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Two-day G20 summit concludes ● World leaders laud India's presidency ● Gavel to Brazilian President for 2024 summit

Modi pushes for UNSC expansion, proposes virtual meet in Nov

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday made a renewed push for expansion of the UN Security Council and reforms in global institutions to reflect the world's "new realities", as the G20 summit concluded here with world leaders lauding India's presidency for ensuring several tangible outcomes.

Marking the ceremonial transfer of the rotational G20 presidency, Prime Minister Modi handed over the gavel to Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who hailed India for giving voice to topics of interests of emerging economies.

Brazil will formally assume the G20 Presidency on December 1 this year.

Lula also said the UN Security Council needs new developing countries as permanent and non-permanent members to regain political strength and greater representation for emerging countries at the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In his concluding remarks at the final session of the two-day G20 summit, the Prime Minister also proposed a virtual session of the G20 around the end of November to take stock of the suggestions and decisions made by the leaders of the major de-

veloped and developing countries here.

"With this (proposal), I declare the G20 summit as closed," Modi said.

Modi, who noted that India's presidency of G20 would officially continue till November 30 and that over two-and-half months were left for its tenure as the head of the grouping, cited a Sanskrit shloka to pray for hope and peace in the entire world.

Official sources, meanwhile, said the text relating to Russia-Ukraine conflict in the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration is a "convergent consensus" rather than a "divisive consensus" and it could show a path to a resolution of the crisis, a day after a breakthrough on the contentious issue was achieved to help the G20 leaders come out with a 37-page Declaration marking a huge diplomatic win for India.

India achieved '100 per cent' consensus on developmental and geo-political issues in the Declaration, which avoided mentioning the Russian invasion of Ukraine and made a general call to all states to follow the principle of respecting each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Addressing the 'One Future' session at the sum-



mit, Modi said it is necessary that the global bodies should reflect the "new realities" to lead the world towards a better future.

"In order to take the world towards a better future, it is necessary that the global systems are according to the present realities. Today, the 'United Nations Security Council' is also an example of this. When the UN was established, the world was completely different from what it is today. At that time there were 51 founding members in the UN. Today the number of countries included in the UN is around 200," Modi said.

"Despite this, the number of permanent members in the UNSC remains the same. The world has since changed a lot in every aspect. Be it transport, communication, health and education, every sector has been transformed. These new realities should reflect in our new global structure." The UNSC has five permanent members - the US, China, France, Britain and Russia.

Pitching for reforms, Modi said this was why a historic initiative was made on Saturday by granting the 55-nation African Union (AU) permanent membership of the G20.

"Similarly, we also need to expand the mandate of multilateral development banks. Our decisions in this direction should be immediate and effective," said Modi, who also led G20 leaders in a

symbolic tree plantation ceremony at the swanky convention centre Bharat Mandapam to mark the 18th summit of the grouping which was established after the 1999 Asian financial crisis.

With India's G20 presidency ensuring several tangible outcomes, world leaders hailed Prime Minister Modi for his "decisive leadership" and for championing the voice of the Global South, sources said.

US President Joe Biden said the New Delhi summit has proven that the grouping can still drive solutions to its most pressing issues.

He made the remarks in a post on X as he left for Vietnam after he and several other G20 leaders paid homage at Mahatma Gandhi's memorial Rajghat in the morning.

"At a moment when the global economy is suffering from the overlapping shocks of the climate crisis, fragility, and conflict, this year's Summit proved that the G20 can still drive solutions to our most pressing issues," Biden said.

Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov told reporters that the G20 Summit under India's presidency was a "breakthrough" conclave in many ways as its outcomes (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Mega plantation drive to increase green cover, boost local economy: Himanta

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has emphasized the importance of the ongoing mega tree plantation drive in the state, highlighting its potential to enhance the local environment and boost the economy.

Sarma announced that the 'Amrit Brikshya Andolan' initiative, aimed at planting one crore saplings across the state this year, is set to expand next year with the plantation of three crore seedlings. He stated that the program will further extend in 2024 with the goal of planting three crore saplings.

Speaking at a sapling distribution event in Guwahati, Sarma explained that since the saplings are being planted in non-forest areas, this initiative will contribute to ex-

panding the state's green cover.

"As saplings are being planted in non-forest areas, it will help increase green cover. Also, we are distributing saplings of trees with commercial value and this will help boost the local economy," he said.

He further said that Assam's efforts to establish nine world records during this mega plantation drive are on track.

The initiative includes creating a Guinness World Record for tree plantation, with a 22-km line made up of 3.5 lakh saplings launched recently.

In addition to this record, other records to be attempted during the plantation program include achieving the highest participation in an online (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Stormy session on the cards

Autumn session of state Assembly from today
● Around 24 Bills likely to be tabled: Pijush

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: The Assam Legislative Assembly is set to convene its autumn session starting Monday.

Notably, this session will mark the first time the Assembly meets in the newly constructed Assam Assembly Building.

The session will be a stormy one as the opposition is planning to raise several pertinent issues during the five-day session.

Parliamentary affairs minister, Pijush Hazarika, addressed the media on Sunday and assured the public that the autumn session would proceed seamlessly in the newly equipped facility. A total of approximately 24 Bills are expected to be presented during this session.

Hazarika extended an appeal to all political parties to cooperate in ensuring the smooth conduct of



the session and urged the opposition parties to work in harmony with the government.

He detailed, "Nearly 23-24 bills will be tabled. Several colleges

have been converted or upgraded to universities. One Panchayati Raj bill will also be tabled, along with several other bills from various departments. The Assembly session will run both in the morning and evening shifts between September 14 and 15. We have decided to pass the bills after thorough discussions in the all-party meeting."

Furthermore, the minister promised to allocate time for opposition members to voice their concerns. He emphasized the importance of various bills, including the Panchayati Raj Amendment Bill and the conversion of several colleges into universities, which are scheduled to be presented during this session. However, he acknowledged that the passage of these bills might require more than two days of discussion.

BJP working more for welfare of Muslims than Cong: Assam CM

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday claimed that the BJP government is working more for the welfare of the Muslims than any Congress government had done previously.

He claimed that the Congress viewed the Muslims only as vote bank but the saffron party is working to free them, especially the women, from exploitation.

"Some people say that we are anti-Muslim. But I think that by stopping

polygamy, (triple) talaq, child marriage - we are working more for the Muslims than any Congress government ever did," Sarma said, speaking at the concluding day of a two-day national executive meet of BJP's Mahila Morcha.

He said the Assam government will bring a law to prohibit polygamy by December, while another round of intensified crackdown on child marriage will be launched within a few days.

More than 5,000 offenders were arrested in the first round of operation against child marriage in February this year and it was kept on hold till the completion of the G20 summit, he added.

Sarma maintained that many Islamic countries have ended "bad practices" but when "our country takes any such step, (Congress leaders) Rahul and Sonia Gandhi call it a step against the minority". He asserted all these measures are to (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



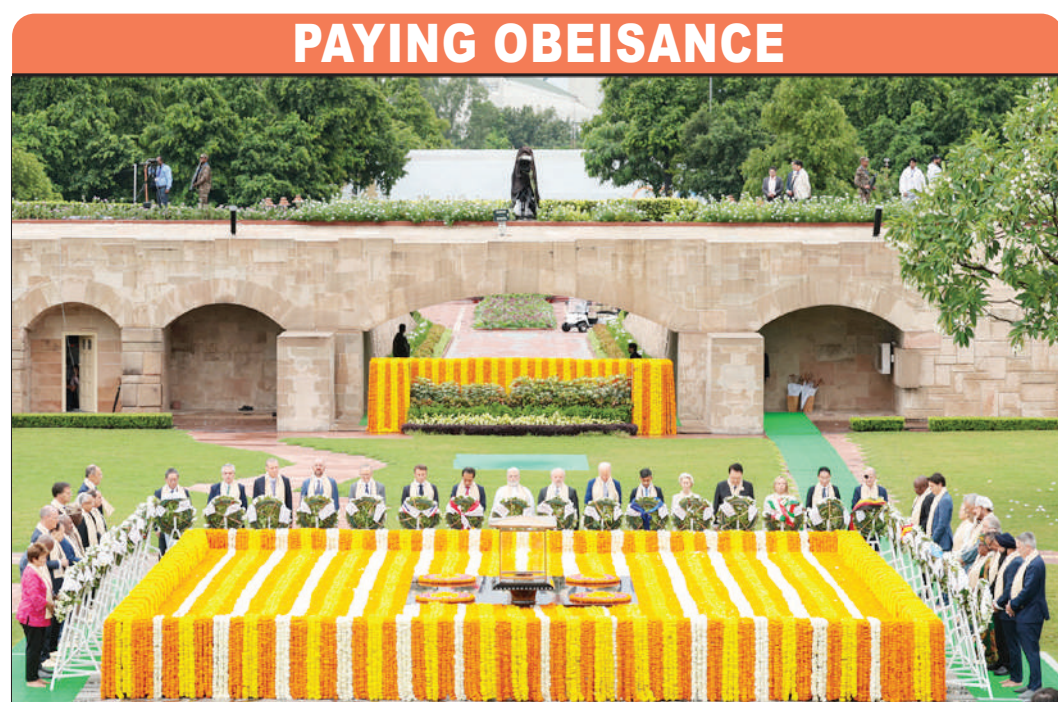
Heroin worth over ₹ 2 cr seized; four arrested

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: In a significant drug bust, authorities in Guwahati have arrested four individuals found in possession of heroin valued at over ₹ 2 crore. The operation was carried out by a team from the Jorabat outpost under the Basistha police station, acting on a credible tip-off.

On the eastern entry point to Guwahati city, a check-post was established, and during a thorough vehicle inspection, 251.2 grams of heroin were discovered in a car. In the early hours of Sunday, the four occupants of the vehicle were apprehended by law enforcement.

Sharing the news on social media, Guwahati Police on Sunday said, "An EGPD team from Jorabat OP of Basistha PS busted a gang of drug traffickers after it arrested 4 thugs - Prem Gogoi of 13 Mile, Bhaskarjyoti (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



PM and G20 leaders paying tribute at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat, in New Delhi on Sunday. PIB

Postgraduate course imparting practical training to develop quality HR in tea industry 7 batches pass out with almost 100 percent placement

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: In a bid to ensure quality human resources in Assam's 200-year-old tea industry, a postgraduate course has been imparting practical training in the gardens coupled with wide-ranging theoretical knowledge of plantation and management.

The North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) in collaboration with Golaghat Commerce College had started the one-year 'Post Graduate Diploma in Tea Plantation Management (PGDTPM)' in 2016, and since then, seven batches have passed out with almost 100 per cent placement, an official said.

"We decided to initiate the course to impart training to aspiring local youths desirous of working in the industry. Initially, we were not sure about how it will



evolve, but the journey has been inspiring with cent per cent placement, and even a foreign student from Zambia joining the course

this year," NETA chairman (CSR Committee) Sunil Jallan said.

Trained human resources are key for the survival and growth of an industry and "we decided that youths desiring to join the tea industry must have the necessary knowledge required", NETA advisor Bidyananda Barkakoty told PTI.

"The syllabus has been created by a team of industry and academia. It is focused on the industry and there are both theory and practical classes in the field (factory and plantation)," he said.

Barkakoty pointed out that this course was the "first of its kind" in industry-academia collaboration in the field of tea education. NETA members produce over 150 million kg of tea (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Aditya L1 successfully undergoes third earth-bound manoeuvre: ISRO

BENGALURU, Sept 10: Aditya L1 spacecraft, India's first space-based mission to study the Sun, successfully underwent its third earth-bound manoeuvre in the early hours of Sunday, ISRO said.

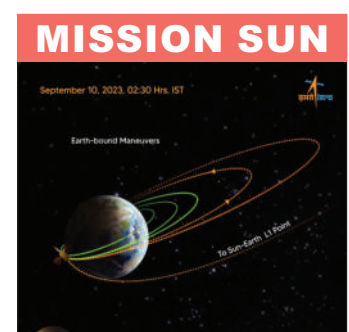
The space agency's Telemetry, Tracking and Command Network (ISTRAC) carried out the operation.

"The third Earth-bound manoeuvre (EBN#3) was performed successfully from ISTRAC, Bengaluru. ISRO's ground stations at Mauritius, Bengaluru, SDSC-SHAR and Port Blair tracked the satellite during this operation," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) said in a post on social media platform X.

The new orbit attained is 296 km x 71767 km, it said, adding the next manoeuvre is scheduled on September 15, around 2 am.

Aditya-L1 is the first Indian space-based observatory that will study the Sun from a halo orbit around the first Sun-Earth Lagrangian point (L1), which is located roughly 1.5 million km from the Earth.

The first and second earth-



bound manoeuvres were successfully performed on September 3 and 5, respectively. The spacecraft will undergo one more earth-bound orbital manoeuvres before it is placed in the transfer orbit towards the Lagrange point L1.

The manoeuvres are required to be performed during the spacecraft's 16-day journey around the earth, during which it will gain the velocity necessary for its onward journey to L1.

ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C57) had on September 2 successfully launched Aditya-L1 from the Second Launch Pad of Satish Dhawan Space (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Tiger injures four

HT Correspondent

DALGAON, Sept 10: A tiger has been causing panic in Kheroni Chapari, located under the jurisdiction of the Shyampur police station in Darrang district. The tiger has already attacked and seriously injured four people in the area, leading locals to accuse forest workers of negligence.

The first victim, Faizuddin, a middle-aged man from Kheroni Chapari village near the Orang National Park and Tiger Project, alerted locals to the presence of the tiger on Sunday morning. Concerned residents promptly notified the forest department.

However, the situation escalated when the tiger attacked another man, 25-year-old Azahar Ali, around 7 am on Sunday. Both victims were rushed to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital for treatment from Mangaldai Civil Hospital.

Despite the presence of forest workers who surrounded the tiger and attempted to monitor it, the big cat continued to move around uncontrollably. Large crowds gathered from different areas to witness the spectacle. Unfortunately, the forest workers failed to evacuate the people from the area, and due to this (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

'Welfare of tea garden workers is my motto' Guv Kataria attends tea workers' conclave



HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria attended a Tea Workers' Conclave organized by the Aadhunika India Foundation at the Srimanta Sankardev International Auditorium in Guwahati on Sunday.

In his address, Governor Kataria emphasised the importance of tea workers in the growth of the tea industry in Assam and reaffirmed the government's commitment to their welfare.

Despite celebrating two centuries of tea cultivation in the region, Governor Kataria acknowledged that the industry faced numerous challenges. He commended the state government for taking various steps to improve the socio-economic and academic conditions of tea workers and their families. However, he also noted that global challenges had slowed the sector's growth.

Governor Kataria pledged to personally convey the issues affecting the tea industry in Assam to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He expressed confidence that the Prime Minister's leadership, combined with proactive measures by the state government, would lead to a brighter future for the industry and the community. The Governor (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

Biden finds a new friend in Vietnam as American CEOs look for alternatives to Chinese factories



HANOI, Sept 10: President Joe Biden on Sunday opened a visit to a Vietnam that wants to dramatically ramp up trade with the United States, a sign of how competition with China is reshaping relationships across Asia.

The president has made it a point of pride that Vietnam is elevating the United States to the status of being a comprehensive strategic partner. Other countries that Vietnam has extended this designation to include China and Russia. Giving the US the same status suggests that the US wants to hedge its friendships as US and European companies look for alternatives to Chinese factories.

Biden, who arrived in Hanoi on Sunday afternoon, said last month at a fundraiser in Salt Lake City that Vietnam doesn't want a defense alliance with the US, "but they want relationships because they're not alone" and can choose its own partners. The president decided to tack a visit to Vietnam on to his trip to India for the Group of 20 summit that wrapped up Sunday. With China's economic slowdown and President Xi Jinping's consolidation of political power, Biden sees an opportunity to bring more nations - including Vietnam and Cambodia - into America's orbit.

"We find ourselves in a situation where all of these changes around the world are taking place," Biden explained last month about Vietnam. "We have an opportunity, if we're smart, to change the dynamic."

Biden was welcomed to Vietnam with a pomp-filled outdoor ceremony at the mustard-colored Presidential Palace. Scores of children lined the steps waving small US and Vietnam flags and Biden watched from an elevated review stand as high-stepping members of the military marched past.

The president waved to the children before he got into his limousine for the quick trip to Communist Party headquarters and a meeting with General Secretary Nguyen Phu Tong.

Jon Finer, Biden's chief deputy national security adviser, said the elevated status represents Vietnam's highest tier of international partnership.

"It's important to make clear that this is more than words," Finer told reporters Sunday aboard Biden's flight to Hanoi. "In a system like Vietnam, it's a signal to their entire government, their entire bureaucracy about the depth and cooperation and alignment with another country that is possible."

Finer noted a five-decade arc in US-Vietnam relations, from conflict during the Vietnam War to normalization and Vietnam's status as a top trading partner that also shares Washington's concerns over security in the South China Sea.

"We will be deepening that relationship through this visit," he added.

Finer also addressed reports that Vietnam was pursuing a deal to buy

weapons from Russia, even as it sought deeper ties to the United States. Finer acknowledged Vietnam's lengthy military relationship with Russia and said the US continues to work with Vietnam and other countries with similar ties to Russia to try to limit their interactions with a nation the US accuses of committing war crimes and violating international law with its aggression in Ukraine.

US trade with Vietnam has already accelerated since 2019. But there are limits to how much further it can progress without improvements to the country's infrastructure, its workers' skills and its governance. Nor has increased trade automatically put the Vietnamese economy on an upward trajectory.

Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said that the CEOs she talks with rank Vietnam highly as a place to diversify supply chains that before the pandemic had been overly dependent on China. Raimondo has been trying to broaden those supply chains through the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, an initiative Biden launched last year.

"Whether it's Vietnam or Malaysia, Indonesia, India, companies are really taking a hard look at those countries as places to do more business," Raimondo said. "It is also true that they need to improve their workforce, housing, infrastructure and, I'd say, transparency in government operations."

Vietnam's economic growth slipped during the first three months of 2023. Its exporters faced higher costs and weaker demand as high inflation worldwide has hurt the market for consumer goods.

Still, US imports of Vietnamese goods have nearly doubled since 2019 to \$127 billion annually, according to the Census Bureau. It is unlikely that Vietnam, with its population of 100 million, can match the scale of Chinese manufacturing. In 2022, China, with 1.4 billion people, exported four times as many goods to the US as did Vietnam.

There is also evidence that China is still central to the economies of many countries in the Indo-Pacific. A new analysis from the Peterson Institute of International Economics found that countries in IPEF received on average more than 30% of their imports from China and sent nearly 20% of their exports to China. This dependence has increased sharply since 2010.

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan saw an opening to broaden the US relationship with Vietnam when one of its top officials, Lê Hoài Trung, visited Washington on June 29.

After talking with Trung, Sullivan walked back to his office and decided after consulting with his team to issue a letter to the Vietnamese government proposing that the two countries take their trade and diplomatic relations to the highest possible level, according to an administration official who insisted on anonymity to discuss the details. (AP)

India forges compromise among divided world powers at the G20 summit

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi touted his country as well-placed to bridge gaps in the Group of 20 top economies and solve global problems, but many were skeptical ahead of the weekend's summit given grave divisions within the bloc over the Russia's war in Ukraine.

He was able to dispel those doubts, announcing a unanimous final agreement a day before the G20 summit ended Sunday that included language on the European war which both Russia and China signed off on.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said the group agreed to a "very strong" message. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called it a "success of Indian diplomacy," adding "many did not think that would be possible beforehand." And India's foreign minister, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, said the declaration "responds to the situation as it stands today."

The statement had softer wording than last year's G20 communiqué and failed to directly denounce Moscow. Instead, it cited a United Nations charter, saying "all states must refrain from the threat or use of force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state. But all countries agreed on the

declaration, allowing India to claim diplomatic success.

"This is the first declaration without a single footnote or a chair's summary," said Amitabh Kant, India's top G20 negotiator.

Some experts saw the agreement as a win for Russia, while others read it as an achievement for the West. But most concurred it was a foreign policy triumph for Modi as he pushes to increase India's influence on the world stage.

"India's statement embodies the voice of the emerging Global South," said Derek Grossman, an analyst focused on the Indo-Pacific at the RAND Corporation. "That is a coup for New Delhi, especially within the context of strategic competition against Beijing, helping it to become the leader of this bloc." At the summit Modi also announced the group had agreed to add the African Union as a permanent member and made progress on other key issues important to the developing nations of the Global South.

"We are seeing the G20 finally come into its own as a truly global entity, and emerging from the shadow of the G7," said Michael Kugelmann, director of the Wilson Center's South Asia Institute, referring to the Group of Seven major industrial nations.

"It's emerging as a successful case study of Western and non-



DIPLOMATIC WIN FOR MODI

Western powers and the Global South working together to pursue shared goals," he said.

The summit came at a time when Russia and China have been trying to put more emphasis on the more like-minded BRICS group — made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — which agreed at its summit last month to expand with six new members. Russian President Vladimir Putin and China's leader Xi Jinping skipped the G20 summit this year.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who took Putin's place at the summit, told reporters the "G20 is going through a crisis" and likened India's "absolute success" to an "internal reform."

"This was manifested in the sig-

nificant activation of members of the Group of 20 from the Global South with the leading role of India, who, very clearly and persistently, sought to take into account their interests," Lavrov said.

Beijing has been seeking to rally the Global South around a China-centric bloc, and Xi's absence from the meetings meant that Modi and others were able to "promote their own ideas and goals," said Michael Schuman, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council's Global China Hub.

With his diplomatic approach, Modi emerged as "probably the summit's big winner," and someone who is becoming an increasingly important player in international affairs, he said.

"Indian Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi showed that he is a force in the developing world as well and has a different vision of the relationship between the developed and developing worlds that is not as confrontational," Schuman said.

A senior European Union official who spoke on condition of anonymity in order to speak candidly about the talks said it was important not to have ended the summit for the first time without a final communiqué.

"I think India's strong leadership has preserved the G20 and opened the space for Brazil in the next presidency to work on global issues," he told reporters in New Delhi.

Heading into the summit, Modi had argued that the developing countries should have more say, noting that they are disproportionately impacted by many crises including climate change, food shortages and rising energy prices.

Many see that India has laid the groundwork for Brazil and South Africa — both influential members of the Global South — to continue along the same path as they take the G20 presidency for next two years.

"With the world facing so many borderless challenges and shortages of multilateralism, that type of truly global cooperation is the need of the hour," Kugelmann said. (AP)

Grasim Textiles plans to open 100-120 retail stores in smaller cities over next two years

KOLKATA, Sept 10: The textile division of Grasim Industries is planning to expand its footprint in smaller cities and towns by opening around 100-120 retail stores over the next couple of years, a senior official of the company said.

It also hopes for a surge in demand for textile products in the upcoming festive season.

"We are optimistic about the growth story of India. We plan to expand in both retail and wholesale businesses. Over the next two years, we plan to open 100-120 Linen Club retail stores in smaller cities and towns," Satyaki Ghosh, CEO, (Domestic Textiles), told PTI in an interview.

Linen Club is Grasim Textiles' premium brand of linen products. Linen comprises about one-third of the company's textile business of around Rs 3,000 crore.

Currently, Grasim Textiles has around 217 brand stores across the country.

Ghosh, who was in Kolkata to inaugurate a Linen Club store, said the company also plans to expand



its reach to 12,000 multi-brand retailers in these markets, from about 8,500 at present.

"This will help Grasim Textiles reach a wider audience and increase its market share," he said.

As part of its capex plan, the company has allocated Rs 122 crore for textiles, insulators, and other items in FY'24.

The textile industry, including apparel, had a sluggish demand trend in the first quarter of the current fiscal year. However, the demand started to pick up in July and August, driven by the Onam and Eid festivals, the official said.

Ghosh said the demand is expected to remain flat in the second quarter due to the delayed festive season. However, it is expected to

pick up in the third and fourth quarters, driven by the festive season and the stocking season for summer.

Overall, the company expects the demand for textiles to grow by 5-6 per cent in the current fiscal year.

Exports have also started to pick up, contributing about 25 per cent of the company's textile revenue. The company expects exports to continue to grow in the coming months.

In addition to offline expansion, Grasim Textiles will also focus on e-commerce, which accounts for 15-18 per cent of its retail sales.

"The company plans to introduce an omni-channel strategy in the future that will allow customers to leverage both offline and online channels," Ghosh said.

