

WORLD  
NATION

- Biden rallies G20 nations to boost World Bank support
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THE HILLS TIMES

www.thehillstimes.in

THE HILLS TIMES

Voice of the hills people

Vol .No. XXIV

Issue No. 238

RNI-ASSEN/2000/12862

DIPHU, KARBI ANGLONG, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023

PAGES 12

PRICE ₹ 8

UNESCO world heritage site in Marrakech partly damaged in earthquake

## Devastating quake hits Morocco, over 1,000 killed, over 1,200 injured

**MARRAKECH (MOROCCO), Sept 9:** A rare, powerful earthquake struck Morocco late Friday night, killing more than 1,000 people and damaging buildings from villages in the Atlas Mountains to the historic city of Marrakech.

The toll was expected to rise as rescuers struggled to reach the remote areas hit hardest.

People woken by the quake ran into the streets in terror and disbelief. State television showed people clustered in the streets of Marrakech late at night, afraid to go back inside buildings that might still be unstable.

A man said he was visiting a nearby apartment when dishes and wall hangings began raining down, and people were knocked off their feet and chairs. A woman described fleeing her house after an "intense vibration."

A man holding a child said he was jarred awake in bed by the shaking.

Emergency workers looked for survivors in the rubble of buildings, their reflective yellow vests



glowing in the dark. A hole gaped in the side of a home, and a car was nearly buried by the chunks of a collapsed building in other images broadcast by local media.

In Marrakech, the famous Koutoubia Mosque, built in the 12th century, suffered damage, but the extent was not immediately clear. Its 69-meter (226-foot) minaret is known as the "roof of Marrakech."

Moroccans also posted videos showing damage to parts of the fa-

homes in nearby towns had partly or totally collapsed, and electricity and roads were cut off in some places.

Abderrahim Ait Daoud, head of the town of Talat N'Yaquob, said authorities are working to clear roads in Al Haouz Province to allow passage for ambulances and aid to populations affected, but said large distances between mountain villages mean it will take time to learn the extent of the damage.

Al Haouz is known for scenic villages and valleys tucked in the High Atlas, and Amazigh villages built into mountainsides.

The Moroccan military and emergency services mobilized aid efforts to the areas hit by damages, but roads leading to the mountain region around the epicenter were jammed with vehicles and blocked with collapsed rocks, slowing rescue efforts. Trucks loaded with blankets, camp cots and lighting equipment were trying to region that hard-hit area, the official news agency (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

At least 1037 people died, mostly in Marrakech and five provinces near the quake's epicenter, and another 1200 people were injured, Morocco's interior ministry reported Saturday morning.

Of the injured, the ministry wrote, 205 were seriously hurt.

The head of a town near the earthquake's epicenter told Moroccan news site 2M that several

## KAAC assures to fulfill demands of employees

HT Bureau

**DIPHU, Sept 9:** Chief Executive Member (CEM) of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang has assured to fulfill the demands of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council Employees Association (KAACEA).

Ronghang said this while attending the 4th general conference of KAACEA that concluded at the Sarsing Teron (Langkung Habe) Memorial Town Hall in Diphu on Saturday. The two day conference began on Friday.

The association held its general conference every three years. The election for the new executive committee of KAACEA for the next three-year term 2023 -2025 was held on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion CEM Tuliram Ronghang said, "There are various demands mentioned in the memorandum submitted by KAACEA and we will soon take necessary steps to fulfill them. The demand for releasing pending gratuity and leave enhancement to KAAC (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Trillions needed to meet climate goals under Paris Agreement: G20

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** The G20, under India's presidency, on Saturday said that developing countries will need USD 5.9 trillion in the pre-2030 period to implement their national climate plans effectively, with the aim of holding global warming to well below 2 degrees celsius, preferably 1.5 degrees celsius.

To achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, developing countries will require approximately USD 4 trillion annually for clean energy technologies by 2030, the bloc said.

The G20 also urged developed countries to double their commitment to double their collective adaptation finance provision by 2025, compared to 2019 levels.

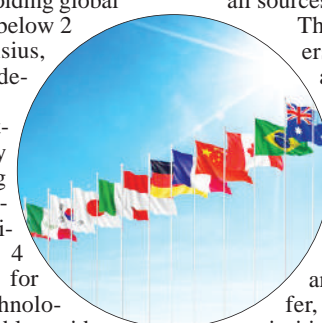
Comprising nations responsible for 85 per cent of the world's GDP and 80 per cent of emissions, the G20 emphasized the need for increased global investments to align

with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

They called for a substantial scaling up of investment and climate finance, transitioning from billions to trillions of dollars from all sources.

The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, adopted on Saturday, emphasized the necessity of aligning financial flows with climate objectives while expanding finance, capacity-building, and technology transfer, with a focus on the priorities and needs of developing countries.

"To achieve this, we note the need for USD 5.8-5.9 trillion in the pre-2030 period for developing countries, particularly for their National Determined Contributions (NDCs), as well as the requirement of USD 4 trillion per year for clean energy technologies by 2030 to reach (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



## Over 5,000 kg of Burmese areca nut recovered

HT Correspondent

**BOKAJAN, Sept 9:** The police recovered 74 bags of illegal dry Burmese areca nuts from a truck plying on national highway 39 in Karbi Anglong district at 4:30 am in the morning on Saturday.

The police while conducting a routine checking on NH-39 came upon a truck coming from Dimapur. On suspicion the police checked the truck bearing the registration number 'PB65AX744', which was loaded with bricks. The vehicle was taken to the Bokajan Police Station, where the bricks were unloaded and from below the building materials 74 bags, weighing 5066.28 kg of Burmese areca nuts were recovered.

In this connection the police arrested four persons, including the driver and helper of the truck. They have (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Assam govt to recommend complete withdrawal of AFSPA

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The Assam government will put forward the recommendation before the Centre to completely withdraw the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) from the state from October 1, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

In view of the significant improvement in the security situation of the state, the cabinet approved the recommendation for the withdrawal of AFSPA from the remaining eight districts of the state, Sarma said late on Friday night.

"The final decision, however, will be taken by the Union government," he added.

The AFSPA empowers security forces to conduct operations and arrest anyone without any prior warrant besides giving immunity from arrest and prosecution to the security forces if they shoot some-



one dead.

The state cabinet also approved an additional ₹ 41.77 crore for developing infrastructure for the newly-raised 2nd battalion of the Assam Police in Hailakandi, 4th battalion in Sivasagar and 5th Battalion in Biswanath, Sarma said.

The cabinet also decided to pro-

vide a one-time financial aid of ₹ 10 crore to the Himachal Pradesh government from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to deal with the devastation caused by the heavy rains and floods.

This aid will help alleviate the sufferings caused by the monsoons and support the Himachal Pradesh government's efforts to provide immediate relief and rehabilitation in the affected areas, Sarma said.

The cabinet also approved the creation of 79 subdivisions, to be known as sub-districts, with geographical limits that would be coterminous with the boundaries of assembly constituencies, he said.

The existing civil sub-divisions, except under Bodoland Territorial Region districts and sixth schedule districts of Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao districts, will cease to exist. (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Charaideo ASP Subhalaksmi Dutta surrenders before Sivasagar police

HT Correspondent

**SIVASAGAR, Sept 9:** The absconding Additional SP, Charaideo, Subhalaksmi Dutta, against whom a non-bailable arrest warrant was issued in connection with the criminal torture of her housemaid Anima Praja in her Nazira quarter in August, surrendered in the office of the Sivasagar superintendent of police on Saturday.

The Sivasagar Police had also launched a man-hunt to track the accused ASP.

A case (No 36/2023) had been registered against the ASP at the Nazira Police Station on August 26 in connection with the physical torture of the housemaid. However, the Assam Tea Tribe Students Association (ATTSA) alleged that the Sivasagar police in a bid to safeguard the woman police officer applied only bailable sections 324 and 342 of the Indian Penal Code



(IPC), thus neglecting the nature of the torture the police officer inflicted on the poor helpless woman belonging to the tea tribe community.

The organization was also alleged that three members of the ATTSA had tried their best to safeguard the ASP, who were later expelled by ATTSA. The victim had

been taken out of the Sivasagar Civil Hospital by a party allegedly sent by the ASP to a private hospital in Dibrugarh, away from the media glare. A police team from Sivasagar had also been sent to Guwahati, but the accused ASP managed to give them a slip minutes before its arrival.

Finally, when the victim in her statement divulged the police officer's attempt to kill her by pouring hot water and confining her to the bathroom, Assam police applied non-bailable sections and issued an arrest warrant against the absconding ASP.

SP Sivasagar, Subhrajyoti Bora said, "The absconding ASP surrendered on Saturday under tremendous pressure and she has been given three days police remand. She will be treated like a general accused person without any special treatment." Security around the Sivasagar (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## India-Middle East-Europe Corridor to augment connectivity, sustainable development: G20

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** Plans for an ambitious India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor were unveiled on Saturday with Prime Minister Narendra Modi asserting that India does not limit connectivity to regional borders and believes that it can play a key role in strengthening mutual trust.

At the launch event of the 'Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment' and 'India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor' during the G20 Summit, Modi said, "We all have reached an important and historic partnership".

He said in the times to come, it will become



an effective medium for economic integration of India, the Middle East and Europe. "It will give a new direction to connectivity and sus-

tainable development of the entire world," the Prime Minister said.

"It will drive sustainable development for the entire world," Modi said.

At the launch, he also said strong connectivity and infrastructure are fundamental basis for humanity and India has always laid strong emphasis on this.

"We are laying a strong foundation for a developed India. Through Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), we can play a key role in filling infrastructure gap in Global South countries. India does not limit connectivity into (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## Death toll rises to 3 in Manipur violence, 1 more dead

**IMPHAL, Sept 9:** The toll in the violence that broke out at Pallel in Manipur's Tenuongpale district rose to three with a 37-year-old man succumbing to his injuries while undergoing treatment at a hospital.

The man sustained bullet wounds on his head during the crossfire between security forces and armed miscreants, officials said.

He died on Friday night while undergoing treatment at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) in Imphal.

Earlier, two persons were killed and 50 others including an Army

major, were injured when hundreds of people from the majority community attempted to storm tribal villages, officials said.

On Friday morning, a gunfight erupted at Molnoi village near Pallel between security forces and armed persons who attempted to arson and indulge in violence in the village.

As the news of the gunfight spread, large groups of Meitei community members, including Meira Paibis and Arambai Tengol militiamen dressed in commando uniforms, attempted to break through (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

HT BRIEF

## BJP launches Shankhnaad campaign in Jorhat



**JORHAT:** The BJP's party's district unit Social Media and IT Cells launched the Shankhnaad campaign in the district by organizing a workshop at its party office in Jorhat on Saturday.

In view of the significance of social media and its potential for the upcoming parliamentary elections scheduled to take place in 2024, the BJP has chalked out a plan to strengthen its social media machinery from the grassroots to the state level to reach out to the voters.

A Jorhat district unit BJP member said that a workshop was organized here to start the Shankhnaad campaign, which was attended by members of the Social Media and IT Cells of the district, mandal and Lok Sabha committees, and convenors and assistant convenors.

State BJP spokesperson and executive member Jayanta Kumar Goswami, assistant co-ordinator of state BJP Social Media Cell Paron Pasoni and state party member Debojit Borogohain were the resource persons in the workshop.

Jorhat district BJP president Hemanta Kalita, district general secretaries Amariyoti Saikia and Manju Dutta, convenor of district Social Media Cell Palash Pratim Khound, district IT Cell convenor Tapan Khatoniar and several party members attended the workshop.

## Cabinet gives nod to EVM use in panchayat polls

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The Assam cabinet has approved the amendment of certain provisions of Assam Panchayat Act to introduce electronic voting machines (EVMs) in panchayat elections and disqualify elected representatives for violating legal age of marriage, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here.

The amended provisions will include constitution of a district delimitation commission to decide the size of the constituencies for zilla parishad, anchalik parishads and gaon panchayats, Sarma said here on Friday night.

The categorization of the districts will be on the basis of population and the gaon panchayats will also be reorganized accordingly, he said.

The amendment will also fix a minimum educational qualification of matriculation for gaon panchayat members and the higher secondary for anchalik and zilla parishad members. Scheduled castes, tribes and backward caste members will be required to pass the matriculation examination.

"EVMs will be introduced in panchayat polls. Panchayat elected representatives, if found to have violated the legal marriage age will be disqualified and members of political parties are also liable to be disqualified under the anti-defection law," Sarma said.

The district delimitation commission will comprise the district commissioner as its chairperson, the chief executive officer of the zilla parishad as the member secretary and the election officer as member, the chief minister said.

Political symbols for elections will be introduced for zilla parishad and anchalik parishads and there will be no party symbols for candidates for gaon panchayat poll, he said.

The president of gaon panchayat will be elected from among the 10 gram panchayat members and a no-confidence motion cannot be initiated for the first two and half years of the term of the president and vice president.

The audit of zilla parishad accounts will be done by the Assam accountant (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)

## 1 crore saplings to be planted within three hours across Assam

## State eyes Guinness World Record through plantation

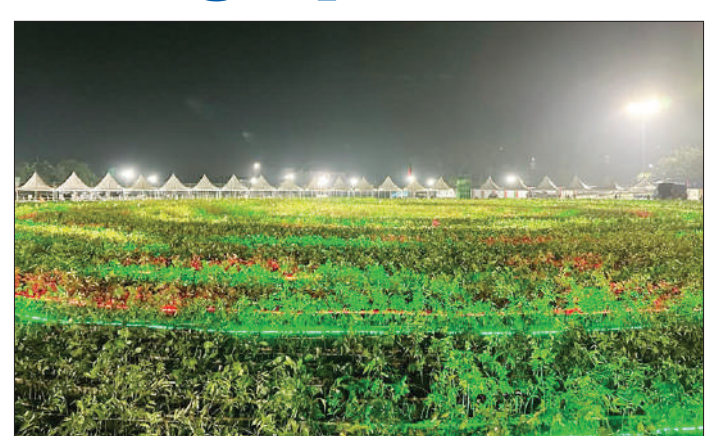
**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** Assam on Tuesday took its first step towards creating yet another Guinness World Record on tree plantation by planting 3.5 lakh saplings in a single row running 22 kilometre long in Guwahati.

Assam environment and forest minister Chandramohan Patowary launched the plantation drive as part of the first of the series of activities under the state government's Amrit Briksha Andolan campaign on Saturday. The longest line of potted seedlings was arranged in a spiral pattern.

The seedlings would be distributed among the public on September 10 for the next set of events.

The state government is planning to plant one crore commercially viable tree saplings in a single day as part of the Amrit Briksha Andolan and create a world record.

The objective of the campaign is to promote a tree-based economy



in Assam and enable people to derive economic benefits by growing commercial trees, Patowary said.

The Assam government is striving to increase forest cover in the state from 36 per cent to 38 per cent, he said.

The campaign has been envisaged by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to enable people to

take ownership of these commercial trees and derive benefits, he said.

"Next year, we are targeting to plant three crore saplings. Efforts will be made to grow those tree saplings in our government nurseries under Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA)

funds next year and not import from outside", the minister said.

As many saplings planted each year die due to various reasons, efforts will be made to grow all these trees successfully this time and ensure a high success rate, he said.

Informing that 49 lakh people have already registered themselves on the portal for planting one crore saplings, Patowary congratulated forest officials for this campaign.

The minister pointed out that Vaishnavite saint Srimanta Sankardev had also emphasised the importance of trees for human society which is evident from his quote "eka briksha dasa putra sama" (one tree is equal to 10 sons).

Patowary also stressed on the need to nurture trees for reducing the negative effects of global warming and climate change.

"The countdown has begun. Eight days to go for Amrit Briksha! A (CONTD. ON PAGE-9)



# India, US express support for building resilient global semiconductor supply chain

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** India and the US on Friday expressed their support for building a resilient global semiconductor supply chain while reaffirming a pledge to sustain high-level engagements between governments, industries and academic institutions.

In a joint statement issued their bilateral talks here, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Joseph Biden called upon the two governments to continue the work of transforming the India-US Strategic Partnership across all dimensions based on trust and mutual understanding.

The meeting was held soon after Biden arrived in New Delhi to participate in the G20 Summit to be chaired by Prime Minister Modi.

The two leaders expressed their support for building resilient global semiconductor supply chains while noting a multi-year initiative of Microchip Technology to invest approximately USD 300 million in expanding its research and development presence in India and also Advanced Micro Device's announcement to invest USD 400 million over the next five years to expand research, development and engineering operations here.

## IT dept finds deficiencies in transactions of Tamilnad Mercantile Bank

**CHENNAI, Sept 9:** The Income Tax Department during a "spot verification" at Tamilnad Mercantile Bank's headquarters at Tuticorin has found deficiencies in some of the filed specified financial transactions, the private lender said on Saturday.

The bank's business operations are continuing "as usual" and "not impacted" due to this development, the Tamil Nadu-based bank, which is over a century old, said in a statement on Saturday.

Last week, the Intelligence and Criminal Investigation wing of the Income Tax department undertook a "spot verification" at the bank's headquarters in Tuticorin.

Tuticorin is located about 500 km from Chennai.

The Income Tax department reportedly found that the bank has not filed statements of financial transactions pertaining to cash deposits of over ₹ 2,700 crore.

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank said, "...we wish to inform you that during the verification, it was observed that few SFT returns were not filed and certain errors/deficiencies were observed in a few of the filed SFT returns".

"The returns, which were to be submitted, have since been submitted, and the deficiencies observed are also being attended to and rectified," the bank said. (PTI)

## CII to organise Foodpro Northeast 2023 from Sept 14-16

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The Confederation of Indian Industry - southern region has been organising its flagship event "Foodpro" since 1995. Over the years, the event has witnessed overwhelming support from the industry and key stakeholders. Recognizing the growing market demand in the North-Eastern region, CII is organising the first edition of Foodpro North-East 2023, scheduled from September 14 to 16 at the Maniram Dewan Trade Centre in Guwahati.

The theme of Foodpro North-East 2023 is "Growing the Market for Food Processing in North-East", and the event is chaired by B Thiagarajan, managing director of Blue Star Ltd.

India's picturesque North-Eastern region (NER), known for its breathtaking natural beauty and fertile lands, is set to become a thriving hub for food processing. With an agro-friendly climate and a rich agricultural heritage, NER is poised to emerge as a sunrise zone for food processing, thanks to the various incentives offered by the Government of India. These initiatives are not only benefiting agricultural producers but also creating employment opportunities in transportation, packaging, advertising, and marketing.

This initiative is supported by Ministry of food processing industries (MOFPI), Government of India, and has received participation from other government nodal agencies like the Spices Board and the CFTRI - Central Food Technological Research Institute.

Foodpro Northeast features a 3 Days Exhibition with the participation of over 50 exhibitors from all over India besides sectoral conferences, B2B, B2G & B2C meetings. The expo is expected to attract over 6,000 business and trade visitors from across the country.



Modi and Biden, according to the joint statement, "expressed satisfaction at the ongoing implementation of announcements made in June 2023 by US companies, Micron, LAM Research, and Applied Materials".

They also welcomed the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Bharat 6G Alliance and Next G Alliance, operated by the Alliance for Telecommunications Industry So-

lutions, as a first step towards deepening public-private cooperation between vendors and operators.

India and the US are also advancing the creation of investment platforms to lower the cost of capital and accelerate the deployment of greenfield renewable energy, battery storage and emerging green technology projects in India, the statement said.

"Towards this end, India's National Investment and Infrastruc-

ture Fund and the US Development Finance Corporation exchanged letters of intent to each provide up to USD 500 million to anchor a renewable infrastructure investment fund," it added.

The two leaders welcomed the efforts to develop an ambitious "Innovation Handshake" agenda under the India-US Commercial Dialogue to include two anchor events (one in India and the other in the United States), in which the two sides will collaborate to bring together start-ups, private equity and venture capital firms, corporate investment departments and government officials to forge connections between the two countries' innovation ecosystems.

Modi and Biden also pledged to sustain the high level of engagement between the governments, industries, and academic institutions of the two nations.

Further, the two countries expressed support for the women in the Digital Economy Initiative, which brings together governments, private sector companies, foundations, civil society and multilateral organisations to accelerate progress towards the closure of the digital gender divide. (PTI)

## Income Tax dept slaps notices on startups seeking creditworthiness of investors

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** The Income Tax Department has slapped notices on some startups seeking information on creditworthiness of their investors as it looked to verify if the amount invested was commensurate with the income declared by the investors. The tax department replying to a social media post of BharatPe co-founder and former MD Ashneer Grover, said under the law, the onus was on the assessee-company to provide the identity and creditworthiness of the investors as well as the genuineness of the transaction.

"In the last one month, a number of startups (a few in my portfolio as well) have received Income Tax notices asking to furnish information about shareholders," Grover had said on a post on X, formerly Twitter, on September 8.

"Bahut interesting hai (it is very interesting) - they are asking start-up companies to furnish a 3 year ITR [income tax return] of all shareholders."

He went on to ask how and why the startup would have ITR of shareholders. "Why would a shareholder/individual share their ITR with a private company?"

He went on to state that the reason given is to 'establish creditworthiness of shareholders'. "Why," he asked. Company shareholders aren't given loans and instead are putting equity in the firm, he added, asking the Union Ministry of Finance to look into this.

Replying to him, the Income Tax Department in a post on X said, "Section 68 of Income-tax Act, 1961 (the Act) under which the Assessing Officer (AO) has made the enquiry about creditworthiness of the shareholder/investor, places initial onus on the assessee-company to prove the following: a) Identity of the investor, b) Creditworthiness of the investor and c) Genuineness of the transaction."

It went on to state that the "Finance Act, 2012 mandated that the nature and source of any sum credited as share capital, share premium etc., in the books of a

closely-held company (excluding Venture Capital Fund or a Venture Capital Company registered with SEBI) shall be treated as explained u/s 68 only if the source of funds from a resident shareholder is also explained by investor."

On the cases raised by Grover, it said: "In the present case, it appears that the AO has sought to examine the genuineness of the transaction and source of investment by the shareholder-investor, to verify if the amount invested is commensurate with the income shown in the ITRs of the investors."

Alternatively, it sought income tax permanent account numbers or PAN of the investors be shared so that the income tax returns of the investors can be verified.

"This has been the practice," it added.

Infosys co-founder and investor Mohandas Pai jumped in to say that this was "misleading". He first tagged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister's Office (PMO) on Grover's initial post to say, "sir tax terrorism is increasing! This is against what you have stood for. Please intervene."

That post he tagged a host of politicians and ministers including BJP Yuva Morcha national president and MP Tejasvi Surya and BJP's Bengaluru Central MP P C Mohan.

