

3 scientists win Nobel Prize in physics

■ By David Keyton and
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STOCKHOLM, Oct 3 (AP)

THE Nobel Prize in physics was awarded Tuesday to three scientists who looked at electrons in atoms during the tiniest of split seconds.

Pierre Agostini of The Ohio State University in the US; Ferenc Krausz of the Max Planck Institute of Quantum Optics and Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich in Germany; and Anne L'Huillier of Lund University in Sweden



(Left to Right) Ferenc Krausz, Anne L'Huillier and Pierre Agostini.

won the award.

Their experiments "have given humanity new tools for exploring the world of electrons inside atoms and mole-

cules," according to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, which announced the prize in Stockholm.

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Will eject Indian troops from Maldives: Prez-elect

Pro-China Mohamed Muizzu Says Wouldn't Stand For A Foreign Military In Country Against Will Of Citizens

Male: The president-elect of the Maldives said he will stick to his campaign promise to remove Indian military personnel stationed in the archipelago state, promising he would initiate the process. Mohamed Muizzu told his supporters gathered on Monday night at a celebration of his election victory that he wouldn't stand for a foreign military staying in the Maldives against the will of its citizens. "The people have told us that they don't want foreign military here," he said.

It's a serious blow to India in its geopolitical rivalry with China in the India Ocean region, where the Maldives' presidential runoff election Saturday was seen as a virtual referendum on which of the regional powers would have the biggest influence on the archipelago. Outgoing President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who was elected president in 2018, was battling allegations by Muizzu that he had allowed India an unchecked presence in the country. Muizzu's party, the People's National Congress, is viewed as heavily pro-China.

Muizzu's main campaign theme was about an alleged threat to the Maldives' sovereignty by some Indian military personnel on an island, part of the party's yearslong "India out" strategy. Solih insisted that the Indian military's presence in the Maldives was only to build a dockyard under an agreement between the two governments and that his country's sovereignty won't be violated.



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Xi congratulates Muizzu, vows to deepen ties

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday pledged to deepen bilateral ties with the Maldives as he congratulated President-elect Mohamed Muizzu, whose party campaigned for forging close ties with Beijing. Muizzu, from the People's National Congress and a close associate of former Maldives President Abdulla Yameen who forged close ties with China during his Presidency from 2013 to 2018, defeated India-friendly incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih in the presidential runoff held on Saturday. Yameen is currently serving an 11-year prison sentence for corruption. Muizzu is due to take over the office on November 17 after which he was expected to outline his foreign policy priorities. PTI

The number of Indian troops in the Maldives is unknown. Critics say the secrecy behind the agreement between the two governments regarding the placement of military personnel and their role has led to suspicion and rumour. Known activities of the Indian military include operating two helicopters donated by India and assisting in the rescue of people stranded or faced with calamities at sea.

Former President Abdulla Yameen, leader of the People's National Congress, made the Maldives a part of China's

Belt and Road initiative during his presidency from 2013 to 2018. The initiative is meant to build railroads, ports and highways to expand trade — and China's influence — across Asia, Africa and Europe. Yameen was transferred Sunday from prison to house arrest, already fulfilling one of Muizzu's campaign promises before he officially takes office on November 17. The Maldives is made up of 1,200 coral islands in the Indian Ocean, located by the main shipping route between the East and the West. AP

Ready with better tactics where we can't fight China's might: IAF

Air Chief Pledges To Remain Forward Deployed Until Ladakh Pullout

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New Delhi: The IAF is ready with 'better tactics and techniques' to deal with challenges in places along the frontier where it cannot counter China's 'might or numbers', even as the force plans to induct fighters, helicopters, missiles and radars worth Rs 2.5 to 3 lakh crore in the next seven to eight years to tackle the collusive China-Pakistan threat, Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari said on Tuesday.

The IAF is 'constantly monitoring' with ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capabilities the situation along the LAC with China, which has upgraded all its air bases facing India and deployed an extensive network of radars and surface-to-air guided weapons (SAGWs) since the military confronta-



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tion in eastern Ladakh erupted in April-May 2020.

After also deploying SAGWs and radars, including LLTRs (low-level transportable radars), along the LAC, the IAF is now looking for mountain radars to look equally deep into enemy territory. The People's Liberation Army-Air Force, incidentally, has more

than four times the number of fighters and bombers as compared to the IAF.

"We will continue to remain forward deployed till complete disengagement in eastern Ladakh takes place. Our operational war plans are very dynamic and we keep revising them based on the situation developing

across any front," ACM Chaudhari said, in the run-up to the IAF Day on October 8.

Referring to the "coordination" between India's two adversaries, ACM Chaudhari said Pakistan is now manufacturing the Chinese JF-17 'Thunder' multi-role fighters, while also inducting 25 advanced J-10C jets. The two countries also train together, with their latest 'Shaheen' exercise taking place in north-west China last month.

But ACM Chaudhari exuded confidence, stating that plans were underway to bolster IAF's combat capabilities with contracts worth Rs 1.7 lakh crore over the next one year. This includes 97 more Tejas Mark-1A fighters to add to the 83 such jets ordered under the Rs 46,898 crore contract inked with Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) in February 2021.