Grasim Textiles is also focusing on innovation and new product development. The company introduced a "waste-to-wealth" brand 'Cavallo', which is made from waste linen mixed with cotton. (PTI)

Markets to focus on trading activity of foreign investors this week

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Macroeconomic data announcements, global factors and trading activity of foreign investors would be the key triggers for the domestic stock markets this week, analysts said. Last week, the benchmark indices joined the broader market's party despite a host of negative global cues. In the broader market, the BSE midcap and smallcap gauges hit their all-time highs on Friday. "Despite last week's market rally, institutional investors remained net sellers throughout the week, making it crucial to monitor institutional flows going forward. On the global front, close attention will be paid to movement in crude oil prices, the dollar index, and US bond yields," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investment Ltd. Global factors such as the US inflation and the outcome of the ECB meeting will be of significance, Meena said adding that our IIP and CPI numbers are scheduled to be announced on September 12.

From the domestic macroeconomic front, industrial

production data for July and inflation data for August will be announced on Tuesday. "On the macro front, the market will react to some of the key domestic events such as India's CPI and WPI inflation, IIP numbers, manufacturing output. Major global events that can impact the market are US inflation, initial jobless claims, industrial production, crude oil inventories, UK GDP and IIP numbers would be in focus," Arvinder Singh Nanda, senior vice president, Master Capital Services Ltd, said. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said currently, the market is eagerly awaiting data on inflation and industrial production to provide further guidance.

Last week, the BSE benchmark jumped 878.4 points or 1.34 per cent and the Nifty climbed 384.65 points or 1.97 per cent. Domestic indices experienced a gradual rally throughout the week, buoyed by strong domestic macroeconomic data such as robust GDP and PMI figures, which painted a positive outlook for the domestic market, Nair said. (PTI)

Growth fundamentals of Indian aviation sector strong no slowdown seen: Boeing India chief

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Asserting that the Indian aviation sector's growth fundamentals are strong, aircraft maker Boeing has said that significant skilling of people to meet demand, rationalisation of fuel taxes and continued infrastructure investments will keep the growth going.

Boeing, which has hundreds of aircraft on order from Indian carriers, has also announced various investments, including USD 100 million for training pilots in the country. Besides, it has maintenance training partnerships with partners for having enough skilled mechanics in India.

"We see no slowdown (in India) and we continue to see very high load factors, extremely high rates of profitability amongst the airlines and we see extremely strong demand for aeroplanes as we have seen in some of the largest orders ever placed in the world."

"Overall, we see that demand grows. We are also seeing significant advancements in infrastructure as new terminals come up... new greenfield airports come up... That is going to be a boon to Indian aviation," Boeing India President Salil Gupte told PTI in a recent interview.

For many many years, he said all were expecting to see the significant growth in Indian aviation and it is now occurring in a very real way. India is one of the fastest growing civil aviation markets in the world and Indian carriers have around 1,500 planes on order. Earlier this year, Air India placed an order for 470 aircraft, including 220 planes from Boeing.

Indian carriers are expected to require more than 2,200 aircraft in the next 20 years. In order to tap the growth opportunities, Gupte said a few ingredients need to be put in place, including ensuring

that there are enough pilots and mechanics to fly all these aeroplanes.

"That is going to require significant skilling, it is going to require us to train 37,000 pilots and 38,000 mechanics over the next 20 years. That is one reason why Boeing has announced a USD 100 million investment in pilot training, which includes infrastructure and curriculum... in India to ensure that we are doing our part to skill those pilots."

"This is also the reason why we are entering into maintenance training partnerships among our partners to ensure that we have enough skilled mechanics in India as well," he said.

Further, Gupte noted that rationalisation of fuel taxes must continue.

"There has been a good progress made with states in the last few years but we need to continue to make that progress, especially in some larger states, so that the rate of taxation of jet fuel can come down closer to the global level."

"Right now, the cost of fuel for Indian airlines is far higher than many airlines outside India. That needs to be done to tap the growth as well. Then the continued investments in infrastructure," he said.

Gupte spoke to PTI on the sidelines of an aerospace conference recently held in Gwalior. India's domestic air passenger traffic is projected to grow further in the current fiscal.

Credit rating agency Icria, this month, said that after the fast-paced recovery in FY2023, the growth in domestic air passenger traffic is projected to be 8-13 per cent and touch 150-155 million in the current financial year. In FY20, before the coronavirus pandemic, the traffic was at 141.2 million passengers. (PTI)

Artificial intelligence technology behind ChatGPT was built in Iowa — with a lot of water

DES MOINES, Sept 10: The cost of building an artificial intelligence product like ChatGPT can be hard to measure.

But one thing Microsoft-backed OpenAI needed for its technology was plenty of water, pulled from the watershed of the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers in central Iowa to cool a powerful supercomputer as it helped teach its AI systems how to mimic human writing.

As they race to capitalize on a craze for generative AI, leading tech developers including Microsoft, OpenAI and Google have acknowledged that growing demand for their AI tools carries hefty costs, from expensive semiconductors to an increase in water consumption.

But they're often secretive about the specifics. Few people in Iowa knew about its status as a birthplace of OpenAI's most advanced large language model, GPT-4, before a top Microsoft executive said in a speech it "was literally made next to cornfields west of Des Moines."

Building a large language model requires analyzing patterns across a huge trove of human-written text. All of that computing takes a lot of electricity and generates a lot of heat. To keep it cool on hot days, data centers need to pump in

water — often to a cooling tower outside its warehouse-sized buildings.

In its latest environmental report, Microsoft disclosed that its global water consumption spiked 34% from 2021 to 2022 (to nearly 1.7 billion gallons, or more than 2,500 Olympic-sized swimming pools), a sharp increase compared to previous years that outside researchers tie to its AI research.

"It's fair to say the majority of the growth is due to AI," including "its heavy investment in generative AI and partnership with OpenAI," said Shaolei Ren, a researcher at the University of California, Riverside who has been trying to calculate the environmental impact of generative AI products such as ChatGPT.

In a paper due to be published later this year, Ren's team estimates ChatGPT gulps up 500 milliliters of water (close to what's in a 16-ounce water bottle) every time you ask it a series of between 5 to 50 prompts or questions. The range varies depending on where its servers are located and the season. The estimate includes indirect water usage that the companies don't measure — such as to cool power plants that supply the data centers with electricity.



Most people are not aware of the resource usage underlying ChatGPT," Ren said. "If you're not aware of the resource usage, then there's no way that we can help conserve the resources."

Google reported a 20% growth in water use in the same period, which Ren also largely attributes to its AI work. Google's spike wasn't uniform -- it was steady in Oregon where its water use has attracted public attention, while doubling outside Las Vegas. It was also thirsty in Iowa, drawing more potable water to its Council Bluffs data centers than anywhere else.

In response to questions from The Associated Press, Microsoft said in a statement this week that it is investing in

research to measure AI's energy and carbon footprint "while working on ways to make large systems more efficient, in both training and application."

"We will continue to monitor our emissions, accelerate progress while increasing our use of clean energy to power data centers, purchasing renewable energy, and other efforts to meet our sustainability goals of being carbon negative, water positive and zero waste by 2030," the company's statement said.

OpenAI echoed those comments in its own statement Friday, saying it's giving "considerable thought" to the best use of computing power.

"We recognize training large models can be energy and water-intensive" and work to improve efficiencies, it said. Microsoft made its first \$1 billion investment in San Francisco-based OpenAI in 2019, more than two years before the startup introduced ChatGPT and sparked worldwide fascination with AI advancements. As part of the deal, the software giant would supply computing power needed to train the AI models.

To do at least some of that work, the two companies looked to West Des Moines, Iowa, a city of 68,000 people where Mi-

crosoft has been amassing data centers to power its cloud computing services for more than a decade. Its fourth and fifth data centers are due to open there later this year.

"They're building them as fast as they can," said Steve Gaer, who was the city's mayor when Microsoft came to town. Gaer said the company was attracted to the city's commitment to building public infrastructure and contributed a "staggering" sum of money through tax payments that support that investment.

"But, you know, they were pretty secretive on what they're doing out there," he added.

Microsoft first said it was developing one of the world's most powerful supercomputers for OpenAI in 2020, declining to reveal its location to AP at the time but describing it as a "single system" with more than 285,000 cores of conventional semiconductors, and 10,000 graphics processors — a kind of chip that's become crucial to AI workloads.

Experts have said it can make sense to "pretrain" an AI model at a single location because of the large amounts of data that need to be transferred between computing cores. (AP)

Students, faculty from Stanford University visit Sri City

CHENNAI, Sept 10: A 20-member delegation comprising faculty and students from the Stanford University, United States, visited the Sri City near here to study about the industrial development in the region, an official said.

The students of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) department of the California-based University, led by professor Mykel Kochenderfer were received by Sri City president-operations Satish Kamat.

Sri City situated about 100 km from Chennai is home to 210 industrial units from 28 countries. Some of the companies which have set up shop include PepsiCo, Cadburys, Colgate-Palmolive.

Addressing the delegates, Sri City chairman C Srinji Raju said in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, different sustainability initiatives were implemented and practiced, including solar power generation and water management. (PTI)

UNESCO expert team to assess Charaideo Maidam for World Heritage status

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: An expert team from UNESCO is scheduled to visit the Charaideo Maidam site on October 7, with the aim of evaluating preservation efforts, management strategies, future plans, and the roles of various stakeholders involved.

Charaideo Maidam is renowned for housing over 90 royal burial mounds and is often referred to as the 'Pyramids of Assam'. The Indian government has proposed this historic site for inclusion in the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage list. If granted this status, Assam will boast three world heritage sites, alongside Kaziranga National Park and Manas National Park.

Located approximately 30 km from Sivasagar town, Charaideo was the original capital of the Ahom dynasty, which ruled Assam



from the 13th to the 18th centuries. The site stands as a symbol of Ahom power and culture.

Prior to the UNESCO team's visit, a group of ministers (GoM) appointed by the Assam govern-

ment to oversee the restoration efforts at Maidam site inspected the archaeological site on Saturday. The ministerial team, comprising Keshab Mahanta, Nandita Gorlosa, Jogen Mohan, and Jayanta Mal-

labaruah, assessed structural conservation work, protective measures, excavation requirements, infrastructure development, and landscaping at the site. They also visited the museum situated within the archaeological site's premises.

Following the site inspection, the GoM convened a meeting at Suikapha Museum to review the renovation activities. In this meeting, chairman Barthaakur instructed all relevant officials to expedite necessary preparations ahead of the UNESCO team's visit.

During their two-day visit, the UNESCO experts will engage with government officials, archaeologists, and local stakeholders to discuss preservation and site management strategies. This visit holds the potential to propel Charaideo Maidam onto the global stage as a recognised World Heritage Site.

Kastuba Gandhi Balika Vidalaya Hostel inaugurated in Deithor, Karbi Anglong



HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 10: Richard Tokbi, the Executive Member (EM) of Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC) for Education, inaugurated a 100-bed girls hostel at Deithor Higher Secondary School, known as Kastuba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV).

During the inauguration, EM Tokbi expressed his gratitude to Tuliram Ronghang, the chief executive member (CEM) of KAAC, for allocating this scheme to his constituency. He highlighted how this hostel would significantly benefit girls coming from different places who are pursuing their education in various institutions across the Deithor area.

EM Tokbi also advised the students to maintain discipline and focus on their studies. He emphasized that parents should be conscious of their children's activities

and ensure they do not engage in negative habits like alcohol consumption, smoking, chewing pan masala, or drug use. He urged students to make the most of their time for studies, recognizing the financial sacrifices made by their parents for their education. Tokbi encouraged students to spend their time wisely on their academic pursuits and avoid unnecessary distractions such as recreation centers and picnics.

The inaugural event was attended by various dignitaries, including Sarkoi Rongphar, the VDC chairman; Nirupama Timungpi, joint secretary of KAAC; Birensing Engti, Inspector of Schools for Karbi Anglong Circle; Khonsing Ronghang and Mayadi Hasnu from the district programme officer, SSA; and Nirmal Saikia, Principal of Deithor Higher Secondary School.

New committee takes charge of AATHGA in Morigaon

HT Correspondent

MORIGAON, Sept 10: The district committee of the All Assam Trained Home Guard Association (AATHGA) in Morigaon has undergone a change as a new committee was formed to enhance the organisation's functioning. The formation of the new committee took place at the auditorium hall of Congress Bhawan during a general meeting held for this purpose.

The newly established committee is led by president Abu Nosar, working president Sanat Das, and secretary Anjal Nath. The decision to form this new committee stems from a lack of confidence in the old committee's abilities. During the meeting, the newly appointed committee pledged to work collaboratively for the betterment of the organisation.

11th Assam Girls(I) COY NCC cadets raise awareness on plastic pollution



HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Sept 10: On Saturday, the cadets of the 11th Assam Girls(I) COY NCC in Sivasagar performed a street play in front of the historic Siva Doul to address the issue of plastic pollution. They also organised a procession to raise awareness about this pressing concern. The street play featured role-playing that highlighted the dangers posed to modern society due to the excessive use of plastics.

The event was led by Lt. Col. BKK Vamsi, CO of the 11th Assam NCC, along with instructor Hav DC Meena, Hav Sanjay B, NK Gomar, and ANO Captain Arafah Begum from Sivasagar Girls' College.

Additional two-minute train stoppages for passenger convenience on NFR

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: In a move to enhance passenger convenience, several trains on the Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR) will now have an additional two-minute stoppage at designated stations.

As part of this decision, train no 05671/05672 (Guwahati - Ranchi - Guwahati) Special will include an extra stop at Bagdogra station effective from September 9, 2023. For train no 05671 (Guwahati - Ranchi) Special, commencing its journey on September 9, 2023, it will arrive at Bagdogra at 22:00 hours and depart at 22:02 hours. For train no 05672 (Ranchi - Guwahati) Special, beginning its journey on September 10, 2023, it will arrive at Bagdogra at 12:20 hours and depart at 12:22 hours. This additional stoppage aims to improve passenger access and convenience along the NFR route.

Teej celebrated with zest in Samar Dalani

HT Correspondent

BISWANATH CHARIALI, Sept 10: The vibrant Teej festival, organised by Samridhi Mahila Gosthi in Lakhargarh, was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the Lakhargarh auditorium, featuring a day-long program that showcased the rich cultural traditions of the Gorkha community. The festivities commenced with traditional Gorkha rituals in the morning.

The open session, presided over by Anu Boral, the president of Samridhi Mahila Gosthi, began with the lighting of earthen lamps by Tanka Maya Devi and a harmonious chorus. Dimbeswari Devi, a distinguished social worker, inaugurated the open session.

During the event, various speakers, including Gita

Devi, Rita Devi, and Ranjita Devi, elaborated on the origins and significance of the Teej festival. The program also featured a series of cultural performances, adding to the festive atmosphere.

Anju Devi, the secretary of Samridhi Mahila Gosthi, presented the secretary's proceedings, while Gita Devi, a senior member, extended a vote of thanks to all attendees and participants. Eminent personalities and dignitaries from the Samar Dalani region graced the occasion.

Teej is a major festival celebrated by the Gorkha community, marked by a combination of feasting and fasting by women, and this event beautifully showcased its cultural richness.

Himanta questions legitimacy of 'Gandhi' surname of ex-PM Indira and family

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Sunday questioned the legitimacy of former Prime Minister late Indira Gandhi and her family members using the 'Gandhi' surname, calling them 'sardar of duplicates'.

He also slammed the Congress for using the word 'INDIA' as the acronym for the opposition bloc Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance, claiming that the grand old party uses India and Bharat as per its political convenience.

"I have said to them (Gandhis) that you are the 'sardar of duplicates'. (Mahatma) Gandhi ji gave us independence and they grabbed the surname. All are duplicate Gandhis," Sarma said, addressing the concluding day of the two-day national executive of BJP's Mahila Morcha.

"My humble request to Rahul

Gandhi ji, please leave your duplicate surname as it is not original," said Sarma who quit the Congress in 2015 to join the BJP.

On opposition bloc INDIA, Sarma accused the Congress of not doing anything for the country when it was in power, and claimed that it was only after Narendra Modi became the PM, that a strong sense of patriotism was being imbued among the people.

"You (Congress) all have committed a big sin by taking the name of INDIA as you had never done anything to increase the pride of India. You only worked to increase your family's clout and fragmented the country. You don't have to right to call yourself India or Bharat," he said.

Sarma also took a dig at Congress 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', stating that the party had used the word 'Bharat' then as Karnataka state elections were due and has now as per political convenience, moved on to use 'India'. He said that though 'India' is also used to mean the country, great saints and sages had referred to it as 'Bharat' and he was following their footsteps in choosing the name. (PTI)

Dr Bichitra Bikash and Gouri Prasad Sarmah receive National Employability Award



HT Correspondent

NAGAON, Sept 10: Dr Bichitra Bikash, assistant registrar (Academic), and Gouri Prasad Sarmah,

assistant public relations officer at Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya, have been honoured with the Making India

Employability Award-2023.

These awards were presented in recognition of their outstanding contributions to education and employability during the Making India Employability Conference and Awards Ceremony held at the Novotel India International Airport Hotel in Mumbai on September 8. The esteemed jury panel responsible for selecting the awardees included former vice-chancellor of SNDT University, Professor Basud Kamat, CEO IDCA Runa Balwani, executive director of UNO Rajiv Kapoor, and renowned national writer and columnist Siddharth Pai.

The awards ceremony saw the presence of notable figures such as Professor Manpreet Singh Manna, pro vice-chancellor of Chandigarh University; Professor Hemchandra Reddy, chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Education Council; Runa Balwani, CEO of Deaf Cricket Association; and various other dignitaries. The event was jointly organised by the India Education Forum and India Employees Forum, as stated in a release.

Mysterious death of 20-year-old girl found on Dibrugarh bypass

HT Correspondent

DIBRUGARH, Sept 10: In a shocking turn of events, the lifeless body of a 20-year-old girl, identified as Mehek Sharma, was discovered on the Dibrugarh town bypass at approximately 4:15 am on Sunday, under puzzling circumstances. Preliminary reports suggest that the body exhibited severe injury marks and was found sprawled on the road near a car bearing registration number AS-06-AH-1143, positioned in the middle of the bypass. In a baffling twist, a man identified as Aziz Ahmed, also known as Munna, was found lying on the road near the deceased girl, with no apparent injuries. The car belonged to Aziz Ahmed.

Mehek Sharma was a resident of the Khalihamari area of

Dibrugarh, while Aziz Ahmed hailed from Majjan in Dibrugarh. Initial investigations have revealed that Aziz Ahmed, a married man and father of two, had been pressuring Mehek Sharma to engage in a relationship with him for the past six months. Reportedly, Ahmed had taken Mehek for a drive in his car at around 3:30 pm on Saturday. Authorities discovered bloodstains inside the vehicle and scratch marks on Aziz Ahmed's neck.

Notably, Ahmed's car, found at the scene, showed no signs of damage, dent, or scratches, effectively ruling out the possibility of being involved in an accident.

Dibrugarh SP Shwetank Mishra stated that Aziz Ahmed has been taken into custody, and a thorough investigation is

underway. "We are investigating the incident, and scientific evidence is being analysed," Mishra affirmed.

Meanwhile, Mehek's mother, Moushumi Sharma, alleged that her daughter was murdered by Aziz Ahmed.

"My daughter has been murdered by Aziz Ahmed. He has been troubling my daughter for the last six months. I'm a teacher and used to live alone with my daughter. When I threatened to file a police complaint against him, he threatened us with dire consequences. Yesterday at 3:30 pm, he forcibly took her out for a drive. At 8:30 pm, she called, saying that she was having dinner in a dhaba. That was the last phone call from her. Aziz Ahmed killed her in cold blood," Moushumi Sharma declared.

Karbi Anglong farmers revive millet farming tradition

Local farmer Thengklong Rongpi champions millet farming, promoting sustainability and tradition

HT Bureau

DIPHU, Sept 10: In response to the government's push to promote millet cultivation, local farmers in Karbi Anglong are increasingly turning to millet farming. Among them, Thengklong Rongpi of Hidasajir has taken up millet cultivation alongside a mix of indigenous vegetables and spices.

Last Saturday, this reporter visited Thengklong Rongpi's farmland in Hidasajir, on the outskirts of Diphu town, where he has been growing millet. Thengklong, who began millet cultivation last year as part of mixed cropping with paddy, has now expanded to three bighas (a unit of land measurement).

Discussing his millet cultivation, Thengklong explained, "Last year, I started growing millet alongside paddy in a small area. This year, I expanded to three bighas. Due to the soil's extreme dryness during the sowing season, the millet seeds didn't germinate in some areas. There are different types of millets like Foxtail Millet (Kakum/Kangni), Finger Millet (Ragi),



Sorghum Millet (Jowar), Pearl Millet (Bajra), Little Millet (Moraiyo), and Proso Millet (Chena/Barri). However, I am cultivating Foxtail Millet, which is a local variety."

Thengklong's decision to cultivate millet was motivated by a desire to revive old tra-

ditions. In the past, the older generation of Karbi people cultivated various millets, along with paddy and spices, using the jhum (slash-and-burn) cultivation method in the hills. These millets, alongside rice and maize, were staples of their diet. Thengklong aims to revive this tradition.

He mentioned that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millet to encourage increased millet production, and people should support this initiative.

Millet, unlike paddy, requires less water and can thrive in dry and high-temperature conditions. It has a short growing season and high productivity. Millet is also rich in nutrients, containing iron, protein, fibre, and minerals like calcium and magnesium. Its low glycaemic index makes it suitable for individuals with high blood sugar levels, and it is an excellent source of dietary fibre that helps lower bad cholesterol.

Thengklong dries the harvested millets by hanging them in bunches on bamboo poles at home. He has not yet considered selling the harvested millets in the market but plans to sell them in bunches to those in need of seeds. He sells one bunch for Rs 100. Thengklong expressed his interest in providing seeds to individuals looking to take up millet cultivation and plans to focus solely on millet farming in a larger area next year.

Governor distributes award of excellence to meritorious students

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: Assam Governor Gulab Chand Kataria presented the Assam Governor's Award for Excellence to meritorious students for the year 2023 during a ceremony held at Gauhati Commerce College. The awards were given to students who achieved outstanding academic performance in various fields.

The recipients of the Assam Governor's Award for Excellence included Krishna Maheshwari, who secured First Class First position in B.Com 2023, Ishika Mahanta, who achieved First Class First Position in BBA 2022, Krishnakshi Chakravarty, who secured First Class Fifth in M.Com 2022, Aditya Sahu, First rank in MBA 2022, and Noreen Rahman, First rank in MBA 2023.

During the event, Governor Kataria congratulated the students and expressed his deep appreciation for the teachers who played a crucial role in their success. He thanked the teachers who have served the institution since its inception.

Governor Kataria highlighted the importance of recognizing and rewarding academic excellence, noting that it not only provides financial support but also encourages and inspires students to excel in their studies. He praised the efforts of the former Governor of Assam, Shri Jagdish Mukhi, for initiating these annual awards for meritorious students.

The Governor also emphasized the positive trend of female students achieving academic success and participating in various fields, including scientific endeavors like Chandrayaan-3. He noted that in universities, the enrollment of female students often surpasses that of male students.

Governor Kataria acknowledged the significant role of teachers in nurturing talent and guiding students towards success. He encouraged teachers to identify and mentor students to contribute to the development of the nation and help India become a global leader.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

One fails forward toward success.
- Charles Kettering

Fostering diplomacy and reality check

In the lead-up to the G20 summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had enthusiastically touted the event as a "people's festival", celebrating India's G20 agenda with Bollywood flair. Yet, as the world's spotlight turns toward India, international media has been increasingly critical of Modi's leadership style on the global stage. According to recent research by the Pew Research Institute, a substantial 68 percent of polled Indians believe that India is "getting stronger". However, this sentiment does not necessarily resonate with the rest of the G20 nations, including the United States, where no more than a third share this view. In fact, nearly half of respondents from other G20 countries feel that little has changed in terms of India's global influence. While governments play a crucial role in shaping a nation's image, it is essential to recognise that people and civil society institutions also contribute significantly. Official propaganda can sometimes be self-serving and ultimately unproductive. Take, for example, China's situation, where despite growing unpopularity in the West at the government level, the country continues to attract more Western tourists and business than India. Public perceptions are just as vital as government-to-government relations, and sometimes even more so.

