

Centre defends UNGA abstention

Govt. says resolution that called for truce and ceasefire in Gaza did not include 'explicit condemnation' of the October 7 terror attacks in Israel

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

The Union government on Saturday defended its decision to abstain in a UN General Assembly vote on resolution that called for a humanitarian truce and ceasefire in Gaza, saying it did not include "explicit condemnation" of the October 7 terror attacks in Israel. A note circulated by government sources, responding to criticism from Opposition members about the vote, said that since India's concerns over omissions had not been covered by the final text of the resolution, it had decided to abstain.

"There can be no equivocation on terror," a source said, calling India's position "steadfast and consistent".

The resolution, titled the "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", proposed by Jordan on behalf of the Arab League and co-sponsored by nearly 40 countries, was passed in on Friday with 120 votes in favour, 14 including the U.S. and U.K. against, and 45 abstentions, including India.

In its explanation of vote (EoV), France also objected to the omission of references



The UN General Assembly on Friday voted for an 'immediate humanitarian truce' in Gaza. AFP

to the October 7 attacks as well as the hostages taken, but in a break from its western allies, voted for the resolution saying "nothing can justify the suffering of civilians. All victims deserve our compassion, all lives are equal and there is no hierarchy between them".

The resolution adopted had condemned "all acts of violence aimed at Palestinian and Israeli civilians, including all acts of terrorism and indiscriminate attacks, as well as all acts of provocation, incitement and destruction".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 13

Centre defends UNGA abstention

However, it did not specifically refer to the terror attacks by Hamas earlier this month that left more than 1,400 Israelis dead and 229 taken hostage.

In three weeks of retaliatory strikes by Israeli Defence Forces, the Health Ministry in Hamas-controlled Gaza has estimated that at least 7,700 Palestinians have been killed, around half of which are children.

In the EoV delivered by India's Deputy Permanent Representative Yojana Patel, India had called for condemnation of the attacks and for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages.

"Terrorism is a malignancy and knows no borders, nationality, or race. The world should not buy into any justification of terror acts," Ms. Patel said, before addressing the death toll from the IDF bombardment of Gaza.

"Casualties in the ongoing conflict in Gaza are a telling, serious, and continuing concern. Civilians, especially women and children are paying with their lives," she said, referring to the aid efforts to help Palestinians who have been evacuated from north Gaza to the south, which India is also a part of.

Significantly, in its own EoV, India did not name Hamas directly either. India had however backed an earlier amendment proposed by Canada to add a paragraph that would "unequivocally reject and condemn the terrorist attacks by Hamas that took place in Israel starting on 7 October 2023", and call for hostages to be released. The amendment was not approved as only 88 countries, less than the two-thirds required, voted for it.

Opposition slams decision

India's vote, that differed from a previous vote in favour of a UNGA resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza in 2018 and other similar votes in the past, was criticised by Opposition parties who accused the government of "refusing to take a stand".

"This is a humanitarian issue, not a political one," said AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi, pointing out that India's abstention stood "alone".

"An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind", said Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi.

Government sources, however, said that India had stressed its "consistent stand on Palestine", saying in the EoV that India supports a negotiated two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine issue.

(With inputs from Sandeep Phukan)

MGNREGS sees 7.5% dip in active workforce

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In a significant contraction in the workforce under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), a data analysis by LibTech India – a consortium of academics and activists – for April-September reveals a 7.5% reduction in the number of active workers, from 15.49 crore in the previous fiscal year to 14.33 crore, as per the data available till October 6.

The LibTech's MGNREGS tracker for April-September 2023 provides a comparative analysis of data from preceding financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23 during the same time frame, using the data available with the Rural Development Ministry.

This statistics, read along with a net deletion of 80 lakh workers in the ongoing financial year, paints a bleak picture for the programme. "These statistics indicate a significant contraction in the MGNREGS workforce, emphasising the need for a comprehensive analysis to identify the factors contributing to this decline and to formulate strategies for revitalising the programme's participation," the report states.