After, Income Tax Department clarified the position clearing stating that the alternative to furnishing three years of income tax return is to furnish PAN of the investors, he posted again.

"Again this is misleading," he said, tagging the Union Ministry of Finance, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. "Asking for the PAN is the law. But how can you also ask for 3 year tax returns of the investor from the start up? Does the law permit this. @IncomeTaxIndia itself says that Pan is sufficient. Why this overreach?," he asked.

Grover reposted Pai's post on X. (PTI)

## The IRS plans to crack down on 1,600 millionaires to collect millions of dollars in back taxes

**WASHINGTON, Sept 9:** The IRS announced on Friday it is launching an effort to aggressively pursue 1,600 millionaires and 75 large business partnerships that have assets of roughly \$10 billion on average are targeted for the new "compliance efforts."

Werfel said a massive hiring effort and AI research tools developed by IRS employees and contractors are playing a big role in identifying wealthy tax dodgers. The agency is making an effort to showcase positive results from its burst of new funding under President Joe Biden's Democratic administration as Republicans in Congress look to claw back some

of that money. "New tools are helping us see patterns and trends that we could not see before, and as a result, we have higher confidence on where to look and find where large partnerships are shielding income," he said.

In July, IRS leadership said it collected \$38 million in delinquent taxes from more than 175 high-income taxpayers in the span of a few months. Now, the agency will scale up that effort, Werfel said.

"The IRS will have dozens of revenue officers focused on these high-end collection cases in fiscal year 2024," he said. (AP)

previewing the announcement. He said 1,600 millionaires who owe at least \$250,000 each in back taxes and 75 large business partnerships that have assets of roughly \$10 billion on average are targeted for the new "compliance efforts."

Werfel said a massive hiring effort and AI research tools developed by IRS employees and contractors are playing a big role in identifying wealthy tax dodgers. The agency is making an effort to showcase positive results from its burst of new funding under President Joe Biden's Democratic administration as Republicans in Congress look to claw back some

of that money. "New tools are helping us see patterns and trends that we could not see before, and as a result, we have higher confidence on where to look and find where large partnerships are shielding income," he said.

## China asks G20 countries to resolutely advance economic globalisation calls for unity cooperation

**BEIJING/NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** Chinese Premier Li Qiang on Saturday underlined the need for unity amongst the G20 members and called for cooperation, inclusion and resolute support for economic globalisation.

Li, the number two ranked leader of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), is currently in New Delhi, deputing for President Xi Jinping, to attend the annual G20 summit being hosted by India from September 9-10.

Addressing the first session of the 18th G20 Summit in New Delhi, Premier Li said the influential grouping needs "unity instead of division, cooperation instead of confrontation, and inclusion instead of exclusion."

The G20 member countries represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

Li urged the G20 members to resolutely promote economic globalisation and jointly maintain the stability and smoothness of industrial and supply chains, China's state-run Xinhua news

## India, US settles last trade dispute at WTO

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** India and the US have settled the last trade dispute at the World Trade Organization (WTO) over poultry products, according to a joint statement released on Friday.

With this, the two countries have mutually resolved all the seven pending trade disputes at the WTO.

"The leaders lauded the settlement of the seventh and last outstanding WTO dispute between India and the United States. This follows the unprecedented settlement of six outstanding bilateral trade disputes in the WTO in June 2023," the joint statement said.

It was issued after the meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and United States President Joseph R Biden, Jr., here. Biden is here to attend the G20 Summit to be held on Saturday and Sunday.

Modi and the US President vowed to "deepen and diversify" the bilateral major defence partnership while welcoming forward movement in India's procurement of 31 drones and joint development of jet engines.

In their over 50-minute talks, the two leaders deliberated on India's G20 presidency, cooperation in nuclear energy, critical and emerging technologies such as 6G and artificial intelligence, and ways to fundamentally reshape multilateral development banks.

Earlier, the seventh dispute was discussed during the visit of US Trade Representative Katherine Tai's meeting with Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal meeting last month here.

They had tasked their respective teams with continuing discussions on this dispute in order to reach a solution soon.

During Modi's visit to the US in June, the two countries announced ending of six trade disputes at the WTO and India's removal of tariffs on certain U.S. products (chickpeas, lentils, almonds, walnuts, apples, boric acid, and diagnostic reagents).

The poultry case was filed by the US against India in the WTO in 2012. India has lost the dispute both at the panel as well as the appellate body levels. It was ruled against India that New Delhi's ban on imports of poultry products from the US was inconsistent with global norms.

As India was not able to implement the decision within the stipulated time frame, the US had demanded compensation. After that, both countries were discussing ways to resolve the case mutually.

The US is the largest trading partner of India. In 2022-23, the bilateral goods trade increased to USD 128.8 billion as against USD 119.5 billion in 2021-22. (PTI)

## Legislation introduced in US House to remove high-tech export barriers to India

**WASHINGTON, Sept 9:** As President Joe Biden visited New Delhi, two powerful lawmakers have introduced legislation in the US House of Representatives to remove high-tech export barriers to India to give a big boost to the unrestricted export of sensitive technologies to the country and bolster bilateral technology cooperation.

The legislation was introduced on Friday by Congressmen Gregory Meeks, Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Andy Barr, vice chair of the House India Caucus.

The "Technology Exports to India Act" aims to facilitate the sale of high-performance computers and related equipment to India and strengthen United States-India technology cooperation.

"As President Biden visits India for the G-20 Summit, we are happy to introduce the 'Technology Ex-

## Global Biofuels Alliance likely to be launched at G20: Sources



**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** India's proposal for setting up a Global Biofuels Alliance is likely to get through at the G20 summit with sources indicating that the new grouping may be launched on Saturday to help accelerate energy transition.

A group photo of the G20 world leaders may take place on the first day of the summit on Saturday after it begins at Bharat Mandapam, the venue for the two-day summit, sources said.

The Global Biofuels Alliance, which the world's third biggest oil consumer wants to push during its G20 presidency, mirrors the International Solar Alliance (ISA) piloted by New Delhi and Paris in 2015 to bring clean and affordable solar energy within the reach of all.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi told PTI in an exclusive interview that India's proposal for a global alliance on biofuels among members of the Group of 20 major economies will help accelerate sustainable biofuels deployment in support of the global energy transition.

"Such alliances are aimed at creating options for developing countries to advance their energy transitions," he had said.

"Biofuels are also important from the perspective of a circular economy. Markets, trade, technology, and policy - all aspects of international cooperation are crucial in creating such opportunities," Modi had said.

Biofuel is a renewable source of energy which is derived from bio-

mass. India, which imports over 85 per cent of its crude oil needs, is gradually building capacity to produce fuel from items including crop stubble, plant waste and municipal solid waste.

While India is on schedule to double the mixing of ethanol extracted from sugarcane and agriculture waste to 20 per cent with petrol by 2025, dozens of compressed biogas (CBG) plants are being set up.

The Global Biofuels Alliance is aimed at facilitating cooperation and intensifying the use of sustainable biofuels, including in the transportation sector. Its focus is primarily on strengthening markets, facilitating global biofuel trade, developing concrete policy lesson-sharing and providing technical support for national biofuel programmes worldwide.

Such an initiative is also aimed at helping India's transition to alternative fuels and cutting its import bill, as it seeks to achieve its net zero carbon emissions goal by 2070.

On the other hand, the ISA aims to mobilise more than USD 1,000 billion of investment needed by 2030 for the massive deployment of solar energy.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that global sustainable biofuel production would need to triple by 2030 to put the world's energy system on track towards net zero emissions by 2050.

Liquid biofuels provided more than 4 per cent of the total transport energy supply in 2022. (PTI)

## Siddhanta Medicity partners with UK firm to raise USD 108 mn for cell therapies

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** Bhopal-based healthcare institution Siddhanta Medicity looks to raise around USD 108 million (around Rs 826 crore) in partnership with a UK-based firm for advancing clinical research and development in the field of cell therapies, a release said on Saturday.

The investment of USD 108 million will play a pivotal role in establishing stem cell research centres, treatment facilities, and advanced laboratories, Dr. Subodh Varshney, the managing director of the Bhopal-based health institution said.

The institution has tied up with UK-based SRAM & AM Group to raise funds to advance clinical research and development in the field of NK Cell and Mesenchymal Stem Cell Therapies, the statement said.

The SRAM & AM Group has also tied up with biopharmaceutical company Cellaax, which is engaged in the research and development of advanced cellular therapy. (PTI)

remove high-tech export barriers to India to give a big boost to the unrestricted export of sensitive technologies to the country and bolster bilateral technology cooperation.

The legislation was introduced on Friday by Congressmen Gregory Meeks, Ranking Member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, and Andy Barr, vice chair of the House India Caucus.

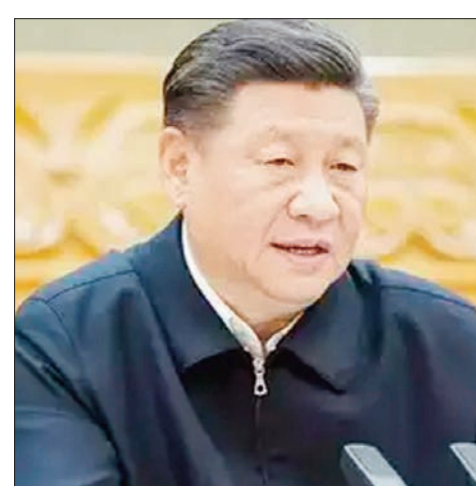
The "Technology Exports to India Act" aims to facilitate the sale of high-performance computers and related equipment to India and strengthen United States-India technology cooperation.

"As President Biden visits India for the G-20 Summit, we are happy to introduce the 'Technology Ex-

ports to India Act' to bolster technology cooperation between the United States and India," the two lawmakers said in a joint statement.

"This bill removes restrictions on the sale of US products, such as digital computers and electronic assemblies, to India without a Department of Commerce license, thereby enhancing US-India technology trade, linkages between our technology companies, and supply chain resilience for a critical industry," they wrote.

"In light of the further strengthening of our strategic partnership with India, this legislative change reduces regulatory barriers to technology cooperation," Meeks and Barr said. (PTI)



agency reported.

The G20 members should stick to the original aspiration of unity and cooperation, and shoulder the responsibility of the times for peace and de-



## Nagaland traders' body to host 1<sup>st</sup> Northeast traders conclave

**HT correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Sept 9:** The Confederation of Nagaland Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CNCCI) will host the 1<sup>st</sup> Northeast States Chamber of Commerce and Industry conclave, the first of its kind in the region, at Niathu Resort at Chumoukedima from September 18 to 20.

Informing this at a press conference here on Saturday afternoon, CNCCI chairman Dr Khukhugha Muru said all stakeholders, academics, and diplomats of the northeastern states who had served in various Southeast Asian countries in various capacities and who are experts in Act East Policy and other business-related issues will speak on various issues of common concern of the region at the conference.

He said the three-day event will include inaugural programme, business summit and closing ceremony where an action plan will be chalked out to put into action.

Nagaland chief minister Neiphiu Rio will grace the inaugural programme as the president of the event.

He said the main issues to be discussed are convergence of markets of the Northeast to help entrepreneurs and start-ups, good infrastructure such as modern warehouses to carry out businesses, exploration of untapped resources and markets, tourism circuit of the region etc.

Besides, the conclave will also deliberate on the insurgency issue in the region to push the state governments concerned and the Centre to find a conducive atmosphere for businesses to grow.

Muru said though six delegates from each state have been invited to the conclave the number of participants will not be limited.

"There is a strong feeling among the business communities in the northeastern region that we should come together in a common platform to address our common issues of concern," he said. Muru said the CNCCI initiated the move to hold such a conclave and that it took years to make it a reality.

"There are many common issues which are to be trashed out from which we all can benefit and help each other," he added.

## IMI 5.0 Round 1 conducted successfully in Nagaland

*The objective of IMI 5.0 is to identify all children up to 5 years for missed doses and pregnant women who could not take up timely immunisation*

**HT Correspondent**

**DIMAPUR, Sept 9:** Nagaland covered 81% of children in the age group of 0-2 years, 92% in the age group of 2-5 years and 86% identified pregnant women in Round 1 of the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI 5.0) conducted in the state, as per the state coverage data provided by the National Health Mission, Nagaland on Saturday.

The objective of IMI 5.0 is to identify all children up to 5 years for missed doses and pregnant women who could not take up timely immunisation, register them on U-WIN and vaccinate them in specially planned IMI sessions.

Round 1 of IMI 5.0 was conducted in the state from August 7 to August 12. Round 2 is scheduled from September 11 to September 16 and Round 3 from October 9 to October 14.

For the Round 2 of IMI, the state has created 191 IMI sessions with child target of 1,187 (0-5 years) and 81 pregnant women.



If some beneficiaries are missed during the headcount, there is an option for onsite registration for which an ID card such as Aadhaar card, PAN card, passport, driving license, service card, ration card or any government approved ID card will be required.

According to the data, despite multiple visits to the households

by the health care workers, the challenge of vaccine refusal still exists and it poses a major hurdle in ensuring that no child is left behind for life-saving vaccinations.

With the upcoming Round 2 of IMI 5.0, the National Health Mission, Nagaland hoped that the parents/caregivers will take the opportunity to get their child/child

dren fully protected from vaccine-preventable diseases like TB, pneumonia, diarrhoea, polio, diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough), tetanus, Hib, hepatitis-B, Japanese encephalitis, measles and rubella.

It said the community needs to know the importance of immunising the child at the right age to ensure that he/she receives full protection. The vaccines are available free of cost at all government health facilities and every unvaccinated or partially vaccinated child is at risk of life-threatening disease.

The department sought continued support from allied departments, faith-based organizations, civil society organisations, village council chairpersons, women leaders, Rotary Club, Lions Club etc. in ensuring that all children under 5 years of age in the family or community complete their dose during these special immunisation sessions being organised in their areas as part of the IMI.

## IRCS Nagaland state branch observes World First Aid Day

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The Indian Red Cross Society Nagaland (IRCSN) State Branch observed 'World First Aid Day' on Saturday under the theme "First Aid in the Digital World", at conference hall Red Cross Complex Kohima, with Kholie Dolf, MC Member and first aid master trainer and Dr Ngan-shimeren MC Member as resource person. The IRCSN society organised First Aid Training for the Managing committee Members, staff of IRCSN and tenants of Red Cross Complex.

The training empowered individuals with knowledge and confidence to respond effectively in any emergency situations. Participants also learned critical techniques.

## NFR extends periodicity of special trains for the benefit of passengers

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The NFR has decided to clear extra rush of passengers during festive season, it has been decided to continue the services of special train no 01666/01665 (Agartala - Rani Kamalapati - Agartala) and train no 05695/05696 (Agartala - Silchar - Agartala) upto December, 2023. These trains will run with the existing days of service, timings, stoppages and composition.

Accordingly, the service of the train no 01666 (Rani Kamalapati - Agartala) special has been extended upto November 30, 2023 to run on every Thursday.

In return direction, the service of the train no. 01666 (Agartala - Rani Kamalapati) special has been extended upto December 3, 2023 to run on every Sunday.

Moreover, the services of the train no 05695/05696 (Agartala - Silchar - Agartala) has been extended upto December 21, 2023 in both directions. The train will run on every Thursday & Saturday.

The extension of these train services will benefit wait listed passengers of other trains in those routes. The details of stoppages and timings of these trains are available at IRCTC website and are also being notified in various newspapers and social media platforms of N F Railway. Passengers are requested to verify the details before undertaking their journey.

## Karbi Cultural Society felicitates KYF contributors in golden jubilee year celebration

**HT Bureau**

**DIPHU, Sept 9:** As part of the golden jubilee year celebration of the Karbi Youth Festival (KYF), the Karbi Cultural Society (KCS) has been organising felicitation programs at various locations in Karbi Anglong and West Karbi Anglong to honor individuals associated with KYF since its inception.

One such felicitation program took place at Karbi Club, Rongthe-ang, Diphu, where the first KYF was organized by Karbi youths. The program was chaired by KCS president Chandrosing Kro and began with a remembrance ceremony for those who were associated with KYF.

In recognition of their contributions to KYF, KCS felicitated them with Karbi traditional turbans (poho) and mementos. Among those honored were Lawrence Teron, former president and secretary of the erstwhile Karbi Youth Festival Committee and KCS, who organized the KYF in 1974 at Karbi Club. During those days, Karbis



were influenced by Durga Pujas and Dewali, and Karbi youths came together to promote Karbi culture and traditions through KYF.

CEM of KAAC, Tuliram Ronghang, attended the program as the chief guest and expressed his happiness that individuals from Dokmoka who contributed to KYF were being honored. He announced plans to develop the Karbi Club with modern facilities.

Bidyasing Rongpi, general secretary of KCS,

mentioned that the felicitation program to honor KYF contributors began in July 2023 and will continue, with plans to felicitate presidents and general secretaries of KCS since its inception at the main celebration at Taralango.

Overall, more than 100 individuals have been felicitated, and those who were not included in this event will be honored later. The grand celebration for KYF's golden jubilee will be held at Taralango.

## ABVP collaborates with MSME for a seminar in Shillong

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, Meghalaya in collaboration with Ministry of micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME), Shillong organised one day seminar at K L Bajoria College recently. The aim for organising the seminar is to enlighten the students

about the startups which can help to nurture innovation and entrepreneurship in the state. Speaking on the occasion, assistant director of MSME, Shillong Readingstar Nongbri said how vital is MSME for the economic growth and the development of a state and of the country. He mentioned that MSME provides employment opportunities, contribute to manufacturing and export, and support innovation and entrepreneurship.

He highlighted some of the schemes launched under MSME and also shared success stories of some of the startups taken over by the entrepreneurs. More than 200 students of KL Bajoria College from all the department of 5th semester batches attended the seminar.



সময়ের সন্ধি  
অসম চৰকাৰ

## আঁঠজনৰ কামত অসম চৰকাৰ প্ৰগতিৰ দিশত ৰাজ্য আমাৰ

# ১০

তাৰিখ

## পেঞ্চন আৰু অৰুণোদয়ৰ দিন

উপকৃত হিতাধিকাৰী  
৩৮,১৯,৫৭৬

প্ৰতিমাহে ধন আদায়  
২৯৯.২২ কোটি

প্ৰতিমাহৰ ১০ তাৰিখে হিতাধিকাৰীৰ একাউন্টলৈ প্ৰাপ্য ধন  
এই মাহৰ পৰা পঞ্চায়ত প্ৰতিনিধিসকলেও প্ৰাপ্য মাননি প্ৰতিমাহৰ ১০ তাৰিখে লাভ কৰিব

ইন্দিৰা মিৰি সাৰ্বজনীন বিধৱা পেঞ্চন আৰু  
দীনদয়াল দিব্যাংগজন সাহায্য আঁচনিও  
অৰুণোদয় আঁচনিৰ অন্তৰ্ভুক্ত কৰা হৈছে

আঁচনিসমূহ

- অৰুণোদয়
- শ্বহীদ কুশল কোঁৱৰ বৃদ্ধ পেঞ্চন
- ৰাষ্ট্ৰীয় দিব্যাংগ, বিধৱা আৰু বৃদ্ধ পেঞ্চন আঁচনি

তথ্য আৰু জনসংযোগ সঞ্চালকালয়, অসমৰ দ্বাৰা প্ৰচাৰিত

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Janasanyog ID/10263/ 23/10 September 2023



# Bharat is India and India is Bharat

By: Dr Ratan Bhattacharjee

Call by whatever name you like, India will remain Bharat and Bharat will remain India. The NDA or I.N.D.I.A cannot make a hill out of the mole. Namesake syndrome cannot change anything but the peaceful scenario. India that is Bharat is a country of plurality of culture. It is not the unity of states, it is the union of states and the present India comes down to us through a historical and still more anthropological evolution.

Down the ages so many changes and so many stages of transformation, so many ups and downs, so many invasions and so many extinction of races finally we have reached out to a stability. Sanskrit Jambudvīpa meaning 'berry island' had been used in ancient scriptures as a name of our country even before the term 'Bhārata' became widespread.

The derivative Jambu Dwipa was the historical term for India in many Southeast Asian countries before the introduction of the Colonial English word "India" which is known by many other names - Al-Hind, Hindustan, Tenjiku, Aryavarta, Bharatkhand,

Himvarsh, Ajnabhavarsh, Bharatvarsh, Aryavart, Hind, and Hindustan. Many historians believe that Bharat dates back to early Hindu texts. In China India is still known as Yin-tu which is not a modern adaptation as it goes back at least to the T'ang period. The great Chinese pilgrim Hsüan-chuang was the first to baptize it. The Sanskrit word Bharata describes Agni. This term has Sanskrit root bhr means "to bear/ to carry" i.e. "to be maintained" (of fire). It also means "One who is engaged in search of Knowledge".

Tianzhu the ancient Chinese name for India that was used between the Later Han and the Song periods. The term is a very crude transliteration of the word "Hindoo" or of the name of the River Indus and it is said that Alexander could not pronounce 'S' and he called Shendu as Indu and the land on the bank of Indu is Indus or Industan or Hindustan. A somewhat older and less often-used, but phonetically more accurate term is Shendu. The Collins Dictionary gives the transliteration of the Hindi name for India. Bharat which is used by Ramcharitmanas to refer to the third son of King Dasharath Bharat, literally means



'those who are striving for illumination', i.e. 'highest human perfection', irrespective of any differences of race, nationality, religion, gender or caste. Some think that the name came from King Bharat who wanted the country to be the land of illumination.

Rising from the Indus Valley civilization, India began to take its current shape in 1,500 BC at the start of the Vedic Civilization. So, the ancient Bharatbarsh or Bharat are not exactly the same geographical land called the present Bharat though the Constitution kept the

name 'Bharat' along with 'India'. There is no need to criticise either one of the two words one as colonial and one as ancient. In fact legal experts say that both are interexchangeable names until one is removed by Constitutional amendment.

The fierce controversy occurs simply because of the political motifs of the contenders. While the Opposition alliance of 28 or more parties renamed UPA as I.N.D.I.A, the NDA under the BJP leadership felt shy and hesitant to call the country by that name of the coun-

try which sounds nearly similar though not in pronunciation because of the typical spelling as in an acronym. If the colonial issue is so important and despicable, BJP or NDA might have raised the issue long ago even in their 2019 election agenda. If the ancient name is acceptable, then they might argue for constitutional amendment to change the name as Jambudeep or Hindustan. Pakistan always referred to India as Hindustan because they wanted to justify the demand of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan for Muslims and Bharat for the Hindus. But we Indians never nourish such fundamental thoughts and India or Bharat is not a country only of the Hindus. The BJP did not demand any constitutional amendment yet for changing Bharat to Hindustan in spite of the allegations against them that they wanted to sacrifice plurality of culture on the altar of Hindu hegemony.