Unfortunately, the Modi government's approach toward Pakistan and China has seen a deterioration in diplomatic relations, accompanied by a reduction in people-to-people contact. Apart from sporadic cricket matches that often resemble battles, there is minimal social interaction between Indian and Pakistani civil societies. This lack of social contact extends to tourism, cultural exchanges, and academic programs, not just with Pakistan but also with China. All three governments share the blame for this situation. However, it is in India's national interest to encourage greater civil society contact across borders, especially with academia. Neighbours should be more open to each other's media presence, which would foster understanding. Media can play a pivotal role in bridging gaps in perceptions. For instance, the Indian journalist Pallavi Aiyer's book about life in China, though a decade old, stands as a testament to the power of such interactions. The absence of extensive media contact also explains India's heavy reliance on Western perspectives when it comes to China.

While Indian society and culture maintain a certain appeal across much of Asia, including China, the same cannot always be said for Indian elite attitudes and prejudices. Indian elites are often seen as arrogant, pro-Western, and lacking in cultural and nationalistic spirit. This perception has led many in China to reach out to activists and intellectuals affiliated with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in the past, favouring conversations in Hindi and Mandarin over English. However, recent shifts in Indian attitudes present challenges to a deeper understanding of its important neighbours. As India asserts itself on the global stage, it must not lose sight of the significance of people-to-people relations in shaping its image and diplomatic success. While governments engage in tough stances on national issues, encouraging civil society contact and cultural exchanges with neighbours, including Pakistan and China, is crucial. Such interactions can help bridge gaps, foster better understanding, and ensure that India's global influence is not just a government claim but a reality acknowledged by the world. In the end, the strength of a nation lies not only in its leaders but also in its people and their connections with the world.

INDIA alliance has really got its mojo in Uttar Pradesh before the 2024 polls

By Sushil Kuttu

The Ghosi assembly constituency in Uttar Pradesh was going the INDIA way and the BJP couldn't have been in a worse place at noon September 8 when votes were being counted. At the end of the day, INDIA had nudged its first victory en route to the 2024 general elections. Seven bypolls in six states and the first time the INDIA block was testing the BJP-led NDA of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was staring at a massive defeat. That would be one up for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and zero for the Yogi Adityanath.

In recent years and months, there has been a lot of literature on how the monk Chief Minister was threatening to overtake Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the people's favourite. The likelihood of Modi giving way to Yogi at the helm in 2029 was often bandied about in Social Media.

The Yogi has several advantages over the 'Vishwaguru' and hardcore supporters of the BJP have a distinct liking for the shaven-headed monk-turned-politician who is often referred to as 'Bulldozer Baba'. Modi just cannot conjure the same inspired imagery that the Yogi does. And though there is nothing to back it up, an intra-party rivalry between the Yogi and Modi isn't hard to envisage. That being said, would the BJP waste time on intra-party conspiracies? The only rivalry there is, is the INDIA-BJP fight for the conquest of India. And Ghosi happens to be "Panipat" in this first battle for electoral supremacy leading up to 2024. Unfortunately, for the BJP, Ghosi was going INDIA's way and it was getting to be past noon.

The BJP was sliding and sliding fast. BJP candidate Dara Singh Chauhan, who had left the BJP to join the Samajwadi Party had returned to the BJP and was in a hurry to throw in the towel. By afternoon September 8, after 21 rounds of counting out of the total of 35, he appeared to be getting his wish. Voters were voting against price rise and other poorly placed economic indices. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's bluffs were being called. The INDIA supported SP candidate

was leading by 24802 votes and there is every sign that the lead is going to be bigger.

Contrary to expectations, Udhayanidhi Stalin's Sanatana Dharma bashing did not leave any impact on voting. The 7 bypolls were being seen as a test for both alliances, the BJP-led NDA and the INDIA grouping. Victory or loss would decide which alliance stood that early chance to top the chart. For the INDIA block, a win in Ghosi would brighten up the horizon. For the BJP, a defeat would be a setback to the highflying Yogi. It would also demoralize Prime Minister Narendra Modi. There will be implications for Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Telangana. If the BJP loses all four states, or even one or two, there would be hell to pay for Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His stock will fall like a wet-stone. The knives will be out for him. Don't forget the RSS doesn't think Modi has the mojo this time to take the BJP through. The RSS is waiting for Modi's house of cards to fall. So the Ghosi bypoll will decide which alliance has the edge. It is a test for INDIA and a challenge for the BJP-led NDA. Winning the bypolls in Tripura and losing the bypoll in Kerala wouldn't matter, it is Ghosi which has to be won. And at the halfway point, the Samajwadi Party was winning by a huge margin.

Also on test is the BJP strategy of poaching opposition legislators. Not every deserter gets the plum he deserted for. Victory in Ghosi will establish the one candidate-one constituency formula. An understanding of seat-sharing will make it by far easier. The question is how the BJP will get out of the hole it has dug itself into?

The bypolls were held in Bageshwar in Uttarakhand, Ghosi in Uttar Pradesh, Puthuppal in Kerala, Dhurguri in West Bengal, Dumri in Jharkhand, and Boxanagar and Dhanpur in Tripura. About 4.30 lakh voted in the Ghosi bypoll. The SP's Sudhakar Singh was leading the BJP's Dara Singh Chauhan throughout the day and by 3 pm Sudhakar Singh was a clear winner. Will the BJP run out of options after the Ghosi defeat? (IPA Service)

Sankaradeva: Visionary reformer shaping Assamese identity

The tales of this remarkable individual seem never-ending, with accomplishments that stretch beyond measure. His heart is as vast and giving as the open sky, his creative output as expansive as the endless Pacific Ocean, and his life, a dedication to the entire world. Nevertheless, this article aims to provide a concise glimpse into Sankaradev's remarkable contributions.

Sankaradeva introduced a religion known as Nava Vaishnavism. This faith stands for truth, love, beauty, goodness, non-violence, equality, and humanity. He aimed to make it a religion for those who were oppressed and less fortunate in society. He drew inspiration from the Gita, Bhagavad Gita, and Padma Purana to build the core beliefs of this religion. The essence of the Vedas, which are ancient scriptures, lies in the Upanishads or Vedanta, and the essence of the Upanishads is found in the Gita. Sankaradeva blended the best teachings of the Gita, Bhakti Yoga, and surrendering to the virtuous God 'Krishna' into his religion.

In Sankaradeva's faith, actions, knowledge, and meditation are empty without devotion. His religion is universal because devotion to God is at the heart of all religions worldwide, even if the name of God may differ in various languages.

Sankaradeva's religion is rooted in the Bhagavad Gita, which revolves around the love for the virtuous God Krishna. It's all about worshipping God by listening to and singing the praises of Krishna, which is the core of Sankaradeva's faith. His religion goes by different names like Eksharan Namdharma, Bhagavat Dharma, or Bhaktidharma. Sankaradeva believed that the deity to be worshipped was Krishna, who he saw as the Supreme Brahman. In this religion, there's no initiation; instead, there's surrender. Surrender involves four aspects: the name, the god (Krishna), the guru, and the devotee. Key elements of Sankaradeva's faith include devotion, surrender, worship of the virtuous God, listening and chanting, Eksharan Namdharma, monotheism

(belief in one God), non-dual thinking, dasyabhakti (devotion as a servant), and the significance of the name, god, guru, and devotee. This religion doesn't involve worshipping multiple gods and goddesses, making sacrifices, or supporting caste discrimination.

Srimanta Sankaradeva didn't just reshape religion; he also sparked a wave of creativity in Assamese literature and culture. He wrote numerous books to teach and spread his religious teachings. His impact extended beyond spirituality and into the realm of literature. Inspired by his devotion, poets, writers, and scholars like Anant Kandali, Ram Saraswati, Baikunthnath Kabiratna, Sridhar Kandali, Bhawanipal Gopal Ata, Ramcharan Tagore, Daityari Tagore, and Gopalcharan Dwij joined in, creating a vibrant literary movement.

Sankaradeva's literary works were powerful tools in spreading devotionism. One of his remarkable creations, the 26-volume Kirtan Ghosha, stands as an exemplary piece of devotional literature. For over five centuries, both Sankardev's Kirtan Ghosha and Madhavdev's Namghosha have been pivotal in the practice of Namkirtan in Assam's Satras and Namghars. Sankaradeva's translation of the Bhagavad Gita into eight fluid Assamese verses is noteworthy, covering twelve Skandas of the original. His poetic talents shine in works like the Harichandra Upakhyaana, Rukminiharan Kavya, and Uttarakhand from various Puranas. He also enriched Nava Vaishnav-era poetry with creations like the Ajamilopakhyaana, Amrit Manthan, Balisalan, Kurukshetra, and Nimi Navasiddha Sambad from the Bhagavad Gita's different Skandas.

Sankaradeva was a trailblazer in Assamese literature, penning six plays and staging dramatic performances known as bhaonas. He was like the Shakespeare of Assamese literature, pioneering the use of mythological stories in



plays about a hundred years earlier. He cleverly used these plays as a way to spread his religious teachings among the common people. Sankaradeva's six plays are: Patni Prasad, Kulkidaman, Kaligopal, Rukminiharan, Parijat Haran, and Ramvijay.

Sankaradeva's impact extended beyond religion and literature; he ignited a cultural renaissance. Renowned artist Jyoti Prasad Agrawal hailed Srimanta Sankaradeva as the guru of our culture. He named this culture 'Krishna,' emphasizing the significance of these two facets of life. Recognizing the importance of physical beauty, Sankaradeva prioritized physical fitness through exercise. He also practiced celibacy and yoga to attain control over his body, mind, and emotions, aiming for physical strength and mental stability. Despite being a householder, he demonstrated how one could lead a worldly life without being shackled by worldly desires, and he encouraged others to do the same.

Sankaradeva was a true polymath, excelling in various fields like poetry, music, architecture, sculpture, and writing. He wasn't just a scholar; he composed songs and plays, created melodies and rhythms, choreographed dances, played instruments, sang, and acted – a remarkably talented artist. He lived a culturally rich life and encouraged his followers to do the same. In Sankaradeva's society, devotees were also artists.

They sang, danced, acted, and contributed to their community through their everyday tasks, following Sankaradeva's inspiring example. Sankaradeva believed that religion and daily life should be intertwined. He taught people how to conduct themselves from the moment they woke up in the morning until they went to bed at night. He emphasized that an individual's life should seamlessly merge with the life of the community and society as a whole. This meant guiding people on how to behave, interact, act, feel, think, and believe in a way that harmonized with their religious beliefs and contributed positively to the greater social fabric.

Sankaradeva's contributions were truly remarkable. He introduced an inclusive and universal religion, laid the foundation for Assamese literature, and played a crucial role in shaping the Assamese nation through a revolutionary culture. His efforts weren't just theoretical; he stood up against the decline of royal power and the oppression of the Ahom rulers. His actions were instrumental in uniting the Assamese people and breaking down barriers. Sankaradeva's revolutionary mindset, which promoted equality for all in society, was a key factor in the formation of the Assamese nation. He elevated devotees by giving them names like Govinda, Jaihari, Narottam, and even recognized the contributions of a Muslim tailor named Chandsai. Sadly, it's crucial to recognize that neglecting his ideals can jeopardize the unity of the

Assamese nation. Sankaradeva aimed to make his accomplishments accessible to everyone in society, regardless of their caste, community, or social standing. He wanted everyone to participate in Namdharma, his teachings. To foster social cohesion, he established various types of Namghar and Satra, which served as unique institutions for community building. Nowhere else in India could you find such an innovative and effective approach to promoting unity and discipline in society through Namghar and Satra. These places were open to people of all castes and communities, emphasizing inclusivity and bringing people together.

Namghar and Satra were more than just places of worship; they served multiple roles in the community. They weren't solely religious institutions; they were also hubs for village development and even served as courts. In a way, you could think of Namghar as the village council and court of that time, where important matters were discussed, and justice was administered. Sankaradeva's teachings went beyond just setting up democratic institutions like Namghar and Satra. He made significant societal changes, such as ending caste discrimination and untouchability, discouraging drug use, promoting non-violence, and instilling compassion for all beings, even ghosts. He emphasized the importance of not harming animals and avoiding excessive rituals. Instead, he encouraged singing and using instruments to connect with the divine. He believed that

true purity was in having a clean heart and mind, not just in temples. He taught that selflessness and kindness were the keys to a clear conscience, and the main path to connect with God was through a pure heart and mind. Sankaradeva urged people not to seek fame, wealth, or power but to do what pleased God. Serving one's country, he believed, was a noble and virtuous act.

In today's world, we often witness a troubling erosion of values, leading to violence, terrorism, infidelity, moral decay, injustice, corruption, fraud, and various societal issues like gender-based violence and excessive individualism. Given these challenges, it's vital to recognize that Sankaradeva's teachings on values could offer valuable solutions to address these problems and bring about a positive change in society. Sankaradeva wasn't just a religious leader; he was also a visionary for an egalitarian and democratic society, embodying ideals of fairness and equality.

We wrap up our discussion with the words of renowned Indian journalists. The Shankari era marked a golden age of cultural revival, the emergence of Assamese nationalism, and the pinnacle of the Nava Vaishnava movement in Assam. Sankaradeva didn't just focus on devotion; he also sparked innovation in various fields, contributing songs, musical instruments, dance, literature, festivals, and important moral values to Assamese society. His movement in Assam became a monument embodying social, cultural, religious, and ideal life. No other religious leader held such a mesmerizing sway over the Assamese people or ignited self-awareness like this philosophical leader. Sankaradeva essentially laid the groundwork for a spiritual society, with Madhavadeva as his key disciple. Now, it's the responsibility of the government and the people to take steps to rebuild Assamese society and the nation based on Sankaradev's ideals. (the writer can be reached at dipaknewslive@gmail.com)

People are struggling with health issues in the relief camps of Manipur

By: Dr Arun Mitra

People of Manipur have a glorious history of resistance against the British imperialism. They struggled hand in hand with the Indian National Army (INA) led by Subhash Chandra Bose to free the country from the yolk of colonialism. But the state of Manipur is in crisis these days. Insensitivity of the government towards the state was apparent for a long time, but silence of the Prime Minister even after the video showing women being paraded without clothes went viral on 19th July 2023 proves the point. This insensitivity led to deterioration of the situation; as a result the violence continues unabated.

Health is a major victim under such circumstances. People lose their life, get injured and develop mental stress. It is in this connection that a five member team of Indian Doctors for Peace and Development (IDPD) including two women doctors visited relief camps in the valley and hills of Manipur on 1st and 2nd September 2023 in both Meitei and Kuki areas to assess the health conditions in the relief camps. The team members had come from Punjab, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Telangana. The team visited the relief camps in Khumanlankpak sports hostel in Imphal district and IIT relief camps under Sapornmeina Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Kangpokpi District in hill areas. There are 334 relief camps in Manipur at present. The team of doctors met inmates and nodal officers of the relief camps, officials of health department, workers of Civil Society organisations and officers of district administration.

It was observed that the referral systems for seriously ill patients in the relief camps in hilly areas are far from satisfactory. The displaced people in the hills of Manipur informed us that they had to travel to Nagaland covering a distance of up to 150 KMs to Kohima or Dimapur to get medical assistance in case of even moderately ill patients. Some of them even travel to Assam for their medical needs. Earlier, before the ethnic violence, they were referred to medical colleges in Imphal for better treatment. Now the



movement of citizens from hills to valley and vice versa is impossible due to ongoing ethnic conflict in Manipur.

Kangpokpi district hospital presently has neither an operation theatre nor blood storage facility. Manipur State is also facing acute shortage of specialists and other doctors and health workers. Vast majority of Specialist doctors and the medical college hospitals of the state are located in Imphal district (3 medical colleges) and 4th at Churachandpur district in the hills is at beginning stage.

As there is crowding in the camps the chances of Measles epidemic are very lightly in such situations it is imperative that children be immunised against Measles. The team found that no special immunisation drives especially against Measles has been undertaken in the visited relief camps. Measles Vaccine Immunisation drive in children above 9 months along with Vitamin A oral suspension is imperative for relief camps according to United Nations Humanitarian Commissioner for Relief (UNHCR) SPHERE standards.

Nutritional requirements of the peoples are far from being fulfilled. The inmates and nodal officer of a relief camp in the valley said that no green leafy vegetables/ eggs/ meat/fish has ever been supplied in the ration of inmates by the government; although, local community, Civil Society Organisations and few individuals provide few vegetables sometimes. Another nodal officer in a relief camp in hills told that they get one egg per inmate once every 13 days, but green vegetables are not supplied. Rice, Dal,

Potatoes and cooking oil constitute the bulk of ration supply in the relief camps. The absence of green leafy vegetables and animal proteins in the diet of children for last four months may lead to night blindness which is caused by Vitamin A deficiency.

Availability of potable drinking water and water for bathing/washing in toilets are not sufficient in quantity. Sanitation needs to be improved by many folds. Supply of Sanitary napkins to maintain good menstrual hygiene in relief camps is insufficient. There has not been fogging for mosquito control in and around relief camps which threatens the danger of spread of Dengue and Malaria.

The inmates informed that they are facing lots of mental stress by staying in relief camps for the last 4 months and they are not sure when they will go back to their homes or will they ever go back to their homes? Children are missing their schools and friends adding to their worries. Many children are having nightmares. These are sign of Post Traumatic Stress Order

We found patients of Non Communicable Diseases like – Diabetes, High Blood pressure, Chronic Kidney Diseases etc in the relief camps. A couple of patients required haemodialysis of the patients in the hills.

Much needs to be done to allay the situation. There is urgent need for robust referral systems after triage from primary health centres to higher relief centres both within the Manipur State and neighbouring state should be put in place at the earliest. Fabricated Operation Theatres

should be made operational at district and sub district level with immediate effect. Blood storage units should be started around relief camps after cluster formation.

Internet services should be restored in all health facilities around relief camps so that tele-medicine services can be available to the inmates of relief camps at the nearest health facility. These tele-medicine facilities can also be used in training of Basic doctors in performing Peritoneal Dialysis (for Renal failure patients) and other skills like use of Ambubags in case of Respiratory Distress Syndrome among children, counselling of mothers for breastfeeding of new born children etc. Both central and state governments should implement the UNHCR SPHERE standards on meeting the health needs of the displaced people sheltered in relief camps.

A strong medicine and vaccine supply system should be made functional and a real time monitoring of the stocks of medicine at ground zero level should be done. Immunisation against Measles and providing Vitamin A supplement to children should be undertaken immediately. Supply of good nutritious food like green leafy vegetables, milk, eggs, meat, fish should be ensured for all categories of the inmates in the camps. Fogging for mosquito control should be done in and around relief camps should immediately be undertaken.

Mental health issues are invariably ignored in such situations. There is urgent need for psychological counselling of inmates so as to prevent Post Trauma Stress Disorder. This should be a regular feature in the relief camps.

There is a huge lack of trust among people. So to create mutual brotherhood and trust between Kuki and Meitei groups a lot of work needs to be done. Peace committees should be formed to prevent violence. Constructive dialogue between the stake holders should be initiated. The government will have to be sensitive and take initiative about these things and take constructive steps along with people's organizations. (IPA Service)

How does climate change affect human health?

By: Jayne Leonard

Climate change affects human health in a variety of ways. Extreme changes in the weather and environment can increase existing health problems, as well as creating new ones. In this article, we look at the major risks that climate change poses to human health and discuss who might be most at risk from its effects.

Public health impact

Extremes in weather and temperature, increased pollution and environmental toxins, and changes in food security can all cause physical and mental health problems. Climate change is affecting some of the essential factors that influence human health, including:

- safety of shelter
- air quality
- quality, safety, and supply of drinking water
- food availability
- nutrition levels in food

As climate change progresses, researchers expect an increase in related health issues. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), researchers predict that certain effects of climate change will contribute to an increase of about 250,000 deaths per year between 2030 and 2050 from conditions such as:

- heat stress
- malnutrition
- diarrhea
- malaria

Climate change can also contribute to migration, as factors such as drought and plummeting fish stocks can lead rural populations to move into urban centers. Living in urban areas can increase the risk of disease due to overcrowding and higher temperatures.

Mental health

Extreme weather and natural disasters can be traumatic and stressful for the people whom they affect. People may undergo displacement, injury, the loss of their home and possessions, or the loss of loved ones.

Extreme heat may also have a more significant effect on people with mental health conditions. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), suicide rates increase with higher temperatures. The CDC suggests that climate change and higher temperatures have a negative effect on depression and other mental health conditions.

Extreme temperatures can also change how certain medications, such as schizophrenia treat-

ments, work in the body. In addition, they may affect people's ability to regulate their body temperature correctly.

Researchers have found that natural disasters, such as Hurricane Katrina, have negative mental health effects on those involved, including post-traumatic stress disorder and high levels of anxiety. Floods, heat waves, and wildfires may also create these issues. Concerns about the effects of climate change may also be a source of increased anxiety or despair for some people.

Infectious diseases

According to the WHO, climate change is likely to cause an increase in insect-transmitted infections and waterborne diseases.

The reason for this is that changes in climate could increase the length of the seasons during which insects transmit infections. These changes could also expand the area in which they occur.

Countries such as the United States may be at risk of an increase in both current waterborne and insect borne diseases and diseases that are not yet present in the area. Changes in rainfall patterns could also increase the risk of waterborne diseases and infectious diseases that cause diarrhea.

Heat and weather-related conditions

Rising temperatures can cause or exacerbate a wide range of severe health problems. Prolonged exposure to extreme heat can cause:

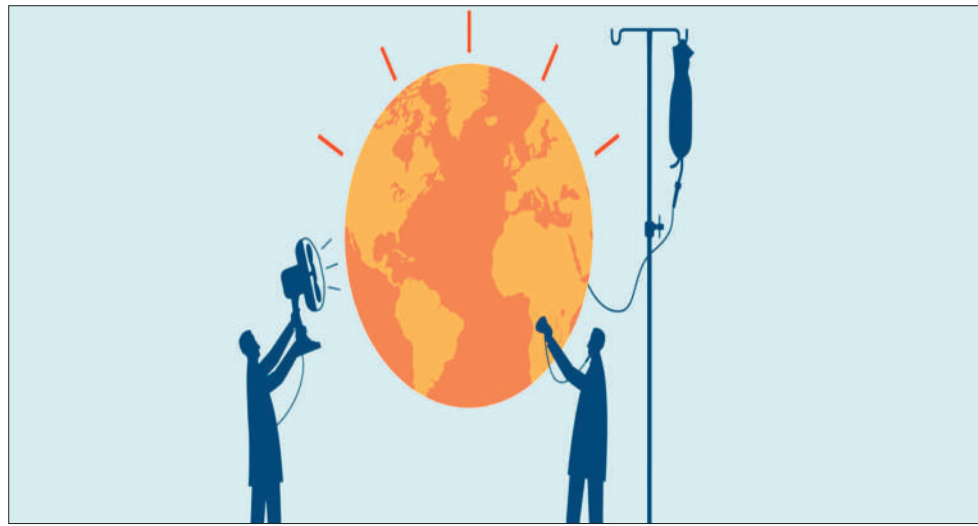
- heatstroke
- heat exhaustion
- muscle cramps
- worsening of existing conditions, such as respiratory and heart conditions
- death

Extreme changes in temperature are likely to have a more significant effect on certain groups of people:

- children
- older adults
- people with chronic health conditions
- people with less economic stability
- people who are socially isolated
- those living in urban areas, where heat levels will be several degrees warmer than they are in areas with fewer buildings

An increase in extreme weather conditions poses a serious risk to health. Hot, dry conditions and droughts can cause:

- dust storms
- wildfires
- a decrease in water supply and quality
- reduced quality of air
- lack of food



All of these factors can have severe effects on human health, including:

- increased risk of infections
- injury
- burns
- respiratory problems from smoke exposure
- malnutrition
- death

Severe flooding and flash floods can be very dangerous. According to the CDC, approximately 98 people die each year in the U.S. as a result of flooding.

While the immediate dangers of flooding include drowning and injury from damaged buildings, other risks of flooding include:

- exposure to toxic chemicals in runoff
- displacement and homelessness, which can affect physical and mental health
- an increase in respiratory diseases from living in damp environments
- mold, which can reduce indoor air quality

Air pollution

An increase in air pollution can pose a high risk to health. Higher levels of dust, ozone, and fine particles in the air can all reduce air quality and cause or exacerbate a range of health issues, including:

- asthma
- chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- coughing and irritation of the throat
- inflammation of the lungs
- risk of lung cancer
- airway congestion

- chest pain
- heart attacks

Allergens

Warmer temperatures can lead to an increase in pollen production. An increase in carbon dioxide can lead to higher levels of allergens from plants.

