australia beat the West Indies by 31 runs Friday to clinch the Twenty20 series 2-0 in the build-up to defending their World Cup title. The home team were cruising at 95-1, but they lost three wickets for five runs, including Warner, as the visitors got back into contention. The dangerous Tim David came to the rescue with an entertaining 42 off 20 balls, including three big sixes, to steer them to 178-7.

"It was a fantastic all-round performance and well executed by the bowlers. At the halfway mark we had discussed about bowling Test match lines and lengths, and they nailed them," said man-of-the-match Warner. Skipper Aaron Finch added: "The difference in the game was Davey and David." The hosts clinched the first match by three wickets, and the West Indies wanted a win in what was their last game before the World Cup, where they face Scotland in the preliminary round first-

up on October 17. But they managed just 147-8 in reply, with Starc taking 4-20, his best figures in a T20.

"Tough to lose, but they played better cricket," said West Indies captain Nicholas Pooran. "We are getting accustomed to the conditions, putting our ego aside, and working on the team plans." They had few answers to Warner, who punished anything short at the Gabba in Brisbane, hitting 10 fours and three sixes in his 41-ball blitz. Finch was on the teamsheet to open alongside Warner after coming in at four in the first game, but after Australia were sent into bat it was Cameron Green who again strode to the crease. And for a second match, the all-rounder failed to fire, out for one.

Finch was the first drop as Australia continued to experiment ahead of the World Cup, and he was content to play second-fiddle to Warner. After smacking two boundaries in the opening over, Warner barely put a foot wrong as he raced to his 23rd T20 half-century, bringing up the milestone off 30 balls. They

reached 88-1 — 68 of them from Warner — at the halfway mark, but the visitors pounced soon after with both players falling within six balls. Finch was caught at mid-off by Rovman Powell off Obed McCoy for 15, snapping an 85-run partnership, then Warner departed caught and bowled by Odean Smith. Glenn Maxwell's poor run of form continued, run out for one as Australia stumbled to 100-4, losing three wickets for five runs. But David steadied the ship with his quick-fire 42. After hitting 20 off the first four balls of a McCoy over, he was finally trapped lbw. The West Indies' chase started poorly with Kyle Mayers caught in the first over to a reflex catch by Starc off his own bowling. Australia's quality attack bowled 21 dot balls in the first five overs before the West Indies lashed 16 off Green to get themselves moving.

But Brandon King (23), Pooran (2), and Johnson Charles (29) all fell in the space of 17 runs to leave them in trouble at 76-4 after 11 overs and they never recovered. (AFP)