The oldest recorded civilization in the world is the Mesopotamian civilization.

Overall, the four oldest civilizations of the world are Mesopotamia Civilization, Egyptian Civilization, Indus Valley Civilization, and Chinese Civilization.

The idea that the Dravidians were the original inhabitants of India has been considerably modified. Now the generally accepted belief is that the pre-Dravidian aborigines, the ancestors of the present tribals or Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes), were the original inhabitants. The Aryans like the immigrants of the North America are the outsiders to India. They are of the Indo-European origin.

Another popular name for the country is Hindustan, which means "land of the Indus" in Persian. It became a popular way to refer to the country during the Mughal era and is frequently invoked by Hindu nationalists who believe that the name Bharat instills pride. Jai Bharat, Jai Kishan is a popular slogan and we cannot forget that even a cricketer Virendra Sehwag told that "We are Bhartiyaas, India is a name given by the British". The retreat to the original name Bharat is long overdue. However the controversy is not come to an end so easily because the whole matter of naming and renaming goes to the politicians. The total controversy is like six blind men going to describe the elephant. Some says it is like a rope, some says it is like a pillar. But the ele-

phant is not correctly described. Similarly the biased politicians cannot say which name is right for the country.

Even Mahatma Gandhi the greatest nationalist and the great believer in ancient heritage of India described the country as India when he focused on our duty and dream about our motherland: "I dream of an India that is prosperous, strong and caring. An India, that regains a place of honour in the comity of great nations."

The same words can be said about Bharat. Which one came first and which one is more important, the chick or the egg - this is not the moot question. So let us see who can make the country better. What is in a name finally? Whatever name you give the country, our country will remain the same Bharat or the same India. Cheap political gimmicks cannot go a long way. Lily Leung says, "When in doubt, choose change." Our politicians are all in a state of doubt and despair. The nation is really passing through a big crisis. *(The author is currently in Virginia Commonwealth University as an Affiliate Faculty. He can be reached at bhattacharj@vcu.edu.)*

## G20 Summit: India's rising global leadership

By: Dipak Kurmi

The G-20 Summit is about to take place in India, and the preparations are nothing short of spectacular. The Pragati Maidan and its surroundings, especially the entrance facing the Bhairon temple, have undergone a stunning transformation. Delhi now boasts a vibrant display of hundreds of fountains in various colors, adorned with depictions of lions, elephants, musicians, and the city's metro pillars and walls beautifully painted to showcase India's rich cultural heritage. The External Affairs Minister aptly described the G-20 Summit as not merely an event but a joyous celebration of cultures and diversity.

Over the past 10 months, India has been a hive of activity, hosting over 200 meetings in 29 states involving 35+ working groups and numerous cabinet ministers from member countries. These discussions have spanned a wide array of topics, from Finance and Trade to Health, Agriculture, and Culture. Despite notable absentees like Putin and Xi and potential divisions over Ukraine, the G-20 Summit is poised to generate a comprehensive report encompassing green energy, climate financing, SDGs, trade, multilateral bank reforms, debt issues, women-led development, cryptocurrency, cybersecurity, and counterterrorism, among others. Dhruv Jaishankar of ORF in the USA has labeled it as the most impactful Summit in independent India's history, although some may draw parallels with the NAM Summit of March 1983, albeit in a vastly different global context and addressing distinct issues, all hosted in Delhi.

The Delhi G-20 Summit stands out with numerous unique aspects. Distinguished from previous Summits, India has orchestrated a multitude of Ministerial meetings across different state capitals, offering delegates from member nations a firsthand experience of India's rich diversity and captivating cultural heritage. This endeavor not only highlights India's progress since independence but also fosters a sense of inclusion among various state governments, irrespective of their political affiliations. Over the course of India's G-20 Presidency, approximately 100,000 official and unofficial delegates will have graced the country, significantly boosting India's tourism sector.

Even if Putin and Xi had attended the Summit, reaching a consensus on Ukraine in the presence of the US President, given previous strained relations and ongoing sanctions, would have been challenging. However, India's diplomacy, rooted in dialogue and hard work, has fostered substantial progress in various areas. These include trade, multilateral bank reforms, addressing the debt issues of more than 60 nations, India's impressive achievement of 40% renewable energy production, leadership in digital payments with the UPI platform, healthcare collaboration in pandemic response, climate financing, cyber security, and, most importantly, the promotion of inclusive and innovative economic growth for all.

Many analysts believe that India's G-20 Presidency will be remembered for its focus on highlighting issues of utmost significance to the Global South. India has taken a pioneering role in advocating for the in-

clusion of the African Union as a new member of the G-20, emphasizing the continent's importance. Currently, South Africa is the sole African member, while Europe has five members and Spain as a permanent invitee. External Affairs Minister Jaishankar noted that India's efforts have effectively raised the awareness of the Global North about the concerns of the Global South, leaving a lasting impact on G-20 discussions.

India's strategic outlook is evident in its diverse guest list for the G-20 Summit. In addition to inviting Bangladesh and Mauritius, India extended invitations to Egypt, Nigeria, Oman, the Netherlands, Singapore, and the UAE. This inclusive approach demonstrates India's thoughtful approach to global engagement. Furthermore, the G-20 Summit boasts one of the highest numbers of international organizations ever invited, underlining the event's significance on the global stage.

Modi emphasizes the shift from a GDP-centric to a people-centric order to address global challenges effectively. He believes that every voice, regardless of GDP size, is crucial. India is actively catalyzing this transition and, as per PM Modi, its G-20 Presidency has instilled confidence in countries of the so-called Third World. Successfully hosting the G-20 Summit on a grand scale while highlighting issues facing the Global South strengthens India's position as a leading advocate for the region on the world stage.

With the exception of Xi and Putin, the G-20 Summit will be graced by the presence of all leaders, and PM Modi enjoys warm personal relationships with many of them. Notably, US President Biden holds PM Modi in high regard, a sentiment echoed by French President Macron, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, British PM Sunak, Australian PM Anthony Albanese, Japanese PM Fumio Kishida, and Brazilian President Lula. This widespread admiration signifies India's positive global standing. An illustrative moment came during the BRICS summit in Johannesburg when South African President Ramaphosa celebrated India's Chandrayaan 3 moon landing as a collective success for BRICS, underscoring the favorable international sentiment India enjoys today.

It's evident that China is less than pleased with the positive attention surrounding India, despite India's GDP being just a quarter of China's. Speculation abounds regarding Xi's absence from the Delhi summit. Possible reasons range from China's internal issues, particularly in the property sector, to a desire to avoid potentially awkward moments given the current state of relations with the US and India. Some even speculate about health concerns affecting Xi, as suggested by Professor Srikanth Kondapali of JNU.

While Chinese PM Li Qiang will be present at the Summit, expectations for him to actively promote consensus and a joint communiqué are low. Instead, it's anticipated that he may aim to obstruct progress. However, India appears to have prepared for potential Chinese obstacles and remains undeterred by such prospects, indicating a readiness to navigate any challenges that may arise.

Now is the moment to acknowledge India's accomplishments, its global leadership, and its promising future. Let all of India celebrate this moment with joy.



## Project Constitutional Justice - Victory to the common man, victory to the land

By: Naset Chollen

The Constitution of India, a people's document, not only lays the foundation for a democratic and just society but also empowers the common man to champion social causes that serve the greater good. This constitutional empowerment has given rise to numerous movements and initiatives across the nation, all aimed at uplifting the common man. One such remarkable initiative is "Project Constitutional Justice," which took root in the vibrant town of Chare, Tuensang and is now being passionately driven by ordinary citizens.

Project Constitutional Justice embodies the spirit of the Indian Constitution, which envisages a society where every citizen enjoys justice, equality, and fundamental rights. It exemplifies how common individuals, armed with the principles of the Constitution, can effect change and contribute to the welfare of society at large.

Chare, a small yet resilient town, became the birthplace of this inspiring initiative. Here, a group of like-minded individuals came together, united by a shared vision of addressing various social issues and promoting equality. They recognized that the Constitution was not just a legal document but a living, breathing guide to creating a just society. With unwavering determination, they embarked on the journey of Project Constitutional Justice.

What sets this initiative apart is its grassroots approach. It is not spearheaded by politicians or well-known public figures, but by ordinary people who believe in the power of the Constitution. These individuals are driven by a deep commitment to the ideals of justice and equality, and they are determined to make a difference in the lives of their fellow citizens. Project Constitutional Justice operates on the principle that every citizen has the right and responsibility to ensure that the Constitution is upheld. It encourages people to actively engage with the legal and judicial systems to seek justice, to challenge discrimination, initiate effective redressal of the violation of the constitutional rights through constitutional channels and to promote the welfare of marginalized communities as guaranteed in the Constitution.

One of the key aspects of this initiative is legal literacy. It empowers individuals with the knowledge of their rights and the legal processes avail-

able to them. By conducting workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns, Project Constitutional Justice equips citizens with the tools they need to navigate the complex terrain of the legal system. Moreover, this movement is not limited to urban centers but has spread to rural, remote areas of Nagaland including Eastern Nagaland, reaching communities that are often neglected and marginalized. It bridges the gap between legal institutions and the common man, making justice more accessible to all.

The impact of Project Constitutional Justice is profound. It has been instrumental in helping local communities in Nagaland find their own space in the constitutional paradigm. Through the collective efforts of its members adhering to the constitutional mandate revealed the infrastructural lapses and government's negligence through video-recorded evidence.

What makes this initiative even more remarkable is its non-partisan nature. It transcends political affiliations and focuses solely on upholding the principles of the Constitution. This approach has garnered support from a diverse spectrum of society, uniting people across tribal, ideological lines for a common cause.

The residents of Nagaland hold within their grasp a potent tool for effecting change and seeking justice within their world, and that tool is found in Articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution of India. These articles grant every citizen the fundamental right to move the Supreme Court and High Courts, respectively, for the enforcement of their fundamental rights. Project Constitutional Justice serves as a powerful vehicle in bringing the significance of Art 32 and Art 226 to the doorsteps of every Naga in Nagaland. It empowers individuals by providing them with the knowledge and resources necessary to engage with the legal system, enabling them to address issues of injustice, discrimination, policy failures and rights violations effectively. Through this initiative, Nagaland's residents are not only made aware of their constitutional rights but also encouraged to actively participate in shaping a more just and equitable society. In doing so, Project Constitutional Justice becomes a beacon of hope and change, reminding Nagaland's people that they possess the means to shape their own destiny and make their voices heard in the corridors of justice.

In a country as diverse and complex as India, initiatives like Project Constitutional Justice serve as beacons of hope and progress. They remind us that the power to effect change lies within the hands of the common man. The Constitution of India is not a distant, abstract document; it is a living evidence to the rights and responsibilities of every citizen.

As Project Constitutional Justice continues to grow and inspire others, it stands as a shining example of how ordinary individuals can become champions of justice and equality. It proves that the true strength of a nation lies in the collective efforts of its people, working together to build a society where the ideals of the Constitution are not just words on paper but a lived reality for all. Project Constitutional Justice believes in hopes. PCJ is a group of dreamers and doers that hold the bright torch of 'Grund-Norm' of our country- The Constitution of India.

Project Constitutional Justice is not just a voluntary initiative; it holds a constitutional mandate at its core. This initiative is standing strong on the shoulders of simple, ordinary Nagas who believe in constructing a better world. Project Constitutional Justice draws its authority and purpose directly from the Constitution of India, which enshrines the principles of justice, equality, and fundamental rights.

The project's founders and supporters from all walks of life in the state of Nagaland firmly believe that the Constitution is not merely a legal document but a guiding force that empowers citizens to actively participate in the pursuit of justice. It operates within the constitutional framework, ensuring that the rights and responsibilities of every citizen are upheld and respected. In this way, Project Constitutional Justice serves as a living embodiment of the constitutional ideals that inspire individuals to champion social causes for the betterment of society and the common man. *(The author is a Policy Researcher)*

## Deciphering the fine line between freedom of expression and hate speech

By: Asad Mirza

The recent incidents of burning copies of the Holy Quran in Sweden and Denmark by the far right elements has forced the two Scandinavian countries, besides several others to introspect their stand on the freedom of expression and hate speeches and crimes.

Reportedly the Swedish government is concerned about national security following several incidents involving the burning of the Holy Quran that have provoked demonstrations and outrage from Muslim-majority countries.

On 25th August, Denmark's government said it would "criminalise" desecration of religious objects and moved a bill banning the burning of scriptures.

Denmark and Sweden are among the most secular and liberal countries in the world, and have long allowed trenchant public criticism of religions. Politicians across Denmark's political spectrum said an outright ban would compromise citizens' constitutionally inscribed right to freedom of expression as new laws could stop or at least restrict them.

While freedom of expression is a fundamental human right in liberal democracies, the right to express one's opinion can become complex when expressing one's views clashes with the religious and cultural beliefs of others and when this rhetoric veers into hate speech.

In many European countries, lawmakers and others are asking whether these religious book burnings should be seen as exercises of free expression or more as incitement based on religion. A few countries are already introducing

new legislation to curb hate speech against religious communities, as per a report by Armin Langer, for The Conversation.

But here we also have to acknowledge the fact that such tendencies grew in Scandinavian countries, which have a far better societal edifice. This suffered cracks when a large number of migrants from various, mostly Muslim Arab and Asian countries, to these developed nations began. As a result of their old customary and religious belief and with little help from government's side, these migrant communities were not able to assimilate themselves properly in the mainstream of these countries and were seen more of a problem, rather than an asset.

As per census figures the migrants in Sweden constitute about 1.8 to 4.4% of the population, in numbers these transform to 250,000 to 400,000 in a country of 9 million people. On the other hand, 5% of Denmark's population consists of migrants or descendants of migrants.

Historically, since medieval times, because of the dominant role of Christianity in political and cultural life, blasphemy against Christian beliefs in European countries was severely punished. Even now various European countries retain blasphemy laws, though the laws may not prevent present-day acts like dishonouring of religious texts.

Russia, introduced a federal law in 2013 criminalising public insults of religious beliefs. The German Penal Code of 1969 has forbidden the public slander of religions and worldviews.

Both, Austria and Switzerland have laws in this regard. In 2011, a person in Vienna was fined for calling the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

a paedophile. This case later went up to the European Court of Human Rights, which supported the Viennese court's decision. The court said that the person wasn't trying to have a useful discussion but instead just wanted to show that Prophet Muhammad shouldn't be respected.

Spain, also takes a strong stance against religious disrespect. Its penal code makes it a crime to publicly belittle religious beliefs, practices or ceremonies in a way that could hurt the feelings of followers of other religions.

Italy punishes acts deemed to be disrespectful to religions. Its penal code has been used to punish actions that insult Christianity. For example, in 2017 authorities charged an artist for depicting Jesus with an erect penis.

Even in the U.S., there's an ongoing debate about the boundaries of free speech. The First Amendment of the Constitution allows free speech, which some can interpret as the right to burn holy books.

If we analyse closely, based on our interpretation of societal mores and democratic principles, these acts of hatred against one particular religious community seems to be a part of a broader agenda of targeting Muslims by far-right groups across Europe and elsewhere, too.

Lawmakers, social scientists, academicians, politicians all are intent on getting a plausible definition of defining whether these acts of book burnings should be seen as exercises of free expression or more as an incitement based on religion.

On the other hand in India, a country which has seen a steady increase in cases of hate crimes and hate speeches over the past few

years, the real intervention has come from the judiciary, not the political class.

In reality, if we really want to put an end to such fissiparous tendencies then we'll have to change our focus. The cases of burning copies of the Holy Quran or religious books of other religions or the increasing rise in Islamophobia across the world, could be resolved with the help of the political class but we need to adopt a more humane and social approach to resolve the anti-religious acts through finalising a more clearer definition of free speech, hate speech and hate crimes. Only this would help in dealing with them in a more proactive manner rather than a reactive manner, as is evident by the Danish decision to review laws relating to free speech in Denmark.

A few countries are introducing new legislation to curb hate speech against religious communities. For example, in 2006 England got rid of the blasphemy law and introduced The Racial and Religious Hatred Act, which makes it an offense to stir up religious hatred. After repealing its blasphemy law in 2020, Ireland has been discussing the introduction of a hate speech law, which will criminalise any communication or behaviour that is likely to incite violence or hatred.

Sweden passed a hate speech law in 1970 protecting racial, ethnic, religious and sexual minorities. Swedish authorities pointed to this legislation when they took action against a Quran-burning incident that occurred in front of a mosque in June 2023. *(The author is a Delhi-based senior political and international affairs commentator)*



# Good mental health – Determinant to prevent suicides

By: M.R.Lalu

September 10 is World Suicide Prevention Day. It was not going to be pretty to those who chose to put a full stop to their life - a deliberate and abysmally chosen maneuver to finish one's life. All those who brought their lives to a hasty end have probably had no choice, a better one to make than landing on the terrains of death. World has a serious decision to make, a better plan to creatively design and implement for those who are still living with the mental condition of committing suicide. Societies across the globe have seriously been facing this threat, the threat of 'suicidality' - which includes suicidal thoughts, plans and attempts. The quantum of such tendencies is increasing with its rigorous impacts haunting people and families alike. A pattern of thoughts and actions in this direction would not only hamper the mental balance of a

person but the atmosphere which he is a part of would equally be affected.

Certainly, being delicate and predisposed to be less courageous and inefficient to maintain an adequate level of mental ambience of balance, those who chose to commit suicide definitely bring us a lesson to learn.

from. If your mental wellbeing is feeble and flimsy, you will be more susceptible to making a wrong choice. We can hear their lamentation, of those who made such wrong choices, floating in the frail moments of undetected mental predicaments.

Between life's uncertainties and relentless pressure comes the moment of hopelessness, which ultimately approaches us more menacingly than anything. The moment a person loses courage to live further but becomes courageous enough to stop life forever is the most fragile moment of his existence. Unsurprisingly, the numbers of suicide cases are increasing every year. A meaningful question resonates with indescribable alertness. With modernity marching with all comforts to soothe the complexities of life, why people often choose to Self Harm and finish it forever.

There can be multiple answers to satiate our reasoning. But statistics pouring in from various corners from across the globe do

not give us any reason to remain idle.

The latest Pew Research brings us alarming revelations on increasing suicidal tendencies among children, especially school goers. Its data is a highlight on an ongoing mental health and suicide crisis among adolescents in America. Comprising all demographic groups across race and ethnicity, the research on suicides and suicidality conclusively establishes the fact that suicide is one of the leading causes of death in the U.S. While various reasons have been pushing people to commit suicide in that country, economic reasons remain the principal cause behind suicides in India. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) recorded 1.5 lakh suicide deaths in 2020 during the pandemic. Most of the cases were the results of a huge financial crisis that abruptly made people take their lives. And to be specific, over a quarter of the total number of suicides happened in India were from daily wagers while almost 14 per cent of the total cases were from housewives.

Studies across the globe convincingly declare one thing that among the educated class the suicide tendency is less. The level of animosity towards the self, compelling a person to take his own life is the severest and harshest moment. We often hear students under severe pressure from their parents and teachers end their life. In

many cases they attempt to commit suicide and come back from the brink of a total collapse. Conclusive facts call for education and awareness from a younger age. Probably, people with a good family atmosphere and acceptance would rarely attempt an abrupt end to their life. Education and awareness can show the way out of this menace. Ask any child between the ages of 14 to 18, you will find many who thought of slicing their nerves or consuming a poisonous substance or hanging on to the end of a rope to quell the thrust of an overwhelming thought that demanded a sudden response in the form of death.

Official data in India reveal the fact that the year 2021 recorded the highest suicide since the beginning of the century with 12 suicides per 1 lakh population. Feeling hopeless and unprecedentedly distressed are the reasons that lead a person to commit suicide. This also reveals the other side of the coin, that people who nurture a tendency to make an attempt to commit suicide are naturally demanding an attention, compassion and care. They are mostly unprepared to handle the pressure of circumstances and suggestively declare their inability through the act of attempting to commit suicide.

Undoubtedly, students' deaths by suicide are a huge concern. Most of the cases call for the parents and the

stakeholders to maintain restraint. Instead of pushing the young minds through the tunnels of parental aspirations, pressing them harder to suffocate and collapse, there should be vivid interactions taking place among members in families to explore amicable possibilities to gear up with the abilities of the child.

At present, there is a huge gap seemingly growing wider in terms of mental acceptance and understanding between parents and children and the ruthless spirit of competition injected by institutions slit open through the conscience of families. As per the NCRB data, over 13000 students died in India by suicide in 2021 and maximum of them had chosen to end their lives due to 'failure in examination.' India's suicides should worry us, especially when the maximum number of death cases comes from among the youth.

Every suicide attempt is directly linked with the mental health of the person and its prevention is all about helping someone from falling mentally sick. Constructive and sustainable goals are to be set and good practices for mental wellbeing should enjoy resounding acceptance and reach. September 10 this year should formally be seen as a benchmark set for more creative interventions to prevent suicides, a step closer to actuality. (The author is a freelance journalist)

## Allama Iqbal's Shaheen: A symbol of aspiration and inspiration



By: Aubaid Ahmad Akhoun

Allama Iqbal is the poet of the East. Not only a professor, advocate, poet, and politician, his contributions were vast and diverse. Through his profound insights, he authored numerous influential books in Urdu, English, and Persian, solidifying his authority in various languages. His impact transcends time, serving as an unwavering source of inspiration for millions worldwide. Allama Iqbal's teachings encouraged individuals to embrace progress, freedom, happiness, and self-respect, resonating across cultures and continents. His verses have woven into the very fabric of education, discussed passionately within schools, colleges, universities, and even the peaceful corners of mosques.

His poetic expressions often reflect themes of remembrance for Islam's past glories, an earnest lamentation for its current decline, and an earnest call to unite and enact reform, echoing with a timeless urgency that continues to shape generations. He was a visionary philosopher, poet, and thinker whose poetry ignited the flames of self-discovery and empowerment among Muslims in the Indian subcontinent during a crucial period in history. His verses carried profound metaphors and messages, among which the Shaheen (falcon) stood as a symbol of strength, aspiration, and the relentless pursuit of higher ideals. Given below are some of the prominent messages squeezed from the amazing writings of the poet of the East with special reference to Shaheen:

### The Metaphor of Shaheen

The symbol of the "Shaheen" (eagle) in Allama Iqbal's poetry is a powerful representation of his ideals. The shaheen embodies the spirit of freedom, ambition, and self-soaring aspiration. Iqbal employed this majestic bird to epitomize the Individual's journey towards self-realization and the pursuit of lofty goals. Just as the shaheen soars high, defying limitations, Iqbal urged humanity to transcend mediocrity, break free from constraints, and embrace its inherent potential. The shaheen symbolizes not only the resilience of the self but also the collective yearning of a nation to rise, awaken, and contribute to a brighter future. The following couplets reflect Iqbal's emphasis on self-elevation, aspiration, and the pursuit of higher ideals, using the "shaheen" symbol to convey his message of transcendence and self-discovery.