As a result, people may experience the following effects:

- greater sensitivity to allergens
- asthma, including longer or more frequent bouts of acute asthma
- worsening of other respiratory conditions

A combination of warmer weather and more rainfall can lead to increased dampness and fungi, including mold, indoors. These conditions can also cause breathing problems.

Food security

Weather changes affect crops and food production. Food prices may rise, which may cause people to adopt less healthful diets. Poor diets can lead to hunger, malnutrition, or obesity.

According to the CDC, the nutritional value of certain foods may decrease due to climate change. Experts predict that increased carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere and changes to the nutrients in the soil will result in fewer nutrients in many crops. The likely increase in weeds and pests will also mean that farmers need to use greater amounts of herbicides and pesticides. These substances can be toxic to the people working with crops, as well as to those eating them.

Developmental and neurological issues

Exposure to toxins in the environment and stress-related effects of climate change can have a negative effect on neurological health.

According to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Trusted Source, scientists believe that environmental factors play a role in the development of both Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease. Toxins in food and water can also lead to health issues in a developing fetus. For example, climate change can cause harmful algal blooms, which increase the biotoxins in fish and seafood. An increase in heavy metals, such as mercury and lead, contaminating seafood can lead to a reduced IQ in a developing fetus.

Who is most at risk?

Although all populations are likely to experience the effects of climate change, certain areas of the world are more at risk than others. Areas most at risk from the health effects of climate change include:

- coastal regions
- mountainous regions
- polar regions
- small islands
- megacities
- countries with a lack of healthcare facilities
- developing countries

Certain groups of people are also more at risk from the health hazards of climate change. They include:

- children, particularly those living in developing countries
- older adults
- people with certain preexisting health conditions

• people who are economically disadvantaged

• people who are socially isolated

Summary

Climate change poses significant risks to human health in many ways. Natural disasters and extreme weather events can cause injury, mental health issues, increased risk of infection, and death. Damage to infrastructure can also cause long-term setbacks to health and well-being.

Increased pollution, toxins, and allergens in the environment can all lead to an increase in respiratory and heart health issues. Children and older adults are most at risk from health issues relating to climate change, as are people in less economically developed areas. Addressing climate change is vital to help limit these effects and health risks. (Courtesy: Medical New Today)

New drugs for Alzheimer's have been hailed as a breakthrough – but their shortcomings are profound

By: Sebastian Walsh

A prominent childhood memory is of my grandparents living with and then dying from dementia. As is universal with dementia, there was a double blow: watching my grandparents lose their identity and seeing the suffering of those closest to them.

As a junior doctor on a specialist dementia ward when I was in my 20s, I watched the same stories play out for family after family, feeling largely powerless to help.

Now in my 30s, I conduct public health research to understand what we can do to prevent, delay or improve the experience of dementia – the leading cause of death in England.

Naturally, this makes me desperate for good news on treatment options for Alzheimer's disease – the main cause of dementia. Enter three drugs (aducanumab (trade name Aduhelm), lecanemab (Leqembi) and donanemab) that remove amyloid, the protein thought to cause Alzheimer's disease.

Unlike their many predecessors, that also successfully removed amyloid from the brain, these drugs were the first to slow cognitive decline.

This breakthrough was hailed as "the beginning of the end for Alzheimer's disease", but how useful are these drugs going to be?

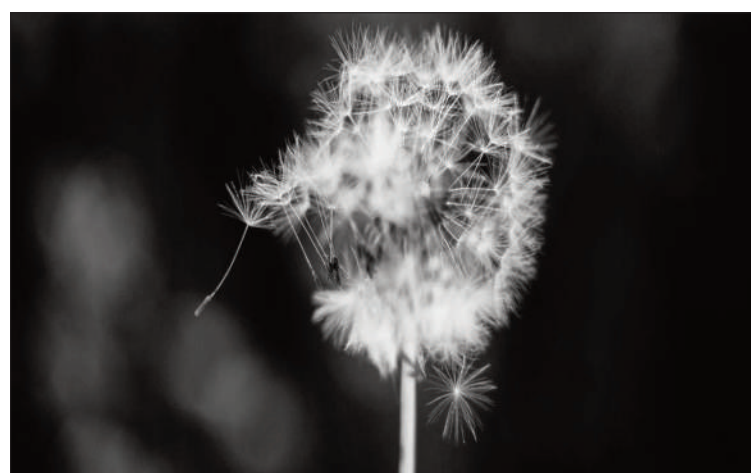
There are four key shortcomings to consider:

1. **Tiny benefits:** In the donanemab trial, the people taking the drug declined on average by ten points on a 144-point cognitive scale. The placebo group declined by 13 points.

Consistent with the patterns in the trials of the other two drugs, this tells us that all groups in all these trials declined and the amount of decline that was avoided by taking the drug – in this case donanemab – (three points) was a lot smaller than the amount of decline that still occurred (ten points). The difference in the amount of decline was so small that it would probably not be noticeable to the doctors looking after these patients.

2. **Side-effects:** Through regular magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans, one in six people taking lecanemab was found to have evidence of brain bleeding, and one in eight had brain swelling.

Regular scans will sometimes pick up these pathologies in dementia patients. And, indeed, one



in 11 of those in the placebo group had evidence of bleeding, while one in 59 had swelling. For most people, these events were only detectable by MRI and not through showing any specific symptoms. However, the effects of this drug's damage to the brain, particularly the long-term effects, are unknown.

Sadly, there have also been a few deaths attributed to these drugs.

3. **Very expensive:** Aducanumab was marketed in the US for US\$45,000 (£35,000) per patient per year (later reduced to US\$20,000 to increase demand), and lecanemab for US\$26,500. This is just for the drug itself. Health systems also need to pay for additional scans to test for eligibility, monitoring and management of side-effects, and staff to run infusion clinics. The donanemab trial suggested that treatment could end when brain scans showed sufficient amyloid clearance. But we don't know if amyloid will return after some time. Regular monitoring for amyloid recurrence and repeated bouts of treatment would add further costs.

There are other impositions for patients: attending centres every two to four weeks for drug infusions and regular monitoring and worrying about side-effects.

4. **Highly selective trials:** It is accepted that not all trial "efficacy" (the effect seen in a specialised trial context, designed to maximise the likelihood of treatments working, such as including only uncomplicated cases) will convert into clinical "effectiveness" (the effect seen when drugs are given to relatively more complex patients in busy, real-world clinical settings).

This is concerning, because there's little wriggle room before the effects become undetectable. And, while this is the case for all

diseases, Alzheimer's is likely to be an extreme example.

For every ten patients that doctors thought might be eligible for these trials, seven or eight were rejected. People with brain pathologies other than amyloid, such as vascular damage or Lewy bodies, and those with significant other medical problems, which might have clouded the trial results and increased the risk of side-effects, were excluded.

If the drug eligibility is restricted to match the trial eligibility, then very few people will be eligible. If eligibility is broader, then already small effects are likely to be even smaller and side-effects more pronounced.

Profound shortcomings

There's more. The trials selected people at the earliest stages of the disease – that is, when symptoms had only recently developed – and successfully cleared amyloid, yet patients still declined almost as fast. So inevitably, researchers ask: maybe we need to start the drugs even earlier? But how?

People in the trials were, on average, five to ten years younger than most people are at Alzheimer's diagnosis in the US and UK. And catching people earlier in the disease is problematic because most people with amyloid but no cognitive symptoms won't get dementia before they die. Sadly, I don't think these drugs can make a big difference for people currently, or soon to be, living with Alzheimer's disease. Also, the shortcomings are so profound, despite decades of expensive trials and patient sacrifice, I think it's time to take the amyloid blinkers off and prioritise exploring other, neglected, options for treating dementia. This isn't the beginning of the end of Alzheimer's, but perhaps it should be the end of the anti-amyloid drug pathway. (Courtesy: Scroll.in)

Not just high blood sugar, diabetes can also damage your heart

By: Dr Rahul Gupta

Technological advances today are impacting almost every aspect of our life, making our everyday lives easier with conveniences that have eased up a lot of our physical work. But, the other side of today's modern lifestyle is that for every problem solved by technology, other new problems arise. Among these new problems is the rise in non-communicable diseases.

Recent decades have witnessed a significant rise in NCDs. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), NCDs are estimated to cause 74 percent of all deaths globally. As of 2021, around 422 million people worldwide have diabetes, a number that has nearly quadrupled since 1980. As far as India is concerned, estimates indicate that 31 million more Indians became diabetic in four years (2019-2021).

The study also showed that diabetes and other metabolic non-communicable diseases (NCDs), such as hypertension, heart disease, obesity, and dyslipidemia are much more common in India than previously thought to be. The fallout of this is seen in the increase in morbidity and mortality from NCDs.

They are often silent killers, manifesting over time with minimal symptoms until a severe event such as a heart attack or a stroke occurs. Among these conditions, diabetes and heart disease have become particularly concerning due to their interconnected nature.

Heart disease and stroke are the most common cardiovascular complications among people with diabetes, representing a growing health crisis.

In the United States, adults with diabetes are two to four times more likely

to die from heart disease than adults without diabetes. Understanding the relationship between these two diseases can help you make informed decisions about your health and take appropriate preventive and treatment measures.

The Link between the two NCDs

But how is diabetes related to heart disease? The link is the high blood sugar levels that are common in diabetes. High blood sugar damages blood vessels and nerves over time. In the heart, this leads to atherosclerosis, where blood vessel walls thicken and lumens (passageways) narrow, leading to heart disease.

In addition, there are metabolic changes associated with type 2 diabetes, including high blood pressure, obesity, high triglycerides, low HDL (good), and high cholesterol, further increasing the risk of heart disease. People with diabetes often have other conditions that increase the risk of heart disease.

These include high blood pressure, obesity, and high levels of cholesterol. They also develop heart disease at an early age, often more severely than those without diabetes. These are the same reasons why cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death in people with diabetes.

Prevention through lifestyle change Preventing or effectively managing diabetes is the first step in reducing the risk of heart disease. Lifestyle changes are the first line of defense.

- These include,
- Quitting smoking and tobacco
- Maintaining a healthy weight
- Exercising regularly
- Eating a balanced diet of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains

A healthy diet and regular exercise

can help control blood sugar levels, lose weight, and control high blood pressure and cholesterol. If lifestyle changes are not enough, medications to control blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels may be necessary.

You can track your HbA1C level which reflects your blood glucose level over the last 3 months and work towards a healthy goal. If it is on the higher side, it means that glucose levels have increased in the last 3 months which can damage your blood vessels and organs like eyes, heart and kidneys. Although the HbA1C goal for many people with diabetes is less than 7 percent, goals can also change depending on your age and lifestyle changes.

A Holistic Approach to Diabetes & Heart Disease

If you're currently grappling with both diabetes and heart disease, it's important to know that there's always room to better your health status. Treatment often involves a combination of lifestyle changes and medication.

- This may comprise,
- Cholesterol-reducing statins
- ACE inhibitors to manage high blood pressure
- Drugs to maintain blood glucose levels

Regular health check-ups are pivotal, allowing for monitoring of response to treatment with adjustments in dosage and treatment as required to ensure blood sugar levels are kept within safe limits, and potential complications are averted.

Let's not forget, caring for health is akin to investing in your future. Seek guidance from your healthcare provider, stay informed, stay proactive, and above all, stay healthy! (Courtesy: The Quint)

Diet, lifestyle, environmental changes linked to massive cancer cases spike in under-50 adults globally

By: Rohini Krishnamurthy

Changes in diet, lifestyle and environment are likely driving an increase in global cancer cases among adults under 50, stated a new study published in the British Medical Journal (BMJ).

Between 1990 and 2019, global early-onset cancer cases shot up by 79.1 per cent and deaths rose by 27.7 per cent, the paper found.

"Dietary risk factors such as foods high in red meat, low in fruits, high in sodium and low in milk, alcohol consumption and tobacco use are the main risk factors underlying early-onset cancers," the researchers wrote in their study. Cancer, they added, is generally more prevalent in adults over 50 years.

However, the incidence of early-onset cancer has increased worldwide. The rising trend of early-onset cancer is more distressing because it has significant personal and societal consequences. This, along with the adverse impacts of some corresponding cancer treatments, may lead to additional health issues, increasing the disease burden.

Due to a paucity of data on global trends in early-onset cancer cases, the team analysed data from the Global Burden of Disease 2019 study for 29 cancers in 204 countries and regions. They zoomed in on specifics such as the number of new cases, deaths, health consequences (disability-adjusted life years or DALYs) and contributory risk factors for adults aged between 14 and 49 from 1990 to 2019.

The analysis showed that the number of cases was estimated to be 1.82 billion in 1990, which increased by 79 per cent to 3.26 billion. The death tally was 0.83 billion in 1990, climbing to 1.06 billion in 2019, according to the study.

Breast cancer saw the highest increase in new cases and deaths. The

researchers also found that the leading risk factors for early-onset breast cancer DALYs were alcohol use (4.5 per cent), followed by tobacco smoking (4.4 per cent), a diet high in red meat (2.9 per cent), high fasting plasma glucose (2.6 per cent) and physical inactivity (0.6 per cent).

However, researchers still do not have a complete understanding of the reasons behind the observed trends. "Lifestyle factors are likely contributing, and novel areas of research such as antibiotic usage, the gut microbiome, outdoor air pollution and early life exposures are being explored," they explained.

Still, more research is required to establish this link, they said. The study also pointed out that the burden of early onset was higher in high-income countries. The incidence rate was the highest in North America and the lowest in western Sub-Saharan Africa (37.4 cases per 100k).

"On the whole, the more developed the country and region, the higher the incidence of early-onset cancer," the paper noted. The researchers also highlight the increasing burden of breast cancer in Asia. The growing prevalence of a westernised lifestyle, the paper explained, could be among the factors contributing to the spike in Asian countries.

However, the genetic factors driving the increasing burden of breast cancer in Asian women are still unclear. Research shows a link between mutations in BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes and breast and ovarian cancers.

"Prevention and early detection measures are urgently required, along with identifying optimal treatment strategies for early-onset cancers, which should include a holistic approach addressing the unique supportive care needs of younger patients," the paper suggested. (Courtesy: Down To Earth)

G20 declaration a 'coup' for PM Modi, but stops short of condemning Ukraine war, says world media

WASHINGTON/LONDON, Sept 10: The G20 declaration, which hit snags on the language to describe the Ukraine war, amounted to a "coup" for host Prime Minister Narendra Modi though the final compromise statement reflected a stand far softer than those the US and its Western allies have adopted on Russia, the world media said on Sunday.

India managed to hammer out an unexpected consensus among the G20 countries on the contentious issue of Ukraine through a series of hectic negotiations with emerging economies such as Brazil, South Africa and Indonesia playing a leading role in reaching the breakthrough on the first day itself.

Leaders gathered for the two-day annual Group of 20 Summit managed to agree on a 'G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration' laying out shared views on climate change and economic development but showed the fractures within the group by stopping short of explicitly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Diplomats had been working furiously to draft a final joint statement in the lead-up to the summit but hit snags on language to describe the Ukraine war.

The New York Times said a painstakingly negotiated declaration Saturday evening at the Group of 20 summit in New Delhi omitted any condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine or its brutal conduct of the war, instead lamenting the "suffering" of the Ukrainian people.

This year there were low expectations that the divided group would reach any sort of consensus with Ukraine, it said.

"The eventual compromise statement amounted to a coup for the summit's host, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but still reflected a position far softer (than) those the United States and its Western allies have adopted individually," CNN commented.

The G20 summit in New Delhi was one of the most complicated in the history of the bloc, Russia's G20 sherpa, Svetlana Lukash, said



on Saturday.

"I believe that it was probably one of the most complicated G20 summits in the almost 15-year history of the forum's existence. It took almost 20 days before the summit and five days here on the ground to agree on a declaration," Lukash was quoted as saying by Russia's official Tass news agency.

The NYT also highlighted a

project announced during the summit to create a rail and shipping corridor linking India to the Middle East and, eventually, Europe.

The paper said though the project lacked key details, including a time frame or budget, it represented much softer than usual rhetoric about Russia from US President Joe Biden and other Western leaders, who have spent the better part

of two years spending billions on arming Ukraine and burning untold domestic political capital building support for the war.

Biden spent most of his time at the summit quietly nurturing his relationship with Narendra Modi, it said.

"Biden, like previous presidents, is trying to bring India closer," the paper quoted Richard N. Haass, a foreign policy veteran and former president of the Council on Foreign Relations, as saying.

"He's having limited success, but that's the nature of the relationship. That's baked into the cake here," Haass said.

India's G20 presidency comes at a moment of contradiction for the country: Its rise to a bigger role on the world stage coincides with increasing divisions at home, the paper said.

The Delhi declaration appears designed to allow both the West and Russia to find positives. But in the process, it has used language that is not as strong in its condemnation of Moscow as it was in Bali

last year, BBC said.

Importantly, the declaration specifies "the war in Ukraine" rather than "the war against Ukraine." This choice of words could have increased the likelihood of Russia endorsing the declaration. Ukraine - which took part in the Bali summit - was not invited this year, and its response to the declaration has been critical, it said.

The British public broadcaster also highlighted the Ukrainian foreign ministry's reaction on X, formerly known as Twitter that "in terms of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, G20 has nothing to be proud of."

The other big news came when Modi formally invited the African Union (AU) to become a permanent member of the G20.

"Delhi prioritised elevating the voices of these nations as the foundation of its presidency, and in the near future, it is poised to reap the rewards of this strategic choice as it vies with China for influence across Asia and Africa," it said. (PTI)

Russian strikes on Ukraine kill 2 foreign aid workers, target Kyiv

KYIV, Sept 10: Two foreign aid workers were reportedly killed in eastern Ukraine on Sunday as Russian shelling hit a van carrying a team of four working with a Ukrainian NGO, while dozens of Russian drones targeted Kyiv and wounded at least one civilian.

The four volunteers from the Road to Relief NGO, which helps evacuate wounded people from front-line areas, were trapped inside the van as it flipped over and caught fire after being struck by shells near the town of Chasiv Yar, the organisation said on its Instagram page. Road to Relief said Canadian Anthony Ihnat died in the attack, while German medical volunteer Ruben Mawick and Swedish volunteer Johan Mathias Thyr were seriously injured.

Road to Relief added that it could not trace the whereabouts of the van's fourth passenger, Emma Igual, a Spanish national who was the organisation's director. Hours later, Spain's acting foreign minister José Manuel Albares told Spanish media that authorities in Madrid had received "verbal confirmation" of the 32-year-old Igual's death.

The volunteers were on their way to assess the needs of civilians on the outskirts of Bakhmut, Road to Relief said, in reference to the eastern town that saw the war's longest and bloodiest battle before falling to Moscow in May. Ukrainian forces have held on to Bakhmut's western suburbs and are pushing a counteroffensive in the area.

Also on Sunday, "over two dozen drones" launched by Russia were shot down over Kyiv in the early hours, according to the head of the Ukrainian capital's military administration. Serhii Popko reported in a Telegram post that debris from Iranian-made Shahed drones landed in several districts of the city and wounded at least one civilian. Popko said there was no risk to the person's life, and added that most of the wreckage fell in open ground, although one high-rise apartment was damaged.

He did not specify the exact number of drones used in the strike, saying the Ukrainian air force would supply the information later.

Russia's defence ministry said in the early hours of Sunday that Moscow's forces earlier destroyed three US-supplied Ukrainian speedboats that had been travelling toward Crimea. The claim could not be independently verified. (AP)

'Nothing Hindu' about what the BJP does: Rahul Gandhi

LONDON, Sept 10: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has hit out at the BJP during an interaction with students and academics in Paris, saying that the governing party is out to get power at any cost and that there is "nothing Hindu" about their actions. During the interaction on Saturday at the Sciences PO University in Paris, a leading social sciences institution in France, the 53-year-old Opposition leader covered a broad range of topics such as his 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', the Opposition alliance's fight to defend India's democratic structures, changing global order and other key issues.

He stressed that the Opposition was committed to fighting for the "soul of India" and the country would "come out just fine" from the current "turbulence".

"I've read the 'Gita', I've read a number of the Upanishads, I've read many Hindu books; there is nothing Hindu about what the BJP does, absolutely nothing," said Gandhi, in response to a question about the rise of "Hindu nationalism" in the country at the interaction, a video of which was released on Sunday.

"I have not read anywhere, in no Hindu book, from no learned Hindu person have I ever heard that you should terrorise, harm people who are weaker than you. So, this idea, this word, Hindu nationalists, this is a wrong word. They're not Hindu nationalists. They have nothing to do with Hinduism. They are out to get power at any cost, and they will do anything to get power... They want dominance of a few people and that is what they are about. There is nothing Hindu about them," he said. Asked about the cases of violence against the Dalit and other minority communities in the country, Gandhi said it requires "political imagination" to combat the issue "head on" and the Opposition is committed to that fight.

"What the BJP and the RSS are trying to do, the heart of what they're trying to do is trying to stop the expression, the participation of lower castes, other backward castes, tribals and minority communities. And, for me, an India where a Dalit person or a Muslim person, tribal person, upper-caste person, anybody, is being mistreated, is being attacked, is not the India I want," he said. "If the Prime Minister tomorrow morning was to decide there would be no

chest thumping and no violence in India, it would stop. It is the direction that the leadership of the country gives, the imagination that the leadership of a country gives that shapes people," Gandhi, now on a tour of Europe, said.

"The feeling right now is that you can do whatever you want and nothing's going to happen to you... This is an attack on the soul of India, and the people doing this should pay a price for it," he said.

Referencing his own experiences, the Congress leader pointed to 24 legal cases against him and also the "first time in Indian history" that somebody was given the maximum sentence for criminal defamation. But he stressed that the fight to keep the democratic structure of India is "ongoing and very vibrant".

Gandhi was referring to his conviction in a 2019 defamation case over his Modi surname remark. Last month, the Supreme Court stayed his conviction, paving the way for revival of his Lok Sabha membership.

"We are part of that fight... we are going through a process; we are going through turbulence in our democratic structure and there are millions of people who really believe in that democratic structure and are going to defend it with everything that they've got."

"So, it's a fight and also an opportunity to rethink and to reimagine our country. There are many things that can be improved, and I think this is an opportunity, this is a test that many countries go through. And, I think we'll come out just fine in this test," he said. Asked about the debate around the name of the country, Gandhi noted that both India and Bharat are documented in the Constitution and therefore, the government was acting in "strange ways" because they are "irritated" with the name of the Opposition's Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A.). "There is something deeper that is going on, which is that people who want to change the name of anything are basically trying to deny history. The fact of the matter is, whether we like it or we don't like it, we have a history. We were ruled by the British, we fought the British, we defeated the British... English is spoken by more Indians than English people; it's our own language more than theirs," he said. (PTI)



Moroccan villagers mourn after earthquake brings destruction to their rural mountain home

MOULAY BRAHIM, Sept 10: The ground shook with a force few had ever felt, thundering through the remote Moroccan village in the dark of night.

When the earthquake was over late Friday, the town carved into the Atlas Mountains lay in devastation, with possibly dozens dead, scores of homes crumpled and walls reduced to rubble. Soon crews were listening for desperate sounds of life within the ruins of Moulay Brahimi.

A village of fewer than 3,000 people, Moulay Brahimi attracted tourists and outdoor enthusiasts with its stunning vistas and proximity to Marrakech. Streets brimmed with small hotels and cafes overlooking gorges and green valleys. But after the 6.8-magnitude earthquake that killed more than 2,000 across Morocco, the scene in the village is bleak.

People in the poor rural community about 45 kilometers (28 miles) northeast of the quake epicenter live in homes made of clay brick and cinder block, many of which are no longer standing or safe to inhabit. Fallen walls exposed the innards of damaged homes, their rubble sliding down hills.

"We felt a huge shake like it was doomsday," resident Ayoub Toudite said. "Ten seconds and everything was gone."

Others, like 19-year-old student Abdelfattah El Akari, said the quake felt much longer, seeming to go on more than a minute. "The ground moved and homes cracked," he said.

Chaos and terror followed as frightened villagers sought safety in the streets. When they returned to their neighbourhoods, some used bare hands to clear debris and start pulling out bodies, one after another. People gathered and cried outside a community health center as



news trickled in of more deaths.

Search crews peered into crevices looking for more casualties or people in need of rescue following the biggest earthquake to hit the North African country in 120 years.