While the MGNREGS workforce is shrinking, there is an increased demand for work under the scheme.

Fading legacy: 1,300-year-old Pallava paintings lie in neglect in Villupuram

B. Kolappan
CHENNAI

Neglect has taken a heavy toll on the 1,300-year-old Pallava-era paintings at Talagirishwara temple at Panamalai in Villupuram district. The panel depicting the dance of Lord Shiva has almost faded away and only the face of goddess Parvathi and a few patches remain now.

"When I visited the temple in 2017, I could figure out the faces in the paintings. Since the temple is under the control of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), I have requested the officials to restore them," said D. Ravikumar,

Villupuram Lok Sabha member.

The temple was constructed by Pallava king Narasimhavarman II, popularly known as Rajasimha. Mr. Ravikumar said it was a living temple and a lot of devotees were visiting it on a daily basis. "The paintings bear a close resemblance to the paintings in Ajantha and Chithannavasal," he added.

The paintings are on the wall of a sub-temple on the northern side of the Talagirishwara (Siva) temple, perched on Panamalai, the Tamil name of the word *Talagiri*.

"The painting is on the wall behind the Ettupattai

lingam. It shows Lord Shiva with eight hands dancing, known as *Latathilagabhani*, being watched by Goddess Parvathi with her crown and well-decorated umbrella," said D. Ramesh, assistant professor of History department, Arignar Anna Arts College, Villupuram.

He said Panamalai paintings were older than Chithannavasal paintings and the Pallava king would have chosen the hills to build the temple because it was near the first rock-cut temple in Mandagapattu.

He said it was still possible that the paintings could be restored with the help of experts in the field.



The temple was constructed by Pallava king Narasimhavarman II, popularly known as Rajasimha.

WHO Southeast Asia members to meet to nominate its regional director, to discuss health issues

Session will discuss ways to rein in cardiovascular diseases, end neglected tropical diseases and ensure regional health security; the two candidates in the fray are Bangladesh nominee Saima Wazed and Nepal's Shambhu Prasad Acharya

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Health Ministers and senior officials from the Southeast Asia member countries of the World Health Organization will meet in New Delhi the coming week to deliberate on priority health issues and nominate the next WHO Regional Director for Southeast Asia.

The 76th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Southeast Asia, the annual governing body meeting of the WHO at the regional level, will be held from October 30 to November 2, according to an official communication. It added that WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and South-East Asia Regional Director Poonam Khetrapal Singh will be present.

Key topics

Accelerating prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases, ending neglected tropical diseases, and regional health security, are among the key issues to be discussed. A ministerial roundtable will be held on strengthening primary healthcare as a



The WHO says since 2014, the Southeast region has eliminated polio and maternal and neonatal tetanus. SANDEEP SAVANA

key element towards achieving universal health coverage, noted the regional office.

"On Wednesday, the regional committee will vote to nominate the next WHO Regional Director for Southeast Asia. There are two candidates in the fray - Bangladesh nominee Saima Wazed and Nepal nominee Shambhu Prasad Acharya. The nomination will be submitted to the WHO Executive Board, which will meet from January 22 to 27, 2024, in Geneva, Switzerland. The newly appointed Regional Director will assume office on February 1 for a five-year term," said a senior WHO

South-East Asia official.

She added that at the regional committee, countries will be felicitated for public health achievements, many of them triggered by the focused approach towards the regional flagship priorities.

Milestones reached

Giving an overview of the health issues in the region, the WHO office notes that this area is home to more than two billion people, and since 2014, the region has eliminated polio and maternal and neonatal tetanus. Four countries - Bhutan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste - have eliminated measles

and rubella, one of the eight flagship priorities.