"Shaheen se bhi zyada uchayon mein udne ki azaadi,  
Haasil hai us insaan ko jo imaan-daar hai khud se."  
"Shaheen Kabhi parwaz se thak kar nahin girta,

Par dum hai agar tu, toh nahin khatra-e-iftaad."

**Inquisitiveness and Curiosity:** Iqbal values curiosity, symbolized by the Shaheen's sharp vision and vigilance. He believes that individuals should possess inquisitiveness, as it enables them to explore the mysteries of the universe and acquire knowledge.

**The Call for Freedom:** Freedom, both personal and intellectual, is a recurring theme in Iqbal's poetry. He appreciates the Shaheen's freedom and connects it to human freedom, urging individuals, particularly the Muslim youth, to break free from mental slavery and pursue their destinies with vigor.

**A Quest for Higher Aims:** The Shaheen's lofty flight symbolizes the pursuit of noble goals. Iqbal encourages individuals to adopt this quest for higher aims, striving to reach beyond their limits and make a meaningful impact on the world.

**The Power of Detachment:** Iqbal emphasizes the importance of choosing one's companions wisely. The Shaheen avoids the company of pigeons and crows, symbolizing the need to surround oneself with those who elevate one's character and ambitions rather than lead them astray.

**Rejecting Superficial Comforts:** Iqbal often criticized the notion of building nests, symbolizing a rejection of superficial comforts. The Shaheen does not seek the security of a nest but instead chooses the ruggedness of mountains and cliffs. This characteristic encourages individuals to resist the allure of comfort and strive for higher purposes.

**Contentment and Independence:**

In Iqbal's verses, the Shaheen embodies contentment and independence. It is a bird that thrives on the bare necessities of life and does not succumb to the temptations of materialistic pleasures. The poet admonishes against becoming like pigeons or crows, easily enticed by worldly desires.

**Service to Country:** Allama Iqbal believed that serving one's country was a sacred duty. He emphasized the importance of individuals actively participating in the progress and development of their nation. He saw service to the country as a way to fulfill one's responsibilities and contribute to the collective growth and welfare of society.

**Service to Humanity:** For Iqbal, service to humanity was a higher calling that transcended national boundaries. He envisioned a world where individuals worked together to alleviate human suffering and promote justice and compassion. He believed that helping others and working for the betterment of society were integral aspects of a meaningful and purposeful life.

**Search for the Creator:** Allama Iqbal encouraged individuals to engage in a personal quest to discover and connect with the Creator. He believed that understanding one's relationship with the divine was essential for leading a fulfilling and spiritually enriched life. He urged people to explore their inner selves and seek a deeper understanding of their purpose in the context of the universe.

**Self-Realization:** Iqbal stressed the importance of self-realization as a means to unlock one's true potential. He believed that individuals should strive to understand their strengths, weaknesses, and unique qualities. Through self-reflection and introspection, people could work towards personal growth and contribute more effectively to the world around

them.

**Quran is the Best Guide for Humanity:** Allama Iqbal regarded the Quran as an eternal source of guidance for humanity. He believed that the Quran's teachings encompassed a comprehensive framework for living a just, ethical, and harmonious life. He emphasized the need for individuals to deeply engage with the Quran's wisdom and derive insights that could shape their actions and attitudes.

**Gain Education:** Education held a special place in Iqbal's philosophy. He believed that gaining knowledge was vital for individual and societal progress. Education empowered people to think critically, embrace innovation, and contribute meaningfully to their communities. Iqbal advocated for a holistic education that combined spiritual and intellectual growth.

**Remember Your Glorious Past:** Allama Iqbal urged people to connect with their rich historical and cultural heritage. He believed that acknowledging and learning from the past was essential for charting a successful future. By remembering the achievements and lessons of their ancestors, individuals could draw inspiration and insight to overcome challenges and shape their destiny.

To conclude, Allama Iqbal's message to the world encapsulates the imperative of self-discovery, service to humanity, and the pursuit of knowledge. He beckons individuals to rekindle their connection with faith, realize their potential, and contribute to a just, compassionate, and enlightened global community, guided by the eternal wisdom of the Quran. (The author is a renowned columnist & motivational speaker and an Associate Editor of the Weekly Publication 'Education Quill.' He can be reached at akhoun.aubaid@gmail.com)

## Fishing by shades of Moon

By: Kamal Baruah

It's a spectacular feat for India's Moon mission "Chandrayaan-3", when a spacecraft entered the lunar orbit and its 'Vikram' lander safely touched down while "Pragyan" rover is moving around on Moon's surface in pursuit of lunar secrets at the South Pole. There're space mysteries around the Moon for ages. Maybe someday people will explore water and a lunar colony is arguably the next logical step for mankind. The skills of ISRO have now signified India's capabilities in space exploration and who knows what amazing things we might discover up there.

But for commoners, "Chanda mama door ke" (Moon is far away). It's an object of admiration for unattainable desire. When the sky is dark at night, it lightens by the celestial objects like stars, planets, and the Moon. Centuries before any lunar mission, people viewed the Moon differently. They looked at the waxing crescent with wonder and fascinated by the ancient echoes. We always see the near side of the moon that always faces earth, while the far side is never visible from earth due to the Moon's synchronous rotation. The near side has large volcanic deposits while the far side has more craters and highlands. The reason for this asymmetry is still a mystery.

Human have long obsession with the Moon and it influenced civilizations and religions too. Cultures have been tracking the lunar cycle for tens of thousands of years. While the Sun is the foundation of the current Gregorian calendar, the lunar cycle remains an integral part of religions and cultures across the Earth. When the moon is at its brightest in the early night, the intense of the moonlight is soothing with

grandma's bag of fairy tales. We gazed in awe that adorns the night sky.

But the Moon isn't as beautiful as it appears to be. There're dark spots. It's big, rocky playground in outer space. But there is no mystery anymore when American Astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first humans ever to walk on the moon. That was one small step for man but one giant leap for mankind. India also makes it the fourth country in the world to send a spacecraft there and the first country to explore near the Moon's South Pole. Now it's a big deal as 'Vikram' could do sudden hop before it set into sleep mode in frigid temperature because it sees two weeks of continuous daylight followed by two weeks of continuous darkness. The successful maneuver is expected to open up new possibilities for future lunar sample returns and human mission. Scientists believe the Moon's craters that are permanently in shadow may hold frozen water.

However, our domestic help Rabha da doesn't get impressed with those modern astronomy and space exploration about our mysterious neighbour in the sky. What else is there to do for him? The newly sunken paddy field during the monsoon rain has delighted him. The tribal folks belonging to the Rabha, Bodo, Garo, Hajong and Koch-Rajbongshi community of Goalpara district usually practice community fishing. They have by tradition been associated with farming and a knack for fishing. Sufficient moonlight enables nighttime fishing. Fish hunters move at night in ankle deep water with a type of indigenous night lamps made from bamboo, locally known as jor-kat. They experience a connection between Moon phase and its fishing success.

The rain forms a vast water



sheet. He waded slowly like a snowy Egret on shallow water with faggot (sticks as fuel for fire) in order to stalk his prey for pinning a fish. The fish are much more active than usual on Purnima (full moon day) thereby catching easier. Some believe that the Moon cycles only affect saltwater fish. However, he wasn't surprised, if the moon still affects freshwater fish also. What we all saw his khaloi (keeping fish) always filled with puthi, goroi, kawoi, kholihona, and tengeri. It was the waning gibbous Moon where its lighted side appears to shrink. He noticed that the Moon rises later and later each night. So it was almost dark moonless night. The hunters were at all-night fishing but to no avail.

Finally he gave a second thought of catching Cuchia (mud eel). It hides under mud during daylight and at night come out for scavenging in search of food. The fishing method by wounding gears included Jongor/kosh/soli (spears), knives and sickle get effective with the abundance of sluggish Cuchia. The spears are specially made for piercing the Cuchia in open water while Jathi is a single prong spear used under soft mud.

Cuchia makes a hole with 3-4

openings for proper aeration and easy escape from enemy. He noticed 3-4 holes in closer distances plugged with aquatic weeds by keeping one hole open. The fisher patiently waited without any movement near the hole with a wounding gear in hand. Toxin released from the plant material compels the fish hiding under the mud to come out. The fish is then caught by wounding under light. He then quickly filled up his khaloi with a pair of Cuchia from swamps.

Who can forget those happy moments while we have "Goroi masor pura-pitika" (burned-mashed goroi fish) in the evening? It created a rustic atmosphere around the wood burning fireplace. We liked the smoky scent either. Many people don't take Cuchia as food. It believed to have medicinal value. No muss, no fuss. Our Rabha da makes it possible that at least Cuchia is on the menu on any moon phase night when there is no fish in water. Fishing is an ancient practice. People love to spend their free time fishing with the thrill of reeling in a fish at the water. To catch more fish, Rabha da's mastery of fishing on any shades of the Moon phase night is quite unique.

## My Country Is My Pride

By: Maharshi Dubey

My country is my pride,  
This is my love, this is my life,  
This is my motherland, this is my heaven,  
I feel proud to be an Indian,  
I shall serve it till the end of life,  
My country is my pride.

This is land of diversity,  
A unique example of integrity,  
Diverse religions are found here,  
Diverse traditions are found here,  
Find here cultures so nice,  
My country is my pride.

This is land of meditation,  
Treasure of medicinal vegetation,  
This originated decimal and zero,  
Produced many great men and heroes,  
This is land of sunrise,  
My country is my pride.



## Family

By Khemu Parashar

Everyone defines family in different ways, but the exact definition is still undefined, it is in this that a person is born, the sacraments are given here, lessons of civilization are taught, from childhood till death man revolves around it, food, clothes and house are needed by the family only, he bestows many more joys upon us, we are humans, what makes us human is family, teaches humanity

Help us immensely in sorrow, always seeks happiness for us, there are two types of family, some like nuclear family, so someone likes joint family, in a nuclear family only the parents and their children live, joint family has more number of members, no matter what the family is, love should be in all

## Who will give the solution?

By: Mowsam Hazarika

Ever  
why the power of temptation increases  
Why temptation intrudes on the mind  
Why does the bond of shame break?  
Why takes me outside the circle  
Who will give the solution?

Ever  
why the power of temptation increases  
Why temptation intrudes on the mind  
Why temperance loses its way  
Why does the chain break  
Who will give the solution?

Ever  
why the power of temptation increases  
Why temptation intrudes on the mind  
Why the rhythm of loyalty breaks down  
Why does love burn in the fire of desire?  
Who will give the solution?

Ever  
why the power of temptation increases  
Why temptation intrudes on the mind  
Who will give the solution?  
Sudhakanta's question:

"If sin is evil,  
Why did God give the wish?  
If delusion is bad,  
Why did God give the tune?  
If the breakdown is bad,  
Why did God give up?"

Who will give the solution?  
What is legal  
What is illegal  
Who will give the solution?



Biden is currently in New Delhi to attend the annual G20 summit being hosted by India from September 9-10

## Biden rallies G20 nations to boost World Bank support for low- and middle-income countries

**WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** US President Joe Biden has rallied G20 nations to agree to collectively mobilise more headroom and concessional finance to boost the World Bank's capacity to support low- and middle-income countries, the White House said on Saturday.

Biden is currently in New Delhi to attend the annual G20 summit being hosted by India from September 9-10. "We are aiming for our joint contributions to deliver a one-time boost to IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) equivalent to three times the World Bank's annual non-concessional lending volume, and to double IDA's crisis lending capacity," the White House said in a press statement.

This initiative, it said, will make the World Bank a stronger institution that is able to provide resources at the scale and speed needed to tackle global challenges and address the urgent needs of the poorest countries.

"In New Delhi, President Biden rallied G20 partners to agree to collectively mobilise more headroom and concessional finance to boost the World Bank's capacity to support low- and middle-income countries," the statement said.

Biden is leading a major new initiative with G20 partners to fundamentally reshape and scale up the World Bank to more effectively deliver poverty reduc-



tion and inclusive economic growth while better addressing global challenges that can undermine the achievement of these very goals, it said.

The G20 member countries represent around 85 per cent of the global GDP, over 75 per cent of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

The White House said a growing coalition of countries has come together to reform the World Bank's mission and vision, incentives, operational model, and financing capacity.

"With measures implemented and identified under the G20's Capital Adequacy Review, the multilateral development bank system could unlock USD 200 billion in new lending capacity over the next decade," it said.

To amplify the impact of the ongoing reforms to the World Bank and advance progress at a global level, President Biden has asked Congress for support that would unlock new concessional World Bank financing by more than USD 25 billion just from US action.

Biden has asked the US Congress for funding to unlock USD 25 billion in new International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) concessional lending capacity and provide borrowers more headroom so that they can address global challenges.

"This new lending capacity will enable the World Bank to better support developing countries by providing more resources on better terms, and helping countries pursue more ambitious reforms and development projects with

regional and global benefits," the statement said.

The White House asserted that the World Bank must continue to pay sufficient attention to the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable countries, which are facing multiple, compounding crises, including those stemming from global challenges.

"President Biden has requested from Congress funding to provide a USD 1 billion contribution to support the International Development Association's (IDA) immediate crisis response in the world's poorest countries," it said.

Biden will continue to call on G20 Leaders to commit to further progress on evolving the World Bank and other multilateral development banks over the next year, and he will push for concrete results by the Rio de Janeiro Summit under Brazil's G20 Presidency in 2024, it said.

The G20 grouping comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US and the European Union (EU).

In a significant milestone under India's G20 presidency, the African Union on Saturday became a new permanent member of the grouping of the largest economies of the world, in the first expansion of the influential bloc since its inception in 1999. (PTI)

## UK PM signs new strategic pact with Singapore in India

**LONDON, Sept 9:** British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has agreed a new strategic partnership with Singapore during a meeting with Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on the margins of the G20 Summit in New Delhi on Saturday.

Following the new UK-Singapore Strategic Partnership, Downing Street said both countries will work to conclude a "new and modern" bilateral investment treaty – the first the UK has negotiated since Brexit.

The pact is expected to give Singaporean companies more confidence to invest in the UK and vice-versa, creating jobs and growth for both economies.

"This new agreement with Singapore will take us even further in delivering our priorities and ensure that, as we map the future of the world economy, we are doing so alongside our closest partners," said Sunak in a statement from Delhi. "As Prime Minister, I've put the interests of the British people front and centre of my international engagement. I am ensuring that diplomacy delivers. You have already seen that through deals that will stop illegal migration, make our economy more secure and increase trade with our international partners," he said.

Downing Street pointed out that the UK has forged a number of new bilateral and multilateral partnerships since Sunak took charge as Prime Minister, with an

FTA with India still some way to go after 12 rounds of negotiations.

"We are in the process of negotiating further free trade agreements (FTAs), including a deal with India which would be the first the country has signed with a European country," it said.

In addition to enhanced economic cooperation, the new UK-Singapore Strategic Partnership is expected to



strengthen security cooperation, science and technology innovation, and research and development. This includes collaboration to counter new and emerging threats in domains like cyber, through a first-of-its-kind partnership between Sin-

gapore's new Digital and Intelligence Service and the UK, Downing Street said.

According to official data, the UK-Singapore trade relationship is worth 21 billion pounds, accounting for 40 per cent of Britain's total trade with Southeast Asia, and Singaporean entities have a total of 226 billion pounds invested in the UK.

Sunak arrived in New Delhi on Friday for the G20 Leaders' Summit and started the three-day visit with an interaction with British Council students and staff with wife Akshata Murty ahead of the first set of official multilateral discussions taking place on Saturday. (PTI)

## Veteran SAfrican politician Mangosuthu Buthelezi dies at 95

**JOHANNESBURG, Sept 9:** Veteran South African politician and the traditional Prime Minister of the ethnic Zulu Monarch and nation, Mangosuthu Buthelezi, died early on Saturday at the age of 95.

Buthelezi, who was the President Emeritus of the Inkatha Freedom Party, had just marked his 95th birthday last week.

The elder statesman was admitted to a hospital in August after complications related to the treatment for a back pain operation but returned home last week to recover and recuperate. President Cyril Ramaphosa announced Buthelezi's death early on Saturday morning through a statement. "I am deeply saddened to announce the passing of Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, the Prince of KwaPhindangene. Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi has been an outstanding leader in the political and cultural life of our nation, including the ebbs and flows of our liberation struggle, the transition which secured our freedom in 1994 and our democratic dispensation," Ramaphosa said.

"The Inkosi (Chief) of the Buthelezi clan was a formidable leader who has played a significant role in our country's history for seven decades," he added. The statement said that announcements on the arrangements to mourn and honour Buthelezi would be made in due course based on con-



sultations between the government and the family. Tributes started pouring in on Saturday morning after Buthelezi's passing. The Buthelezi family described him as "South Africa's truest champion and greatest servant."

"We realise that this loss will be deeply felt by many and that many will wish to express their condolences and pay their respects in the days ahead. The family will engage His Majesty the King and the royal family, His Excellency the President, the Buthelezi Clan and the leadership of the IFP as the necessary funeral arrangements are made. Further details in this regard will be announced in due course," read a statement issued by the family.

The only South African Indian-origin citizen to have been anointed a Prince of the

Zulu Kingdom by the late King Goodwill Zwelithini, Ishwar Ramlutchman Mabheka Zulu, also shared his grief. "We have travelled a long journey with Prince Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who was also the Honorary Patron of the Sivananda World Peace Foundation," Ramlutchman said, adding that Buthelezi would always be remembered for fostering good relationships with the Indian people across the globe.

"As an Indian Zulu, I am grateful to have been associated with (Buthelezi). I have learnt Zulu through him," Ramlutchman said. The Nelson Mandela Foundation condoned Buthelezi's passing in a statement which described him as "a prominent figure in the tapestry of South Africa's history."

"His legacy is an imposing and complex one, embracing strands as diverse as the mobilisation of ethnic identities in political struggles, the making of peace, service in a government of national unity, and dedication to making democracy work in South Africa," the Foundation said. "His life journey intersected at multiple points with that of Nelson Mandela. In many ways, the two leaders came to embody an understanding of reconciliation which had no need of forgiveness, nor of forgetting the past, nor even of learning to like one another – it was simply about determining to get on together," it added. (PTI)

## UN atomic watchdog warns of threat to nuclear safety as fighting spikes near plant in Ukraine

**KYIV, Sept 9:** The United Nations atomic watchdog warned of a potential threat to nuclear safety due to a spike in fighting near Europe's largest nuclear power plant in Ukraine as the forces of the war-torn country continued pressing their counteroffensive on Saturday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said its experts deployed at the Russia-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant reported hearing numerous explosions over the past week, in a possible indication of increased military activity in the region. There was no damage to the plant.

"I remain deeply concerned about the possible dangers facing the plant at this time of heightened military tension in the region," IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi warned in a statement issued late Friday.

He noted that the IAEA team was informed that staff at the nuclear power plant had been reduced temporarily to minimum levels due to concerns of more military activity in the area.

"Whatever happens in a conflict zone, wherever it may be, everybody

would stand to lose from a nuclear accident, and I urge that all necessary precautions must be taken to avoid it happening," Grossi said. The IAEA has repeatedly expressed concern that the fighting could cause a potential radiation leak from the facility, which is one of the world's 10 biggest nuclear power stations.

The plant's six reactors have been shut down for months, but it still needs power and qualified staff to operate crucial cooling systems and other safety features. As Ukrainian forces pressed to expand their gains after recently capturing the village of Robotyne in the Zaporizhzhia region, the UK Defence Ministry noted in its latest report that Russia has brought in reinforcements to stymie the Ukrainian advances.

"It is highly likely that Russia has redeployed forces from other areas of the frontline to replace degraded units around Robotyne," it said.

"These redeployments are likely limiting Russia's ability to carry out offensive operations of its own along other areas of the front line." (AP)

## Former PM Nawaz Sharif likely to return to Pakistan in October: Report

**ISLAMABAD, Sept 9:** Ending his over four years of self-imposed exile in the UK, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is likely to return to Pakistan next month, according to a media report on Saturday.

Quoting sources present at a meeting in London where Sharif, the supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), was speaking to his party workers, the Dawn newspaper reported that he "spoke about his return, but a clear date for travel has not been disclosed."

Sharif, 73, has been living in self-imposed exile in London since November 2019. He was convicted in the Al-Azizia Mills and Avenfield corruption cases in 2018.

He was serving a seven-year imprisonment at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail in the Al-Azizia Mills case before he was allowed to proceed to London in 2019 on "medical grounds."

"PML-N workers at the meeting were eager to prepare for their leader's return and were discussing the logistical details of his comeback. Sharif confirmed his return to Pakistan in October," the Dawn report said. The report also said that Nawaz Sharif had told it that "he must return to engage with his vote bank and supporters amid the ongoing economic crisis."

Earlier, on August 25, Sharif's younger brother Shehbaz had announced the former prime minister's return to Pakistan in September "to face his pending court cases and lend the party's campaign for the general election."

Shehbaz, the President of the PML-N party, has also said that Nawaz will return to Pakistan to lead the country as the prime minister for a record fourth time.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had declared to conduct a fresh delimitation of constituencies on the basis of the new census, delaying the general elections.

The general elections were scheduled to be held within the 90-day constitutional period since the August 9 dissolution of Parliament. (PTI)

## Kim Jong Un hosts Chinese and Russian guests at a parade celebrating NKorea's 75th anniversary

**SEOUL, Sept 9:** North Korea invited visiting Chinese delegates and Russian artists to a paramilitary parade featuring rocket launchers pulled by trucks and tractors, state media said Saturday, in leader Kim Jong Un's latest effort to display his ties with Moscow and Beijing in the face of deepening confrontations with Washington.

The event in the capital, Pyongyang, which began Friday night to celebrate North Korea's 75th founding anniversary that fell on Saturday, came amid expectations that Kim will travel to Russia soon for a meeting with President Vladimir Putin that could focus on North Korean arm sales to refill reserves drained by the Kremlin's war on Ukraine.