The majority of the deaths, at least 2,012 as of Saturday night, were in Marrakech and five provinces near the epicenter, with at least 2,059 more people injured, including 1,404 critically, the Interior Ministry reported.

Authorities in Moulay Brahimi tempered expectations with warnings that many areas remained too fragile to enter while there were still risks of aftershocks that could collapse whatever remained standing. A minaret looming above Moulay Brahimi was severely damaged and appeared at risk of toppling if nudged by another tremor.

Hours after the tragedy, with sunlight exposing the extent of the damage, a procession of hundreds accompanied more than a dozen blanket-covered bodies to the town square. Men knelt on rugs and prayed for the dead during a brief funeral before carrying the deceased to a hillside cemetery. According to Islamic custom, burial should happen quickly after death.

Distraught parents sobbed into phones to tell

loved ones about losing their children.

Villagers erected a large tent in the square, traditionally used for joyous occasions like weddings. In the coming days, the space will serve a much more somber role as a shelter for those who no longer have homes.

Toudite and other villagers appealed for help. "People are suffering here very much. We are in dire need of ambulances. Please send us ambulances to Moulay Brahimi. The matter is urgent," Toudite implored Saturday. "Please save us."

The town also is in need of food and tents for people who have no place to go but the streets, he said.

The bulk of the town's economy depends on agriculture and tourism. Time will tell how soon visitors will return to a place that stood for centuries.

Moulay Brahimi is named after a Moroccan Sufi saint who practiced a form of Islam valuing peace, love and tolerance, emphasizing inward meditation to reach a connection with God. The town's people speak a combination of Arabic and Tachelhit, Morocco's most widely spoken indigenous language.

Hassan Ait Belhaj, who owns several rental properties in Moulay Brahimi, said the buildings weren't designed for such violent quakes and wondered how long it would take for the area to recover.

The Moroccan military deployed aircraft, helicopters and drones. Emergency services mobilized aid efforts to the hardest-hit areas, but roads leading to the mountain region around the epicenter were jammed with vehicles and blocked with fallen rocks, slowing rescue efforts. (AP)

Maldives presidential runoff is set for Sept 30 with oppn in surprise lead but short of mark

COLOMBO, Sept 10: Maldivians will return to the polls on Sept 30 to vote in a runoff election between the top two candidates in the country's presidential race after neither secured more than 50% in the first round, the elections commission said Sunday.

Main opposition candidate Mohamed Muiz managed a surprise lead with more than 46% of votes, while the incumbent President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, who was seen as the favourite, got only 39%.

The election on Saturday has shaped up as a virtual referendum over which regional power — India or China — will have the biggest influence in the Indian Ocean archipelago state. The vote was to choose the country's fifth freely elected president since Maldives became a multiparty democracy in 2008. Solih is perceived as pro-India, facing off against his main rival Muiz, who is seen as pro-China.

The result is seen as a remarkable achievement for Muiz, who was only a late selection as a candidate by his party after its leader, former President Abdullah Yameen, was



blocked from running by the Supreme Court. He is serving a prison term for corruption and money laundering.

"I did not expect Muiz to have this kind of a lead against Ibu (Ibrahim Mohamed Solih)," said Azim Zahir, a political science and international relations lecturer at the University of Western Australia.

"This is a major blow (to Solih) and one could read it even as a rejection of his government," said Zahir. Muiz had only three weeks to campaign and did not have the advantage of a sitting president, Zahir said. He said Muiz's strong stand against the presence of Indian troops in the Maldives could have been a significant factor in the election.

Solih is seeking a second term and is battling allegations by Muiz

that he had allowed India an unchecked presence in the country.

Muiz promised that if he wins, he will remove Indian troops stationed in the Maldives and balance the country's trade relations, which he said are heavily in India's favour. He however has promised to continue friendly and balanced relations with the Maldives' closest neighbour.

The People's National Congress, Muiz's party, is viewed as heavily pro-China. While its leader Abdullah Yameen was president from 2013-2018, he made the Maldives a part of China's Belt and Road initiative. The initiative envisages building ports, railways and roads to expand trade — and China's influence — across Asia, Africa and Europe.

Mohamed Shareef, a senior official for Muiz's party, told The Associated Press that the removal of Indian military personnel was a "non-negotiable" position for the party. He said the number of Indian troops and their activities are hidden from Maldivians and that they have near-exclusive use of certain ports and airports in the country. (AP)

Drone attack kills at least 30 in Sudan's capital

CAIRO, Sept 10: A drone attack Sunday on an open market south of the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, killed at least 30 people, activists and medical workers said, as the military and a powerful paramilitary group battle for control of the country. At least three dozen others were injured in the attack in Khartoum's May neighbourhood, according to an activist group known as the Resistance Committees and two health care workers at the Bashair University Hospital, where the casualties were treated.

The activist group posted footage on social media showing bodies wrapped in white sheets in an open yard at the hospital.

It was not immediately clear which side was behind Sunday's attack. Indiscriminate shelling and airstrikes by both factions aren't uncommon in Sudan's war, which has reduced the Greater Khartoum area to a battleground.

Sudan has been rocked by violence since mid-April, when tensions between the country's military, led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Burhan, and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces, commanded by

Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, burst into open fighting.

The clashes have since spread to several parts of the country. In the Greater Khartoum area, which includes the cities of Khartoum, Omdurman and Bahri, RSF troops have commandeered civilian homes and turned them into operational bases.

The military responded by bombing residential areas, rights groups and activists say.

In the western Darfur region — the scene of a genocidal campaign in the early 2000s — the conflict has morphed into ethnic violence, with the RSF and allied Arab militias attacking ethnic African groups, according to rights groups and the United Nations. The conflict has killed more than 4,000 people, according to August figures from the United Nations. However, the real toll is almost certainly much higher, doctors and activists say.

The number of the internally displaced has nearly doubled since mid-April to reach at least 7.1 million people, according to the UN refugee agency. Another 1.1 million are refugees in neighbouring countries. (AP)

Project connecting India to Europe via Middle East 'largest cooperation project' in history: Netanyahu

JERUSALEM, Sept 10: Hailing the announcement of the ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) as a "major news" for Israelis, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the "largest cooperation project in our history" will change the face of the Middle East, Israel, and will benefit the entire world.

The new economic corridor, which many see as an alternative to China's controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was jointly announced on Saturday by the leaders of the US, India, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, France, Germany, Italy and the European Union on the sidelines of the G20 summit in New Delhi.

In a video message released late Saturday evening, Netanyahu said that Israel is at the focus of an unprecedented international project that will link infrastructure from Asia to Europe.

"I welcome the statement that was released today by the United States, India, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the European Union, as well as France, Italy and Ger-

many," Netanyahu said.

"A good week to you, citizens of Israel. This evening, I am pleased to inform you (of) some major news," the Israeli Prime Minister said.

His message came as hundreds of thousands of Israelis protested on the streets against the government's judicial overhaul plan they think will undermine the authority of the judiciary.

"Israel is at the focus of an unprecedented international project that will link infrastructure from Asia to Europe. This link will also realise a multi-year vision that will change the face of the Middle East, and Israel, and will affect the entire world," he said.

"This vision starts in India, passes through the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel before reaching Europe," Netanyahu said.

The initiative is seen as a potential alternative to the BRI, an ambitious project launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping, which has also drawn criticism about its debt sustainability, especially



from smaller countries.

Xi unveiled the BRI in 2013 with an aim to link China, the global manufacturing giant, with Southeast Asia, Central Asia, the Gulf region, Africa and Europe with a network of land and sea routes.

The announcement of the IMEC comes amid discussions around the normalisation of ties between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

The two countries do not have diplomatic relations but the Gulf kingdom has been seen to be recently softening its position towards Israel by allowing Israeli airlines to use its air space.

It is said to have also demanded, as per media reports, several concessions from the United States for the normalisation of ties with the Jewish state, some very contentious ones.

"They announced the launch of a pioneering initiative to develop an economic corridor from India, through the Middle East, to Europe. I am pleased to inform you, citizens of Israel, that our country, the State of Israel, will be a central junction in this economic corridor," Netanyahu said.

"Our railways and ports will open a new gateway from India, through the Middle East, to Europe, and back — from Europe to India via Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the UAE," the Israeli Prime Minister, battling a downturn in the economy in the face of his controversial judicial overhaul plans, said.

"I would like to thank US President

(Joe) Biden and his administration for the major effort that has led us to today's historic announcement. Several months ago, the US contacted us regarding the realisation of this historic opportunity. Since then, it has held urgent diplomatic contacts in order to bring about today's breakthrough," he stressed.

The project reshapes the face of our region and allows a dream to become reality, he said.

The initiative includes the construction of railways, the laying of a hydrogen pipeline, the energy of the future, the laying of fibre optic communications cables, the laying of electricity cables and more infrastructure, the Israeli Prime Minister noted.

"The State of Israel will contribute its capabilities, all of its experience, momentum and commitment, to realise the largest cooperation project in our history. All government ministries will be instructed to join in realizing this dream," he emphasised.

"I have directed the National Security Council, in the Prime Minister's Office,

to coordinate the staff work and also the close cooperation with the US and other countries in order for this vision to become reality as soon as possible," Netanyahu said.

The project will lead us to a new, unique and unprecedented era of global and regional cooperation and involvement.

"Together we will succeed," Netanyahu asserted.

With protesters turning up in hundreds of thousands every weekend for the last 36 weeks, Israel faces threats of mass emigration, resignations in critical positions, army desertions, strikes and flight of capital backed by gloomy predictions from prestigious global credit rating agencies.

Netanyahu has been struggling to show that everything is under control and the economy is stable amid widespread angry protests. He also hinted at the major link project during his trip to Greece and Cyprus early this week to boost the morale of his citizens and supporters. (PTI)

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Joint Parliamentarians Consultative Meeting of the southern zone of the NSCN-IM was held at Ecological Park in Senapati district

NSCN-IM appeals Nagas to stand by 'Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015'

DIMAPUR, Sept 10: Notwithstanding the slow progress of Indo-Naga political talks, the NSCN-IM is determined to keep the tempo going by organising consultative meetings of tatars (Members of Parliament of the NSCN-IM), kilonsers (ministers of the organisation) and deputy kilonsers, steering committee and executive steering committee members of all regions and keep abreast of any development on the on-going Naga political issue.

On September 8, 2023, Joint Parliamentarians Consultative Meeting of the southern zone of the NSCN-IM was held at Ecological Park, Mayangkhang, Senapati district, according to the NSCN-IM.

During the meeting, the core issue of Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015, was brought forth before the members as they stood up in unison to stand by "Framework Agreement" and with the coherent voice shouted "No Naga flag no solution" "No Constitution no solution" "Under Indian Constitution no solution", a press communiqué from the NSCN-IM issued to Newmai News Network recently, said.

Maj (Retd) Kewer Mero, Kilo Kilonser (home minister of the organisation), in his keynote address, said this is the time

to stand strong and resolute and understand together the prevailing development from proper perspective, the press release said. He reminded the members never to forget the hard achievements of Indo-Naga political talks ever since it started after the ceasefire in 1997 where Nagas have firmly asserted their historical and political identity after negotiating its way to get official recognition of the government of India on the "unique history of the Nagas and situation" and followed by the historic "Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015" and the critical importance to stand by it no matter what circumstances we may have to face, the statement also said.

Zhehota Awomi, Chaplee Kilonser (finance minister of the organisation), fervently appealed to members how NSCN should reflect unity at all times taking into consideration how the Naga political movement was run under the banner of "Nagalim for Christ". He also stressed on how NSCN members should maintain moral integrity and discipline in all respects in order to guard the image of NSCN as the bona fide Naga national organisation fighting for the political rights of the Nagas, the press note added.



Jongpong Sashi, kilonsar, Education, called upon the members not to lag behind in introspection and examine where they stand, if they are giving hard and soul for the Naga national cause. He called upon the members to work fearlessly but in closeness with God as nothing good can be achieved without God in our everyday struggle, the press statement further added.

Meyong Phom, member, Collective Leadership, called upon the members

to realise how the Naga nation wants them to be righteous leaders to face the huge task at hand and how God has been with the Nagas when solid political foundation was laid with the signing of the historic Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015, the NSCN-IM statement also said.

He pointed out that NSCN-IM today is facing aggressive forces to drive the Naga solution away from Framework Agreement. "This requires rededication

of commitment from all members to Collective Leadership, NSCN and supports them to take the Nagas towards the desired goal". He quoted from the Holy Bible to drive home the point, "Righteousness exalts a Nation but sin condemns any people," (Psalm 14:34). With this he called upon members to give importance to qualities of righteousness in order to make God happy to help find Naga political solution, the press release added.

Lieut Gen(Rtd) VS Atem, VC, Collective Leadership, welcoming the big turnout of the members from all regions of southern zone, impressed upon the members that "we all have to bear all the inconveniences as the Naga issue matters to all at this turning point of Naga history when the Indo-Naga political talks is at critical stage". With this he asked the members to exercise responsibility as serving the Naga nation is not without sacrifices.

Gen Atem quoted from the records of Naga history mentioning the names of two Prime Ministers of India, Jawaharlal Nehru and Morarji Desai who are critical of the Naga political issue and made disparaging remarks with their crude manners and how Nagas proved them wrong

for their "irresponsible recklessness", the statement further said.

According to Gen Atem, the political resoluteness of the Naga political struggle is the driving force that has taken us this far. Nagas after the declaration of Naga Independence on August 14, 1947 launched a peaceful movement as they boycotted the Indian general election consecutively, in 1952 and 1957. Nagas refused to join the Union of India when more than 500 princely states joined the Union of India. He hit on the point that Naga political struggle has come this far because Nagas have the political courage to assert their rights, the press release further stated.

Taking reference to the present context, Gen Atem said, "We have to stand upright as history will judge us how we stand up for our rights".

Acting correspondingly, the core issue of Framework Agreement of August 3, 2015, was brought forth before the members as they stood up in unison to stand by "Framework Agreement" and with the coherent voice shouted "No Naga flag no solution" "No Constitution no solution" "Under Indian Constitution no solution", the statement of the NSCN-IM further added. (NNV)

ON CLOUD 9



Miss Stella Khongsni (centre) crowned Miss Meghalaya 2023 with first runner up Miss Lasmiker Dkhar(right) and second runner up Miss Sanjijai Khyriem (left) during the grand finale held at Soso Tham Auditorium, Shillong. UB Photos

Rangpur Sahitya Sabha's platinum jubilee preparatory meeting at Sibsagar Girls' College

HT Correspondent

SIVASAGAR, Sept 10: The Platinum Jubilee Committee of Rangpur Sahitya Sabha convened a preparatory meeting on Sunday at Sibsagar Girls' College. During the meeting, several action plans were adopted in preparation for the Platinum Jubilee celebration scheduled for January next year. These plans include the inauguration program, tentative budget preparation, publication of a souvenir, literary and cultural competitions among students, and the reconstruction of the Rangpur Sahitya Sabha building at Borkatak Khetra.

Sadikur Rahman, joint secretary, discussed the objectives of these initiatives, while Juty Bora Bhunya, secretary of Rangpur Sahitya Sabha, presented a report on the previous meeting. President Hem Baruah encouraged members to work diligently for the Rangpur Sahitya Sabha, announcing his donation of ₹ 2 lakh towards the construction of the permanent Rangpur Sahitya Sabha Bhawan.

Renowned writer and academician Khagendranath Bhuyan emphasised the need to foster an environment conducive to literary activities. He lamented the decline of Rangpur's literary prominence, which once played a significant role in the Assamese literary



world, producing 17 presidents of the Asom Sahitya Sabha from Sivasagar.

Apurba Bhuyan, former secretary, provided insights into the development and degradation of the Rangpur Sahitya Sabha Bhawan and the contributions of notable individuals in this regard. Juga Gogoi, former president of Sivasagar Jila Sahitya Sabha, stressed the importance of remembering those generous individuals who made significant sacrifices for Rangpur Sahitya Sabha.

Former president of Rangpur Sahitya Sabha, Manoj Kumar Borthakur, along with Janam Khanikar, Umesh Changkakoti, and Dulal Dutta, shared their perspectives on various aspects of the Sabha unit.

Mokokchung town youth organisation gets office

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: The much needed office chambers of the Mokokchung Town Lanur Telongjem (Mokokchung town youth organisation) was formally dedicated by Rev Dr Bendang Longkumer, the pastor of Artang Baptist Church on Saturday, September 9.

The newly dedicated office comprising of a president's chamber, a general secretary cum media & publicity office, a conference hall and a foyer is located in the middle of the town at Arkong Ward.

The office chambers were refurbished after the RTO, Mokokchung shifted its office to its new building in Kumlong ward.

The pastor, Rev Dr Bendang Longkumer, before the dedicatory prayer, exhorted the MTLT to always keep God in the front while working for the welfare of the people.

Speaking from the Book of 1 Corinthians 10: 31, the Reverend encouraged the Mokokchung Town youths to always do everything for the Glory of God. Additionally, he quoted the Book of Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me...", Reverend Bendang inspired the MTLT to take strength from the Lord so that they might be bold and stand in truth as they work for the people.

The first president of MTLT, Imkongsanen Imchen, while delivering a short speech, delved on the formative history of the



Mokokchung Town Lanur Telongjem during the early days. He said that the MTLT had to face of hurdles during the early days, yet it was the prayer of the parents and the constant support of the MTLT members who sustained the Telongjem thus far.

Likewise, he highly appreciated the present office bearers who have taken the task of opening a dedicated office in the town. He further encouraged the present MTLT office bearers to always keep the welfare of the people first, be bold, stand for the truth and work for the general wellbeing of the people.

The MTLT president, Immaonen Pongen, while delivering the welcome address, appreciated all who

have contributed towards the successful opening of the office chambers which was much needed for an organisation of the MTLT stature which stands on its motto 'always vigilant'. He further acknowledged all the MTLT members and also the citizens who have generously donated towards the furnishing of the office. He also deeply appreciated the landlord L. Yanger Aier for leasing the building to the MTLT for which the Telongjem would remain ever grateful for their understanding.

Meanwhile, the programme was chaired by general secretary Imkongchuba Pongen while the assistant general secretary Moarenba invoked God's blessings.

Conclusion of All Assam Inter Educational Institutions Debating Competition

HT Correspondent

DEMOW, Sept 10: The All Assam Inter Educational Institutions Debating Competition, organised under the patronage of the Nitaipukhuri Branch Sahitya Sabha and the social organisation Suraksha in memory of the late educationists Mangal Deori and Badan Chandra Sarma, concluded successfully at Nitaipukhuri Public Hall on Saturday.

The event commenced with the lighting of ceremonial lamps and earthen lamps in front of the portraits of Late Mangal Deori and Late Badan Chandra Sarma. The competition focused on the topic 'Free Schemes of the Government have contributed to Social Justice and Equality in the Country'.

Rajani Kanta Dutta, retired principal of Nitaipukhuri Higher Secondary School, inaugu-

rated the All Assam Inter Educational Institutions Debating Competition. Santanu Borthakur, senior advocate of Gauhati High Court, presided over the event. The competition featured judges such as Haren Hazarika, a professor at Sivasagar Commerce College; Rupjyoti Nath, principal of Gaurisagar Senior Secondary School; and Netrajit Borah, a journalist.

Tafajjal Hossain BJP's new poster boy in Tripura

More than 66 per cent of the voters in the Boxanagar Assembly constituency belong to the minority community and the constituency was a CPI (M) stronghold

AGARTALA, Sept 10: BJP's Tafajjal Hossain, who wrested the minority-dominated Boxanagar Assembly seat in Tripura's Sepahijala district from the CPI (M) in the by-election by more than 30,000 votes is now the new poster boy of the saffron party.

More than 66 per cent of the voters in the Boxanagar Assembly constituency belong to the minority community and the constituency was a CPI (M) stronghold.

Hossain's win in the minority-dominated Boxanagar Assembly constituency in Tripura is seen as politically important for the BJP, who are accused of ignoring the interest of minority people in the northeastern state.

Tafajjal Hossain polled 33,849 votes in the by-election to the Boxanagar seat while CPI(M)'s Mizan Hussain got only 3,884 votes.

For the first time in 25 years, the Communists lost their stronghold Boxanagar. Riding on the aggres-



sive campaign led by chief minister Manik Saha and his cabinet colleagues, the BJP defeated the CPI (M) in its bastion.

"For the past 40 years, the people of Boxanagar were fooled by the CPI (M) and Congress. Today

the people have taken revenge for the ill-treatment meted out to them", Hossain told reporters after winning the by-election from Boxanagar.

"In the 2023 February election, the electors were misled by the

Communists. This time we have been able to remove misconceptions about BJP. The result is with us as the CPI(M) candidate lost his deposit", he said.

Hossain said people voted in large numbers for the BJP to teach the CPI (M) a lesson.

"In the assembly election in February, 2023, the CPI (M) won the seat by misleading people of the minority community. But this time, they voted for the BJP in large numbers to teach the CPI (M) a lesson. The CPI (M) will be reduced to a party of the past soon," he claimed.

"The CPI (M) knew they would lose the election. That's why they boycotted the counting," he said.

The by-election to the Boxanagar constituency was necessitated by the death of CPI (M) MLA Samsul Haque. The CPI (M) had fielded Haque's son Mizan Hussain to garner sympathy vote in the by-election but failed to win the seat. (PTI)

NSUD urges for peaceful resolution to Indo-Naga political talks

HT Bureau

GUWAHATI, Sept 10: The Naga Students' Union Delhi (NSUD), sought intervention of the world leaders attending G20 summit in New Delhi for facilitating a peaceful and just resolution to the Indo-Naga political talks.

NSUD, an apex Naga student body in the national capital, stated they were compelled to reiterate the Nagas' quest for an honourable and acceptable solution to the protracted Indo-Naga political conflict.

Appealing to the international community for its intervention to resolve the long-pending Indo-Naga political issue which has profound implications for peace and stability in the Southeast Asian region, the Naga student body maintained that the Indo-Naga conflict is over seven decades old, rooted in historical grievances, and identity, which dates back to India's pre-independence, and has resulted in significant human suffering, displacement, and loss of life.

"The Naga people have long sought recognition for their unique cultural and political identity. And despite numerous rounds of negotiations for decades, a final agreement has remained elusive," the NSUD stated.

According to the Naga student body, this impasse is not only a matter of concern for the parties involved but also has broader regional and global ramifications.

It further stated that the continuation of this conflict threatens the peace and stability of the Southeast Asian region and undermines the principles of self-

determination and conflict resolution that the international community holds dear.

The Union further urged the international community to take a proactive role in facilitating a peaceful and just resolution to the Indo-Naga political talks through mediation and facilitation between the two parties, building international pressure on the Indian government in the G20 Summit meetings to address the Naga political conflict, monitoring and ensuring accountability through a mechanism of international oversight on the progress of the negotiations.

"The international community possesses valuable experience and expertise in conflict resolution and mediation and therefore, its involvement can provide fresh perspectives and methods to break the deadlock in negotiations by encouraging both parties to commit to upholding international norms, including respect for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, in any future agreement," it stated.

The Union is convinced that this can pave the way for a brighter and more peaceful future for all parties involved by facilitating a just and lasting solution which will not only bring lasting peace in the Naga region but will also contribute to stability and prosperity in Northeast India as a whole, they said.

Further, the Naga student body urged for international actors as impartial mediators for the facilitation of constructive dialogue between the Government of India and Naga representatives.



Ex-CM Chandrababu Naidu non-cooperative during questioning, claims AP police

AMARAVATI, Sept 10: The Crime Investigation Department which arrested TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu in the skill development corporation scam case has said the former chief minister was non-cooperative during questioning and replied vaguely saying he did not remember certain issues. Naidu was produced in an Anti-Corruption Bureau court in Vijayawada on Sunday morning amid tight security, a day after being arrested in a case of alleged corruption.

Seeking his judicial custody, the remand report said though the officials arranged a chopper to take him to Vijayawada from Nandyal where he was arrested, the Leader of the Opposition refused. The convoy was obstructed several times by TDP cadres which is an indication of intimidating law enforcement officials by virtue of his position.

"He was asked questions based on the note files, which form part of the evidence in this case diary. But to all the questions he was non-cooperative and replied vaguely that he could not recollect the facts. In this regard, the report was drafted in the presence of the mediators and duly attested by him," the report said.

The CID report further said after reaching the office of the CID, Naidu was questioned about his role in the offences in the presence of mediators. He was given breaks as per his request to consult a legal counsel, to meet the members of his family and have food and refreshments.



