

Nepal PM to meet Xi during visit to China from Sept 23

Kathmandu: Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" will be on an eight-day visit to China from September 23 for talks with the top Chinese leadership, including President Xi Jinping, on ways to further bolster bilateral ties

between the two neighbours. Prachanda will also attend the opening ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou on September 23, Nepal's foreign ministry said on Thursday.

"PM Prachanda is paying an official visit to China from September 23 to 30 at the invitation of Li Qiang, premier of the state council of the People's Republic of China," said the statement issued by the Nepal foreign ministry. Prachanda's delegation to China will also include several Nepal government cabinet mini-

sters, including the foreign minister. Prachanda will hold a bilateral meeting with his counterpart Premier Li Qiang, and also meet Zhao Leji, chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress in Beijing.



During the meetings, the two sides will have an in-depth exchange of views on deepening traditional friendship, expanding mutually benefi-

cial cooperation and international and regional issues of mutual interest, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said. The PM will also address the China-Nepal Investment Summit jointly organised by China Council for the Promotion of International Trade and Federation of Nepal Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Nepali Embassy in Beijing. PTI

Zelensky tries to woo US lawmakers for war aid

Ahead Of Biden Meet, Russia Hits Ukraine Cities, Energy Infra

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky made a whirlwind return visit to Washington on Thursday to shore up US support for Ukraine, delivering an upbeat message on the war's progress while facing new questions about the flow of American dollars that for 19 months has helped keep his troops in the fight against Russian forces. Zelenskycame to the Capitol with a firm message in private talks with Republican and Democratic leaders. The Ukrainians have a solid war plan, and "they are winning", lawmakers quoted him as assuring them, at a time that the world is watching Western support for Kyiv.

He will also meet with President Joe Biden at the White House and spoke with military leaders at the Pentagon. Biden has been working to shore up support in Congress for an additional \$24 billion in military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine at a time when some Republican lawmakers are growing increasingly sceptical of Kyiv's slow-moving counteroffensive. "If we don't get the aid, we will lose the war," Zelensky said in a meeting with at least 50 senators, as recounted afterward by the Senate majority leader, Chuck Schumer.

House Republican leaders had promised tough questions for Zelensky on his plans for winning Ukraine's counteroffensive against invading Russian forces. Zelensky "conceded that it's tough, very tough to overcome



NOT ON SAME PAGE: Republican House Speaker Kevin McCarthy (inset), who faces opposition on support for Ukraine among followers aligned with Donald Trump, notably chose not to join in greeting Zelensky (C) before the cameras. That left House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries (L) to escort the Ukrainian president into the Capitol

Kyiv 'hits' Crimea air base, Russia denies

Ukraine's military said on Thursday its forces had struck a Russian air base in Crimea overnight, but an adviser to a Russian-installed official on the peninsula said none of Ukraine's missiles had hit their target. A brief military statement said the Saky air base in western Crimea had been attacked by Ukraine's defence forces, but gave no further details. An intelligence source said the attack was carried out by the SBU security service and navy using drones and Neptune cruise missiles. The attack "hit the target and caused serious damage" to equipment at the air base, the source said. REUTERS

entrenched defences," Independent Senator Angus King said. "They believe they will make slow but steady progress, but it's not going to be quick." Zelensky's trip is happening at a critical time, as Ukraine struggles to break through Russian frontlines in a counteroffensive being fought in the south and east, before the start of winter brings fighting to a standstill. The US has sent some \$113 billion in security and humanitarian aid to help Zelensky's government since Russia invaded in February 2022.

Hours after Zelensky cal-

led Moscow's invasion "criminal" at a speech at the UN on Wednesday, Russia launched its biggest missile attack in weeks at targets across Ukraine, hitting at least five cities, wounding dozens and damaging energy facilities, leading to power outages in several regions, according to Ukraine authorities. Russia targeted Lviv in the west, near the border with Poland, and Kharkiv, close to Ukraine's eastern front lines, as well as Kyiv, Cherkasy and Rivne. The Ukrainian military said it had intercepted 36 of the 43 missiles Russia fired. AP&NYT

Ukraine's staunch

Curfew back in Imphal as mobs try to storm thanas

Women Clash With Cops To Get Arrested Men Freed

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Guwahati: At least 15 people were wounded in Manipur's Imphal valley on Thursday as protesters clashed with security forces when they tried to storm police stations and court arrest, demanding the unconditional release of five men arrested on Saturday for impersonating policemen and carrying firearms.