While China has sent a delegation led by Vice Premier Liu Guozhong to the North Korea's anniversary celebrations, Russia sent a military song and dance group. South Korean media speculated that the lack of Russian government officials at the festivities in Pyongyang could be related to preparations for a summit between Kim and Putin, which Washington expects within the month. According to some US reports, it could happen as early as next week. Putin is expected to attend an international forum that runs from Sunday to Wednesday in the eastern city of Vladivostok, which was also the site of his first summit with Kim in 2019 and is now seen as a possible venue for their next meeting.

South Korea's spy agency told lawmakers in a closed-door briefing Thursday that North Korea and Russia could also be arranging an unexpected "surprise" route for Kim's visit to avoid potential venues reported by the media.

North Korea has not confirmed any plans for Kim to visit Russia.

"Whether or not a Putin-Kim summit soon follows, the United States is attempting to deter serious violations of international law by preemptively reducing intelligence," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University



in Seoul. The growing cooperation between China, Russia and North Korea, and Chinese President Xi Jinping's decision to skip the Group of 20 Summit in India, give the appearance of a widening fissure in Asia's geopolitical landscape, he said.

Still, a major Russia-North Korea arms deal, which would breach numerous international sanctions, should worry Beijing because "association with an emerging pariah state bloc could have negative repercussions for China's globalised but struggling economy," Easley said. KCNA said Kim received letters from Putin and Xi on the anniversary, where both leaders said that their countries' strengthening ties with North Korea would contribute to the region's peace and stability.

Saturday's parade was centred around paramilitary organisations and public security forces protecting Pyongyang, rather than the military units that handle his nuclear-capable weapons systems, which have been the focus of other parades this year.

Millions of North Koreans between the ages of 17 and 60 are listed as Worker-Peasant Red Guards, a national civil defence organisation that could be loosely compared to military reserve forces of other countries.

Saturday's marches of the Red Guards included huge columns of motorcycles, anti-tank rockets towed by tractors and civilian-style trucks equipped with multiple rocket launchers, according to KCNA's text reports and photos. (AP)

## Maldivians vote for prez in a virtual geopolitical race between India and China

**MALE, Sept 9:** Voting started in the Maldives presidential election Saturday, a virtual referendum over which regional power — India or China — will have the biggest influence in the Indian Ocean archipelago state.

Eight candidates are vying for the post, with current President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih — perceived as pro-India — fighting his main rival, Mohamed Muiz.

Solih is seeking re-election for a second term and is battling allegations by Muiz that he had allowed India an unchecked presence in the country. Muiz has promised that if he wins the presidency, he would remove Indian troops stationed in the Maldives and



balance the country's trade relations, which he said, is heavily in India's favour.

The People's National Congress, Muiz's party, is viewed as heavily pro-China. Its leader, Abdullah Yameen, when he was president from 2013-2018, made the Maldives a part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It envisages building ports, railways, and roads to expand trade — and China's in-

fluence — in swathes 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 that the number of Indian troops and their activities are hidden from Maldivians and that they have near-exclusive use of certain parts and airports in the country. Both India and China vie for influence in the tiny archipelago state made up of some 1,200 coral islands in the Indian Ocean, located by the main shipping route between East and the West.

Solih was considered the front-runner in the field of eight candidates since his strongest

rival, Yameen, was blocked from running by the Supreme Court because he is in prison for corruption and money laundering convictions.

Muiz hoped to take advantage of a split in Solih's Maldivian Democratic Party that led Mohamed Nasheed, a charismatic former president, to break away and field his own candidate.

Sahida Saeed, a university student who was voting in the Maldives Embassy in Sri Lanka, said she expects a leader who can take care of the current issues. "Due to the population increase, the employment rates are at risk (of decreasing). So, I hope that in the future those issues are addressed," she said. (AP)

Large swells are battering the northeast Caribbean as Hurricane Lee churns nearby through open waters as a Category 3 storm

## Heavy swells pound northeast Caribbean as Hurricane Lee charges through open waters

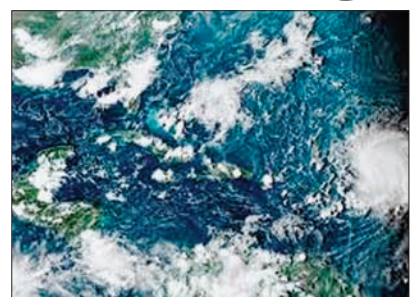
**SAN JUAN, Sept 9:** Large swells battered the northeast Caribbean on Saturday as Hurricane Lee churned nearby through open waters as a Category 3 storm.

The storm, which is not forecast to make landfall, was located 385 miles (620 kilometers) east-northeast of the northern Leeward Islands. It had winds of up to 115 mph (185 kph) and was moving west-northwest at 12 mph (19 kph). Earlier this week, Lee grew from a Category 1 storm to a Category 5 storm in just one day amid warm waters and limited wind shear.

"This was one of the fastest rates of strengthening in the Atlantic Basin on record," AccuWeather said in a statement.

Lee was forecast to pass well north of the northeast Caribbean in a big relief to people from the British Virgin Islands to Puerto Rico, which are still recovering from hurricanes Irma and Maria that hit in September 2017.

Tropical storm conditions were not expected for any Caribbean island, but breaking waves of up to 15 feet (5 meters) were forecast for Puerto Rico and nearby



territories, with authorities warning people to stay out of the water.

"We are concerned about people and boaters who may underestimate the impacts of this passing storm," said Capt. José Díaz of the Coast Guard sector in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

"The increase in projected sea states of 10 to 15 feet severely reduces our ability to respond to a maritime distress with the full use of our resources."

The National Hurricane Center said the seas near the center of the hurricane were expected to peak at 45 feet (14 meters).

It noted that dangerous surf and rip currents were expected to hit most of the U.S. East Coast starting Sunday, but that the hurricane's impact beyond that is still unclear.

"It is way too soon to know what level of impacts, if any, Lee might have along the U.S. East Coast, Atlantic Canada, or Bermuda late next week," the center said.

Meanwhile, officials in the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe warned of up to 3 inches (8 millimeters) of rain in a span of three hours or less for some areas. Lee is expected to remain a powerful hurricane into next week and is forecast to take a northward turn by Wednesday. However, its path after that remains unclear.

"Right now, the area in the United States that really needs to pay attention includes locations from the upper part of the mid-Atlantic coast to New England," said AccuWeather meteorologist Bernie Rayno.

Lee is the 12th named storm of the Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from

June 1 to November 30 and peaks in September.

Tropical Storm Margot became the 13th named storm after forming on Thursday evening. It was located about 890 miles (1,430 kilometers) west-northwest of the Cabo Verde Islands. It had winds of up to 45 mph (75 kph) and was forecast to strengthen into a hurricane early next week. It was moving west-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph) and is expected to remain over open water. The National Ocean and Atmospheric Administration in August forecasted between 14 and 21 named storms this season. Six to 11 of them are expected to become hurricanes, and of those, two to five might develop into major hurricanes.

In the Pacific, Hurricane Jova spun through open waters far from Mexico's southwest coast and posed no threat to land. It was located about 945 miles (1,520 kilometers) west of the southern tip of Baja California and was moving west-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph) with winds up to 70 mph (110 kph). (AP)



## Two-day BJP Mahila Morcha national executive and office bearers meeting starts in Guwahati

# Success of G20 events prove India ready to take leadership role on global issues: Vanathi Srinivasan

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** The success of the year-long G20 events under India's presidency culminating in the ongoing summit in New Delhi proves that the country is ready to take up the leadership role on global issues, BJP Mahila Morcha president Vanathi Srinivasan said here on Saturday.

The year-long G20 events in 60 cities and 220 meetings with nearly 30,000 delegates has showcased the vibrancy of Indian democracy, cultural heritage and also unity in diversity, Srinivasan said at the inaugural programme of the two-day BJP Mahila Morcha national executive and office bearers meeting.

"A mega international event is taking place in Delhi under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. We feel happy that under India's G20 presidency, global leadership is coming together... The Mahila Morcha extends its warm wishes to the G20 delegates and also for the success of the grand event," she added.

Srinivasan said the meetings of the national office bearers of



Mahila Morcha and its national executive are very crucial as the Morcha's road map will be planned in them keeping in mind the 2024 Parliament election and poll in five state assembly.

"Already some of the mega outreach programmes are being implemented. We want to review them, ensure that Mahila Morchas

are strengthened in all areas and our mahila karyakartas are connected with the women voters of the country," she said.

Women, who comprise nearly half the population, are very important for BJP and the meeting will discuss the foundation laid by the prime minister for women including the various schemes and

policy initiatives taken under his leadership during the last five years, Srinivasan said.

Altogether 200 officer-bearers, including 60 from the seven NE states, of the BJP Mahila Morcha will participate in the meeting.

The meeting, being held for the first time in the north east, are being attended by members from 35 states, barring Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh where assembly elections are due.

There will be five sessions during the meeting. They will deliberate among other things the future road map of the Mahila Morcha for the 2024 Lok Sabha polls and its role in the coming assembly poll in five states. MPs P Konyak from Nagaland and Kamakhya Prasad Tasa, who has been recently appointed as the BJP national general secretary will preside over separate sessions.

The concluding session on Sunday will be presided over by BJP's joint general secretary (organisation) Shiv Prakash and Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. (PTI)

## Himanta calls on power minister; requests 300 MW to tide over power deficit in Assam

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** Chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma called on union power minister, RK Singh at his official residence here on Saturday.

The chief minister briefed the power minister about the unprecedented 26 per cent increase in power demand due to growth of productive sectors of the economy.

Power minister Singh assured that he would consider the personal request of the chief minister to allocate at least 300MW of power to Assam to tide over the current power deficit.

Later, taking to X (formerly Twitter), the chief minister said, "Had an excellent discussion with Hon'ble Union Power Minister Shri RK Singh ji. I briefed him on the unprecedented 26% increase in power demand due to growth of productive sectors of the economy. He has assured to kindly consider my personal request to allocate at least 300 MW of power to Assam, which will aid in tiding over the



current power deficit."

Earlier, chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma spoke to media persons and said that load shedding is being personally monitored. He further added that in the past, we needed 1,800 megawatts (MW), but this year, we need 2,500 MW.

CM Sarma stated, "We do not have so much electricity as of

now and if we must buy electricity, then the power tariff will be hiked by ₹ 1."

In the meantime, CM Sarma explained that the state government has partnered with a number of businesses for the following year to increase the MW so that residents can continue to receive power.

## Guv encourages youth to focus on skill development and entrepreneurship



**HT Correspondent**

**MORIGAOON, Sept 9:** The Youth Conference 2.0 held at Mayang Regional College in Morigaon district culminated with the esteemed presence of Governor Gulab Chand Kataria. The event was organised in collaboration with the Assam Skill Development Mission-North East Skill Centre, Shiksha Shiksha Parishad Foundation, Assam, and the NSS Cell of Gauhati University, under the theme "Skill Development of Youth for Building Self-Reliant India".

Addressing the gathering, Governor Kataria emphasised the importance of skilling India's vast

youth population. He highlighted that India is renowned for its significant youth demographic and that it is a collective responsibility to provide them with the necessary skills. He stressed that change brings new opportunities and that the younger generation possesses the potential to drive transformative change for the betterment of the nation.

The Governor urged young individuals to shift their mindset from seeking government jobs to actively creating employment opportunities. He underlined the pivotal role that youth play in shaping society and their unique contribution to nation-building. Emphasising

the need to enhance their skillsets, he encouraged young people to become active partners in the nation's development.

Governor Kataria advised students to recognize their individual skills and make the most of every moment without prejudging the size or significance of their work. He expressed his belief that if everyone in society fulfills their responsibilities in building the country, India can soon become a global leader.

The event featured key dignitaries including Ankur Jain, director of Assam Skill Development Mission; Devayani Chowdhury, district development commissioner; Professor Neelima Bhagwati, International Secretary General of Teachers' Education Council Foundation; Dr Mahananda Bora, principal of Mayang Regional College; Dr Ranjan Kumar Kakati from the NSS Cell of Gauhati University; as well as officials from the district administration, teachers, and students.

The Youth Conference served as a platform to inspire and guide young individuals towards skill development, entrepreneurship, and self-reliance, aligning with India's goal of empowering its youth to contribute to the nation's growth and development.

## Body parts of wild animals seized in Manas National Park; 5 poachers held



**BAKSA, Sept 9:** Five poachers were arrested after huge quantities of body parts of wild animals were seized from their possession in Assam's Manas National Park,

a forest official said on Saturday. Acting on a tip-off, a team of forest department personnel conducted a raid in the house of a person in Shamthaibari village near

Kahitama beat of the park's Bashbari range and arrested him along with four others for their alleged involvement in the killing of wild animals like rhinoceros, elephants, deer and others in the reserve forest.

A handmade gun, rhino horn, claw, skin, tiger nail, wild bison skin, wild buffalo horn, deer antler and several other body parts of wild animals were recovered from his residence, the official said.

"In a first-of-its-kind intel-based operation carried out by the forest department, a huge cache of banned wildlife articles, including a rhino horn, have been recovered in an operation in Manas. Arrest of poachers have also been made in this connection," chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma posted on the micro-blogging site 'X'. (PTI)

## Quake rocks state

**HT Bureau**

**GUWAHATI, Sept 9:** An earthquake with a magnitude of 4.4 on the Richter Scale hit parts of Assam, Meghalaya, and Bangladesh on Saturday at 3:48 pm. The epicenter of the quake was located in Cachar, Assam, at a depth of 43 km, with coordinates Latitude: 24.76 N and Longitude: 92.74 E. Fortunately, there have been no reports of casualties or damage.

Meanwhile, a severe earthquake in Morocco on September 8 has resulted in several buildings being reduced to rubble and dust, with at least 1,000 people reported dead. The historic city of Marrakech and villages in the Atlas Mountains have suffered major damage. Casualty figures continue to rise as the extent of the devastation becomes clearer, particularly in rural and hard-to-reach areas. Videos of the chaos and commotion caused by the Morocco earthquake have surfaced on the internet, providing a glimpse into the terrifying situation.

## Foundation stone laid for Bechimari-Daipam connecting road

**HT Correspondent**

**DALGAON, Sept 9:** The long-awaited issue of the Bechimari-Daipam connecting road appears to be resolved. The road had been in a dilapidated state for a long time, causing hardships for the general public. MLA Mazibur laid the foundation stone for the road on Saturday in Bechimari. The construction of the road, measuring 6,300 km in length and 7.5 meters wide, will cost ₹ 7.1 crore and is being carried out under the PMSY Scheme.

This road is one of the busiest in the entire Darrang district in rural areas. The construction of the road is expected to reduce traffic congestion in the market area. Additionally, a bridge will be constructed over the Kakalbhangi River west of Bechimari town.

It was noted that some business establishments had encroached on both sides of the road. MLA Mazibur emphasised the need to clear the sides to widen the road for the public's benefit. He made it clear that there would be no compromise on road widening, and if necessary, these business establishments would be bulldozed.

## CSJMC at DU hosts inspirational interactive session with filmmaker Rima Das

**HT Correspondent**

**DIBRUGARH, Sept 9:** The Centre for Studies in Journalism and Mass Communication (CSJMC) at Dibrugarh University orchestrated a captivating interactive session featuring renowned filmmaker Rima Das. The event took place at the Indira Miri conference hall, commencing at 3.15 pm, and saw a remarkable turnout of students and faculty members from the CSJMC and other university students.

The event began with a touching lighting ceremony in homage to the iconic Dr Bhupen Hazarika. Dr P K Gogoi, the chairperson of the Centre, along with esteemed guests Rima Das and Priyanka Baruah, a film marketer and PR manager, graced the occasion. Both guests were honored for their outstanding contributions to the Assamese Film Industry.

In a heartfelt gesture, students presented a special gift to Rima Das, expressing their admiration and appreciation for her exceptional work in the film industry. Dr Gogoi delivered an introductory speech, emphasizing the importance of such interactive sessions in nurturing talent and fostering creative minds. He acknowledged the incredible strength, resilience, and achievements of women in all walks of life, celebrating their contributions to society.

Rima Das, known for her exceptional storytelling skills, captivated the audience with an inspiring speech, sharing her experiences and insights into the world of cinema. She discussed filmmaking as a powerful medium for connecting with people on a



deeper level, capturing emotions, sharing stories, and sparking conversations that touch hearts and bring about positive transformations. She expressed her privilege in being a part of this incredible art form and referred to the camera as her weapon.

She also discussed her Oscar-nominated film "Village Rockstars" and shared her experiences at the Toronto International Film Festival with "Bulbul Can Sing" and "Tora's Husband". The interactive session allowed attendees to engage with Rima Das and Priyanka Baruah, gaining valuable knowledge and advice from these accomplished individuals.

The session included moments of fun and light-hearted conversations, creating a vibrant atmosphere that encouraged interaction and networking among participants. To conclude the event, a student paid a soulful tribute to Dr Bhupen Hazarika by singing one of his iconic songs, leaving everyone touched and nostalgic.

## ADESA to hold biennial conference on Oct 14-15

**HT Correspondent**

**SIVASAGAR, Sept 9:** The Assam Diploma Engineers Service Association (ADESA) is set to host its biennial conference at the Arihana auditorium in Gaurisagar on October 14 and 15. This conference will bring together delegates from across the state's districts.

In preparation for the event, the executive committee meeting of the Sivasagar District Diploma Engineers Association, convened on Friday, made key appointments to ensure the successful organization of the conference. Ranjan Mahanta, senior engineer from the Lok Nirman Department, was elected as the president, Bolin Gogoi as vice president, and Mri-nangka Saikia of the Water Resource Department as the secretary of the Reception Committee.

The upcoming conference is expected to be a significant gathering of diploma engineers, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among professionals from various districts of Assam.

## Tezpur Medical College & Hospital observes Eye Donation Fortnight

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Sept 9:** Tezpur Medical College and Hospital joined the rest of the nation in observing National Eye Donation Fortnight. The event commenced on September 5 with an awareness meeting held in front of the OPD at the Department of Ophthalmology.

Dr. Saurabh Kumar Bhuyan, HOD Ophthalmology, delivered an introductory lecture. During the program, a student of the postgraduate course, Dr. Dhritibrata Goswami, and Assistant Professor Abhijit Handique discussed the essence of eye donation and its mechanism.

The National Eye Donation Fortnight concluded with an awareness rally on the last day. The rally aimed to spread the message, "Eyes are precious, don't bury or burn." Dr. Karuna Hazarika, Principal, and Dr. Rupam Borgohain, Superintendent of Tezpur Medical College and Hospital, flagged off the rally.

Following the rally, a meeting was held to discuss the need to reduce corneal blindness and how eye donation can help achieve this goal. Dr. Karuna Hazarika, Dr. Rupam Borgohain, and Dr. Saurabh Kumar Bhuyan highlighted various aspects of eye donation and called upon everyone to understand its significance and pledge to donate their eyes, so they can continue to help others even after their passing.

The organizers expressed their gratitude to all the distinguished guests, participants, and dedicated volunteers who contributed to the success of the Eye Donation Fortnight and the concluding ceremony.

The National Eye Donation Fortnight is observed annually from August 25 to September 8 to create awareness about the importance of eye donation and to motivate people to pledge their eyes for donation after death, a practice that has been observed since 1985.

## Father of state cabinet minister UG Brahma passes away

**HT Correspondent**

**KOKRAJHAR, Sept 9:** Harkeswar Brahma, the father of Assam cabinet minister and founding president of United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), Urkhao Gwra Brahma, passed away at a private hospital in Kokrajhar.



He was about 90 years old.

Minister UG Brahma confirmed his father's demise on his social media handle, paying tribute to his selfless father who had dedicated his 90-year journey to the well-being of his children. Harkeswar Brahma was a well-known social worker in the greater Chalani Batabari area near Dotma in Kokrajhar district.

Prominent political figures, including Pramod Boro, the chief executive member of Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) and UPPL president, Rajya Sabha MP and UPPL working president Rungwa Narzary, MLA Lawrence Islary, UPPL general secretary Raju Kumar Narzary, and others, visited the Brahma family to offer their condolences and pay their respects.

CEM Pramod Boro expressed his deep condolences to the bereaved family and well-wishers, hoping that the departed soul may rest in peace. The Bodo Sahitya Sabha and All Bodo Students Union also extended their condolences to the family.

## Tezpur University hosts G-20 themed quiz contest, showcasing student enthusiasm

**HT Correspondent**

**TEZPUR, Sept 9:** Tezpur University recently organised an engaging quiz competition with a G-20 theme, aligning with the ongoing G-20 summit taking place in Delhi. The event witnessed a vibrant participation of over 250 students who took part in the initial screening test. Following this, the final round featured six teams that had been selected based on their performance in a preliminary round of questions.

The program was inaugurated by Prof Shambhu Nath Singh, the Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University. In his opening remarks, he highlighted the significance of India's presidency in the G-20, emphasising that this role is a source of national pride. He also alluded to the potential expansion of the organisation, with the African Union poised to join its ranks, which would further broaden the G-20's scope. Prof Singh expressed optimism that, under India's leadership, the G-20 would reach new heights in terms of all-encompassing development.



The quiz contest, led by Prof Tridib Ranjan Sarma from the Department of Business Administration, covered a wide range of topics. Questions encompassed aspects of India's art, culture, politics, and general G-20 issues, creating an engaging and informative experience for participants.

The quiz competition consisted of four rounds, each offering exciting and thought-provoking questions. In addition to the par-

ticipating teams, there was active audience engagement with questions designed to challenge their knowledge.

The event was organised by the National Service Scheme of Tezpur University, with Prof Amiya Kumar Das from the Sociology Department serving as its Coordinator. Dr Biren Das, the university's Registrar, also attended the event to show his support.

To recognise the participants' efforts and achievements, three prizes were awarded to the top-performing teams, along with two consolation prizes.

It's important to note that this year marked the 18th G-20 summit, being held at the Bharat Mandapam Convention Centre in Pragati Maidan, Delhi. The summit is featuring various sessions focusing on themes such as "One Earth, One Family", among others.

Tezpur University's quiz contest provided an opportunity for students to engage with the G-20 summit's themes and issues, fostering an environment of learning and awareness about global affairs.



# African Union becomes permanent G20 member, PM says it will strengthen 'voice of Global South'

*'Thrilled to have the African Union as a permanent member'*

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** In a significant milestone under India's G20 presidency, the African Union on Saturday became a new permanent member of the grouping of the largest economies of the world. It is the first expansion of the influential bloc since its inception in 1999. All member countries of the G20 accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposal to bring the key bloc of the Global South to the high table of the world's top economies.