It said the TDP chief is not a flight risk.

The CID alleged that Chandrababu Naidu and the Telugu Desam Party were the "end beneficiaries" of the misappropriated funds.

The CID named G Subba Rao and K Lakshminarayana, former government employees, as A1 and A2 respectively in the case. According to the remand report submitted to the court, Naidu was named as Accused 37 (A37) in the case.

Naidu was arrested in a pre-dawn operation on Saturday at Nandyal for his alleged role in a multi-crore Skill Development Corporation scam, which involved officers knocking on the door of the caravan in which he was sleeping.

The former CM was arrested by the CID around 6 am on Saturday from a marriage hall (outside which his caravan was parked) at Gnanapuram in Nandyal.

The CID chief N Sanjay had said Naidu was the "principal conspirator" in the case. (PTI)

TMC accuses Bengal Guv of working on behalf of BJP after Bose sends missives to state, Centre

'Good books of BJP with an eye on a plum posting in New Delhi as a reward'

KOLKATA, Sept 10: After West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose sent two sealed letters to the Centre and the state government at midnight, the ruling TMC on Sunday lashed out at him, accusing him of "deliberately adopting a confrontational approach on behalf of the BJP".

The BJP, on the other hand, accused the ruling party in the state of "humiliating the governor by attacking him for his efforts to clean up the mess in the state's education system".

TMC Rajya Sabha MP Santanu Sen said the governor's latest act of sending confidential letters at midnight stems from his wish to be in the "good books of BJP with an eye on a plum posting in New Delhi as a reward".

"The governor is destroying the state's higher education sector by violating all rules, statutes and constitutional provisions. Despite the state pointing out the anomalies in his action, he appears nonchalant and has adopted a confrontational stance because of the support of BJP," Sen said.

TMC state spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said that the governor's penchant for becoming hyper-active in midnight hours requires notice.

"It is clear he is acting at someone's behest and is not listening to anybody else," he said.

Responding to the TMC's allegations, BJP state president Sukanta Majumdar said, "The governor is trying to clean up the mess



created by TMC in the higher education sector in the last one decade. He is working overtime to end the era of politicisation, intimidation and threat on campuses of state universities."

"The ruling party is humiliating the governor in the most unsavoury manner as it does not like his initiative for improving the education sector. It is not concerned about the fate of students who suffer due to the chaotic situation in several state universities which remain headless owing to the TMC's blatant partisan policy to put its own candidates in the VC's post," Majumdar told reporters.

The governor's letter writing exercise came after education minister Bratya Basu accused him of trying to "destroy" the higher education system in the state and running a "puppet regime" in universities.

Bose had earlier warned of "much bigger action" at midnight

in the backdrop of the state education minister's severe criticism and attacks.

As the clock neared 12 am, a Raj Bhavan official said Bose had "signed two confidential sealed letters", one for the state secretariat, Nabanna, and another for the Centre.

On the content of the letters, the official said that "it would be disclosed later".

"The governor signed two confidential letters tonight, one for Nabanna and the other for Delhi," the official added.

"You will come to know of the content of the letters later," the official told PTI, while hinting that the subject could be on the recent war of words between the governor and the state government.

Incidentally, Bose signed the letters a couple of hours after holding an elaborate meeting with Chief Secretary H K Dwivedi at Raj Bhavan.

The topic of the meeting, however, was not disclosed by either the state government or the Raj Bhavan.

Earlier, on Saturday, Bose had warned of "much bigger action" at midnight.

"Wait for the stroke of midnight today. You will see action," Bose had told reporters on the sidelines of a programme. Minutes after Bose's comment, Basu, without naming the governor, mocked him by calling him the "new vampire in town" and cautioned the people to "beware of him".

"See till midnight, see the action BEWARE! BEWARE! BEWARE! New Vampire in the town! Citizens please watch yourselves. Eagerly waiting for the 'Rakkhas Prahar' (time of the monster), according to Indian Mythology!," Basu posted on X, formerly Twitter.

In the continuing war of words between the West Bengal government and the Raj Bhavan over the appointment of interim vice-chancellors in universities, Basu had on Friday accused the governor of trying to "destroy" the higher education system in the state.

The minister also charged the governor, who is the chancellor of state-run universities, with running a "puppet regime" in the varsities and threatening registrars not to hold meetings with the higher education department.

"The honourable governor wants to run a puppet regime by appointing people according to his whims to satisfy someone's ego.

He is making a constant effort to dismantle the higher education system," Basu said.

The West Bengal Educationists' Forum, in a statement, described Bose's comment on midnight action as "threats".

"It is unfortunate to witness the chancellor issuing threats of staging a midnight drama of revenge against the educationists and the officials and functionaries of the state higher education department," the statement said.

The governor, in his capacity as the chancellor of state-run universities, recently appointed interim vice-chancellors for eight varsities, including the prestigious Presidency University, MAKAUT and the University of Burdwan, a step which was severely criticised by the chief minister as a bid to interfere with the running of state-administered universities.

Sources said the interim vice-chancellors of eight other universities have also been finalised and appointment letters "will be issued soon".

Earlier, the governor, while responding to a barrage of criticism from the TMC, had on September 7 vowed to "continue to fight to make state universities corruption and violence-free."

Speaking about the Raj Bhavan's move to appoint interim VCs, Bose had said that he had appointed them as the Supreme Court had ruled against some of the appointments earlier made by the state government. (PTI)

Cong shares video of waterlogging at Bharat Mandapam, says govt's 'hollow development'

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: The Congress on Sunday shared on X a video of waterlogging at the newly constructed Bharat Mandapam, the venue for the G20 Summit, and said it has exposed the "hollow development" under the Modi government.

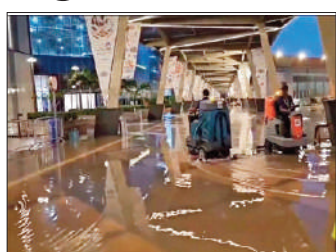
In the video, people are seen walking in a waterlogged corridor. "Hollow development exposed. Bharat Mandapam was prepared for G20. ₹2,700 crore was spent. It was lost in one rain...." the Congress said in its post.

Party spokesperson Supriya Shrinate spoke in the same vein.

"Efforts are underway to remove water with machines. Rains are also part of an international anti-national conspiracy," she said while sharing the video on X.

"Who are these corrupt people who stole so much money and did such shoddy work," she asked.

Addressing a rally in Niwai in poll-bound Rajasthan's Tonk district, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took a



swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the waterlogging.

"Perhaps what the people of our country are not able to say due to fear, God has said: Reduce your ego, this country has made you a leader, put it first and make the people supreme," she said. Party spokesperson Pawan Khera also targeted the government.

"I vividly remember the criticism our govts - both state and central - faced due to waterlogging in the basements of the flats of CWG Village 15 days before the event.

"The Bharat Mandapam gets flooded in the middle of a 'G20 India 2023' event, but not a squeak in the media," he said.

"Modi ji, you didn't learn from us how to govern India, but we must learn from you how to manage the media," Khera said.

Congress general secretary Randeep Surjewala said, "In the 'Bharat Mandapam', built at a cost of about ₹3000 crore, today 'development' was seen floating even in the slightest rain."

Taking to X, he said he prays to God that it doesn't rain much during the day and the G20 Summit gets completed safely.

"The Modi government has covered the poor with a curtain but no amount of showmanship can cover up its misdeeds. Anyway, in the Modi government, nothing lasts after events and inaugurations," Surjewala said in Hindi.

Sharing the video of the Bharat Mandapam, Indian Youth Congress chief B V Srinivas said "development is swimming". The G20 Summit began at the Bharat Mandapam on Saturday and will conclude on Sunday. (PTI)

Himachal CM requests PM to declare rain-caused calamity in state national disaster

SHIMLA, Sept 10: Himachal Pradesh chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to declare the rain-caused calamity in the hill state a national disaster.

Sukhu was the only chief minister from the Congress-ruled states who attended a dinner hosted by President Droupadi Murmu for G20 leaders on Saturday.

In a post on X on Sunday, he said: "Had the privilege of addressing the grave aftermath of torrential rains in Himachal Pradesh during my conversation with Prime Minister Shri @narendramodi Ji after our G20 Summit dinner. I also requested a special disaster relief package and emphasised the need to designate this calamity as a 'national disaster', highlighting the urgency of the situation."

An official statement said Sukhu has conveyed the gravity of the damage suffered by the hill state during the monsoon season to the



Prime Minister and appealed to him to declare the rain-related incidents a "national disaster".

The chief minister has also told Modi that Himachal Pradesh requires substantial assistance from the Union government to chart a path towards recovery and requested him to announce a special relief package for the state.

Sukhu, who had earlier said Himachal Pradesh had suffered losses to the tune of ₹12,000 crore

due to rain-related incidents this monsoon, has been demanding that the calamity be declared a national disaster and a special disaster package be announced on the lines of those provided in the aftermath of the Kedarnath and Bhuj tragedies.

On September 4, the chief minister had reiterated his demand and said he would meet Prime Minister Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah in this regard if the

need arises.

Earlier, the Congress government in the hill state had raised claims of losses to the tune of ₹6,700 crore suffered till August 10 and sent a detailed report of the damage caused during the monsoon to the BJP-led Centre.

Himachal Pradesh saw two spells of heavy rain this monsoon. The first on July 9 and 10 led to large-scale destruction in Mandi and Kullu districts. Shimla and Solan districts were hit during the second spell on August 14 and 15, and the capital city of Shimla suffered heavy damage as an aftermath.

According to the state emergency operation centre, 418 people have died (265 in rain-related incidents and 153 in road accidents) since the onset of monsoon on June 24 till September 9, while 39 are missing. The state has suffered losses of ₹8,678 crore and the estimates are still pouring in, it said. (PTI)

'Resign and apologise': CPI (M) to IIT-Mandi director for linking landslides to meat-eating

SHIMLA, Sept 10: The Himachal Pradesh unit of CPI (M) on Sunday sought resignation and unconditional apology from the director of IIT-Mandi, Dr. Laxmidhar Behera, for his comments that landslides and cloudbursts are effects of cruelty on animals by people who eat meat.

In a letter to the IIT Mandi director, CPI (M) state secretary Onkar Shad said that his views on meat-eating have proved "beyond doubt that there is no guarantee that one being in an elite technology institute has scientific vision."

Terming Behera's views as unscientific and contradictory to professional values and ethics, the CPI (M) leader said that it was an act of "unprofessional conduct" to force personal views on students and ask them to not eat meat.

A copy of the letter has also been sent to the Union minister and the Himachal Pradesh Chief

Minister. Behera stirred a controversy after he asked students to take a pledge not to eat meat while claiming that landslides and cloudbursts in Himachal Pradesh are happening because of cruelty on animals.

"Himachal Pradesh will have a significant downfall...if we do not stop butchering animals. You are butchering animals there... innocent animals. It has a symbiotic relationship with the degradation of the environment as well... which you cannot see right now but is there..."

"It is having landslides, cloudbursts and many other things again and again, these are all effects of cruelty on animals...people eat meat," Behera said addressing the students. A video of his address surfaced online after the incident was reported on Thursday.

"To become good human beings, what do

you have to do? No to meat eating," he further said and then went on to ask the students to vow not to eat meat.

The letter said that the people of Himachal Pradesh have been eating meat "for ages", asking the IIT-Mandi director "why cloudbursts and landslides of the present magnitude did not happen for centuries."

The director has willfully skirted the issue of climate change, unimaginable rainfall, fragile nature of Himalayas, and anthropogenic causes behind this recent disaster, the letter said.

"Do you not see blunders of reckless hill cutting for four-laning of roads, adverse impact of hydroelectric dams and depleted carrying capacity of the hills due to undue expansion and unplanned growth of hill towns," Shad added in the letter. (PTI)

Joe Biden 'very humble', says Indian priest after holding communion service for US president

PANAJI, Sept 10: Father Nicholas Dias, secretary for the liturgy commission for the Delhi Archdiocese, has described US President Joe Biden as a "very humble" person who expressed that his grandmother was a great influence in his life. Father Dias met Biden during a 30-minute holy communion service for the US president at a hotel where he was staying in New Delhi on Saturday, ahead of the G20 summit.

Talking to PTI, Fr Dias said their conversation was around faith, Goa and India. "I mentioned to him about the origin of Christianity in India and recalled that the Indian Church is as old as Christianity in the world," said the priest, who hails from Benaolim in Goa.

The Delhi Archdiocese priest prayed for the success of the G20 summit and of both India and the US.

Fr Dias said the US president was "very humble" and

expressed his gratitude for making time for the prayers. He said Biden told him about the influence of Christianity on him and his closeness to Holy Father Pope Francis.

"We had a quick conversation where he shared how his grandmother was a great influence in his life and in his Catholic upbringing," Fr Dias said. The priest also shared with him Bebinca, a Goan delicacy which he carried with him. Before their meeting concluded, Biden handed over a souvenir - the President's Seal No 261 - to Fr Dias which he said he will always cherish.

The priest also mentioned to Biden about the relics of St Francis Xavier at Old Goa and the decennial exposition scheduled to be held next year in the coastal state. Fr Dias also told President Biden that St Francis Xavier was the inspiration behind his vocation. (PTI)

Rig Veda, Apollo statue, Mona Lisa find place in 'culture corridor' of G20 Summit venue

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Certified original copies of the US' Charters of Freedom, a 'fahua'-lid jar from China and Panini's grammar treatise "Ashtadhyayi" from India are among the historic items displayed at the Bharat Mandapam as part of a G20 'culture corridor'.

The one-of-its-kind project was unveiled on Saturday, coinciding with the opening of the summit.

The exhibition of artefacts -- in physical and digital form -- has been set up on the same floor where the leaders' meetings took place. They walked through this corridor while moving into and out of the summit room.

The two-day G20 Summit attended by top world leaders ended on Sunday. A New Delhi Leaders' Declaration was adopted after the meeting on Saturday.

The 'Culture Corridor - G20 Digital Museum' was envisioned by the Union Ministry of Culture under India's presidency of the bloc as a 'phygital' project.

Manuscripts of the Rig Veda from India, a rare copy of the Magna Carta from the

UK and an anamorphic digital image of the Mona Lisa -- the 16th century Leonardo da Vinci masterpiece on display at the Louvre in Paris -- are among the several artefacts being exhibited at the 'culture corridor'.

Officials had earlier this month said there was a plan to open the corridor to the public after the summit.

"India's G20 presidency theme is 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' and with this international project, we are walking the talk that the world is one family as we will display cultural objects from all 20 members and nine invited countries as part of this 'culture corridor', envisioned as a G20 legacy project, a 'museum in the making'," a source had earlier said.

As part of this project, conceptualised about six months ago, India asked each G20 member and invited country to make submissions under four categories -- physical object of cultural significance, "iconic cultural masterpiece" in digital format, high-resolution digital content depicting the intangible heritage and natural heritage



of each of the countries.

The physical objects have been loaned for a limited period, the source had said.

As an exhibition themed on the 'Mother of Democracy' is being also hosted to mark the summit, a fifth segment was added to the 'culture corridor' project in

which an "ancient artefact related to democratic practices" in physical or digital format was sought from each G20 member and invited country.

In the object of cultural significance category, India has displayed Panini's "Ashtadhyayi", the ancient grammar text

sourced from the Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University, Delhi. In the artefact related to democratic practices category, the Rig Veda manuscript has been displayed. In the iconic cultural masterpiece category, Bhimbetka cave paintings from Madhya Pradesh, dating back to approximately 30,000 years, are displayed in digital format, the official had said.

In the artefact related to democratic practices category, the US is sharing "original copies of the Charters of Freedom", certified by the American government.

The Charters of Freedom refer to three historic 18th century documents of the US -- the United States Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

After India's presidency of the G20 ends, "this project will have an afterlife and it will be preserved in a digital form in a portal, also containing digital images of the physical objects," a source said.

"We will be happy to offer it to countries subsequently assuming the presidency (of the bloc)," he added. (PTI)

3 Naxalites carrying reward of ₹6 lakh arrested

GADCHIROLI, Sept 10: Three Naxalites involved in murders, landmine blasts and arson and collectively carrying a reward of ₹6 lakh have been arrested in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district, the police said on Sunday. The arrests were made in two operations in the past three days. According to a release by the Gadchiroli police, 70 Naxalites have been arrested in the district since January 2022. In the first operation, the district police's elite C-60 squad on September 7 took into custody Sarju, alias Chotu Bandu Mahaka (28) and Madhu, alias Anu Maharu Kumoti (23), both natives of Halwer under Bhamragad tehsil. Mahaka was a member of the banned outfit's Gatta local organising squad (LOS) between 2010 and 2018. He was involved in many encounters and the murder of "two innocent persons", the release said. Kumoti worked with the Bhamragad LOS for two years since 2015 and was involved in murder and attacks on policemen. (PTI)

PM holds bilateral meets with Prez Macron, German Chancellor Scholz, PM Trudeau

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday held a series of bilateral meetings with world leaders, including French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, and discussed issues of mutual interests.

On the sidelines of the G20 Summit, he met South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and African Union President Azali Assoumani.

After his meeting with Scholz, Modi said he thanked the German leader for enriching the G20 Summit with his views. "Also discussed how India and Germany can continue working together in clean energy, innovation and work towards a better planet," PM Modi wrote on X.

Scholz said that at the summit the leaders have successfully engaged in a new interaction between the North and the South.

"We will continue to pursue ambitious objectives in tackling climate change and state that the G20 have taken a clear stand against the violent principles of Russia's policy," the German Chancellor posted on X.

On his meeting with Macron, Prime Minister Modi said they discussed a series of topics.



"A very productive lunch meeting with President Emmanuel Macron. We discussed a series of topics and look forward to ensuring India-France relations scale new heights of progress," Modi said in a post on X. Both countries share close ties and strategic partnership. On his meeting with Assoumani, Modi said it was a very fruitful discussion.

"Congratulations him once again on African Union joining the G20 family. Comoros is vital to India's SAGAR Vision. Our deliberations included ways to enhance cooperation in areas like shipping, trade and more," Modi said.

Assoumani is the President of Comoros and chairs the African Union. Prime Minister Modi said

he discussed full range of India-Canada ties across different sectors in his meeting with Trudeau.

On his meeting with South Korean leader Yeol, Modi said the deliberations were extensive.

"Reviewing the complete spectrum of bilateral relations, we agreed to further boost commercial and cultural ties between India and the Republic of Korea," Modi said on X.

In another post, PM Modi said he and President Erdogan talked about ways to further cement trade and infrastructure linkages between India and Turkey.

On his interaction with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Modi said it was an "excellent meeting."

"Ties between India and Brazil are very strong. We talked about ways to boost trade and cooperation in agriculture, technology and more. I also conveyed my best wishes for Brazil's upcoming G20 Presidency," Modi said.

The prime minister also held a meeting with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Charles Michel in which subjects such as improved connectivity, trade and technology featured prominently.

"India-EU cooperation in futuristic sectors including green hydrogen is very laudatory," Modi said.

In her post on X, the European Commission president thanked Modi for his skilful leadership of the G20.

"A strong partnership with India is paramount for Europe. Glad to see our Trade & Tech Council in action. And to have launched with you an historic project, the India-Middle East - Europe Economic Corridor," she said.

On Friday, he held bilateral meetings with US President Joe Biden, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina and Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth.

On Saturday, he held a series of meetings, including with UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Italian PM Giorgia Meloni. (PTI)

DCGI asks states to keep vigil on sale of falsified versions of 2 drugs following WHO alerts

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has directed the drugs controllers of all states and Union territories to keep a strict vigil on the sale and distribution of falsified versions of two drugs, liver medication Defitelio and Takeda's cancer drug Adcetris (injection), following alerts issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO). In an advisory on September 5, the DCGI said the WHO has issued a safety alert identifying multiple falsified versions of Adcetris injection 50 mg manufactured by Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited, identified in four different countries including India.

"These products are most often available at the patient level and distributed in the unregulated supply chains (mainly online). The products have been identified in both regulated and illicit supply chains, sometimes at patient levels as well. WHO has reported that there are at least eight different batch numbers of falsified versions in circulation," the DCGI said in a communication to the state drugs controllers. Adcetris (Brentuximab Vedotin) is a CD30-directed antibody-drug conjugate indicated for the treatment of patients with Hodgkin's lymphoma after the failure of an autologous stem cell transplant and systemic anaplastic large cell lymphoma. On September 6, the DCGI issued another advisory, referring to a safety alert issued by the WHO on September 4 for falsified product Defitelio (Defibrotide) 80 mg/ml concentrate for solution for infusion, manufactured by Gentium Srl. "This falsified product has been detected in India (April 2023) and Turkey (July 2023), and was supplied outside of regulated and authorised channels," the WHO said. It said the genuine manufacturer of Defitelio has confirmed that the product referenced in the alert is falsified.

"The use of falsified Defitelio will result in the ineffective treatment of patients and may pose other serious risks to health because of its intravenous administration and could be life-threatening in some circumstances," the health body of the United Nations (UN) said. Following the safety alerts for both

the products, the DCGI has advised doctors and healthcare professionals to carefully prescribe drugs and educate their patients for reporting any adverse drug reactions (ADRs). The DCGI has also asked the state and regional regulatory offices to instruct their officers to keep a strict vigil on the movement, sale, distribution and stock of the mentioned drug products in the market.

They should also draw samples and initiate necessary action in accordance with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and the rules made thereunder, the DCGI said. For consumers and patients, the apex drug regulator has asked them to be careful and only procure the medical products from authorised sources with a proper purchase invoice.

On August 31, the DCGI had issued an advisory alert against Abbott's anticid Digene gel, citing safety concerns as the United States-based drugmaker voluntarily recalled several batches of its Digene gel in India after the drug regulator raised an alert. The DCGI had asked the consumers and patients to discontinue the use of Digene gel, which is manufactured at a Goa facility.

As for wholesalers and distributors, the DCGI had said the impacted product, with all batch numbers, manufactured at the Goa facility within the active shelf life to be removed from distribution.

Reacting to the development, Takeda Pharmaceutical Company Limited said Adcetris (injection) should be procured only from the authorised distribution sources. "We would like to clarify that the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation has issued a general advisory cautioning against falsified versions of Adcetris Injection (Brentuximab vedotin) identified in India.

"Takeda has been authorised by the Drug Controller General of India to import, sell and distribute Adcetris in India, and we make it available to our patients here through well-established supply chain networks. We strongly recommend that Adcetris should be procured from Takeda authorised distribution sources only," the firm said in a statement. (PTI)

India believes in taking everyone along: RSS chief



LUDHIANA, Sept 10: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday said many countries of the world are looking towards India for it believes in taking everyone along.

Bhagwat made the statement addressing a congregation organised by the Namdhari mission here held in memory of Satguru Partap Singh and Mata Bhupinder Kaur at Namdhari International headquarters Bhaini Sahib, about 30 kms from here in this district on Sunday.

"India's job is to create balance in the world and it is playing its role very well. India is not a selfish country. It believes in taking everyone along with it," Bhagwat said.

The Hindu right wing leader said there were forces dividing the society that were not only damaging the country but also the world and they must be fought jointly.

Bhagwat said that India has to show a new path to the whole world, but also carry forward its traditions, culture and heritage.

"The meaning of religion is to unite, it does not talk about disintegration," he said.

Satguru Uday Singh of Namdhari community was present on the occasion.

Earlier, the RSS chief reached Bhaini Sahib amid tight security and also had a closed door meeting with Satguru Uday Singh, sources said.

Bhagwat had reached Ludhiana Saturday by train from Delhi and stayed here at state RSS headquarters. (PTI)

Modi pushes for UNSC expansion, Contd. from Page 1...

showed a path to the world to move forward on a range of challenges and demonstrated the strength and importance of the Global South.

After a luncheon meeting with Prime Minister Modi, French President Emmanuel Macron said considering the current fragmented environment, India has done well as G20 president.

India did its best to send across a message of unity and peace to the world while Russia was still waging its aggression against Ukraine, he told reporters. Macron also said a vast majority of G20 countries condemned the Russian invasion but G20 should not get stuck because of one issue.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said that at the summit the leaders have successfully engaged in a new interaction between the North and the South.

"Under India's leadership, we have demonstrated that we can come together, at a time when it really matters," a source quoted British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak as saying at one of the summit meetings.