Prioritising elimination of neglected tropical diseases, four countries - the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Bangladesh - have eliminated lymphatic filariasis, while Nepal and Myanmar eliminated trachoma, and India was verified yaws-free. Additionally, Sri Lanka and the Maldives eliminated malaria, while Thailand, the Maldives and Sri Lanka eliminated mother-to-child transmission of syphilis and HIV. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Thailand achieved hepatitis B control.

Focusing on accelerating reduction of maternal, neonatal and under-5 mortality, the region recorded a 68.5% reduction in maternal mortality between 2000 and 2020, a 45% reduction in under-5 mortality and a 39% reduction in neonatal mortality during the period. Five countries - South Korea, Indonesia, the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Thailand - have achieved 2030 SDG (Sustainable Development Goals) targets of reducing under-5 mortality and neonatal mortality. "Prone to health emergencies, the re-

gion had been investing in strengthening preparedness and response capacities since the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that hit multiple countries in the region and killed over 2,00,000 people. Countries have been enhancing International Health Regulation (2005) core capacities. The lessons from COVID-19 pandemic are now guiding the Regional Strategic Roadmap on Health Security and Health System Resilience for Emergencies 2023-2027," said Dr. Khetrapal.

Tackling BP, diabetes

She said the region is accelerating control of cardiovascular diseases with a target to place 100 million people with hypertension and/or diabetes on protocol-based management by 2025. "We are committed to accelerating universal health coverage. With the focus on human resources for health and essential medicines, the availability of doctors, nurses and midwives has increased by over 30.6% since 2014. Countries in the region have been taking several initiatives to make universal health coverage a reality," she added.

Bangladesh is building memorial to honour Indian heroes of 1971 war

Dinakar Peri

NEW DELHI

A memorial to honour the Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives in the Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971 at Ashuganj in Bangladesh is in the advanced stages of completion. It will have the names of around 1,600 Indian soldiers inscribed on it.

It is expected to be ready by December and the effort is to have it inaugurated by Prime Minister of the two Prime Ministers in March or April, said A.K.M. Mozammel Haque, Bangladesh Minister for Liberation War Affairs.

This will be the first memorial in Bangladesh to ex-



A model of a memorial building that Bangladesh is making for Indian soldiers who were part of the 1971 war. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

clusively honour Indian soldiers from the 1971 war. The foundation stone for the memorial at Ashuganj, Brahmanbaria was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in March 2021.

"The idea is by December it will be finished. All the names of the Indian soldiers martyred will be engraved so that everybo-

dy can know who are these people who sacrificed for our emancipation, for our liberation," Mr. Haque had said. "We will try to invite both the Prime Ministers," he said noting there are elections in both countries. "That is why we are thinking by March or April we will try to inaugurate it, by both the Prime Ministers," he stated.

Major Chandrakant Singh, Vrc, a 1971 war veteran and author of several books on the war, introduced Mr. Haque as the first Bangladeshi who attacked the Pakistan Army in 1971. "I feel happy and proud to have been associated with this project," he told *The Hindu*.

IITM Pune demonstrates cloud seeding can produce rainfall

The approximate cost of producing water through cloud seeding was 18 paise per litre; the cost will drop by more than 50% if we use indigenous seeding aircraft

R. Prasad

A cloud seeding experiment carried out in Solapur city, which falls on the leeward side of the Western Ghats and hence gets low rainfall – 384 mm and 422 mm of total rainfall during the period June to September 2018 and 2019, respectively – was able to achieve 18% relative enhancement in rainfall, which is approximately 8.67mm more rainfall. The relative enhancement of accumulated rainfall was seen over two hours after seeding the clouds. In all, the total enhancement of water availability through cloud seeding experiments was 867 million litres. The results of the study were published recently in the journal *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*.

The experiment – Cloud Aerosol Interaction and Precipitation Enhancement Experiment (CAIPEEX phase-4) – was a scientific investigation conducted in Solapur city during the summer monsoon period of 2018 and 2019. The primary objective was to investigate the efficacy of hygroscopic seeding in deep convective clouds and to develop a cloud seeding protocol. The experiment used two aircraft for studying various cloud parameters and for seeding the clouds. The study found that cloud seeding is an effective strategy for enhancing rainfall in a region under suitable conditions. A randomised seeding experiment was undertaken to study the effectiveness



of cloud seeding in producing rainfall. In total 276 convective clouds were chosen, and 150 were seeded while the remaining 122 clouds were not seeded.