"Honoured to welcome the African Union as a permanent member of the G20 Family. This will strengthen the G20 and also strengthen the voice of the Global South," Modi posted on X along with a video of his announcing that the African Union has become a permanent member of the G20.

In his inaugural remarks at the Summit, Modi asked the President of the Union of Comoros and Chairperson of the African Union (AU), Azali Assoumani, to join other leaders at the high table, making the 55-member bloc the second multi-nation grouping after the European Union to be a permanent member of the G20.

"In keeping with the sentiment of 'sabka saath' (with everyone), India had proposed that the African Union should be given permanent membership of the G20. I believe we all are in agreement on this proposal..." Modi said at the Bharat Mandapam, the venue of the Summit.

"Before moving forward with the proceedings, I would like to invite the president of the African Union to take his place as a permanent member of the G20," he said amid thunderous applause by the gathering of world leaders. External affairs minister S Jaishankar then escorted Assoumani to take his seat at the G20



high table. Before taking his seat, Assoumani shared a warm handshake and hug with Prime Minister Modi.

In a post on X later, the Prime Minister's Office said, "Advancing a more inclusive G20 that echoes the aspirations of the Global South! PM @narendramodi extends a heartfelt welcome to President @AzaliAssoumani and the President of Comoros Azali Assoumani."

"Thrilled to have the African Union as a permanent member. A milestone for the G20 family indeed," it said. In an interview with PTI ahead of the G20 Summit, Modi had said India backs inclusion of the African Union as a full member of the Group of 20 largest economies as no plan for the future of the planet can be successful without the representation and recognition of all voices. Africa is "top priority" for India and it works for the inclusion of

those in global affairs who feel their voices are not being heard, Modi had said. In the last few years, India has been positioning itself as a leading voice, flagging concerns, challenges and aspirations of the Global South, or developing nations, especially the African continent.

"I would like to draw your attention to the theme of our G20 presidency -- 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam -- One Earth, One Family, One Future'. It is not just a slogan but a comprehensive philosophy that is derived from our cultural ethos," Modi had said during the wide-ranging interview.

The Prime Minister was leading from the front on the issue of the African Union's membership of the G20. In June, Modi wrote to G20 leaders to pitch for according the African Union full membership of the grouping at its New Delhi summit. Weeks later, the proposal

was formally included in the draft communiqué for the summit during the third G20 Sherpas meeting in Hampi, Karnataka, in July.

As G20 president, India has been focusing on issues like inclusive growth, digital innovation, climate resilience, and equitable global health access with an aim to benefit the Global South or the developing countries. In January, India hosted the Voice of the Global South Summit with an aim to highlight the problems and challenges facing the developing countries.

The Addis Ababa-headquartered African Union (AU) comprises the 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity, Africa's first post independence continental institution set up in 1963 with 52 members. Collectively, African Union member states have a GDP of nearly USD 3 trillion and a population of around 1.4 billion.

US President Joe Biden, Chancellor Olaf Scholz, British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, his Italian counterpart Giorgia Meloni, South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva are among those attending the two-day G20 Summit here.

The chiefs of many leading global bodies such as the United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Health Organisation are also participating in the conference. After assuming presidency of the bloc on December 1, India held around 200 meetings related to the G20 across the country on a range of its priority areas. (PTI)

## Sacked Rajasthan minister Rajendra Singh Gudha joins Shiv Sena

**JAIPUR, Sept 9:** Sacked Rajasthan minister and BSP-turned-Congress MLA Rajendra Singh Gudha has joined Shiv Sena, Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde announced on Saturday.

Addressing a gathering in Gudha's assembly constituency, Udaipurwati, in Jhunjhunu district, Shinde welcomed the former Rajasthan minister to the Shiv Sena and said Gudha left the ministerial position for the cause of people.

"Gudha has come to Shiv Sena. I welcome him to Shiv Sena family," Shinde said.

Shinde said that Gudha spoke about the safety of women and law and order and he was removed for it. "What wrong did he say?" the Maharashtra chief minister said.

Gudha, who was the minister of state for panchayati raj and rural development, was dismissed from the post in July after he cornered the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in the state assembly drawing parallels between sexual violence in strife-hit Manipur and crimes against women in Rajasthan.

Following his termination, Gudha claimed he had a 'red diary' that contained details of alleged illegal transactions by Gehlot.

Shinde said that Rajasthan needs improved law and order, safety of women, job opportunities for youths and progress of farmers.



The Maharashtra chief minister said that Rajasthan requires industries and there is huge potential in sectors such as mining which can be used to create job opportunities for local youths so that they are not forced to migrate to other states in search of jobs.

Gudha gave up the ministerial post "for truth" and therefore he has joined Shiv Sena, Shinde said.

On the possibility of an alliance with the BJP in Rajasthan, Shinde said Shiv Sena will only engage with the "politics of development" for elections and added that decisions on it will be taken when polls are closer.

Rajendra Gudha contested the 2018 assembly elections on a BSP ticket and joined Congress along with five other BSP MLAs. BSP had won six seats in the last assembly elections and all the MLAs had joined the ruling party. (PTI)

## Wait till midnight to see action: Bengal Guv



**KOLKATA, Sept 9:** A day after state education minister Bratya Basu accused him of trying to "destroy" the higher education system in the state and running a "puppet regime" in the universities, Governor C V Ananda Bose Saturday warned of much bigger action at midnight.

"Wait for the stroke of midnight today. You will see what is action," Bose told reporters on the sidelines of a programme here.

Within minutes, 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 ac-

tion" BEWARE! BEWARE! BEWARE! New Vampire in the town! Citizens please watch yourselves. Eagerly waiting for the "Rakkhas Prahar" (monster prahar), according to Indian Mythology!," Basu posted on X.

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 on Friday accused the governor of trying to "destroy" the higher education system in the state.

The minister also charged the governor, who is also the chancellor of state-run universities, with running a "puppet regime" in the universities 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, he said. (PTI)

## Soren to attend G20 dinner in New Delhi, give ED summons a miss

**RANCHI, Sept 9:** Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren will travel to New Delhi on Saturday to attend the dinner hosted by President Droupadi Murmu for the G20 summit, which meant that he would miss appearing before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for questioning in a money laundering case.

Soren did not appear before the ED on August 14 and August 24 as well. The ED then asked him to appear at its regional office in Ranchi on September 9.

"CM Hemant Soren will leave for New Delhi to attend the dinner hosted by President Droupadi Murmu for officials of the G20 summit," the chief minister's office (CMO) said in a statement.

The central probe agency is investigating more than a dozen land deals, including one related to defence land, wherein a group of land mafia, middlemen and bureaucrats allegedly connived to forge deeds and documents that go back as long back as 1932. (PTI)

## Ex-AP CM Chandrababu Naidu held in Skill Devp Corporation fraud case: AP police

**AMARAVATI, Sept 9:** TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu was arrested on Saturday in connection with an alleged fraud case involving misappropriation of funds from the Skill Development Corporation, leading to a loss of ₹ 300 crore to the state government, AP CID Chief N Sanjay said.

Addressing reporters after Naidu's arrest, the police official said the investigation implicated the former AP CM and TDP as beneficiaries of misappropriation of funds.

"... this case revolves around the establishment of clusters of Centers of Excellence (CoEs) in the state of Andhra Pradesh, with a total estimated project value of ₹ 3,300 crores.

The alleged fraud has caused huge loss to the Government of Andhra Pradesh in excess of ₹ 300 crores," noted Sanjay, addressing a press conference at the CID office in Mangalagiri.

Reacting to his arrest, Naidu in a post on X (formerly Twitter), said, "For the past 45 years, I have selflessly served Telugu people. I am prepared to sacrifice my life to safeguard the interests of Telugu people. No force on earth can stop me from serving Telugu people, my #AndhraPradesh and my motherland."

During his arrest, he appealed to people and party cadre to exercise restraint.

"Finally, truth and dharma will triumph.

Whatever they do to me, I will march forward for the people," he said.

Elaborating further, the CID chief said, "the principal conspirator behind the entire scheme and who orchestrated the transfer of public funds from government to private entities via shell companies has taken place with the act of leadership of Nara Chandrababu Naidu."

Naidu possesses the exclusive knowledge of transactions leading to the issuing of government orders and MoUs from time to time which makes him the "central figure" of the investigation, he said, adding that Naidu's custodial interrogation is required.

The skill development case pertains to the setting up of clusters of centres of excellence (CoE) in the southern state with the total estimate of the project valued at ₹ 3,300 crore but ended up causing a loss in excess of ₹ 300 crore to the state government.

Incidentally, before the private entities involved in this project could spend any money, the state government released an advance of ₹ 371 crore, which is 10 percent of the government's commitment.

The money released by the state government was diverted to shell companies through fake invoices while no delivery or sale of the items mentioned in the invoices took place. Some of

the shell companies were also located in Singapore.

Further, he said that departing from the official procedure, a portion of the funds was used to create CoE clusters while the remaining amount was routed to shell companies.

According to Sanjay, the statement of public officials recorded under section 164 CrPc clearly points to the involvement of former AP CM as the principal decision maker to release the money in advance.

He insisted that further investigation of individuals like Vikas Khanvelkar, managing director of Design Tech Systems is required.

Moreover, the CID chief said that several key documents of this case have gone missing and Naidu and other individuals are suspected to be behind it.

The charges in the case carry penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment while custodial interrogation is deemed necessary to uncover all the aspects of the financial fraud.

The ADGP noted that the Enforcement Directorate and GST authorities have already investigated this case.

"The entire offence has occurred with the knowledge of the prime mover, conspirator and final beneficiary of defalcation money. He is the former chief Minister of AP," he said. (PTI)

## 'Poll survey' video: Shivraj Singh Chouhan accuses Digvijaya Singh of spreading lies

**BHOPAL, Sept 9:** Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday accused Congress Rajya Sabha member Digvijaya Singh of spreading lies through a doctored video.

"Congress has the support of lies. But this time false and fake support will not help. That's why Congress has to face public anger," Chouhan said on X, sharing screenshots of a post by Singh related to a video showing an "opinion poll" claiming it to be from a news channel.

The CM also posted screenshots of the tweets of the news channel's officials terming the "survey" shared by Singh and other Congress leaders fake and doctored.

The video shared by Digvijaya Singh claims to be revealing the findings of an opinion poll, in which the Congress is apparently poised to get an overwhelming majority in BJP-governed Madhya Pradesh.

The assembly elections in Madhya Pradesh are due in November.

Meanwhile, state home minister Narottam Mishra told reporters that legal steps would be taken if the channel authorities filed a complaint in this regard.

"Digvijaya Singh is showing the distorted shape of politics by using social media. They ran

a fake poll survey attributing it to ABP while the news channel's managing editor termed it fake. This is not the first time he has done it," Mishra said.

According to Mishra, Digvijaya Singh had earlier said that there could be Nuh-like violence in MP and had shared a picture of a "saffron flag on a mosque" claiming it to be from Khargone. Nuh in Haryana was recently hit by communal violence.

BJP state chief VD Sharma said that such kind of acts show the frustration of Congress leaders. MP Congress media department chairman KK Mishra, who also allegedly shared the clip on Saturday morning and later deleted it, said that the video regarding the "opinion poll" was doing rounds on social media for the past two days.

Instead of blaming Congress leaders, they should file a case against such persons who have been circulating the clip for the past two days, he said.

Earlier last month, the state police registered a case against Digvijaya Singh after a tweet by his official X account claimed that some alleged "anti-social elements of Bajrang Dal" ransacked the Jain temple complex at Kundalpur in Damoh district and kept a "Shiv Pindi" there. (PTI)

## JD(S)-BJP LS poll understanding: Discussions are at initial phase, says Kumaraswamy

**BENGALURU, Sept 9:** Discussions regarding BJP and his party contesting the 2024 Lok Sabha polls together are still at initial phase, JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy said on Saturday, a day after the saffron party veteran B S Yediyurappa stated that both parties have reached an understanding. Maintaining that the seat sharing and other things are yet to be discussed, the former chief minister said more than give and take, trust and respect is important for him.

"These are initial phases of discussions. I have seen reports in the media on this (understanding) for the last couple of days...I have seen senior leader Yediyurappa's statement. He has spoken good about our party, Deve Gowda (JDS supremo) and me. Thank him for his statement that in the days to come we will work together," Kumaraswamy said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said the seat sharing and other things have not been discussed yet, and also date has not been fixed for his Delhi visit.

"There are reports in the media that -- we are adamant on the Mandya seat, what will happen to the sitting MP there, what will happen to Tumakuru and Kolar seats -- all these have not yet been discussed. I appeal to media friends not to speculate as they want, when the discussions are

still at the initial phase," Kumaraswamy said.

Media is projecting as though understanding has been finalised, he further said. "But in my opinion there is still time for it, still a lot of discussions are yet to happen. It is not give and take that is important, trust and respect is important for me."

A meeting of party workers has been called on Sunday, where their opinion will be gathered, he said, adding that "time to respond to all these issues -- preliminary discussions regarding alliance, Congress leaders' statements -- is still far."

Yediyurappa on Friday said the BJP will have an understanding with former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda-led JD(S) for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, an announcement that shot up political temperature in the State.

The veteran leader, who is also the BJP parliamentary board member, had said that as part of the poll understanding, the JD(S) will contest in four LS seats in Karnataka, which has a total of 28 constituencies.

Asked whether Deve Gowda has agreed for alliance, Kumaraswamy said all these are preliminary phases of discussions and whether the party supremo has agreed or not will be known in the days to come.

To a question whether this is a promising devel-

opment, he said, "In the interest of the state, at a time when such a bad government is there in the state, certain decisions need to be made. It requires time, let's wait for it. I'm not in a hurry."

The BJP had swept the 2019 LS polls in Karnataka by winning 25 seats, while an independent (Sumalatha Ambareesh from Mandya) backed by it won in one seat. The Congress and JD(S) won one seat each.

JD(S) had contested the polls in alliance with the Congress, as both parties were then running an alliance government under Kumaraswamy's chief ministership.

Noting that Congress administration in Karnataka is already facing anti-incumbency, after over three months, since coming to power, the former chief minister said, he was not saying it and it is the opinion of senior officials in this government.

"So there is a feeling among people that it (understanding between BJP and JDS) is good," he said.

Stating that no one is indispensable to anyone, either for him or for the BJP, Kumaraswamy further said the JD(S) had already contested parliamentary polls independently several times and won two or three seats. (PTI)

## G20 leaders call for global governance for AI, inclusive digital public infra for service delivery

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** G20 leaders on Saturday stressed on promoting international cooperation and further discussions on international governance for Artificial Intelligence and called for a secure, trusted, accountable and inclusive digital public infrastructure (DPI) for service delivery and innovation.

Recognising the role of DPI in the delivery of services at a societal scale, the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration welcomed the "G20 Framework for systems of Digital Public Infrastructure", a voluntary and suggested framework for the development, deployment and governance of DPI.

The G20 declaration asserted that safe, secure, trusted, accountable and inclusive digital public infrastructure (DPI), respectful of human rights, personal data, privacy and intellectual property rights can foster resilience, and enable service delivery and innovation.

The G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration also draws attention to building safety, security, resilience, and trust in the Digital Economy.

"To this end...we welcome the G20 Framework for Systems of Digital Public Infrastructure, a voluntary and suggested framework for the development, deployment and governance of DPI," it said.

The Declaration talks of building safety, security, resilience and trust in the Digital Economy, fostering digital ecosystems, and harnessing Artificial Intelligence (AI) responsibly for "Good and for All".

"To unlock the full potential of AI, equitably share its benefits and mitigate risks, we will work together to promote international cooperation and further discussions on international governance for AI," it said. The declaration also welcomed India's plan to build and maintain a Global Digital Public Infrastructure Repository (GDPIR), a virtual repository of DPI, voluntarily shared by G20 members and beyond.

Further, it takes note of the Indian Presidency's proposal of the One Future Alliance (OFA), a voluntary initiative aimed to build capacity and provide technical assistance and adequate funding



support for implementing DPI in LMICs.

"In our voluntary efforts to make digital public infrastructure interoperable, we recognise the importance of data free flow with trust and cross-border data flows while respecting applicable legal frameworks. We also reaffirm the role of Data for Development," it said.

On technological transformation and Digital Public Infrastructure, the Declaration noted that technology can enable rapid transformations for bridging the existing digital divides and accelerate progress for inclusive and sustainable development.

"Digital public infrastructure (DPI), as an evolving concept and as a set of shared digital systems, built and leveraged by both the public and private sectors, based on secure and resilient infrastructure, and can be built on open standards and specifications, as well as open-source software can enable delivery of services at societal-scale," it said. Put simply, Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) refers to blocks or platforms such as digital identification, payment infrastructure and data exchange solutions that help countries deliver essential services to their people, empowering citizens and improving lives by enabling digital inclusion.

A case in point is the India Stack, say the identity system Aadhaar, payment platform UPI and others, all of which have been receiving ringing

praises globally.

DPIs are interoperable, open, and inclusive systems supported by technology and provide essential, society-wide, public and private services that play a critical role in accelerating this digital transformation in an inclusive manner.

G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration has laid emphasis on building safety, security, resilience and trust in the digital economy.

An enabling, inclusive, open, fair, non-discriminatory and secure digital economy is increasingly important for all countries and stakeholders while respecting applicable legal frameworks.

"We will share our approaches and good practices to build a safe, secure and resilient digital economy. To this extent, we...welcome the non-binding G20 High-level Principles to Support Businesses in Building Safety, Security, Resilience, and Trust in the Digital Economy...welcome the G20 Toolkit on Cyber Education and Cyber Awareness of Children and Youth," it said. (PTI)



# 'One Man, One Government, One Business Group': Cong takes swipe at govt over Adani issue

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** The Congress on Saturday attacked the government over the Adani issue, saying the G20 theme is 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' but Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems to actually believe in "One Man, One Government, One Business Group".

The Congress has been questioning the financial dealings of billionaire Gautam Adani's group after US research firm Hindenburg alleged "irregularities" and charged it with stock price manipulation. The Adani Group has denied all the allegations made in the Hindenburg report and claimed there had been no wrongdoing on its part.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh said in a statement that as the 2023 G20 Summit begins in Delhi, it is worth recalling Modi's many exhortations at previous meetings of the grouping for the international community to crack down on corruption and money laundering.

At the 2014 Brisbane G20 meeting, the prime minister called for global cooperation "to eliminate safe havens for economic offenders", to "track down and unconditionally extradite money launderers" and to "break down the web of complex international regulations and excessive banking secrecy that hide the corrupt and their deeds", the Congress leader said.

At the 2018 Buenos Aires G20



summit, Modi presented a nine-point agenda "for action against fugitive economic offences and asset recovery", Ramesh said.

"The PM's brazenness would be laughable if his complicity in high-level corruption and economic offences were not so serious.

"The PM has not simply facilitated the creation of Modi-made Monopolies (3M) for his close friends, the Adanis, in critical sectors like ports, airports, power and roads using all the tools at his disposal, he has systematically blocked all investigations into Adani's wrongdoing by agencies as varied as SEBI, CBI, ED, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and the Serious Fraud Investigation Office..." he charged.

This ensures that "tax havens are safe for his close friends and that they continue to enjoy the protec-

tion of excessive banking secrecy and complex international regulations", he alleged.

The revelation that at least two opaque funds that are alleged to have done round-tripping, money laundering and to have violated securities laws are directly connected to Adani is the most recent example of how enfeebled agencies have been made "subservient to the Adanis" and the PM's corporate interests", Ramesh said.

"No less a body than the Supreme Court's Expert Committee noted in its damning report how SEBI had itself deleted the requirement for overseas funds to report their actual ownership, something that it belatedly tried to undo in June 2023 when it reintroduced reporting requirements, long after the Adani horse had bolted. Would it have done so without pressure from the top," he asked.

Note that it deleted those requirements long after the departure of UK Sinha, who joined the board of the Adani-owned channel after having previously failed to act on a DRI investigation on Adani, indicative of a broader conspiracy, Ramesh said.

"The PM's 'nine-point agenda' is equally laughable given the ease with which the BJP permitted economic offenders like Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi, Mehul 'Bhai' Choksi and Vijay Mallya to flee the country. The government itself has admitted that it has been able to bring back only two of 72 major economic offenders in recent years," he alleged.

The G20 is intended to be a productive gathering of the major world economies, aimed at dealing with global problems in a cooperative manner, Ramesh noted.

"President Putin may have stayed away, but Prince Potemkin has been in full display with slums being either covered up or demolished, rendering thousands homeless. Stray animals have been cruelly rounded up and mistreated, only to burnish the PM's image. The G20 slogan is 'One Earth, One Family, One Future'. However, the PM seems to actually believe in 'One Man, One Government, One Business Group'," the Congress general secretary said.

Opposition parties have also been demanding a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into the Adani issue. (PTI)

## BJP's policies have forced people to beg before Supreme Court: J&K Congress

**JAMMU, Sept 9:** The president of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of Congress party, Vikar Rasool Wani, on Saturday slammed the BJP, accusing the party of forcing people "to beg before the Supreme Court" for the restoration of their rights.

Wani was speaking at a function to welcome Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Jagdeep Singh who along with scores of other activists joined Congress at party headquarters here. At a separate function in Akhnoor, several BJP leaders and other social activists also joined the Congress.

The J&K Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief said the people have decided to replace the BJP with a Congress-led secular government.

"Over the past decade, BJP has destroyed everything. We have seen demonetisation and growing unemployment. Besides, special status (under Article 370) and statehood of Jammu and Kashmir was finished. Today, we are forced to beg before the Supreme Court," Wani told a gathering at party headquarters here.

He said the residents of Jammu are unhappy due to the "anti-people" policies of the BJP which has been in power since 2014, first in alliance with the PDP, followed by central rule from 2018 onwards.

"Jammu and Kashmir is number one in unemployment and all sections of the society, including farmers and industrialists, are severely affected and have become economically weak. They (BJP) are sucking the blood of the people by introducing bulldozers, smart electricity metres and property tax," he said.

Referring to J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina's claim that the saffron party will secure 50 plus seats in the next assembly elections, Wani said the people have made up their mind to get rid of the BJP and support a Congress-led secular govern-



ment.

"They have not done a single developmental work. They cannot fool the people of Jammu anymore as all sections of the society have seen the real face of the party," he said, claiming that there is a wave in favour of Congress in both the Jammu region and the Kashmir Valley.

Wani described the BJP dispensation as "anti-poor and anti-development" and said administrative inertia and lack of political will has increased the people's sufferings.

"BJP has been instrumental in adding to the misery of people. In an atmosphere of uncertainty and political instability, the people of the J&K in general and Jammu region in particular are passing through the most difficult times," he said.