During the summit, while Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida hailed PM Modi for providing "great leadership" of the G20, Lavrov called for strengthening G20 cooperation based on "the foundation created by the Indian presidency," sources said.

Turkiye President Erdogan hoped that the summit will be a blessing for "the only world we have".

Several leaders praised the prime minister for "championing the voice of the Global South" and hailed, in a unanimous voice, the key decision to make the African Union (AU) a member of the G20 grouping, according to sources. The AU being granted permanent membership was a milestone for India's presidency.

Hailing Modi, President Biden was quoted as saying, "The African Union is a critical partner. You (Modi) are bringing us together, keeping us together, reminding us that we have the capacity to tackle challenges together."

At his press briefing, Lavrov said India played an important role in "preventing the West" from taking forward their approach on many issues, including Ukraine.

"It is a breakthrough summit in many ways. It provides us a way forward to move ahead in many issues."

Lavrov also noted that the Delhi summit provided a direction towards fairness in global governance and global finance as well.

"I want to express my gratitude to India for preventing attempts to politicise the G20," he said, adding the West will not be able to remain a "hegemony" as we see new centres of power coming up in the world.

During the G20 sessions and bilateral meetings, several leaders also lauded Prime Minister Modi's efforts to tackle climate change and extended support to his initiatives, sources said.

Addressing the closing ceremony, President Lula said geopolitical issues should not hijack the discussions at G20 and that the bloc was not interested in a "divided G20" and the challenges of the day could be faced only through joint action.

"We need peace and cooperation instead of conflict."

The next summit will be held in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in November 2024. (PTI)

Mega plantation drive to increase

course on environmental issues and tree plantation, setting the record for the most plantations by a single group in a single venue, and the highest number of plantations within 24 hours.

As part of this initiative, participants will upload pictures of themselves planting saplings on a dedicated portal on September 17. This will not only contribute to the tree planting record but also create the biggest photo album of such an exercise.

The mega tree plantation drive will conclude on September 17 with the planting of one crore saplings across the state. (With inputs from PTI)

BJP working more for welfare of

stop the exploitation of women, especially of a 'category', who are married off at nine years, become mothers by 12 years and then are forced to accept their husbands marrying more than once.

Referring to Tamil Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin's recent comments on Sanatan Dharma, Sarma maintained that Hinduism does not endorse casteism and the last symbols of casteism are also being done away with.

He questioned Stalin for not calling for wiping out "another religion" which discriminates against women, allowing the men to marry multiple times.

"I told him: don't speak about wiping off Hinduism, Islam, Christianity... but end casteism in Hinduism and polygamy, (triple) talaq in Islam," Sarma added.

The BJP leader said the Narendra Modi-led government is focused on 'women-led development' and women are given top leadership positions across the government on the basis of their efficiency.

"We believe that the 'nari shakti' (women's power) is with the BJP...I exhort our Mahila Morcha workers to further ensure that the women reap benefits of all schemes meant for them," Sarma added. (PTI)

Heroin worth over ₹ 2 cr seized

Bori of Silapathar, Majun Umbang of Kulajan & Jhon Patir of Silapathar - along with 21 soap boxes containing suspected heroin weighing 251.2 gms."

In addition to the substantial quantity of heroin, the authorities also seized six mobile phones and ₹ 1.16 lakh in cash from the individuals. An ongoing investigation is underway to further delve into the matter.

Aditya L1 successfully undergoes

Centre, Sriharikota. The spacecraft is expected to arrive at the intended orbit at the L1 point after about 127 days, the space agency had said soon after the launch.

According to ISRO, a spacecraft placed in the halo orbit around the L1 point has the advantage of continuously viewing the Sun without any occultation or eclipses. This will provide a greater advantage of observing solar activities and their effect on space weather in real-time.

Aditya-L1 carries seven scientific payloads developed indigenously by the ISRO and national research laboratories, including the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, and the Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune.

The payloads will observe the photosphere, chromosphere and the outermost layers of the Sun - the corona - using electromagnetic, particle and magnetic field detectors.

Using the special vantage point L1, four payloads will directly view the Sun and the remaining three will carry out in-situ studies of particles and fields at the Lagrange point L1, providing important data on the propagatory effect of solar dynamics in the interplanetary medium.

The suits of Aditya L1 payloads are expected to provide the most crucial information to understand the problem of coronal heating, coronal mass ejection, pre-flare and flare activities and their characteristics, dynamics of space weather, and propagation of particles and fields.

According to scientists, there are five Lagrangian points, or parking areas, between the Earth and the Sun where a small object tends to stay put.

The Lagrange Points are named after Italian-French mathematician Joseph-Louis Lagrange. These points in space can be used by spacecraft to remain there with reduced fuel consumption.

At a Lagrange point, the gravitational pull of the two large bodies (the Sun and the Earth) equals the necessary centripetal force required for a small object to move with them. (PTI)

Tiger injures four

negligence, the tiger later attacked two more individuals, Abutaleb, 35, and Shahed Ali, 25, in the evening.

A significant contingent of the forest department, along with personnel from the Shyampur police station, was present at the scene. The injured individuals have been admitted to Mangaldai and GMCH hospitals for treatment.

The incidents have raised concerns about wildlife management and the safety of local communities in the vicinity of wildlife reserves. Wildlife authorities are likely to conduct investigations into the tiger's behavior and the circumstances surrounding the attacks to prevent future incidents.

'Welfare of tea garden workers

highlighted the government's efforts, such as the establishment of model schools across the state, to improve the lives of tea garden residents. He encouraged individuals from the tea community who had received quality education and achieved a better quality of life to contribute actively to the betterment of their fellow community members.

Governor Kataria stressed the importance of securing land ownership for tea garden workers, not just as a symbolic gesture but as a gateway to accessing government facilities. He also expressed his intention to visit tea garden areas during his district visits across the state to better understand the challenges faced by the community and ensure their voices are heard.

The conclave was attended by various dignitaries, including minister of welfare of tea tribes Sanjoy Kishan, MP Karimganj Kripanath Mallah, chairman of Aadhunik India Foundation Dinesh Kr Chouhan, and others.

7 batches pass out with almost

annually, and students get the opportunity to do their internship in the factories and gardens owned by the members of the association, he said.

"The tea gardens of NETA members are an extended campus and provide support to students for field, factory visits and practical training on all aspects of tea production," Course coordinator Rajesh Jaswal said.

Most of the students have so far been absorbed in tea gardens owned by NETA members, while few others have also joined tea marketing companies, Jaswal said.

A new batch of students enrolled for the course recently and among them is Tiza Banda from Zambia, and "we expect many more international students to join in the years to come", Jallan said.

Banda said she decided to come here to learn about tea crop management from experts.

"Having searched online, I found this place safe and friendly and rich in knowledge on tea cultivation. I expect this course to equip me with vast knowledge and skill in tea plantation management, including cultivation, factory and labour management," she said.

Maresh Baraik, who belongs to the tea tribe community and has grown up in the gardens, said he had enrolled for the course to gain a proper scientific knowledge of tea production.

Baraik joined the Jutlibari Tea Estate as an assistant manager after successfully acquiring his diploma. (PTI)

British PM Sunak, wife spend 45 minutes at Akshardham temple, enquire about its architecture and history

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Britain's Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Sunday visited the Akshardham temple here with his wife Akshata Murty and said it is not only a place of worship but also a landmark that portrays India's values.

The couple spent 45 minutes at the temple, offering prayers and learning about its architecture and history, according to the temple management.

They reached the temple dedicated to Swaminarayan, believed to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, around 6:45 am and walked barefoot from the reception area to the main temple complex -- a distance of about 150 metres.

Sunak, who was dressed in a crisp white shirt and navy blue trousers, and his wife, who paired a beige kurta with a bright pink dupatta and loose pants, were accorded a traditional welcome at the temple.

Walking around the temple, the British prime minister shared his thoughts with his hosts.

"My wife and I were delighted to visit Swaminarayan Akshardham for darshan and puja this morning. We were amazed and awed by the beauty of this temple and its universal message of peace, harmony and becoming a better human being," the temple authorities quoted Sunak as saying in a statement.

"This is not only a place of worship but a landmark that also portrays India's values, culture and



contributions to the world," he said.

The UK PM said these values and culture are seen in the "positive contributions the British-Indian community makes to the UK", he added.

A temple management official said the visit of Sunak and his wife is a matter of "great honour".

"It rained but Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife graciously offered prayers at our temple and it is a matter of great honour for us to have hosted them at this revered temple," the official told PTI.

"Prime Minister Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty walked barefoot in the temple premises even in

rainy weather. From the reception area to the main temple complex, there is a distance of about 150 metres and both of them walked barefoot back and forth," he said.

They first offered flower petals (pushparpan) to the golden idol of Swaminarayan ji and then offered 'aarti', the official said.

"They also offered flower petals to idols of Sita-Ram, Radha-Krishna, Laxmi Narayana and Shiva-Parvati in the temple complex. The UK PM enquired about the architecture of the temple and its history," he said.

Sunak also saw some of the sanctified items that belonged to

Swaminarayan ji, such as shoes and a garland, he said.

A senior temple management official told PTI, "Sunak and his wife spent about 45 minutes at the Akshardham temple and offered prayers. They were given a marble elephant and a marble peacock besides a special replica of Akshardham."

A trustee of the BAPS Swaminarayan Trust, UK and a volunteer from the Neasden temple in London accompanied Sunak and his wife during their visit, said another temple management official who was part of the reception team. (PTI)

SRK CONGRATULATES PM MODI FOR SUCCESS OF INDIA'S G20 PRESIDENCY

MUMBAI, Sept 10: Superstar Shah Rukh Khan on Sunday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the success of India's G20 presidency, saying it has brought in "a sense of honour and pride into the hearts of every Indian".

The G20 Summit came to an end on Sunday. The grouping of emerging and developed economies adopted the New Delhi Leaders' Declaration through consensus and included the African Union as a permanent member of the bloc.

Highlighting the theme of India's G20 presidency, 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' -

One Earth, One Family, One Future', Shah Rukh in a post on X said India will prosper in "oneness" and not isolation under PM Modi's leadership.

"Congratulations to Hon. PM @narendramodiji for the success of India's G20 Presidency and for fostering unity between nations for a better future for the people of the world."

"It has brought in a sense of honour and pride into the hearts of every Indian. Sir, under your leadership, we will prosper not in isolation but in Oneness. One Earth, One Family, One Future..." the actor wrote on the microblogging site, formerly called Twitter.

Shah Rukh is currently basking in the success of his latest release "Jawan". (PTI)



Made choices from opportunities that were accessible to me: SOBHITA DHULIPALA

MUMBAI, Sept 10: Be it her latest series "Made in Heaven" or the "Ponniyin Selvan" films, actor Sobhita Dhulipala says she has always tried to make the best of the opportunities that came her way.

Dhulipala, who made her film debut with Anurag Kashyap's "Raman Raghav 2.0" in 2016, recently reprised her breakout role of the wedding planner Tara in the second season of the Prime Video series "Made in Heaven".

"I didn't think that I will do whatever comes my way just because I want to be visible or I just want to have work. Having said that, my choices were driven by the opportunities that I have. I could make choices from the opportunities that were accessible to me."

"If I sit back and say that I want to do a certain kind of a film, I would love to do a Karan Johar or Farah Khan film. If that opportunity has not naturally happened at that time, I'll have to figure out what I can do from the opportunities that I can find and choose from and give my 100 per cent," the 31-year-old actor told PTI in an interview here.

In her last film appearance, Dhulipala played Vaanathi opposite Jayam Ravi in "Ponniyin Selvan I and II", directed by Mani Ratnam.

The actor is appreciative of "talented directors" like Ratnam and Zoya Akhtar for giving her distinctive roles in "Ponniyin Selvan" movies and "Made in Heaven", respectively.

"I would wonder why Zoya Akhtar, who is commercially successful, would offer me the lead in a show but she took a chance. Mani sir also took a chance by giving me the role in 'Ponniyin Selvan'. 'She (Vaanathi) is very different from Tara and I've shot them side-by-side. These talented directors have taken that

chance and I hope that streaks continue because I want to do amazing work," she added.

Speaking of "Made in Heaven 2", the former Miss India Earth said playing a layered character like Tara was natural. "I don't know if Tara as a character is likeable. She is admirable, people like her grit, work ethic, and her hustle. Many things about her are special as she is non-judgemental, sensitive. "It (the role) is similar to a real-life person, who is not all good or bad. It was amazing to have this opportunity. Playing a character with this variation feels more natural than playing a part that is sweet or a daayan (witch)."

The praise coming from the audience makes her feel motivated, she said. "In the past three years a lot of the stuff that I did, most of it has come this year. I feel grounded that I'm making choices that people are connecting with. It makes me feel that I'm on the right path and I'm doing stuff that people also feel for." (PTI)

'Jawan' sets BO record with ₹ 144.22 cr nationwide on day 3

MUMBAI, Sept 10: Shah Rukh Khan's high-octane action thriller "Jawan" recorded the highest single day collection ever in India for a Hindi film with ₹ 144.22 crore nationwide gross on the third day of its release, the makers said Sunday.

Directed by Tamil filmmaker Atlee, the pan-India film released on Thursday in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. It also stars Nayanathara and Vijay Sethupathi as well as Deepika Padukone in a special appearance.

Red Chillies Entertainment, the production house behind "Jawan", shared the India box office collection of the movie on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Highest single day collection ever. ₹ 144.22 crore gross box office collection all languages. ₹ 68.72 crore (Hindi)," the post read.

"Jawan" is a father-son story that addresses social and political issues

through its hero, essayed by Shah Rukh.

The film also features Sanya Malhotra, Priyamani, Girija Oak, Sanjeeta Bhattacharya, Lehar Khan, Aaliyah Qureshi, Ridhi Dogra, Sunil Grover and Mukesh Chhabra as well as Sanjay Dutt in a cameo appearance.

According to trade analyst Taran Adarsh, the Hindi version of "Jawan" has collected ₹ 180.45 crore in three days.

"#Jawan is a #BO MONSTER, goes on an overdrive on Day 3 (Sat) Creates HISTORY, HIGHEST *3-day* ever (#Hindi version) Thu 65.50 cr, Fri 46.23 cr, Sat 68.72 cr. Total: ? 180.45 cr. #Hindi. #India biz," Adarsh posted on X.

A Red Chillies Entertainment presentation, "Jawan" is produced by Gauri Khan and co-produced by Gaurav Verma. (PTI)

ROMI MEITEI BAGS BEST DIRECTOR AWARD FOR 'EIKHOIGI YUM'

IMPHAL, Sept 10: Adding another feather in his cap, celebrated Manipuri filmmaker Mayanglambam Romi Meitei has bagged the best director award for his debut non-commercial film "Eikhoigi Yum" (Our Home) at the "19th Kazan International Muslim film festival" in Kazan, a Russian city.

Last month, he won the best feature film in Manipuri in the language specified in the Schedule VIII of the (Indian) Constitution category for the same flick at the 69th National Film Awards 2021, a DIPR report said. A whopping 127 feature films from across the world vied for various award categories during the five day long Kazan international film festival that culminated on Saturday. Despite bagging the famed award, Meitei didn't express his fullest elation, considering the unceasing ethnic conflict besieging Manipur, the report also said.

"I would be happier winning this award had there been no conflict in Manipur. The ongoing clash has rendered thousands homeless, and in this situation bagging award seems meaningless," he said while praying for restoration of peace normalcy in the state.

Some of the Russian audience, who are aware of Manipur conflict, even said they would pray for normalcy to return to the state very soon, said Romi, a resident of Kongba in Imphal East district.

The 89-minute Eikhoigi Yum revolves in and around Loktak, the biggest fresh water lake in the northeast India region. With the fishing community facing eviction notice from the government, the film is a narrative on the impact of globalization on a small remote village which causes the residents to move away in an attempt to eke out a livelihood, the report added. NNN

I'm reaching my goals in pieces: Sanchay on recognition post 'Guns & Gulaabs'



NEW DELHI, Sept 10: Actor Sanchay Goswami says the appreciation coming his way for his performance as Nirmal in the Netflix series "Guns & Gulaabs" has strengthened his love for the art of storytelling. Goswami has been working in the film industry for the past nine years and has given over 3000 auditions for films, shows, and ads. He has appeared in shows and movies like "Jalebi" and "Hostel Daze."

His turn as Nirmal in Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK's limited series "Guns & Gulaabs" has brought him into the spotlight, the actor said. "I believe in the process of filmmaking and have never questioned anyone if I haven't gotten a part or called my work a struggle. This is because of my pure love for the art and filmmaking."

"I have experienced a long journey and slow success in my career without believing in shortcuts. I am reaching my goals in pieces, facing many ups and downs. So, I don't take my work and passion for granted, and I work with a lot of excitement and enthusiasm," Goswami said in a statement.

The show centers on the lives of four protagonists: mechanic Paana Tipu (Rajkumar Rao), killer 4-Cut Atmaram (Gulshan Devaiah), a cop (Dulquer Salmaan), and Jugnu (Adarsh Gourav), the reluctant heir of a ruling gang. It follows a drug deal gone wrong that puts them at odds with each other.

In the series, Jugnu, who is shown struggling with his identity and sexuality, is shown in love with Goswami's character Nirmal. (PTI)

Everyone should exercise their right to vote responsibly: SRK on fan's praise for 'Jawan' monologue

MUMBAI, Sept 10: Shah Rukh Khan's "Jawan" has been in the news since its release for highlighting various social as well as political issues and when a fan praised the superstar for his monologue on the importance of casting a vote, the actor once again emphasised on exercising the right "intelligently and responsibly".

The high-octane action thriller, directed by Tamil filmmaker Atlee, is a father-son story that addresses social and political issues through its hero, essayed by Shah Rukh.

It touches upon themes of government apathy, corruption, farmers suicide, a healthcare system in shambles, faulty army weapons and dangerous factories

set near residential areas and in one of the key scenes, Shah Rukh's hero urges the common people to vote sensibly.

At the risk of giving spoilers, when a fan praised the actor for his speech from the film on X, formerly known as Twitter, Shah Rukh wrote: "Arree Usmein spoiler nahi hai. Desh ki bhalai ke liye sab spoilers maaf. Everyone should exercise their right to vote intelligently and responsibly."

The 58-year-old requested the admirer to not share any other spoilers from the film, which also features Nayanathara, Vijay Sethupathi in pivotal roles and Deepika Padukone in a special appearance.

Actors Sanya Malhotra, Priyamani,

Girija Oak, Sanjeeta Bhattacharya, Lehar Khan, Aaliyah Qureshi, Ridhi Dogra, Sunil Grover and Mukesh Chhabra also round out the cast.

In the film, Sanya's character is of a doctor trying to handle the situation of lack of oxygen supply at a government hospital, but gets jailed on dereliction of duty after the death of 63 children.

Many viewers noticed the similarity of the sub-plot with the 2017 Gorakhpur hospital tragedy, including Dr Kafeel Khan, who was jailed for dereliction of duty after 63 children died of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome at Baba Raghav Das (BRD) Medical College in the city.

Kafeel Khan took to X to thank the

makers of "Jawan" for showing an incident similar to his real-life. He said he had not yet seen the movie but was flooded with messages regarding the film since its release.

"I haven't seen 'Jawan', but people have been messaging me saying they thought about me after watching Dr Irrum's character. There is a lot of difference between the film world and real life. The culprits in the army, health minister etc. get punished. But here I and those 81 families are still wandering for justice... Thank you @iamsrk sir and @Atlee_dir sir for raising the social issue," he wrote.

"Jawan" released worldwide in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on Thursday. (PTI)



NO MESSI, NO PROBLEM

Campana scores twice as Inter Miami beat Sporting KC



FORT LAUDERDALE (FLORIDA), Sept 10: With Lionel Messi out of the lineup to play in a pair of World Cup qualifiers for reigning champion Argentina, Inter Miami got two goals from Leonardo Campana to beat Sporting Kansas City 3-

2 on Saturday night. Facundo Farias added the third goal for Miami (8-14-4), which remains 14th in the Eastern Conference table. The match was a test for Miami, which is 11-0-1 in cup and MLS matches since Messi's

arrival with the club. He already has 11 goals and eight assists with the team. Miami was winless in 11 straight before Messi's debut on July 21. "Like I said (Friday), Leo's absence was going to be felt," Campana said in Spanish.

"But he has instilled so much confidence among the players. We believe now and know what we are capable of. Very happy with the result and the three points."

Messi scored the winning goal in Argentina's 1-0 victory over Ecuador on Thursday and has another national team commitment against Bolivia on Tuesday.

The seven-time Ballon d'Or winner is scheduled to return to Miami for its next league match at Atlanta FC next Saturday.

"We all know that when he is here, we are all better," Miami coach Tata Martino said in Spanish.

"We are capable of winning any type of match. That said — for a group of players which works very hard and are teammates of the best player in the world, when he doesn't play it is uplifting for them knowing they can win."

The lack of Messi was evident in the stands. Although the crowd at DRV PNK Stadium sang throughout the match and cheered loudly after each goal, there were noticeable pockets of empty seats.

In addition to Messi, seven other Miami players were called by their national teams for qualifiers and missed the match.

Campana's second goal in the 45th minute snapped a 1-1 tie. DeAndre Yedlin dribbled deep into the right wing area and cen-

tered a pass to a leaping Campana who headed it past Sporting KC goalkeeper Tim Melia.

"I feel I have emerged from less to more during the course of the season," Campana said. "At the beginning, things were not working out but with continued hard work we are now on the right path."

Farias made it 3-1 with his goal in the 60th minute. Sergio Busquets' free kick from mid-field found an open Farias, who dribbled unchallenged into the penalty area and beat Melia with a right-footed shot from 15 yards.

Alan Pulido got Sporting KC (8-12-8) within a goal in the 78th minute.

"This win solidifies us, we know we have a good team," Martino said. "We can continue getting results like we did tonight."

Miami faced an early deficit, when Dániel Sallói scored nine minutes into the match. Goalkeeper Drake Callender deflected Felipe Gutierrez' 25-yard shot but failed to clear it. Sallói found the loose ball on the edge of the 6-yard box and converted with a right-footed shot inside the right post.

Miami tied it on Campana's penalty kick in the 25th minute. Melia fouled Campana near the 6-yard box when he struck the Miami striker around the neck area. Campana beat Melia with a shot to his left. (AP)

Minjee Lee storms to 2-shot LPGA lead in Cincinnati



CINCINNATI, Sept 10: Two-time major champion Minjee Lee opened with three straight birdies, made up a six-shot deficit at the turn and posted a 7-under 65 on Saturday to take a two-shot lead into the final round of the Kroger Queen City Championship.

Lee played bogey-free on a Kenwood Country Club course that was so firm that even some shots with wedge had a hard time staying on the greens. She leaned on her putter, closing out her round with a 12-foot par save. That gave her a two-shot lead over Charley Hull of England and Peiyun Chien of Taiwan, who rallied from a rough start to get back to even par for the day only to go long over the 18th green and miss a 5-foot par putt.

Hull bounced back from a triple bogey to start the third round with seven birdies, posting a 68 that gets her in the final group. Chien is making her 140th start on the LPGA Tour and had her first 36-hole lead. It was gone by the turn.

Chien started with a double bogey, answered with two straight birdies but then lost ground with three bogeys over four holes to close out the front nine. That included a three-putt bogey on No. 9 that put her one shot behind for the first time all day.

Lee never really slowed after her fast start. She went in front with a delicate flop shot from below the green on the reachable par-4 10th, the ball rolling out to a few feet for birdie. She made a 15-foot birdie on the next hole and at one point was three shots clear.

"Having that momentum really helps, especially when you can save your par putts," Lee said. "That's the key for momentum. Making birdies is nice, but key par putts are

important, too."

Lee was at 15-under 201 as she goes for her first win this year. She had a three-shot lead at the Founders Cup earlier this summer, only for Jin Young Ko to rally to beat her.

Lee began to pull away with a two-putt birdie on the par-5 15th, followed by a wedge into 12 feet for birdie on the 16th.

Hull tried to keep pace with three birdies over her last six holes.

"Laughed it off and birdied the next couple," Hull said of her start. "It was quite windy, quite tricky. Patches of them (the greens) are firm, other patches are spinning. It's tricky, which I quite like. It plays into my hands."

Chien drove into a bunker and got up-and-down for birdie on the 10th and made a great par save from well behind the green on the par-3 11th, hitting a flop shot up a steep slope to a few feet away from the back pin. She hit wedge to 5 feet on the 16th for birdie, added another on the 17th with a 15-foot birdie from the fringe and was one behind.