"In our previous work we have found certain characteristics in a cloud such as the liquid water content in the cloud, the vertical motion in the cloud, which is an indicator of the growth of the cloud, will help inform us if the cloud will rain or not. Based on several criteria we know if a convective cloud has a potential to rain as all clouds cannot rain," she says.

Convective clouds with a depth of over one kilometre and likely to evolve into deep cumulus clouds were targeted.

"We must indicate that the availability of a large number of samples (150/122 seed/no-seed) is a testimony to the rainfall enhance-

ment through hygroscopic seeding with the physical conditions set in CAIPEEX," the authors write.

"The seeded clouds produced more rainfall than the unseeded clouds," Dr. Thara Prabhakaran from the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune and the corresponding author of the paper tells *The Hindu*.

Calcium chloride flare was used for seeding the clouds. A cloud seeding flare releases these particles when triggered. The seeding was done at the base of the warm convective clouds and at a time when the clouds were in their growing stage so that the seed particles could enter the clouds with minimum dispersion.

"The convective cloud bases are found at 500-1,500 metres altitude during the summer monsoon

period and around 2,000 metres or more altitude during the monsoon break periods, which depends on the moisture content in the lower atmosphere," Dr. Prabhakaran says. "Since the clouds are found at lower heights, the base of the convective clouds is warm, around 15 degrees C."

"But cloud seeding alone cannot mitigate droughts but can help produce 18% more rainfall and partially address water requirements," says Dr. M. Rajeevan, former secretary, Ministry of Earth Science, and a co-author of the paper. Undertaking cloud seeding as catchment-scale projects can possibly help in managing drought conditions.

"The study was carried for two years to first study and understand the microphysics and characteristics of convective clouds that

can be targeted to enhance rainfall. The work provides elaborate protocols and technical guidance to plan and conduct cloud seeding in India," he says. The two-year study has helped develop a high-resolution numerical model that can help stakeholders to identify target locations, clouds that can be seeded, and a suitable seeding strategy to enhance rainfall in an area.

One of the most important findings of the study was that not all cumulus clouds produce rainfall when cloud seeding is done. "We found 20-25% of cumulus clouds produce rainfall if cloud seeding is done correctly. The microphysics of clouds vary widely and so not all clouds produce rainfall through cloud seeding," says Dr. Rajeevan.

"Though the relative enhancement of rainfall was 46% as measured by automatic rain gauges, the actual increase in rainfall over a 100 sq.km area was only 18%," says Dr. Prabhakaran.

"We estimated the cost-benefit ratio and found the approximate cost of producing water through cloud seeding was 18 paise per litre. It was a research experiment and so we hired two aircraft from outside India for seeding the clouds. The cost will drop by more than 50% if we use indigenous seeding aircraft," says Dr. Prabhakaran. In places like Solapur where water is supplied only once in three days, the availability of additional water through cloud seeding will be immensely beneficial.

What's in store for economy in second half?

Could the West Asia flare-up push oil prices further up and disrupt food and fertilizer supply lines? How may freight geopolitical events, rising risk aversion, higher interest rates and volatile markets impact India? Have domestic concerns about inflation faded?

Vikas Dhoot

The story so far:

The Indian economy, measured in terms of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as well as Gross Value-Added (GVA), grew 7.8% between April and June (first quarter or Q1) this year, a four quarter high. The Finance Ministry believes the momentum of economic activity was carried forward in the July-September quarter, despite retail inflation hardening to 6.4% from 4.7% in Q1 thanks to a spike in food prices. Growth estimates for Q2 will come in next month, but the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expects GDP growth to moderate to 6.5%. A week into the second half of the year, the Israel-Palestine conflict erupted and a spate of fresh dark clouds now hover over the economy.