As a precautionary measure, the state government clamped total curfew in Imphal East and Imphal West districts. The curfew relaxation hours, which were in effect from 5am to 9pm on Thursday, were withdrawn from 5pm, and restrictions on movement were enforced in all areas of the two adjoining valley districts.

The protesters, responding to a call by six local clubs and Meira Paibis (women activists), demonstrated by holding placards and shouting slogans while attempting to enter Andro and Porompat police stations in Imphal East, and Singjamei, Kwakeithel and Mayang Imphal police out-



Normal life in Imphal valley was paralysed by a 48-hour bandh called by Meira Paibis and local clubs, demanding release of the 5 arrested men

posts in Imphal West district.

They demanded the release of the five arrested men, claiming that they were village defence volunteers.

In response, police and RAF personnel used tear gas shells to disperse the crowds. The five men remain in police custody. According to police, one of them is a trained member of a banned militant outfit of the state, while another is a drug addict running a rehabilitation centre.

Earlier, normal life in the Imphal valley was paralysed by a 48-hour bandh called by Meira Paibis and local clubs, demanding the release of the arrested men. The bandh ended Wednesday. The organisations asked people to assemble at their nearest police station on Thursday.

Security forces conducted search operations in various districts, recovering arms

and ammunition, including mortar shells. A joint team of Assam Rifles and state police seized four mortar bombs hidden in bushes during a search in Kangpokpi district.

"Search operations were conducted by security forces in the fringe and vulnerable areas of Imphal West, Thoubal, Bishnupur, Kangpokpi and Churachandpur districts in which one arm, two local pumpi guns, 50 ammunition and eight explosives were recovered from Imphal West and Kangpokpi districts," the police tweeted.

Police have installed 127 checkpoints in the valley and hill districts and detained 873 people on Wednesday for violating rules. Strict security measures have been implemented in vulnerable locations, and security convoys are providing safe passage for vehicles in sensitive areas.

Delhi HC cuts fine on two convicted Manipur rebels

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi high court on Thursday reduced the fine imposed on two convicted members of Manipur-based terrorist organisation Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP), who had pleaded guilty in a terror case, saying their admission of guilt is a clear indication of possibility of reform.

Paving the way for their release after seven years behind bars, HC reduced the fine from Rs 39,000 to Rs 9,000 each, imposed on convicts Khoiram Ranjit Singh and Pukhrihongam Prem Kumar Meiti after taking note that their families are not in a financial position to pay the entire amount as a result of which the duo will have no alternative but undergo default sentence of additional 30 months.

A bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anish Dayal said there is no reason why they are being penalised for their poor financial condition since that has no relation to the sentence undergone for the offences they were convicted of.

India suspends visa for Canadians, asks Ottawa to downsize missions

No E-Visas Too; Can't Apply From 3rd Countries

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New Delhi: Describing Canada as a safe haven for terrorists, a characterisation it had used so far only for Pakistan, the Centre Thursday suspended visa processing services in the North American country, saying Indian diplomats were unable to perform their duties because of threats from Khalistan forces.

Reiterating that Canadian diplomats were involved in anti-India activities, India also asked Ottawa to reduce its diplomatic strength here. The Centre said there had to be parity between diplomatic presence in both countries as Canada had a much stronger presence here than the other way around.

Amid the raging diplomatic dispute over allegations by Canadian PM Justin Trudeau that India might be involved in the killing of pro-Khalistan activist and Canadian national Hardeep Singh Nijjar, India also suspended e-visa facility for Canadian citizens and said they won't be allowed to apply for Indian visa even from third countries.

With Canada yet to provide any evidence or even information linking India to the killing, the Centre called Trudeau's allegations "politically motivated" and marked by prejudice as Canada had expelled an Indian diplomat only on the basis of allegations.

While details on how Canada will reduce its staff strength in missions are being worked out, whether India formally downgrades diplomatic ties will likely depend on how Canada reacts to the move.