But her approach to the 18th bounced hard and rolled over the green. She used putter to get it about 5 feet from the hole and missed it on the high side. Morgane Mettraux of Switzerland birdied the 18th for a 70 and was three shots behind. Mettraux came into the tournament at No. 107 in the Race to CME Globe and is running out of tournaments to get into the top 80 who have full status for next year. Ruoning Yin of China, who needs to finish solo fourth or better to reach No. 1 in the women's world ranking, began her round with three straight bogeys. She got two of those shots back and had a 73, leaving her six shots behind. (AP)

Coco Gauff wins the US Open for her first Grand Slam title at age 19

NEW YORK, Sept 10: Coco Gauff is still a teenager, after all, and so it should surprise no one that she was on her phone in the locker room, scrolling through social media, right up until 10 minutes before heading out on court for the U.S. Open final.

What the 19-year-old from Florida was reading, she would say later, were various comments, negative ones, "saying I wasn't going to win today; that just put the fire in me." As a pro athlete from a young age, as someone of whom greatness has been expected by some and doubted by others, Gauff has always taken it all in and kept moving forward, trying to learn from each setback. And now, at a tournament she used to visit as a kid to see her idols, Serena and Venus Williams, Gauff is a Grand Slam champion herself and a certified star.

Setting aside a so-so start Saturday, Gauff surged to a 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory over the soon-to-be-No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka in the final at Arthur Ashe Stadium, delighting a raucous crowd that backed her from start to finish.

When Gauff walked into her news conference — phone in hand, of course — she noticed that a large screen on the back wall was rotating pictures of her from the match. So she tucked her new silver trophy under one arm and used the other hand to snap a selfie with those photos in the background.

"Right now I'm just feeling hap-

piness and a very, very small bit of relief," she explained. "Because honestly, at this point, I was doing it for myself and not for other people."

Gauff, who is from Florida, is the first American teenager to win the country's major tennis tournament since Serena Williams in 1999. If last year's U.S. Open was all about saying goodbye to Williams as she competed for the final time, this year's two weeks in New York turned into a "Welcome to the big time!" moment for Gauff. Famous people were coming to watch her play, including former President Barack Obama, who was among those sending congratulatory wishes on Saturday.

Gauff burst onto the scene at 15 by becoming the youngest qualifier in Wimbledon history and making it to the fourth round in her Grand Slam debut in 2019. She reached her initial major final at last year's French Open, finishing as the runner-up to Iga Swiatek, a loss that stung. "I watched Iga lift up that trophy, and I watched her the whole time," Gauff recalled. "I said, I'm not going to take my eyes off her, because I want to feel what that felt like for her." Another down moment came this July at the All England Club, where she exited in the first round. Since then, she has won 18 of 19 matches, and now 12 in a row, while working with a new coaching pair of Brad Gilbert and Pere Riba. The No. 6-seeded Gauff



did it Saturday by withstanding the power displayed by Sabalenka on nearly every swing of her racket, eventually getting accustomed to it and managing to get back shot after shot. Gauff broke to begin the third set on one such point, tracking down every ball hit her way until eventually smacking a putaway volley that she punctuated with a fist pump and a scream of "Come on!"

Soon it was 4-0 in that set for Gauff. Didn't take long for her to close it out, then drop to her back on the court, before climbing into the stands to find her parents.

"You did it!" Gauff's mom told her, both in tears.

In addition to her trophy, Gauff was handed an envelope with the champion's \$3 million paycheck, the same amount Novak Djokovic

or Daniil Medvedev will get after the men's final Sunday. This is the 50th anniversary of when the 1973 U.S. Open became the first major sports event to pay women and men equal prize money; the person who led that effort, Hall of Fame player and rights advocate Billie Jean King, was on hand Saturday.

"Thank you, Billie," Gauff said, "for fighting for this."

Sabalenka came in 23-2 at majors in 2023, including a title at the Australian Open. The 25-year-old from Belarus already was assured of rising from No. 2 to No. 1 in the rankings next week (Gauff will be No. 3 in singles, No. 1 in doubles).

That ranking milestone is "why I'm not super depressed right now," Sabalenka said, then joked: "I'm definitely going to be. I'm definitely going for a drink tonight — if I'm

allowed to say that."

She was reduced to the role of foil by the fans in 23,000-capacity arena. Setting the tone, Gauff's pre-match TV interview, shown in the arena, was drowned out by the sound of applause and yells reverberating off the closed retractable roof. Winners by Gauff were celebrated as if the match were over. So were Sabalenka's misuses. When Sabalenka heard cheers during the post-match ceremony, she joked: "You guys could have supported (me) like this during the match."

By the end, she had 46 unforced errors, Gauff 19. Here's another way to view it: Gauff only needed 13 winners to accumulate 83 points. "Sometimes, I can get emotional," Sabalenka said. "Today on the court, I was overthinking and I was missing ... balls I shouldn't be missing."

When Sabalenka has everything calibrated just right, it's difficult for any foe to handle it — even someone as speedy, smart and instinctive as Gauff, whose get-to-every-ball court coverage kept points alive.

Sabalenka credited Gauff's superb defense — "definitely, she was moving just unbelievable" and "I always had to play like an extra ball" — but also thought many mistakes were "more about me than her. I lost this match."

Sabalenka raised her left hand and wagged her fingers, telling spectators to give her some love. (AP)

Sabalenka's US Open loss to Gauff will sting. Being No. 1 in the rankings Monday will help ease it

NEW YORK, Sept 10: Aryna Sabalenka knows it's going to be hard to get over the sting of a loss to Coco Gauff in the U.S. Open final. That's why, right after Gauff's 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 victory, Sabalenka was reminding herself that when she wakes up Monday morning, she will be No. 1 in the WTA rankings for the first time.

"That's why probably I'm not super depressed right now. I'm definitely going to be," Sabalenka said. "I'm definitely going for a drink tonight — if I'm allowed to say that."

Sabalenka learned in 2023 to handle the nerves and negative thoughts that sometimes plagued her in the biggest tournaments earlier in her career, showing how far she had come by rallying from a set and 5-3 down to beat Madison Keys in the semifinals Thursday. "I'm really proud of myself that all those years I have been working so hard helped me to become world No. 1," Sa-



balenka said.

Still, when the native of Belarus thought of her family who were let down by her defeat, Sabalenka couldn't hide the hurt.

"They've been awake and watching," she said, fighting back tears during the trophy cel-

ebration. "Sorry for this result."

For a while, the match was looking like so many Sabalenka played in the majors this year. She entered with a 23-2 record, highlighted by the Australian Open title, as even the top players seemed helpless against her

power.

The 25-year-old pounced on Gauff early, breaking her serve three times while winning the first set in 40 minutes. But the No. 6-seeded American kept running down balls and forcing Sabalenka to hit an extra shot, and too many of them started flying long of the baseline or wide of the sideline.

"Definitely she was moving just unbelievable today," Sabalenka said. "But then the second set I started probably overthinking, and because of that I started kind of losing my power. Then she started moving better and I started missing a lot of easy shots." Sabalenka ended up with 46 unforced errors, including 16 against just two from Gauff in the final set. Sabalenka tried to remain upbeat during the celebration after the match. She joked with the fans who were applauding her now, but largely and loudly rooted for the American

during for the previous two hours. "You guys could have supported (me) like this during the match," she said.

She teased her coaches and trainers, saying: "They know they will be fired after this tournament."

But then she told them how much she appreciated their work and how much remained.

"As always, we'll come back stronger, right?" Sabalenka said.

She certainly did after last year, when a loss to Iga Swiatek in the semifinals was the second straight year Sabalenka fell one match short of the final in Flushing Meadows. She will finally see her name ahead of Swiatek in the rankings on Monday, and wants it to stay there.

"It's good that I can say I have been world No. 1, but I really would like to finish the year as world No. 1," Sabalenka said. "That's why I'm still positive and I'm still motivated." (AP)

Germany routed 4-1 by Japan in friendly as pressure mounts on coach Hansi Flick

WOLFSBURG (GERMANY), Sept 10: Germany was jeered by its home crowd Saturday after slumping to a 4-1 loss to Japan to pile yet more pressure on coach Hansi Flick, nine months out from hosting the European Championship.

The German defence allowed Japan a string of chances on the counter and the result highlights the lack of progress since a 2-1 loss to Japan played a key role in Germany going out of last year's World Cup in the group stage. Flick's team has not won any of its last five games and conceded 13 goals in that time.

"At some point, expectations and reality are so far apart that you have to accept that currently you aren't good enough," German captain Ilkay Gündogan told broadcaster RTL. "Perhaps we also think that we are better than we really are."

Flick said he believes he is still the right coach for Germany and he was supported by Gündogan, who said he still trusts him. Another challenge comes Tuesday with a friendly against World Cup runner-up France.

Japan targeted Germany left-back Nico Schlotterbeck from the off. A low cross in the 12th minute allowed Junya Ito to score with a shot that appeared to take a deflection off Antonio Rüdiger.

Germany responded when Florian Wirtz found Leroy Sané in space to score, but conceded again almost immediately when Ayase Ueda finished off another move involving a cross from the right.

Flick tried to shake things up in



the second half, introducing Brighton midfielder Pascal Gross on debut and giving Thomas Müller a game for the first time since the World Cup. Neither change had much effect and instead it was Japan who took total control.

Takuma Asano surged in behind the defence to score the third goal in the 90th and Ao Tanaka added another in stoppage time when he was left unmarked for a header.

The pressure has mounted on Flick not just because of Germany's poor form — three wins from 11 games in the preceding 12 months — but also the release this week of a documentary series following last year's poor World Cup campaign. The Amazon series showed Flick struggling to connect with his squad and complaining about a lack of support back home.

"I know that soccer is very dynamic and I can't foresee what might happen," Flick told RTL. "But from my side, and I think that of the coaching team too, we are trying everything to prepare this team well." (AP)

Warner and Labuschagne tons set up another big Australia ODI win



BLOEMFONTEIN (SOUTH AFRICA), Sept 10: Quick-fire centuries by David Warner and Marnus Labuschagne set up yet another big win by Australia against South Africa and a 2-0 lead in their one-day international series on Saturday.

Australia racked up 392-8, its third highest ODI total, and bowled out South Africa for 269 with 8.1 overs to spare.

The Australians won by 123 runs, after a three-wicket win on Thursday, and it follows a sweep of the Twenty20 series.

They can also clinch this series on Tuesday on the same ground.

Travis Head took a liking to Marco Jansen and Kagiso Rabada in the power play, in which Australia reached 102 without loss.

Head hit 64 off 36 balls before falling to Tabraiz Shamsi, who also got Mitch Marsh on review.

The baton was picked up by Warner, who got to his fifty off 52 balls. Warner took only 33 more balls to get his hundred, his fifth against South Africa, tying Sachin Tendulkar in ODIs against South Africa.

Labuschagne came in as part of the lineup, not as a concussion substitute as he was in his match-winning turn on Thursday. He went after spinners Aiden Markram and Shamsi. His first fifty took 54 balls but the second only 26. His two ODI hundreds have both been against South Africa.

He and Warner combined for 151, which ended when Warner tried to pull and was bowled by

Andile Phehlukwayo, who was playing his first ODI since October.

Warner made 106 off 93 balls. Josh Inglis smacked a 37-ball 50 but Australia lost its last five wickets in 27 balls, including Labuschagne for 124 off 99 with 19 fours and one six, and was kept under 400.

Shamsi took 4-61. South Africa needed a record chase and got a good start from Quinton de Kock and captain Temba Bavuma.

De Kock was dropped before he scored and, on 24, the ball rolled onto his stumps but didn't dislodge the balls. He was bowled by Nathan Ellis, who took the pace off to bag de Kock for 45 off 30.

South Africa ended the power play at 84-1 and in great shape but then Bavuma was lbw to Adam Zampa for 46 off 40 and South Africa lost a review.

Zampa got Markram caught on the boundary, and Rassie van der Dussen was tied down before dragging Aaron Hardie on.

Heinrich Klaasen launched Head for three sixes over the covers but, after being pinned down by Ellis and Sean Abbott, he was bowled by Zampa for 49 from 36 balls.

David Miller was the fourth batter to reach the 40s and he was out for 49 off 52, trapped lbw by Ellis.

The tail didn't offer much and Zampa finished with 4-48, along with doubles for Abbott, Ellis and Hardie. (AP)

Aussies back at top of ICC ODI rankings following win over South Africa

DUBAI, Sept 10: The Australian men's ODI team, after being briefly dislodged by Pakistan, is back at the top of the ICC rankings following its second successive win over South Africa in Bloemfontein.

Fine centuries by David Warner and Marnus Labuschagne set up a 123-run victory for Australia in the second ODI on Saturday, helping them take a 2-0 lead in five-match series. Australia smashed 392 for 8, their third highest ODI total, and bowled out South Africa for 269 with 8.1 overs to spare. The visitors had beaten South Africa by three wickets on Thursday and can clinch the series if they win the third ODI at the same venue on Tuesday.

Australia, with 121 rating points following the win, overtook Pakistan by one point. India, with 114 rating points, are third on the ICC

rankings.

Australian, after a few hiccups late last year, have been the dominant ODI side. They lost a closely-fought series against Sri Lanka away from home in 2022, which was followed by a humbling defeat to Zimbabwe in a dead rubber after having won the series.

However, Australia followed that with a 3-0 defeat of traditional rivals New Zealand at home and then whitewashed England 3-0 at home in November last year.

They then achieved major success, defeating India in India in March 2023, followed by successive wins against South Africa in the ongoing series.

The equations might change again with Pakistan currently playing in the Asia Cup at home and in Sri Lanka. (PTI)

Nagal ends runner-up in Tulln Challenger event

TULLN (AUSTRIA), Sept 10: Sumit Nagal had to be content with a runner-up finish at the ATP Tulln Challenger event after losing the singles title clash in straight sets to Czech Republic's Vit Koprivka, here on Sunday.

Competing in his third Challenger level final, Nagal lost 2-6 4-6 to his rival, who is ranked five places below him at 194.

Nagal struggled with his serve and lost his cool in the opening set when he lost a game after being up 40-0. Frustrated at losing the game, he banged his racket on the court, breaking it in a jiffy.

The Czech earned match points

with a backhand winner and closed the contest with a forehand winner.

Nagal had won the Rome (April) and Tampere (July) Challenger events early this year.

The top Indian singles player, who took out two seeded players including top seed Spaniard Albert Ramos-Vinolas en route the final, earned 60 ranking points for his effort.

He will move to 156 in the ATP chart with a jump of 33 places. His next assignment is a home Davis Cup World Group II tie against Morocco in Lucknow. (PTI)

RAIN PLAYS SPOILSPORT AGAIN AS INDIA-PAK GAME TAKEN TO RESERVE DAY

Empty stands not good advertisement for cricket's greatest rivalry

COLOMBO, Sept 10: The electrifying atmosphere that makes a cricket match between India and Pakistan a pulsating spectacle was absent during their Asia Cup Super 4 match here on Sunday.

The spectators once again stayed away from one of the most storied cricketing rivalries despite it being a weekend, just as it was the case during the Indo-Pak league match at Pallekele.

The organisers were expecting to see a good turnout as Colombo has a good representation of Indians and Pakistanis.

In fact, back in 2012, during the World T20 game between the same teams, the Premadasa Stadium was jam-packed. As it has been in Mirpur, Melbourne, Adelaide, Dubai, Birmingham, London or Manchester throughout the better part of the last decade.

The local administrators were understandably disappointed despite them not having any financial stake in the match, as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is the official host.

"With the rain staying away, we were expecting a good turnout. But tickets are still available offline and online. In fact, the ticket rate too has been slashed but we are yet to see a big rush. Hopefully, it will pick up," said an SLC official.

Sri Lanka Cricket has also tweeted about the price reduction of tickets for all the Super 4 matches, including the one between India and Pakistan.



The price of C and D Upper Block tickets at the Premadasa Stadium has been slashed to LKR 1000 while the rate for C and D Lower Block tickets is now fixed at LKR 500. However, the price reduction is applicable only to the Super 4 matches as the prices will be restored for the final scheduled on September 17.

So, what could have been the

reason behind the crowd staying away from this much-anticipated match?

"Perhaps, it was because of the rain prediction that people don't want to take a chance, or may be the local interest is not there," the SLC official said.

However, the Super 4 match between Sri Lanka and Bangladesh on Saturday too saw

several empty spaces in the stands. But a PCB official said the selection of the venue itself was far from ideal.

"It is tough to organise cricket matches in Sri Lanka at this time of the year as it rains there more often than not. But then, a decision has been made and now we have to go ahead," the official told PTI on conditions of

anonymity.

He said the speculation over a possible venue shift also might have affected the sale of tickets.

"Then there were all those talks about shifting the venue (from Colombo to Hambantota) of Super 4 matches and the final. Obviously, people will be apprehensive to come forward and buy tickets," he added. (PTI)

Indian archer Prathamesh Jawkar signs off with Silver at WC Final

HERMOSILLO (MEXICO), Sept 10: Indian compound archer Prathamesh Jawkar's dream run in his maiden 'World Cup Final' ended with a silver medal after he lost to Denmark's Mathias Fullerton by the narrowest of margins in an intense shoot-off finish.

Shanghai World Cup winner Jawkar, who stunned the world No 1 and reigning champion Mike Schloesser for a second time in four months to storm into the final, lost 148-148 (10-10*) to Fullerton, who was adjudged the winner by virtue of his arrow being closer to the centre. The Denmark archer took an early lead after the Indian 20-year-old dropped one point in the opening round of their final clash, here late on Saturday. Trailing 89-90 at the midway mark, Jawkar brought the final on an even keel when he shot 30 points out of a possible 30 to make it 119-all going into the last round.

But in the designated final end, both the archers shot identical scores of 29 each to take it to shoot-off.

The tiebreaker also saw a stalemate as the Indian missed Fullerton's arrow by narrowest of margins.

In the semifinal, the Maharashtra archer dished out a flawless shooting of 150 out of a possible 150 points to pip Schloesser by one point (150-149).

The win also denied the Dutchman a hat-trick of World Cup Final titles. Schloesser is a winner of four 'World Cup Final' (2016, 2019, 2021 and 2022). It was Jawkar's second win over

the 'Mr Perfectionist' in four months. At the final of the Shanghai World Cup in May, Jawkar had prevailed over the Dutch heavyweight 149-148.

Schloesser, however, managed to bring his A-game in the bronze medal playoff, when he denied India a second medal defeating veteran Abhishek Verma 150-149.

Verma was eyeing a second World Cup Final bronze, when he made his way through to the third-place playoff defeating Sawyer Sullivan of the USA 146-146 (10-9) in the quarterfinals.

In the semifinal, Verma lost to eventual champion Fullerton 147-150. Jawkar started off in an ominous fashion when he dropped just one point to eliminate host nation representative Miguel Becerra 149-141 in the quarterfinal. It's only in the penultimate round that the Indian missed the centre once from 15 arrows in an otherwise perfect display.

The win set up Jawkar's semifinal clash against the Dutch superstar Schloesser for a second time in four months. India, however, disappointed in the women's compound section with the duo of Aditi Swami and Jyothi Surekha Vennam returning empty-handed after losing their respective opening round matches. World Cup stage winner Jyothi Surekha Vennam failed to cross the opening round hurdle, going down to Colombian heavyweight and eventual champion Sara Lopez by a five-point margin in a lop-sided quarterfinal. (PTI)

Biggest challenge was to get rid of that fear and pain aspect of things: KL Rahul

COLOMBO, Sept 10: Overcoming the mental barrier was the biggest challenge India wicketkeeper KL Rahul faced while rehabilitating after suffering a serious quadriceps injury that laid him low for nearly four months. Rahul had suffered the debilitating injury during the IPL, which later necessitated surgery in London.

The 31-year-old underwent rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) in Bengaluru to get fit for the Asia Cup. But a "niggle" resulted in him missing the first two group matches of the tournament in Sri Lanka.

However, he was assessed again on September 4 and cleared to join Team India in Kandy for the continental tournament. He also figures in the provisional squad for the World Cup in India.

"A lot of times, it's also like you fight a big mental battle where you're always thinking at the back of your head that, okay, I might feel pain. And when you are in that mindset, you can't really start focusing on skills," said Rahul in a video posted by BCCI on Sunday.

"So, the biggest challenge was to get rid of that fear and

get rid of that pain aspect of things." He added that wicket-keeping requires a lot of strength in the quads and the biggest "question mark" in his mind while rehabilitating was how he would convince himself to don the role again after such a big surgery.

"The big thing was to feel confident in my own body and be pain free in movements that require a lot of intensity. Especially, I knew coming back, I'll have to keep wicket as well."

"And that was one of the big concerns for physios and me, a big question mark in my head that the biggest challenge for me coming back will be wicket-keeping because of the quadriceps injury."

"When you are wicket-keeping, squatting down every ball, you require a lot of strength in your quads and you need it to support you. You need your body to support you and be pain free." Rahul expressed his gratitude towards the physios who

guided him through the tough phase.

"And once you get through that (pain free), and that can only happen when you take things step by step. And, like I said, I was in the hands of some really good physios and trainer at the NCA. So, they really guided me and they knew when to push me, when to step back."

The cricketer added that it was quite a simple chase that resulted in the injury, and that he initially felt it would get better in a couple of weeks.

"I just tried to chase the ball and my tendon snap. I had a full-fledged tear, my tendon ripped apart from my quadriceps. So, when it happened, obviously me, my family, the franchise, the team, everybody had their fingers crossed hoping that wasn't a big tear... it was a small strain or I could get better in a couple of weeks. (PTI)



My criticism for BCCI was about ticketing, scheduling and not against any individual: Prasad

NEW DELHI, Sept 10: The BCCI could have handled the scheduling and ticketing process of the World Cup in a better way, says former India pacer Venkatesh Prasad, who insisted that his outburst on social media on the issue is in no way a tirade against any individual.

The ICC in consultation with hosts BCCI rescheduled as many as nine games, including the marquee India vs Pakistan match, which was originally scheduled on October 15 in Ahmedabad but had to be advanced by a day on account of Navratri celebrations.

Prasad has often taken to social media platform 'X' (formerly twitter) to share his opinion.

However, one of his tweets on Saturday that caught attention was: "It takes one corrupt, arrogant guy to take away the hardwork of an otherwise non-corrupt organisation and spoil the reputation of an entire organisation & the impact isn't just micro but at a macro level. This is true in every field, be it politics, sports, journalism, corporate."



level."

On Sunday morning he modified the tweet to say: "It takes one corrupt, arrogant guy to take away the hardwork of an otherwise non-corrupt organisation and spoil the reputation of an entire organisation & the impact isn't just micro but at a macro level. This is true in every field, be it politics, sports, journalism, corporate."

While he did not mention any

name, there were conjectures on social media on who could have been Prasad's target of ire.

"Nothing personal, just observation," Prasad told PTI when asked if it was meant towards any particular official.

So were you misinterpreted? "100 percent. That (corrupt) I meant generally in all aspects of life. Be it airline industry, banking industry, even IPL franchises have

been banned as well.

"Since in my other tweets, I had tweeted about tickets, it looked mixed up. My criticism for BCCI was clear about the ticketing and scheduling," he said, clarifying his position.

Many in BCCI believe that since he hasn't been a part of system for sometime, he has been angry?

"Not at all. I have, in-fact been offered positions but not ready for it," he vehemently denied any such conjectures.

For him, he was only pointing at what everyone is talking about the organisational part.

"Nothing personal. Just a clear observation and many people have expressed displeasure at the way ticketing is, fans as well as friends from overseas," said the former pacer, who played significant role in India's victory over Pakistan in back-to-back World Cup editions in 1996 and 1999.

Prasad said that while he acknowledged BCCI's good work, he

didn't want to turn a blind eye on aspects which left a lot to be desired.

"There are many things which the BCCI is doing right like equal pay for men and women but I truly believe they haven't handled the World Cup ticketing and schedule well and this has brought a lot of inconvenience and heartbreak for genuine fans," said India's former bowling coach and former chairman of junior national selection committee.

His angry tweet against fact-checker Mohammed Zubair has been construed as an after-thought and something to balance out his scathing attack on BCCI.

"Absolutely not. It was that guy (Zubair) who replied to me and has used derogatory language. Thought it apt to reply and call him out."

Zubair, in a later tweet, termed Prasad as "Fattu", a colloquial hindi slang calling someone "coward". (PTI)