How have experts reacted to recent events?

Economists feel a prolonged conflict in West Asia could push crude oil prices beyond India's comfort zone and if other countries join the fray, critical sea routes could face disruptions and spike transport and insurance costs. The government may not pass on higher petroleum prices to consumers ahead of critical elections, but producers' costs may still rise. Airlines, for instance, have been hiking fares in line with aviation turbine fuel costs. Moreover, higher fuel import bills could pose implications on the exchequer as oil marketing companies may need support for under-recoveries. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her first remarks since the strife in Gaza, said it has brought concerns about fuel, food security and supply chains back to the forefront. She flagged concerns about the impact of any disruptions on inflation in the near future. In subsequent comments, she has

The RBI Governor is confident of the overall macro essentials of the Indian economy despite fresh uncertainty

also emphasised the need to ensure that global food, fertilizer and fuel supplies did not become an "instrument of war and disruption".

The RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, who chaired a monetary policy review hours before Hamas launched the first salvo in the conflict, summed up the emerging situation eloquently. "We all thought that the period of uncertainties is over, but as you would have seen in the last fortnight, new uncertainties have been thrown up while some that already existed, like oil prices and volatility in financial markets, have got more pronounced," he said last Friday. Among the new uncertainties, he listed the spurt in U.S. bond yields that hit a 16-year high this month and mixed global data points amid fears of "higher for longer" interest rates. A cut in India's interest rate is not on the cards, he emphasised. "Interest rates will remain high... how long... only time and the way the world is evolving, will tell." Higher interest rates can impact investment flows in markets like India.

Is there a shift in the assessment of risks for the economy?

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its 2023-24 GDP growth estimate for India to 6.3% this month from 6.1% estimated earlier. This is just slightly below the 6.5% GDP uptick the Finance Ministry and the RBI have penned in for this year, following last year's 7.2% growth. In its monthly economic review report released last month, the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in the Finance Ministry said it was comfortable with the 6.5% hopes "with symmetric risks". Bright spots of corporate profitability, private sector capital formation, bank credit growth and construction sector activity offset the risks at the time. These included steadily climbing crude oil prices ("but no alarms yet") and an overdue global stock market correction, which it termed "an ever-present risk". The RBI, this month, also asserted that risks from the uneven monsoon, geopolitical tensions, global market volatility and economic slowdown, were "evenly balanced". The RBI expects GDP growth to slow to 6% in the current quarter, and further to 5.7% in January to March 2024 before picking up to 6.6% in Q1 of 2024-25. Governor Das has since exuded confidence in the overall macro fundamentals of the Indian economy, despite the uncertainties that have emerged this month.

Last Monday, in its latest economy review, the DEA noted that though domestic fundamentals are strong and improving, downside risks arise from global headwinds that have been compounded by recent developments in the Persian Gulf, and uncertainties in weather

conditions due to El Niño effects. "Depending on how the situation develops, crude oil prices may push higher. Further, the relentless supply of U.S. Treasuries and continued restrictive monetary policy in the U.S. (with further monetary policy tightening not ruled out) could cause financial conditions to be restrictive," it said. It was also prescient about the U.S. stock markets having a greater correction risk, which would have spillover effects on other markets. India's stock markets clocked six straight days of sharp declines before a marginal recovery was seen this Friday. The DEA has flagged a broader worry about freight geopolitical conditions triggering a surge in risk aversion. "If these risks worsen and are sustained, they can affect economic activity in other countries, including India," it noted, even as it averred that India's growth story remained on track. Inflation had eased to 5% in September from a 15-month high of 7.4% in July and the department highlighted higher upticks in industrial capacity utilisation levels, private consumption and investment, retail loans extended for vehicles and housing as bright spots in its economic outlook. The report also cited "optimistic" findings from RBI's forwarding-looking surveys on manufacturing, consumer confidence, employment and inflation expectations to stress all is well.