Punjab bans rice variety to cut farm fires by 50%

Banks On Short-Duration Paddy Though Stubble Burning Has Spiked

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File photo

New Delhi: Counting on a variety of paddy that takes a shorter time to mature, officials in Punjab are confident that they will bring down the incidents of stubble burning by 50% this season. The preparation of the fields after the rice harvest involves burning the stubble, smoke from which blows towards Delhi and causes immense pollution in the winter months.

At the moment though, harvest remnant fires number almost double that of the last two years. Between September 15 and October 3, there have been 561 farm fires recorded in Punjab, including 105 of them on Tuesday, 119 on Monday and 123 on Sunday. According to the remote sensing data from Indian Agricultural Research Institute, in 2022 and 2021, there were, respectively, 350 and 237 fires in the same period.

Paddy is grown in around 32 lakh hectares in Punjab. On Tuesday, Punjab chief minister Bhagwant Singh Mann declared a ban on the Pusa44 variety of rice starting from the next year. He asked farmers to cease cultivating Pusa44 and other long-duration paddy for their high water consumption and longer maturation periods.

"These water-guzzling varieties take longer to ripen and produce stubble in larger quantities. While Pusa44 takes 152 days to ripen, the PR126 variety takes just 92 days," said Mann. This difference of two months could help alleviate the pollution caused by farm fires because it is the winds and colder weather after October that aggravate pollution in Delhi. An earlier clearan-

THAT DREADED TIME OF THE YEAR



> In 2022, rain towards late September and early October delayed harvesting, leading to less incidents of stubble burning

> This year, farmers endorsed short duration paddy variety PR126

> A few farmers encouraged to shift from paddy to cotton

> Those endorsing cotton given 30% discount on seeds

> Harvest expected a little early, barring in area affected by floods

1,17,672 paddy management machines, **23,000** under procurement



ce of fields for wheat sowing under ideal weather conditions could avert the smoke blowing towards the national capital.

However, this ban hasn't been well-received by farmers, who claim it will lead to financial losses. They argued that Pusa44 yields significantly more per acre than PR126. Farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal said, "Pusa44 produces up to 40 quintals an acre, whereas PR126 yields 25-30 quintals. Farmers have to earn some money from the harvests to meet expenses."

Farmers in Punjab told TOI that they couldn't avoid burning harvest stubble. "Most of us can't afford to use seeding machines that can sow wheat without clearing the field of rice stalks. That is why we have to burn the stubble," said Onkar Singh in Nabha near Patiala.

However, officials in that state are optimistic

about controlling the farm fires. "Last year, there were negligible incidents of stubble burning in the last week of September before gradually picking up in October. That was due to rain, which caused delayed harvesting," explained Jagdish Singh, joint secretary, agriculture, Punjab government. "This year, the farmers have sown a short-duration variety. Last year, there were around 50,000 recorded incidents of farm fires. We were gearing up this year for 25,000 or less."

The joint secretary added, "This year more than 50% of the farmers have opted for the short-duration PR126 variety, which consumes less water, generates 20% less straw load and requires no early sowing."

Farmer Onkar at Nabha confirmed this, saying, "A majority of farmers who have tried the new variety PR126 paddy this year have found it took less time to ri-

pen and leaves behind less stalk remnants."

This is the reason, Jagdish Singh said, while the climate plays a major role in pollution transport to Delhi, the paddy season will wind up earlier this year in Punjab. "It is difficult to give a deadline, but we have reasons to believe that the major portion under paddy will be free by the first week of November," he said.

As for Haryana, where stubble fire count is just 137 to Punjab's 561 so far, government officials claimed that farmers were now favouring cotton over maize for better earning but had yet to break from the rice-wheat monopoly. This year, Haryana offered incentives to paddy farmers to shift to alternative crops.

"Even then, we have successfully encouraged farmers to accept the short-duration paddy variety," said one official.

(With inputs from Patiala)

India asks Canada to withdraw 40 diplomats by October 10

NEW DELHI, Oct 3 (IANS)

INDIA is learnt to have told Canada to withdraw around 40 diplomats from the country by October 10 amid worsening ties between the two nations, according to reports.

The reports have said that New Delhi has conveyed to Canada that if the diplomats are not withdrawn by the deadline, they will lose their diplomatic immunity. There are more than 60 Canadian diplomats posted in India.

Last month, after Canadian

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had alleged in Parliament that Indian intelligence agents may have been involved in the murder of Sikh pro-Khalistan hard-liner Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the diplomatic relations have hit an all time low between the two nations.

Following Trudeau's allegations, both the countries had expelled a diplomat each. India had also termed Canada's allegations as "politically driven".

Nijjar was shot dead outside a Gurudwara in Surrey, British Columbia, on June 18 by

masked gunmen.

On September 21, while replying to questions related to a possible reduction of Canadian diplomats stationed in India, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said: "Yes, we've informed the Government of Canada that there should be parity in strength in our mutual diplomatic presence. Their number is very much higher than ours in Canada... I assume there will be a reduction from the Canadian side."

Army operation in Rajouri continues; 2 jawans injured

The Hindu Bureau

SRINAGAR

An anti-militancy operation being carried out with the help of high-tech gadgets, including drones, continued for the second day on Tuesday in the Pir Panjal valley's Rajouri area. At least two soldiers were injured during a gunfight on Monday night.

The operation was started on Monday following a specific intelligence about the movement of some unidentified individuals, generated by the J&K police in Kalakote.

Two soldiers were injured in the exchange of fire. Official sources said two to three militants were hiding in the forest.