A party spokesperson said that several BJP leaders and some social activists joined the Congress at a separate function in Akhnoor in the outskirts of Jammu. (PTI)

## Priyanka Gandhi to address public meeting in Rajasthan's Tonk today

**JAIPUR, Sept 9:** All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will address a public meeting in Tonk district of Rajasthan on September 10, party leaders said on Friday.

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot visited the venue of the meeting on Friday evening and said 300 kitchens would be started simultaneously in the rural areas of the state under the Indira Rasoi Yojana on that day.

Rajasthan Pradesh Congress Committee general secretary Swarnim Chaturvedi said Gandhi will address the meeting on the premises of the Vivekananda Model School located in Jhilae village of the district.

The party's Rajasthan in-charge Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa, state unit president Govind Singh Dotasra and Gehlot will also be present on the occasion.

During his visit to the venue at Niwai, Gehlot said, "Having the programme in Niwai matters. Our Indira Rasoi Yojana has become very popular. This subsidy-based scheme has given great relief to the people in this inflation."

According to an official spokesperson, the 'Indira Rasoi' scheme is at present running in cities where a meal is being provided for ₹ 8. He said the scheme will now be started in villages and chief minister Gehlot will start it from Niwai on Sunday. A police official said on Friday that Priyanka Gandhi reached Ranthambore in Sawai Madhopur district with her family on Thursday night.

Meanwhile, the Congress' general secretary organization K C Venugopal will hold a meeting in Jaipur on Saturday over the Rajasthan assembly elections due later this year. (PTI)

## Devastating quake hits Morocco,

MAP reported. On the steep and winding switchbacks from Marrakech to Al Haouz, ambulances with sirens blaring and honking cars veered around piles of Mars-like red rock that had tumbled from the mountainside and blocked the road. Red Cross workers tried to clear a boulder blocking the two-lane highway.

Later Saturday morning in Marrakech, ambulances and motorcycles whirled by the edge of the old city, where business as usual mostly resumed on Saturday morning. Tourists and passersby navigated roadblocks and snapped photos of sections of the clay ochre wall that had cracked, spilling fragments and dust onto the sidewalk and street.

World leaders offered to send in aid or rescue crews as condolences poured in from countries around Europe, a Group of 20 summit in India, countries around Europe, the Mideast and beyond.

Turkiye's president, whose country lost tens of thousands of people in a massive earthquake earlier this year, was among those proposing assistance. France and Germany, with large populations of people with Moroccan origins, also offered to help. And the leaders of both Ukraine and Russia expressed support for Moroccans.

The Moroccan government has not formally asked for help, a step required in order for outside rescue crews to be brought in.

The US Geological Survey said the quake had a preliminary magnitude of 6.8 when it hit at 11:11 p.m. (2211 GMT), with shaking that lasted several seconds. The U.S. agency reported a magnitude-4.9 aftershock hit 19 minutes later.

The epicenter of Friday's tremor was near the town of Ighil in Al Haouz Province, roughly 70 kilometers (43.5 miles) south of Marrakech.

The USGS said the epicenter was 18 kilometers (11 miles) below the earth's surface, while Morocco's seismic agency put it at 11 kilometers (7 miles) down. Such shallow quakes are more dangerous.

Initial reports suggest damages and deaths were severe throughout the Marrakech-Safi region, which more than 4.5 million people call home, according to state figures.

Earthquakes are relatively rare in North Africa. Lahcen Mhanni, head of the Seismic Monitoring and Warning Department at the National Institute of Geophysics, told 2M TV that the earthquake was the strongest ever recorded in the mountain region. (PTI)

## KAAC assures to fulfill demands

employees will be met. As there are funds with KAAC and this will be released."

About the pension (retirement) benefits of KAAC employees, the CEM said a committee has been formed to work on it. The KAAC employees will also get retirement benefits as per the employees of the state government. The service rule of KAAC employees will also be prepared. There will be 8 per cent enhancement in council provident fund (CPF) for KAAC employees.

On the other hand, in the executive committee meeting a resolution has been adopted for promotion of ACF to the deputy conservator of forests and conservator of forests.

As demanded by KAACEA, the next executive will feature a discussion on allotment of land for office building of KAACEA that will also be included in the 2024-25 budgets. Ronghang urged the support of KAAC employees as it is part of 'Team Karbi Anglong' for delivering maximum service to people and for development of Karbi Anglong.

President, KAACEA, Sarthe Dera said election of 33 executive members of KAACEA was held yesterday. President, vice presidents, general secretary, secretaries and others will be selected at the first executive committee meeting for a three year term 2023 to 2025.

Dera also said the KAACEA is hopeful that the assurance made by the CEM will be fulfilled.

MLAs Dorsing Ronghang and Bidyasing Englang, KAAC executive members and other dignitaries were also present on the occasion.

## Trillions needed to meet climate

net-zero emissions by 2050," the Declaration read.

The developed countries in the bloc reaffirmed their commitment, dating back to 2009, to jointly mobilize USD 100 billion in climate finance annually by 2020, continuing through 2025. Developed country contributors anticipate achieving this goal for the first time in 2023.

The G20 also called for ambitious, transparent, and tractable New Collective Quantified Goals (NCQG) of climate finance in 2024, from a floor of USD 100 billion a year. They said this should consider the needs and priorities of developing countries in alignment with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and Paris Agreement objectives. (PTI)

## Over 5000 kg of Burmese areca nut

been identified as Amrinder Singh, Manoj Singh, Md. Riya Uddin and Md. Haron Ali.

While Amrinder Singh is resident of Khabra in Punjab's Rupnagar district, Manoj Singh is a resident of Garolia in Punjab's Fatehgarh Sahib district. On the other hand, Md. Riya Uddin and Md. Haron Ali hail from Kapali Gaon and Bajimari in Darrang district respectively.

A case has been registered against them and investigation is underway.

## Assam govt to recommend

This will ensure effective governance and bring public administration closer to the people, the Chief Minister said. The cabinet also decided to amend the Assam Disaster Management Manual for revising the annual flood season in the state from May 1 to October 31, and rationalization of the fodder rate for flood-affected livestock.

The cabinet also decided to upgrade seven colleges to universities in line with NEP 2020, he said.

The cabinet also gave its nod for the declaration of the Charaideo archaeological site and 17 monuments located in its buffer area as protected monuments. (PTI)

## Charaideo ASP Subhalaksmi Dutta

Police Station where the accused APS is being kept has been tightened

The controversial police officer was also involved in more cases that were registered at the Nazira Police Station and Sivasagar Police Station. In the later case, was accused of abusing and physically attacking Anil Pator, a home guard and the investigation is on.

Tea Tribe Yuva Parishad's president Suresh Tanti said, "We are deeply distressed by the lethargic manner in which the state's home department is investigating the case to safeguard the accused ASP. Exemplary punishment should be awarded to the accused to prove that the law is equal for all." (PTI)

## India-Middle East-Europe Corridor

regional borders. We believe connectivity can also play a key role in strengthening mutual trust," he said. Modi stressed on respecting sovereignty and integrity of all nations. He also stressed on promoting financial viability rather than debt burden as well as on following all environmental guidelines.

"With such a major step on connectivity, we are sowing the seeds for future growth," he said.

US President Joe Biden said he was proud to announce that they have finalized a "historic agreement" for the new India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.

"As key part of this corridor, we are investing in ships and rails, that extends from India to Europe connected by the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Israel. It will make it far easier to trade. I want to thank sponsors and particularly Prime Minister Modi and (Saudi Crown Prince) Mohammed bin Salman," Biden said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen hailed the agreement on the corridor, saying this is nothing but historic. "It will be the most direct connection to date between India, the Arabian Gulf and Europe with a rail link that will make trade between India and Europe 40 per cent faster," she said.

French President Emmanuel Macron said it is about having a first global green trade route as hydrogen is also part of this project.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said, "We have to ensure that we implement it successfully and Germany is committed to contribute in that regard." (PTI)

## Death toll rises to 3 in Manipur

security check posts and move towards Pallel. Security forces personnel attempted to stop the mob to ensure peace and stability in Pallel, where the situation had been tense for a few days.

Being blocked by the forces, some armed persons who were dressed in police uniforms and part of the mob opened fire, resulting in gunshot injuries to an Army major. The officer was evacuated to a military hospital in Leimakhong by helicopter. Three other police personnel were also injured in the incident.

In a calibrated response, the forces used minimum force to disperse the mob, officials said.

More than 45 women were injured after security forces personnel lobbed teargas shells to defuse the situation, officials said.

The Friday morning gunfight led to the death of a person, officials said.

Also, a 48-year-old man was killed in the crossfire, officials said.

In the meantime, a contingent of Rapid Action Force personnel heading to Pallel from Imphal to contain the mob was blocked by locals, including Meira Paibis, at Thoubal.

This comes two days after thousands of protesters gathered at Phougakchao Ikhai in Bishnupur district on Wednesday and tried to break through army barricades.

Though they were claiming that they wanted to reach their deserted houses in Torbung, sources within the security establishment alleged that the mob wanted to ransack the houses of tribals besides attacking them.

A day before the protest, a full curfew had been clamped in all the five valley districts of Manipur as a preventive measure. (PTI)

## Cabinet gives nod to EVM use

general and members may be allotted some departments for monitoring and supervision, he said.

The zilla parishad president will nominate members to supervise and monitor the progress of activities of different departments at the district level as decided by the government. The state level recruitment commission will conduct the Grade III and Grade IV recruitments in the Panchayat, he added. (PTI)

## State eyes Guinness World Record

sight to behold as the saplings have arrived. A 22-km-long long row of saplings in a spiral shape will enter the Guinness Records. Join us on September 17, when we plant over 1 cr sapling in just 3 hours," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma wrote on X. Adjudicator of Guinness World Records Prabin Patel said there are strict guidelines which must be followed to achieve a world record. He congratulated the Assam environment and forest department for taking up such a mammoth exercise. Finance Minister Ajanta Neog, Tea Tribes Welfare Department Minister Sanjay Kishan, additional chief secretary Ravi Shankar Prasad, and other senior officials were also present on the occasion. (PTI)

## Nearly 6 in 10 female teens anaemic in India, teenage motherhood an important risk factor: Study

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** Nearly 6 in 10 female teens in India are anaemic, according to new Indian research that analysed data from National Family Health Surveys (NFHS).

Adolescent marriage and motherhood, along with poor nutritional status and other socio-economic variables such as wealth and education, were crucial risk determinants for anaemia in Indian females aged 15-19, the study from Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh, and other institutes found.

Further, Indian states with anaemia prevalence over 60 per cent more than doubled to 11 in 2019-21 from 5 in 2015-16, the study published in the journal PLOS Global Public Health said.

Anaemia, a significant public health issue particularly affecting women in India, is characterised by a deficiency in red blood cells, resulting in low vigour and energy.

Using data from the fourth and fifth rounds of the national surveys, NFHS-4 (2015-16) and NFHS-5 (2019-21), the research studied 1,16,117 and 1,09,400 female teenagers, respectively, to analyse trends regarding anaemia prevalence and identify risk factors for anaemia.

Prevalence of anaemia was higher in women married before 18 years of age, which accounted for around 10 and 8 per cent of the sampled women in NFHS-4 and NFHS-5, respectively. About 70



per cent of the participants lived in rural areas, the study said.

They further found that teenage mothers with at least 2 children were more anaemic than teenagers without children, with anaemia prevalence being higher in breast-feeding mothers.

More educated women teenagers were less likely to be anaemic, as education is linked to knowledge of nutrition and health and also leads to better access to healthcare and nutritious food through improved employment opportunities and income, the authors wrote.

Women belonging to the socio-economically disadvantaged

groups such as SC and ST were more likely to be anaemic than other social groups, which the authors attributed to factors like historical, undernutrition, limited healthcare access, early childbearing and discrimination.

Women adolescents from the northeastern states of India were at lower risk of anaemia than women from the other parts of the country, the researchers noted.

They said this was likely due to the diverse and nutritious diet, that includes iron-rich red rice, traditionally consumed in these states, with their culture emphasising on locally-grown and seasonal foods playing an important role.

These, along with high red meat consumption, were some factors contributing to low anaemia rates in these regions, the authors wrote.

Overall, among all the 28 Indian states, 21 were found to report an increase in anaemia prevalence to varying degrees.

While Assam, Chhattisgarh, and Tripura showed a substantial rise of 15 percentage points, the states of Punjab, Karnataka, Telangana, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh recorded a marginal increase of less than 5 percentage points.

However, Uttarakhand and Kerala exhibited a decline in anaemia prevalence during the study period, offering potential insights for further exploration, the researchers said.

Despite the Indian government implementing several programs aimed at addressing anaemia in women and children over the past five decades, anaemia prevalence is rapidly increasing, possibly owing to insufficient coverage, inadequate implementation, lack of behavioural change, inadequate monitoring and evaluation, the persistence of underlying risk factors, and resistance to good dietary practices, they said.

The study findings underscored the urgency of addressing anaemia in female teenagers and that they could be leveraged to develop tailored interventions aimed at reducing anaemia prevalence, the researchers said. (PTI)



## Akshay Kumar announces 'Welcome 3' on 56<sup>th</sup> birthday



**MUMBAI, Sept 9:** Bollywood star Akshay Kumar will be returning to the "Welcome" movie franchise with a third part, to be directed by Ahmed Khan.

Akshay announced the project on X, formerly known as Twitter, on the occasion of his 56th birthday.

"Khud ko aur aap sab ko ek birthday gift diya hai aaj (Have given myself and all of you a birthday gift today). If you like it and say thanks, I'd say Welcome(3) #WelcomeToTheJungle," the actor wrote alongside a clip featuring the ensemble cast performing a cappella.

The film, titled "Welcome To The Jungle", also star Sanjay Dutt, Suniel

Shetty, Raveena Tandon, Johnny Lever, Paresh Rawal, Lara Dutta, Rajpal Yadav, Arshad Warsi, Jacqueline Fernandez, Shreyas Talpade, Tusshar Kapoor, Disha Patani, Kiku Sharada and Krushna Abhishek. Singers Daler Mehndi and Mika Singh round out the cast.

The movie, presented by Jio Studios in association with AA Nadiadwala, is produced by Jyoti Deshpande and Firoz A. Nadiadwallah. It is scheduled to be released in the theatres on December 20, 2024.

The first film in the franchise, "Welcome", released in 2007 and the second movie, "Welcome Back", came out in 2015. Both the movies were directed by Aneez Bazmee. (PTI)

### A VERSATILE PERFORMER

## Would love to do a romantic role: Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub

**NEW DELHI, Sept 9:** He has played characters of all hues but Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub says he wonders why directors don't imagine him in a romantic role. In "Haddi", director Akshat Ajay Sharma's debut film, Ayyub is playing the love interest to Nawazuddin Siddiqui's transgender character.

Ayyub, who has established himself as a versatile performer, said he was excited when Sharma offered him a role with a romantic arc.

"I was excited about that (in 'Haddi'). I was like 'Yaar, koi to mujhe romantic role me dekh raha hai' (I was like at least someone imagined me in a romantic role). I thought it would be fun," Ayyub, who most recently wowed critics with his turn as a principled editor in Hansal Mehta's "Scoop", told PTI.

Asked whether he ever wondered why such roles don't come his way, the actor said, "Even I want to know. Why not? I would love to play a romantic character." And if need be, he is ready to dance around the trees as well, he joked.

"Dancing around the trees is not the

only way to do a romantic story but if it is interesting, 'vo bhi kar lenge' (will do that also)"

Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap, who plays the antagonist in the film and sat down for the interview with Ayyub and Sharma, quipped that the actor would dance around the trees only if the story is set in Switzerland.

Sharma, on his part, said he had fun directing a romantic scene between Siddiqui and Ayyub in the movie.

Ayyub, 39, said he was happy with the response to the film's romantic number "Beparda" after he shared it on social media. He now hopes the film garners a similar reaction. "Haddi", currently streaming on ZEE5, is a revenge drama that explores the "intoxicating world of vengeance, violence and power".

Sushmita Sen-starrer "Taali", "Made In Heaven" and now "Haddi", transgender stories are finding representation in the mainstream. Ayyub said inclusivity is always a gradual process.

"I have always felt that if you talk about inclusivity by introducing a spe-



cial character, then it is half baked. But when you take a normal story... Like if I am showing three people in the society and one of them is transgender and the other two are boy or girl and they are just normal friends, I feel it is more inclusive than showing how others behave towards that one person. And it has begun," he said.

The actor said the length of his role in the movie may not be long, but his character adds a lot to the story.

"It was an important character and an important film that he (Sharma) was making and I was getting an opportunity to work with them so that was also a factor when I was signing the film. I thought I would enjoy myself," Ayyub added. (PTI)

## VIVEK AGNIHOTRI shares first poster of next film 'The Vaccine War'

**MUMBAI, Sept 9:** Filmmaker Vivek Agnihotri on Saturday released the first poster of his next feature directorial venture The Vaccine War. The film stars Anupam Kher, Nana Patekar, Sapthami Gowda, and Pallavi Joshi in the lead roles. Agnihotri, known for directing films such as The Kashmir Files and Hate Story, shared the poster on X, formerly known as Twitter.

"Presenting: The first look of India's first ever Bio-science film #TheVaccineWar. Releasing worldwide on 28 September 2023," he posted.

According to the makers, the movie is based on the true story of Indian scientists, their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and how they developed an affordable vaccine for India and the world.

Produced by Pallavi Joshi and I Am Buddha, the film will be released on September 28 in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu. (PTI)



## 'Sthal' a commentary on patriarchy in arranged marriages: director Jayant Digambar Somalkar

**MUMBAI, Sept 9:** The unpleasant reality of how patriarchy functions in rural India, where women continue to be seen as commodities, particularly in an arranged marriage scenario, is the subject of director Jayant Digambar Somalkar's debut film "Sthal", which will have its world premiere at the 48th Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) on Saturday.

The Marathi language movie, whose title translates to "A Match" in English, is told from the viewpoint of Savita, a young girl, portrayed by first-time actor Nandini Chikte.

The film is set in the director's hometown of Dongargaon in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region and explores the custom of arranged weddings.

"It is a simple slice-of-life story

about a girl and the men who come to see her. The film is about her journey, how she goes through these things. We have touched upon small nuances like what happens during such meetings. But the main thing is about patriarchy.

"Like how girls in a rural set-up are presented as a commodity, like a 'wastu' (thing). People are like whether her nose is ok or not. Is she tall or fat, fair or dark, they just judge her. I'm trying to comment on these things," Somalkar, who has previously co-directed a web-series "Guilty Minds", told PTI in a virtual interview.

"Sthal" is the only Indian film to be selected in TIFF's Discovery Programme, which showcases the first and second features of emerging filmmakers from around the world.

Even though the movie is set in a small-town India, the writer-director is confident that patriarchy as a central issue will connect with audiences across the globe.

"It is a local story but the theme of patriarchy is prevalent in villages, cities, and even outside of India. It is about how we treat girls, quite often the parents tell girls what they are supposed to do, and that they can't do this or that, we don't pay attention to the aspirations of a girl.

"I think patriarchy is a universal theme. It is not like in developed nations such as the US, the UK, everything has changed, patriarchy is still prevalent. It (film) will connect across the world." The inspiration for the film came from Somalkar's personal experiences when, in 2014, he went to a 'Kande

Poha Karyakram', a metaphor for a formal meeting between a boy and a girl for marriage. The name comes from Kanda Poha, a tangy, spicy, and sweet Maharashtrian snack.

Somalkar said the meeting triggered something in him and inspired him to write the script.

"I've seen this match-making process since my childhood, my two sisters too had a similar process. But back then I didn't realise anything. When I went with my cousin for it, I saw a girl sitting in the centre surrounded by men, who asked several questions.

"I wondered what would go on in the mind of the girl. So, that was the trigger point for me to make a film. I started writing it immediately," he said, adding he completed about four years ago. (PTI)

## AYAN MUKERJI MARKS FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF 'BRAHMASTRA'



**MUMBAI, Sept 9:** Filmmaker Ayan Mukerji on Saturday celebrated the first anniversary of his 2022 blockbuster "Brahmastra", starring Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt.

Titled "Brahmastra Part One: Shiva", the movie marked the beginning of a big-budget fantasy adventure franchise and Mukerji has already announced two follow-ups that will be released in 2026 and 2027.

Mukerji took to Instagram and posted a video which included several popular action scenes from the movie. It ended with a message reading, "Brahmastra Part Two and Three development in progress."

"Happy 1st Birthday, 'Brahmastra'! Thank you for all the creativity, all the hard work, and for all the lessons in filmmaking, and in life! PS: Will share some early artwork from the next stage of the Brahmāstra journey in a bit!" the 40-year-old filmmaker wrote in the caption.

"Brahmastra" follows a deejay named Shiva (Kapoor), who sets out on a journey to find the origins of his special powers with Isha (Bhatt), a woman he falls in love with at first sight.

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan and

Mouni Roy also featured in the movie, produced by Star Studios and Karan Johar's Dharma Productions, with special appearances by Shah Rukh Khan and Nagarjuna.

The film, which earned over Rs 400 crore at the worldwide box office, was one of the major commercial successes for the Hindi film industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Marking the film's first anniversary, Johar called "Brahmastra" a "labour of love".

"Truly, one experience...one journey...one story that is told with the heart and soul. An army of people giving in their best to showcase nothing short of magic on the big screen. The power of love & light will continue to shine bright!!! #brahmastra," the producer posted on Instagram.

In April this year, Mukerji had announced that the two sequels of "Brahmastra" will be "bigger and more ambitious than Part One" and he will be shooting them simultaneously.

Mukerji will return to "Brahmastra" franchise after directing "War 2", starring Hrithik Roshan and Jr NTR, for Yash Raj Films. The movie will be a part of YRF Spy Universe. (PTI)





SURYA IS CURRENTLY THE WORLD NO. 1 IN SHORTEST FORMAT

# SKY needs minor mindset shift to crack ODI code: AB de Villiers

**DURBAN, Sept 9:** Former South African captain AB de Villiers feels that India's No. 1 T20 batter Suryakumar Yadav needs a slight tweak in his mindset in order to replicate his success in the 50-over format.

The world No. 1 in shortest format, who has managed to hold onto his spot in India's squad for the upcoming World Cup, averages a poor 24.33 in ODIs, with only two half-centuries in 24 innings with a strike-rate of 101.38.

Suryakumar himself has referred to numbers as "really bad".

Suryakumar, who has modelled his batting in De Villiers 360-degree hitting style, has found a fan in the South African.