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CANADA A SAFE HAVEN FOR TERROR, CRIME: MEA

Photo: PTI

Those who have valid visas and documents like OCI cards are free to travel to India. The issue is **incitement of violence, inaction by Canada**, creation of an environment that disrupts the functioning of our high commission and consulates and the security threats faced by them

We have informed Canada **there should be parity in strength and rank equivalence in our mutual diplomatic presence.** Their numbers here (in India) are very much higher than ours in Canada... I assume there will be a reduction from the Canadian side



Deserted counters of visa and immigration service at the High Commission of Canada in Delhi on Thursday

We are willing to look at any specific information that is provided to us (in the Nijjar killing case), but have so far received no specific information. **Trudeau's allegations are politically motivated and there is a degree of prejudice**

If there is any country that needs to look at this (reputational damage)... it is Canada and its growing reputation as a safe haven for terrorists, extremists, and for organised crime

—Excerpts from MEA briefing

Not looking to provoke, let's work together to 'uncover truth': Trudeau

New York: Canada's prime minister Justin Trudeau said Thursday that his country was not looking to "provoke or cause problems" with India in a raging diplomatic row over the killing of a Khalistani extremist as he urged New Delhi to work together with Ottawa to "uncover the truth" of the matter.

"We call upon the Indian government to take seriously this matter and to work with us to shed full transparency and ensure accountability and justice in this matter," Trudeau said.

"We are a country of the rule of law. We are going to continue to do the work necessary to keep Canadians safe and to uphold our values and the international rules-based order. That's our focus right now," added Trudeau, here to attend the 78th session

There is no question that India is a country of growing importance and a country we need to continue to work with... We're not looking to provoke or cause problems. But we are unequivocal around the importance of the rule of law... That's why we call upon India to work with us to uncover the truth of the matter and to allow justice to be served



—Justin Trudeau
Canada PM

of the UN General Assembly. Asked if his government will take retaliatory steps after India suspended visa services for Canadians, Trudeau said his government will not tread the path of provocation or cause problems. AGENCIES

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Trudeau party MP takes on Khalistan camp

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Disquiet in Canadian PM Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party over his alleged coddling of the pro-Khalistan camp came to the fore Thursday when Chandra Arya, a Hindu MP from his party, said that the "vast majority of our Canadian Sikh brothers and sisters do not support the Khalistan movement".

The statement came amid a section of Sikh MPs, led by Liberal Party's Sukh Dhaliwal, railing about "excesses" against the community in India. Arya accused US-based separatist Gurbat Singh Pannun of the outlawed Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) of trying to provoke Canadian Hindus with a hate video asking them to go back to India, and drive a wedge between the Hindu and Sikh communities in Canada.

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After 27-yr wait, women's quota bill cleared in 2 days

RS Passes Bill 214-0 After 11-Hour Debate

Dipak Dash & Akhilesh Singh | TNN

New Delhi: The long and seemingly interminable wait for parliamentary clearance for women's quota in legislatures ended on Thursday, and on an emphatic note, as Rajya Sabha unanimously endorsed the Constitution (128th Amendment) Bill 2023 that seeks to reserve one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and state legislatures.

► All women vice-chairs in RS on day of vote, P 16

The unanimous vote 214-0, a rare if not the only one so far, clears the way for the government to secure the President's assent — a prerequisite but yet a formality.

Once enacted, the women's quota bill (Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam) will automatically apply to assemblies of all states and UTs of Delhi and Puducherry. Go-



“This is not merely a legislation, it is a tribute to the countless women who have made our nation. India has been enriched by their resilience and contributions... This historic step is a commitment to ensuring their voices are heard even more effectively”

— PM Modi

(Paraphrasing Kabir's doha, on implementing quota) Kal karne ko aaj karo, aaj karne ka ab karo, pal mein pralai hoga toh phir kareng kab

— Mallikarjun Kharge | Cong

I support this bill. But when will this govt learn that this is a parliamentary democracy and not an army commando operation where you need secrecy, surprise and stealth?

— Derek O'Brien | TMC

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Women's quota bill sails through LS 454-2, set to clear RS today



'Delimitation-based quota will instil trust'

Making delimitation the basis for reserving one-third of seats in Lok Sabha and state assemblies for women will not only instil public trust in the process but also protect against future judicial challenge, said government sources. **P 16**

Government sources told TOI that the amendment does not need to be ratified by half the states because it is Parliament which has the preroga-

Nadda claim on OBC PM draws counter

BJP president JP Nadda's claim in Rajya Sabha that his party had given the country its first PM from the other backward castes (OBC) was countered by members of the opposition who said HD Deve Gowda was the first PM from the community. **P 16**

tive to decide the strength of assemblies which have no say in the matter.

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