What are domestic factors to watch out for?

Inflation may have subsided last month, but could creep back up. The RBI, which expects average inflation of 5.4% through 2023-24, has penned in a 5.6% average uptick in prices for the October to December quarter and 5.2% for the first six months of 2024. While some vegetable prices have corrected, inflation in onions has shot up while for pulses and some cereals, prices are likely to stay high for a while. The IMF and World Bank expect inflation to average even higher at 5.5% and 5.9%, respectively. The RBI's preferred 4% inflation mark remains elusive as do prospects of interest rate cuts. This doesn't bode well for a sustained rise in consumption demand that is vital to revive private investments. A Bank of Baroda study on consumption trends shows that production of readymade garments, mobile phones, hair dye, shampoo, cookers and even ice cream, had declined between 12% to 20% in the first five months of this year. "Normally when inflation is high households tend to cut back on discretionary spending which is what is being seen today," it noted. With pent-up demand effects fading, the next couple of months will determine whether consumption has actually picked up, the Bank's economists said. Rural demand which has been lagging, will be important, and may come under more pressure if some crops' output is affected. Last but not the least, an economist from a rating firm said, the upcoming election season could imply some slowdown in public capex in infrastructure that revved up the economy in recent quarters.



GETTY IMAGES

Why will police stations install DNA systems?

What are the concerns? Why has the National Crime Records Bureau cautioned against the misuse of the database by ensuring identification and deployment of appropriate safeguards allowing only designated officials to access the data in real time?

Vijaita Singh

The story so far:

In April 2022, the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Act (CrPI) was passed by Parliament. The Act enables police and central investigating agencies to collect, store and analyse physical and biological samples including retina and iris scans of arrested persons. The rules that would govern the Act were notified in September 2022. However, the Act is yet to be implemented fully as the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the nodal agency, is still preparing the guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to implement the legislation. The NCRB operates under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Though the Act and rules do not distinctly mention collection of DNA samples and face-matching procedures, in subsequent meetings with State police officials, the NCRB has said that these measures will be rolled out in around 1,300 locations across the country.

Why was the legislation brought in?

The CrPI Act repealed the British-era Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 whose scope was limited to collecting and recording

Plans to include DNA samples and facial recognition technology have raised questions about the protection of data

finger impressions, footprint impressions and photographs of certain category of convicted persons and impressions of non-convicted persons on the orders of a Magistrate. The government said the new Act made provisions for the use of modern techniques to capture and record appropriate body measurements.

What is the role of the NCRB?

The central body has been entrusted with the task to "store, process, share, disseminate and destroy records of measurements." Impressions taken at any police station will be stored in a common database maintained by the NCRB. The database could be accessed by authorised police and prison officials across the country.

The NCRB will prescribe the specifications of the equipments or devices to be used for taking measurements in digital and physical format, the method of handling and storing measurements by the State police in a format compatible with the NCRB database and also the information technology system to be used for taking the measurements. Police and prison officials have been authorised to take measurements and the Act expanded the scope to also allow any person skilled in taking the measurements or a registered medical practitioner or any person authorised to take such measurements. The records are to be stored for 75 years.

What is the status on the ground?

Police across States have been trained to record finger impressions through the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS).

However, several police officials said the iris scanners and devices that would enable capturing of DNA and facial-recognition systems are yet to be provided.

NAFIS, also under the NCRB, is a separate project that was launched in 2022. It assigns a unique ten-digit National Fingerprint Number (NFN) to all suspects arrested by the police. State police have their own fingerprint database. NAFIS integrates the data on a common platform, enabling the police to run a countrywide search to match fingerprint

impressions lifted from a crime scene.

NAFIS workstations are operational in many States.

What are the challenges?

When the Bill was being debated in Parliament, Opposition members argued that it violated fundamental rights, including the right to privacy. With plans to include DNA samples and facial-recognition technology, questions arose about the protection of such data.