"You guys know I'm a big fan (of Surya). He plays in a similar manner to how I used to play, but in ODIs, he hasn't cracked it yet," the South African said on his YouTube channel 'AB de Villiers 360'. "It is a tiny little mind switch that he's got to make, and he's got all the ability and capabilities that he needs to do that," he added.

"I am very relieved to see SKY in the World Cup squad, I'm very happy about it. I hope he gets this opportunity in this World Cup,"



he said.

"Looking at the balance of the Indian squad, he might not start, but a World Cup is a long tournament. So let's see what happens then," he added.

Asked about Sanju Samson's

exclusion from the World Cup squad, De Villiers said: "I don't have to say much about him. We know what he's capable of."

"I've been on the receiving end for RCB, watching him score 92 not out at the Chinnaswamy. The

ball was flying all over the place. He's also got the conventional cricket game and technique where he plays with a straight bat, plays the ball nicely. He's got a good pull and hook shot.

"He's got everything in his bag.

It's all in the mind and it's a matter of adapting to ODI and game-plans and the World Cup and the pressure thereof. So yes, two great players," he said.

Playing the World Cup at home will put Team India under huge pressure and De Villiers' mantra for Rohit Sharma and Co is to "go fearless" in their bid to replicate the 2011 success.

"I think India's squad is incredible, really, really strong. The only worry I have for India is playing at home. They played in India, they won. There will be huge pressure. That's the only big obstacle in my opinion.

"But if they can get rid of that and just free themselves up, I see no problem for India. Control what you can control. But go fearless."

"Fearless is the word I'm looking for the Indian squad. If they can do that, they'll go a long way and most probably lift that trophy," he said.

India will begin their campaign against Australia in Chennai on October 8. The World Cup will kick-start with 2019 finalists England taking on New Zealand in Ahmedabad on October 5. (PTI)

## 'Robbed' of final berth, India confident of beating Lebanon in third-place match



**CHIANG MAI (THAILAND), Sept 9:** Heartbroken but head held high after their penalty shootout loss to Iraq in the semifinals, India would look to continue their recent domination against Lebanon when they face off in the third-place match of Kings Cup here on Sunday.

India were just 10 minutes away from recording their maiden win over higher-ranked Iraq but the West Asian country equalised (2-2) though a debatable penalty and then went on to win the semifinal match 5-4 on shootout.

Head coach Igor Stimac had lashed out at the referee for "robbing" India of a victory. Captain Gurpreet Singh Sandhu was also critical of the 80th minute penalty awarded to Iraq after their striker Ghadban was squeezed by two Indian defenders inside the box during a high-ball tussle.

India will, however, gain a lot of confidence from the feisty fight against 70th ranked Iraq and the world number 99 Stimac's side will hope to sign off the tournament with a win and end at third place.

India and Lebanon had played against each other three times this year and Stimac's side have won twice — though one was via penalty shootout in the SAFF Cup semifinal.

In the Intercontinental Cup in June, India had beaten Lebanon 2-0 in the final after playing out a 0-0 draw in the league stage.

No doubt it will not be an easy outing for India against Lebanon, who lost to hosts Thailand 1-2 in the other semifinals on Thursday, but Stimac's

boys will fancy their chances considering their recent successes.

There is nothing to separate the two teams in terms of FIFA rankings as India are ranked 99th while Lebanon are at 100th.

Despite the absence of inspirational captain and striker Sunil Chhetri, the Indians did a commendable job upfront against Iraq. India's first goal scored by Mahesh Naorem, after a brilliant pass by Sahal Abdul Samad, was a world class act.

India were on the defensive in the second part of the first half but they held on to their own in the next 45 minutes against the Iraqis who were Asian Cup champions in 2017.

Stimac had said after the Iraq match through social media that a time will come when "even referees will not be able to stop my boys winning such games".

Sandhu, on his part, urged his team-mates to build on the performance against Iraq.

"It's a hard result to digest, we could've won the game. The second penalty was questionable. But we did much better than what people would have thought."

"We just need to believe in ourselves, a bit more patient and positive. We also need to make sure we don't give away opportunities to opponents even if it looks like it's something out of our control." India had already claimed two third-place finishes in the tournament, including the most recent one in 2019.

Hosts Thailand will face Iraq in the summit clash. (PTI)

## Shubhankar Sharma shares lead at Irish Open

**KILDARE (IRELAND) Sept 9:** Shubhankar Sharma dropped a late bogey after a splendid front nine to shoot 6-under 66 and grab the joint lead at the Horizon Irish Open. Sharma shared the lead with Jordan Smith, who seemed to be moving into a sole lead before he had a double bogey on the challenging 17th hole.

Smith closed with a birdie for a seven-under 65 and he was also 13-under on the Palmer North Course at the K Club.

The star-studded field includes Rory McIlroy (69-70) in T-26th place and Shane Lowry (68-68) is T-9.

Things did not go too well for the other India's Manu Gandas (73-78) as he missed the cut by a big margin.

Sharma, seeking his first DP World Tour victory since 2018, raced through the front nine in 7-under 28 with seven birdies and two pars. At that stage Sharma after 27 holes was bogey-free and 14 under.

A bogey each on the 10th and the 17th holes, where he went into the water pushed him back as he had two bogeys and a birdie on 11th for a day's work of 6-under after an impressive first round of 7-under.

At 13-under, he was six shots ahead of the next player at one stage. But by the end of the day, Sharma was joined by Smith.

"It was a really quick start. Very early morning start for us, so I was a bit sleepy in the morning. I managed to make a lot of putts on the front nine," Sharma said. Currently 65th, he is also looking at getting into the Top-50 to qualify for the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai in November. (PTI)

## Bopanna again suffers heartbreak, loses US Open final with partner Ebden

**NEW YORK, Sept 9:** Rohan Bopanna's agonising wait to win his maiden men's doubles Grand Slam title continued as he lost the hard-fought US Open final with partner Matthew Ebden to defending champions Rajeev Ram and Joe Salisbury here on Friday.

Playing only his second men's doubles final at a Major tournament, Bopanna and his Australian teammate lost the title clash 6-2 3-6 4-6 after two hours and one minute.

Ram and Salisbury became the first team to win three straight US Open titles. Bopanna was playing the US Open final for the second time in his career and this time as the oldest player at 43.

He had finished a runner-up with his Pakistani partner Aisam-ul-haq Qureshi way back in 2010, losing the title clash to the legendary Bryan brothers.

Overall, it was third Grand Slam final for Bopanna, who won his first and only Major in 2017 when he lifted the French



Open mixed doubles trophy with Canadian partner Gabriela Dabrowski.

Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi are only two male tennis players from India to have won Grand Slam titles.

Bopanna and Ebden got the start they wanted, breaking their rivals in the very first game. The Indian's ferocious forehand was

at work. He blasted a winner on a feeble return to earn three breakpoints.

Ram only helped them by fluffing an easy backhand volley on the first chance. Bopanna consolidated the lead with an easy hold. The sixth seeds had a chance to go up 3-0 but could not convert the breakpoint when the Briton served at 30-40. The de-

fending champions survived a few anxious moments but eventually got on board after playing three deuce points in that third game. Ebden's volley winner on Salisbury's return earned them another breakpoint and they sealed that when the Briton could pick up a half-volley.

This put Bopanna and Ebden firmly in control of the contest as they were now leading the first set 5-2. The Australian came out to serve out the set and delivered. Ebden landed his serves exactly where he wanted to go up 40-0 and Ram hit his forehand return long on the first set point.

Salisbury was feeling the heat. It was evident when he came out to serve in the second set.

The Briton served two double faults and was down a breakpoint when Bopanna found a screaming backhand passing winner at 30-all, running on his left but eventually the third seeds managed to hold the third game to stay alive in the match. (PTI)

## Our goal is to leave China with no regrets: India hockey forward Abhishek

**BENGALURU, Sept 9:** Rising Indian hockey forward Abhishek, who is set for his first major Asian tournament in the upcoming Hangzhou Games, says his aim is to play with confidence and leave China without "any regrets". The 24-year-old has come up the hard way and made a delayed breakthrough in his career but he has cemented his place in the Indian side with some stellar performances -- 18 goals in 48 appearances.

"I am ecstatic to have been named to the squad, and I am eager to give my all on the pitch. The 19th Asian Games

Hangzhou 2022 is a big tournament, and we're preparing accordingly," he said in a Hockey India release. "We'll play with confidence, and our goal is to leave China with no regrets at the end of the tournament," he added. Asked about his team's preparations for the 19th Asian Games, Abhishek said, "We will face some good teams, and we are working very hard in training to make sure we are in the best physical and mental shape when we step onto the pitch."

India are placed in Pool A along with Pakistan, Japan, Bangladesh, Singapore, and

Uzbekistan. "My teammates and coaches are all eager to help me; they encourage me and support me in moving forward quickly if I make any mistakes in training," he said about the team's camaraderie. "I often turn to Mandeep and Lalit for support if I have any concerns about the structure; they are always willing to talk on and off the pitch."

Abhishek began his hockey career on a grass pitch under the tutelage of a Hindi teacher, and his selection to the Indian team for the Asian Games is a testament to his dedication.

When Abhishek was nine-

year-old, his school teacher Shamsher Singh encouraged him to pick up the stick while he was studying in Sonapat, and he has shown no signs of slowing down since then.

"I played on grass for the first ten years of my career, and the first time I played on turf was when I transferred to the National Hockey Academy (NHA) for a couple of years."

"That period of my career was memorable; I competed in the U-18 Asia Cup from the National Hockey Academy and made the Junior Indian Men's Hockey Team in 2017. (PTI)

## IPL 2024: Lucknow Super Giants rope in Sridharan Sriram as assistant coach

**LUCKNOW, Sept 9:** Lucknow Super Giants, on Saturday, announced the name of former India spinner Sridharan Sriram as an assistant coach for the next season of Indian Premier League.

He would be joining head coach Justin Langer and mentor Gautam Gambhir, alongside Vijay Dahiya (assistant coach), Pravin Tambe (spin-bowling coach), Morne Morkel (fast-bowling coach) and Jonty Rhodes (fielding coach).

Sriram possesses immense experience in the field, having helped Bangladesh as the technical consultant to secure a couple of conquests in the Super 12 stage of the ICC T20 World Cup

in Australia last year.

Earlier, he was also associated with the Australian side for six years since 2016, helping it with title wins during the T20 World Cup and Ashes in 2021-22. In the IPL, he was previously involved with Royal Challengers Bangalore, where he was the assistant coach, mainly helping out in batting and spin-bowling.

Sriram also gained an ECB Level-3 "Head Coach" qualification in 2008.

As a player, he featured in eight ODIs for India, besides playing domestic cricket for Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Goa, Assam and Himachal Pradesh. (PTI)

## Bangladesh board contradicts its own coach terms Indo-Pak 'reserve day' decision as 'unanimous'

**COLOMBO, Sept 9:** The Bangladesh Cricket Board has termed Asian Cricket Council's decision to have an exclusive reserve day for India versus Pakistan 'Super Four' game as "unanimous" and taken only after getting consent from all four cricket boards.

Expressing his displeasure, Sri Lanka head coach Chandika Hathurusingha on Friday had termed "not ideal" as Sri Lanka coach Chris Silverwood also had expressed his surprise on the eve of their Super 4 clash.

But hours after their coach's comments, BCB made a surprising announcement saying that the precautionary measure had, in fact, received unanimous approval from all four participating teams in the Super 4 stage.

"A reserve day for India Pakistan contest in Super 11 Asia Cup Super 4 stage has been added that effectively revised the Asia Cup playing condition," BCB posted on their social media account 'X', formerly twitter.

"To clarify on the position, the decision was taken with the consent of all four participating teams and ACC," it added.

The Asian Cricket Council on Friday announced that the much-anticipated Indo-Pak clash could resume on Monday if the rain plays spoilsport on Sunday. However, the other matches will not have a reserve day though rain is predicted in the Sri Lankan capital through the Super 4s.

But Hathurusingha was

clearly miffed at the late decision to add a reserve day.

"It is not ideal, and we also would have liked to have an extra day. But I don't have any more comment on this because they have already made a decision and had they consulted us earlier we would have given our opinion," he said on Friday at pre-match presser.

"Little surprised when I first heard," Sri Lanka coach Silverwood had said about ACC's decision to have different playing conditions.

The 'Rain God' had its say when the two teams initially clashed in the Asia Cup, resulting in a washout in their opening fixture at Pallekele on September 2.

Rain once again made an ap-



pearance during India's first international match against Nepal at the same venue.

However, this time, the rain was less persistent, permitting a 23-over chase, which India suc-

cessfully navigated to secure Super Four berth.

Making mockery of the tournament: Prasad

Former India seamer Venkatesh Prasad, a very vocal social media critic of this current Indian team and the cricket board, also came out hard at the decision and termed it absolute "shamelessness" from the organisers.

"If true this is absolute shamelessness this. The organisers have made a mockery and it is unethical to have a tournament with rules being different for the other two teams."

"In the name of justice, will only be fair if it is abandoned the first day, may it rain harder on the second day and these malicious plans not succeed,"

Prasad posted on X.

In an advisory the ACC had on Friday stated that a reserve day was incorporated for the Asia Cup 2023 Super 4's match between Pakistan and India.

"If adverse weather suspends play during the Pakistan vs India game, the match will continue on 11th September 2023 from the point it was suspended," the statement added.

"If adverse weather suspends play during the Pakistan vs India game, the match will continue on 11th September 2023 from the point it was suspended."

"In such an eventuality, ticket-holders are advised to hold on to their match tickets which will remain valid and will be utilised for the reserve day," the advisory stated. (PTI)



# India seek answer to Rahul-Kishan riddle ahead of high-voltage Pakistan clash

**COLOMBO, Sept 9:** The Indian team management's predicament to choose between KL Rahul and Ishan Kishan will be the dominating theme amid the usual edgy emotional quotient, when they face arch-rivals Pakistan in the most-awaited Super 4 match of the Asia Cup here on Sunday.

Alongside focusing on the team goals, the Indian management will want to assemble the best possible 11 in the park against Pakistan, whom the Rohit Sharma-led outfit is facing for the second time in the event.

But for that, they need to find answers for the aforementioned puzzle, and hope that rains will stay away despite adding a controversial reserve day to the match on Monday.

The return of Rahul to the squad has widened the pool of players to select from, but that has also given them a happy headache.

Kishan has impressed everyone in the last month or so, smashing four fifties in as many matches – three against the West Indies and one against Pakistan in the Asia Cup Group A match at Pallekele last week.

During the process, Kishan has also diversified himself, underlining his comfort in positions ranging from opening to No. 5.

The 25-year-old Jharkhand man opened the innings against the Caribbeans while batting in the middle-order against Pakistan.

Additionally, Kishan brings in a bit of variety to the Indian batting line-up as he is a left-hander.

So, it seems that Kishan has everything going for him. But Rahul's claim for the No. 5 position is hard to ignore despite the fact that the Bengaluru cricketer has not played an ODI since March this year, courtesy a



thigh injury and the ensuing phase of post-surgery convalescence.

The 31-year-old remains one of India's steadiest ODI batters since 2019. In that year, he made 572 runs from 13 matches at 47.67.

The trend continued in the following years – In 2020: 443 runs from 9 matches at 55.38, in 2021: 108 runs from 3 matches at 88.50, in 2022: 251 runs from 10 matches at 27.89 and in 2023: 226 runs from 6 matches at 56.50.

If one filters the stats further, while batting at No. 5, Rahul has amassed 742 runs from 18 matches at 53 with a hundred and seven fifties.

Those are strong numbers and his wicket-keeping offers an additional arrow in the quiver. Rahul also engaged in intense wicket-keeping drills at nets on Friday, further in-

dicating his readiness to make the return.

So, the team management will have to take a hard call on the match day.

While that decision is important for the team to achieve the desired balance, they will also be eager to start the Super 4 with a win notwithstanding the combination they field.

Pakistan have already bagged two points after beating Bangladesh by 7 wickets at Lahore, and another win will place them comfortably on the way to the final.

So, India will also want to enter the log sheet but they will have to counter a potent Pakistan bowling attack that can make an impact irrespective of the nature of the pitch.

Of course, Rohit and other Indian batters will be wary of the high-paced incoming deliveries of Shaheen Shah Afridi, but the Pakistan bowling unit has other equally

explosive performers.

Haris Rauf, with his express pace, is currently topping the Asia Cup bowling chart with 9 wickets from three matches, and seemed to have emerged from the shadows of Afridi (7 wickets).

While Naseem Shah also has taken 7 wickets, ensuring no let off point for opposition batters.

Pakistan has an edge on paper in this department, but India will believe that they have the ammunition to strike back in kind.

The return of Jasprit Bumrah, who skipped the league match against Nepal, will bolster India's bowling, while Mohammed Siraj and Shardul Thakur can play the efficient support cast role.

But once these two teams enter the arena, factors like playing 11, form, past records etc go irrelevant. It will be a storm force collision on the field.

## Teams

**India:** Rohit Sharma (captain), Virat Kohli, Shreyas Iyer, KL Rahul, Shubman Gill, Suryakumar Yadav, Tilak Varma, Ishan Kishan, Hardik Pandya (vice-captain), Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Shardul Thakur, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Kuldeep Yadav, Prasidh Krishna.

**Pakistan:** Babar Azam (captain), Abdullah Shafique, Fakhar Zaman, Imam-ul-Haq, Salman Ali Agha, Iftikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Rizwan, Mohammad Haris, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Usama Mir, Faheem Ashraf, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Naseem Shah, Shaheen Afridi, Saud Shakeel, Tayyab Tahir (travelling reserve). (PTI)

## Not facing Pakistani bowlers enough makes difference at big events: Gill



**COLOMBO, Sept 9:** Shubman Gill, who found Pakistan's pace trio too hot to handle during his painstaking 10 off 32 balls in the group league game, admitted that not facing the Shaheen Shah Afridis and Haris Raufs often, does make a "difference" during multi-nation events.

The Indian top-order batters have had issues with Afridi's nip-backers and the awkward angles that he often creates and it has got everything to do with unfamiliarity even if you have watched thousands of his bowling videos.

"We don't play against Pakistan as often as we do against some other teams. We all know that their bowling attack is quite good and when you don't play against such attacks often it makes a bit of difference in main tournaments," Gill was frank in his admission that life has indeed been a bit difficult against the troika of speed merchants.

India get to play Pakistan only during Asia Cup or at the ICC events.

Gill said that he was also banking on the left-arm throw-down specialist Nuwan Seneviratne to dish out an improved show against Afridi, and in general against Pakistan quicks.

"Definitely (training has helped). He (Nuwan) has been travelling with us for the last 7-8 years. It is nice to have that variation. We have that right-arm spe-

cialist (Raghu), the side-arm specialist (Dayannd Garani) and the left-arm specialist. It does help in any conditions that you play," added Gill.

Gill then explained why the Pakistan fast bowlers are making such an impact.

"They are very different fast bowlers and they have their own specialities. Shaheen gets the ball to swing a lot. Naseem is all about pace and likes help from the wicket. They present different challenges in different conditions," said Gill.

Gill said that Indian batters will have to dominate unlike last time when the top order was blown away for 66.

"As openers, we need to make a good start and dominate them from the beginning," Gill said.

In that context, Gill said his partnership with captain Rohit Sharma could be crucial.

"He (Rohit) is someone who likes to take on the bowlers more aerially and I like playing along the ground in the power play. That combination works well for us. We both are a bit different, how we go about our shots and tackle the situations. That makes it a bit difficult for opposition to contain us," said Gill.

With his fast in-swinging deliveries, Afridi will be a big threat for India. The left-arm pacer had evicted Rohit and Virat Kohli in the league match to rock India's top-order. (PTI)

## Fluent Samarawickrama takes Sri Lanka to 257/9

**COLOMBO, Sept 9:** Sadeera Samarawickrama and Kusal Mendis' fifties notwithstanding, Sri Lanka never really could slip into the overdrive, meandering to 257 for nine against Bangladesh in their Asia Cup Super 4 match here on Saturday. After being asked to bat first, Samarawickrama made 93 off 72 balls, Mendis 50 and Pathum Nissanka 40, yet the Sri Lankans might view this effort as a lost opportunity to be in a far stronger position.

Bangladesh were served well by Hasan Mahmud (3 for 57), while Shoriful Islam and Taskin Ahmed shared four wickets among them equally.

If a few edges did not elude the Bangladesh fielders or they remained more alert, Sri Lanka could have been in deeper peril. After the early departure of Dimuth Karunaratne, who edged pacer Mahmud to Mushfiqur Rahim behind the stumps, Lanka found some sanity through



Nissanka and Mendis.

The second wicket pair added 74 runs, though the partnership was not always smooth.

Mendis, in particular, looked scratchy in the middle and

there were edges and false shots galore in his 73-ball 50.

Nissanka was relatively more fluent, but a clever slower delivery from Islam ended his stay, and even the DRS could not save the batter from the leg-before verdict.

The home side lost three more wickets in the span of next 14 overs as they struggled for a lively middle-over phase.

Samarawickrama, who is one of Sri Lanka's better ODI batters this year, was an exception on the day. The elegant right-hander negated a rather slow pitch and Bangladesh bowlers to script a very fluent innings.

The right-hander was sure in his feet movement and judged the length very early, and a pulled six off Mahmud stood as a testimony to that.

Samarawickrama, who eventually got out in the last over of the innings, could have carried Sri Lanka to a better place with a bit more support but that was not forthcoming. (PTI)

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ONE EARTH - ONE FAMILY - ONE FUTURE

National Health Mission, Assam

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

National Mental Health Programme

# WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

## 10<sup>th</sup> September, 2023

### Creating Hope Through Action

Remember

- ◆ Talking or enquiring about suicidal thoughts does not increase the risk of suicide. On the contrary it will help the person
- ◆ Mental illness is not related to mental strength, anybody can suffer from it
- ◆ Depression is most common cause of suicide
- ◆ Talking about suicidal ideation, buying pesticides/poisonous things/explaining methods of suicide and the intent to commit suicide, giving away favourite things, making legal will, remaining severely depressed and expressing hopelessness in life etc. are some of the signs of suicidal ideation

For more details contact District Mental Health Programme Unit at District Hospital

For any Mental Health related issues dial toll-free number

14416 or

1800-891-4416

Symptoms of Depression

- ◆ Extreme sadness
- ◆ Excessive fear and worry
- ◆ Frequent mood swings
- ◆ Sleep disorders
- ◆ Trouble concentrating
- ◆ Dependence on alcohol, drugs or the internet
- ◆ Suicidal thoughts

**It is not under the influence of any evil force. It is a mental disorder caused by a neurological imbalance.**

**Call 108 for Ambulance Services**

(NHM/D/2023-24/1193)