A police officer in Uttar Pradesh said that though the rules state that measurement of persons detained or arrested under prohibitory and preventive sections of law are not to be recorded, not many officers are aware of it. The rule states that unless a person is booked under prohibitory and preventive sections that are clubbed with other serious criminal charges, the measurements will not be stored in the system.

It takes the onus of destruction and disposal of records of an individual from the central database in case a person has been falsely implicated in a crime or has been acquitted by the court. For such a disposal/destruction, the request will have to be made to the nodal officer.

According to Software Freedom Law Center, India, an Internet advocacy group, "The onus for destruction of data in this 75-year time period has also been placed on the people whose data has been collected. This would impact people from sections of society who do not have access to the law and would therefore be unable to apply for deletion. The provision should be read in terms of the Right to be Forgotten and should not be at the mere discretion of the Nodal Officer." The type of DNA samples that could be collected by the police have not been defined yet.

Another police officer said, "handling DNA sample requires proper training. The storage is also a concern. It is compulsory in offences registered under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. However, what is its scope in other crimes such as cheating and snatching is yet to be spelt out clearly."

In meetings with the States, the NCRB has cautioned against the misuse of the database by ensuring identification and deployment of appropriate safeguards allowing only designated officials to access the data in real time.

Another government official in the Northeast said connectivity is a huge problem and police in smaller States have been unable to fulfil the requirement of secured Internet lease lines.



GETTY IMAGES

India signs off with a whopping overall tally of 111 medals

Neeraj and Gaviot win gold in javelin and 400m respectively; Darpan and men's rapid VI-B1 team take top honours in chess

ASIAN PARA GAMES

Press Trust of India
HANGZHOU

Indian athletes created history on Saturday as they ended their Hangzhou Asian Para Games campaign with an unprecedented 111 medals, the biggest haul for the country in any major international multi-sport event. On the concluding day on Saturday, India added 12 medals, including four gold.

With 29 gold, 31 silver and 51 bronze in their kitty, the total tally was four more than the record 107 medals won in the Asian Games recently.

India ended fifth in the medals tally with China topping the charts with 521 medallals (214 gold, 167 silver, 140 bronze).

39 more than 2018

India won 39 more medals than the 2018 edition with athletics contributing 55 (18 gold, 17 silver, 20). Indian shuttlers contributed 21 medals, including four gold, while chess, archery and shooting gave eight, seven and six medals respectively.

The only other instance of India crossing the 100-medal mark in a major international multi-sport event was the 101 medals at the 2010 Delhi Com-



Podium finish: Javelin throwers Neeraj and Teik Chand celebrate their gold and bronze medal-winning show. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

monwealth Games.

On Thursday, Neeraj Yadav began the gold rush by winning the men's javelin F55 with a Games record of 33.69m.

Twin success

Dilip Mahadua Gaviot added another athletics gold by claiming the men's 400m T47 race with a time of 49.48 seconds.

Chess players saved the best for the last with a seven-medal day, including two gold. Satish Inani Darpan won the men's individual rapid VI-B1 event, while the trio Darpan, Pradhan Kumar Soundarya and Ashwinbhai

Kanchanbhai Makwana took the team gold.

Other medallists:

Athletics: Bronze: Teik Chand (men's javelin F55); Pooja (women's 1500m T20).

Chess: Silver: Pradhan Kumar Soundarya (men's individual rapid VI-B1).

Bronze: Ashwinbhai Kanchanbhai Makwana (men's individual rapid VI-B1); Kishan Gangoli (men's individual rapid VI-B2/B3); Kishan Gangoli, Somendra and Arjan Balchandra Joshi (rapid VI-B2/B3 team); Vruthi Saganlal Jain, Himanshi Bhaveshkumar Rathvi, Sanskruti Vikas More (women's rapid VI-B1 team).

Rowing: Silver: Anita and Konganapalle Narayana (PR3 mixed double sculls).